

Beit Midrash Frequently Asked Questions

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**What Are *Beit Midrash's* Hours?**

Preschool (3 & 4 year olds)	Temple Beth-El	Sunday, 9:30 am – 11:00 am <i>(optional childcare 11:00-12:00)</i> Beginning September 8
<i>Beit Midrash</i> • Includes Hebrew time for Grades 3-6 (Kindergarten – Grade 7)	Temple Beth-El	Sunday, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon Beginning September 8
Pre-Confirmation (Grade 8-9)	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 Beginning September 11
Confirmation (Grade 10)	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Beginning September 11
Post-Confirmation (Grades 11-12)	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Beginning TBD

**Where and When Are Hebrew Classes Held?**

Wednesday Midweek Hebrew	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 4:30 – 6:00 pm Beginning September 11
Online Midweek Hebrew*	Zoom	Tuesdays, times as assigned

\*available to those geographically distanced from Temple or physically unable to attend in person.

**Who is Eligible for *Beit Midrash*?**

Enrollment in *Beit Midrash* is open to students in Preschool through Grade 12 whose families are members of Temple Beth-El or committed to Judaism and enrolled in our Conversion program. Our preschool class is open for students who will be at least age 3 by September 1, 2024. We kindly ask that all preschool students be potty trained before enrolling.

**How Can I Register for *Beit Midrash*?**

Log into your Shulcloud account at [beth-elsa.shulcloud.com](https://beth-elsa.shulcloud.com) account, look for the “Start School Enrollment” icon, and follow the instructions. Please contact our religious school administrator, Sara Planto, at [sara@beth-elsa.org](mailto:sara@beth-elsa.org) if you have questions about the enrollment process.

We proudly offer a completely customizable learning experience for our students. During their class time on Sunday mornings, students learn in interactive, experiential classroom settings with our caring and experienced faculty.

Our preschool class explores Judaism through their senses in a combined 3- and 4-year-old class. Students will have the chance to experience all the Temple has to offer with visits from our clergy, holiday celebrations, and plenty of time to explore Judaism through free play.

In Kindergarten through Seventh Grade, students will select their classes for all three trimesters. Our courses range in interests from science, theater, reading, music, art, and cooking. All these choices can help our students have fun while they learn about Judaism and our sacred community.

During their eight years in our program, students will enjoy classes in 9 content areas selected by our education committee as vital to understanding modern Reform Jewish life: community, Jewish values, holidays, Hebrew and liturgy, Israel, sacred texts, Jewish culture, Jewish history, Jewish lifecycle celebrations, and God-concepts.

Classes are offered based on three age groups:

- Primary (Grades K-2)
- Intermediate (Grades 3-5)
- Advanced (Grades 6-7)

During registration, families can select classes for each trimester so students can pick the offerings that are most appealing to their interests.

### **What is Pre-Confirmation?**

Following their *Beit Midrash* studies, our students matriculate to our Confirmation program, beginning with our Preconfirmation series. During Grades 8 and 9 our students take on a more difficult and nuanced curriculum. This combined group will spend two years learning— one year on Comparative Religion and Jewish Culture and the other in an exploration of the history and beliefs of Reform Jews.

This seminar-style class introduces students to the challenges and exciting learning of their upcoming Confirmation year.

### **What is Confirmation?**

In our congregation's history, Confirmation stands as the pinnacle of a student's Jewish education and a graduation of sorts from our program. In Reform tradition, it is a significant lifecycle event. This year of study and ceremony marks an academic milestone in the students' ongoing Jewish learning and signifies the informed affirmation of their commitments as Jews.

Students meet weekly with Senior Rabbi Mara Nathan and take on a curriculum that focuses on varied, Jewish concepts of God. Students are challenged to develop their understanding of what a relationship with God means to them.

After they complete these studies, students lead a Confirmation service as a class, linking themselves to Judaism and the Confirmands who came before.

