

# TEMPLE BETH-EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS GUIDE

## COMMUNITY

Classes designed to help students understand that we are part of local community and their role in the larger American and global Jewish community. (3 courses)

## CULTURE

Classes designed to let students experience the colorful culture of Judaism. (9 courses)

## GOD

Classes designed to give students space to openly discuss their thoughts and feelings about God. Students will learn that throughout history Jews have explored their relationship with God. (4 courses)

## HISTORY

Classes designed to help students develop a meaningful identification with Jews past and present through studying events, people, and their own families. (3 courses)

## HOLIDAYS

Classes designed to help students familiarize themselves with the rituals and traditions observed around our calendar of Jewish holidays. ( 4 courses)

## ISRAEL

Classes designed to help students understand the connection between the Jewish people and Israel through learning about the land, the state, and the people who live there. (6 courses)

## LIFECYCLE

Classes designed to teach students how Jews mark passages of time and season through their lives and the Jewish moments that help define them. (3 courses)

## VALUES

Classes designed to help students practice our ethical and ritual commandments and connect them to the values they and their families hold. (4 courses)

## TANACH

Classes designed to help students learn what is in the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible) and the other sacred texts from which Judaism originated. (4 courses)

# TEMPLE BETH-EL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS 2022-2023

## PRIMARY COURSES

### TRIMESTER 1

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#### LET'S DISCOVER FALL HOLIDAYS

##### HOLIDAYS

It's all here: fun activities, thought questions and descriptive text that will engage emerging readers and help them discover their own connections to the holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah and Hanukkah. Each week we'll explore the meaning of the holiday, its objects, and rituals, and read a retelling of the holiday origins. Perfect for students who love to read!

#### MORE THAN A STORY: DISCOVERING JEWISH VALUES IN CHILDREN'S STORIES

##### CULTURE/VALUES

Folktales captivate students of all ages while introducing them to culture and beliefs. Using the rich literary heritage of Jewish folktales, students will explore traditions and values.

#### LET'S DISCOVER MITZVOT

##### MITZVOT

Some of the most important mitzvot (commandments) and acts of gemilut chasadim (loving kindness) are the ones we can do easily, day-after-day. In this class, through dramatic play, storybooks, coloring pages, and games, students will learn about the mitzvot they're already doing (and might not even know about) and how they can add more mitzvot to their day-to-day routines.

### TRIMESTER 2

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#### LET'S DISCOVER KINDNESS

##### COMMUNITY

It seems that the world needs more kindness, and now more than ever. But what is kindness, and how do we develop it in ourselves and others? Together, we'll explore the character traits that contribute to kindness, such as empathy, gratitude, and respect, through a Jewish lens. Students will use role-playing, mindfulness activities, personal reflection, and more to explore their emotional responses to the themes and begin to foster those traits in themselves.

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## TRIMESTER 2 - PRIMARY COURSES (CONT.)

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### **GODLY PLAY**

#### TORAH

See Torah come alive through story, wonder, and play. Torah Godly Play nurtures the rich spiritual lives of children by honoring their capacity to understand and engage with Torah stories through imagination and wonder. Children will learn central Torah stories in this favorite of many of our past students.

### **THE GREAT ISRAEL SCAVENGER HUNT**

#### ISRAEL

Following cryptic instructions contained in a letter from their grandfather, two cousins travel across Israel on an adventurous scavenger hunt in search of special objects and places, including the Israeli flag, a palm tree, and the Western Wall. As they travel, the cousins and students discover the major cities and extraordinary sites of Israel, the diversity of Israel's people and cultures, our biblical and modern ties with the Jewish homeland, and the geography of Israel.

## TRIMESTER 3

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### **ALEF BET LAB**

#### CULTURE

Through song and game, free worktime and art, students will explore the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and learn to recognize touchstone Jewish words. This class encourages exploration and creativity and is highly recommended for second grade students who will begin Hebrew school next year.

### **LET'S DISCOVER SPRING HOLIDAYS**

#### HOLIDAYS

It's all here: fun activities, thought questions and descriptive text that will engage emerging readers and help them discover their own connections to the holidays of Tu Bishvat, Purim, Passover, and Shavuot. Each week we'll explore the meaning of the holiday, its objects, and rituals, and read a retelling of the holiday origins. Perfect for students who love to read!

### **BLFF: BEST LIFE CYCLE FRIENDS FOREVER**

#### LIFECYCLE

Create a new friend and help them learn all about what it means to be Jewish. In this class you'll create your own lifecycle buddy and help it build a Jewish life. Learn all about how we get our names, why we become bar/bat mitzvah, what makes a Jewish wedding special, and how to say goodbye to people we love.

# INTERMEDIATE COURSES

## TRIMESTER 1

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### **BIBLICAL STORIES: EXPLORING MIDRASHIM**

#### TORAH

Historically, rabbis wrote midrash to explain parts of the biblical text that aren't clear. If there seemed to be a missing piece to a story, the rabbis would fill in the missing dialogue. In this course, students will explore biblical text and create their own midrash.