### **What is Post-Confirmation?**

Following their Confirmation, students are encouraged to keep learning with us. Post-Confirmation students meet quarterly throughout the city of San Antonio from 12:30-2:00 pm. This seminar-style series allows students to use Judaism as a relevant lens through which to see the world around them. With a facilitator, students will discuss issues that impact their lives and join as voices for justice in the broader Jewish community.

The highlight of the high school years is a trip to Washington, D.C. We are proud to offer our students the opportunity to attend the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)'s L'Taken Social Justice Seminar. During this trip, we bring these students to Washington, DC where they meet with their members of Congress to discuss the issues with which they are concerned. Students join with other teens around the country to learn about the issues the RAC lobbies for and are trained in how to do this sacred justice work while they tour and enjoy a weekend in our nation's capital. The cost of the trip is an additional expense.

### **What is Yachad?**

Yachad is our Parent organization. Our Yachad parents help our teachers by chaperoning local field trips, helping set up for special events, and providing *b'nei mitzvah* members of our school community and holiday gifts for our faculty. As part of registration, families contribute \$25 per year to Yachad. To learn more about volunteer opportunities with Yachad, please contact Ellen Barshop at [ebarshop@beth-elsa.org](mailto:ebarshop@beth-elsa.org).

### **What is Included with My Registration Fee?**

Your *Beit Midrash* registration fee covers all student instructional materials and school supplies. A \$25/child fee increase will take effect on July 16<sup>th</sup>. New members who join after July 15<sup>th</sup> are exempt from the late fee increase.

Included for students in Grades 3-6 is a midweek Hebrew class.

Included for students in Grades 2-6 is a weekend retreat at URJ Greene Family Camp in Bruceville, TX. We take care of transportation, chaperones, lodging, meals, snacks, and activities associated with the weekend.

### How Much Does Beit Midrash Cost?

Our *Beit Midrash* registration fees below are based on the number of instructional hours and included materials and activities offered for your child(ren's) grade. The fee is subsidized by the entire congregation to keep the cost down for families balancing several expenses.

Preschool	\$385
Kindergarten-Grade 1	\$495
Grade 2	\$690
Grades 3,4,5,6	\$800
Grade 7	\$600
Pre-Confirmation (Grade 8-9)	\$600
Confirmation (Grade 10)	\$690
Post-Confirmation (Grade 11-12)	\$180 *Trip will be a separate and additional cost and is optional.

### Are Scholarships or Payment Plans Available for *Beit Midrash*?

Yes! Absolutely! We understand that families have expenses, and **we are committed to making sure all of our families can enroll regardless of financial circumstances.**

Many families set up payment plans for Religious School. These plans are interest-free, and you can set up the installments in a variety of ways. For more information, contact Temple's Controller, Michael Ringel, [michael@beth-elsa.org](mailto:michael@beth-elsa.org).

Additionally, we have scholarships available to families who need financial assistance. The form is available, and linked, to your Beit Midrash registration. If you have questions about scholarships, contact Director of Congregational Learning, Ellen Barshop, at [ebarshop@beth-elsa.org](mailto:ebarshop@beth-elsa.org).

All financial arrangements are kept confidential.

### Are Refunds Available?

We are pleased to be able to offer full refunds of your registration fee until August 1, 2024. If a student drops out because of a move out of town or illness before the end of the first semester, we can offer a prorated fee and refund the fee for the second semester.

Otherwise, refunds are not available.

### **What Does *Beit Midrash* Mean?**

*Beit Midrash* is the Hebrew for “House of Study.” Early rabbinic literature refers to synagogue buildings as serving three purposes: to be a *beit t’filah* (house of worship), a *beit k’neset* (a house of gathering), and a *beit midrash* (house of study). Designating spaces for study has long been part of Jewish tradition. Our name refers to our hopes that we will be more than a school for our students – just teaching classes and assigning grades. What we are is a community of learners, working together to discover the impact that Judaism can have on every aspect of our lives and how we can impact the Jewish world in return. **At *Beit Midrash*** we explore Judaism in our own ways, with each student, like the rabbinic scholars in early centuries, finding what excites us and pursuing those interests.