### **PERFORMING THE MIDDOT**

#### TORAH

Our tradition clearly reflects the importance of values. Some include not embarrassing others, Lo Levayesh, being slow to anger, Erech Apayim, and truthfulness, Emet. In this course, students are guided through these middot, these values, to create skits that demonstrate and teach Jewish virtues.

### **THE MITZVOT PROJECT**

#### MITZVOT

Explore mitzvot through stories, biographies, and experiences as you determine a special Mitzvah Project of your very own!

## TRIMESTER 2

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### **THE MAKING OF A MENSCH**

#### COMMUNITY

What kind of person do you want to be? By studying Musar, which focuses on an awareness of the world and one's responsibility, we explore the positive values, rituals, and practices, that inspire us toward gratitude, generosity, and humility. You have the power to create your own mensch code!

## TRIMESTER 2

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### **STORATELLING**

#### TORAH

Release your inner storyteller by bringing the tools of theater and staging to bear on traditional Jewish texts and stories.

### **GADGETS, GIZMOS, AND GOD: LEARNING ABOUT GOD THROUGH ROBOTICS**

#### GOD

By reminding students that God created humans with an idea and mission in mind, what can we learn about God's role in our lives while we create robots with an idea and mission in mind? In a robotics lab setting, students will learn about famous robots and their creators while wrestling with God concepts like power and control, creation, and perfection. Students will create their own robots and use them to help explain their learning.

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## TRIMESTER 3

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### **HIDDEN HOLIDAYS**

#### HOLIDAYS

Why do we light two candles on Shabbat? Did the Red Sea really part during the Exodus? And why do we eat dairy on Shavuot? This class, which features debates, trivia games, videos and more, will teach students about the secret histories of Jewish holiday rituals and the true stories of the holidays.

### **MAKE, CREATE, AND CELEBRATE** CULTURE, HOLIDAYS, GOD

Not an artist? Don't worry about it! This course is all about self-expression and ideas. Paint, perform, and doodle your way through the Jewish holidays

## TRIMESTER 3

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### **ISRAEL THROUGH SCIENCE**

#### ISRAEL

Learn about the state of Israel using the environment as a backdrop. Study weather, energy and life science as a means to understand the physical space so important to the Jewish people.

## **ADVANCED COURSES**

## TRIMESTER 1

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### **CHANGEMAKERS**

#### COMMUNITY

Making strong connections to Jewish identity and a concrete way to effect change by utilizing the tool of philanthropy, students will explore the Jewish values surrounding tzedakah, learn leadership skills and make a final recommendation for the tzedakah collected during Sunday school.

### **MAKE, CREATE, AND CELEBRATE** CULTURE, HOLIDAYS, GOD

Not an artist? Don't worry about it! This course is all about self-expression and ideas. Paint, perform, and doodle your way through the Jewish holidays.

## TRIMESTER 2

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### **PEOPLE OF THE BOOK: THE LENGTH OF A STRING**

#### CULTURE

Imani is adopted, and she's ready to search for her birthparents. But when she discovers the diary her Jewish great-grandmother wrote chronicling her escape from Holocaust-era Europe, Imani begins to see family in a new way. Author, Elissa Brent Weissman.

### **UP, UP AND OY VEY!**

#### HISTORY

From the birth of Krypton to Batman, the Hulk, Spiderman, the X-Men and more, students will learn the Jewish stories behind the origins of the most famous superheroes. This class will use clips of superhero movies and tv shows and comic books to introduce students to enduring stories that are intrinsically Jewish because of their creators and understand the connections between growing up Jewish and learning that what makes us and superheroes different are the things that make us special.

### **IN GOD'S IMAGE: EXPLORING GOD THROUGH ART**

#### GOD

Many of us have a picture of God based on the ways God is depicted in art. In this class, using art techniques like micrography, painting, collage, mural/graffiti, kaleidoscope, and more, students will depict their own images of God in ways that are in line with their own theological understandings.

## TRIMESTER 3

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### **THE GOOD LIFE**

#### GOD • TORAH

Ah! The Good Life. The words conjure up fancy cars and fashionable clothes. Living the good life is a fundamental question that Judaism tries to answer. What does the Torah say about living a good life and how does that bear on a life well-lived?

### **MIDDOT: THE ETHICS OF LANGUAGE**

#### TORAH

That words are powerful may seem obvious, but the fact is that most of us, most of the time, use them lightly. Judaism has many categories of speech and through sharing of personal experience, analysis of stories, and the study of Jewish texts, this class offers a dynamic opportunity for students to understand the power of their speech through consideration of their words' impact.

### **GADGETS, GIZMOS, AND GOD: LEARNING ABOUT GOD THROUGH ROBOTICS**

#### GOD

God created humans with an idea and mission in mind, what can we learn about God's role in our lives while we create robots with an idea and mission in mind? In a robotics lab setting, students will learn about famous robots and their creators while wrestling with God concepts like power and control, creation, and perfection. Students will create their own robots and use them to help explain their learning.