

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

2011-2012 / 5772



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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the new school year. I am looking forward to working collaboratively with Alice Talmud, Cantor Blum, and our outstanding group of teachers at the TBI Religious School to create a fun, safe, and exciting learning environment for your children.

Teaching our children is one of the core fundamentals of our tradition. In the *V'ahavtah*, first paragraph of the Shema, we say *v'she-nan-tam l'va-nechah*, which means “and you should teach them (the words of Torah) diligently to your children.” This mitzvah applies to me, Cantor Blum, Alice, and our Religious School teachers. It also applies to you—the parents. How can we be most effective as teachers and Jewish role models for our children? The answer can be found at the beginning of the same paragraph: *V'ahavta et Adonai Elohechah*, “You shall love the Lord, your God.” I understand this to mean that we should strive to love God, God’s gift to us—the Torah—and our tradition. Thus, the first paragraph of the Shema teaches us that we will be most effective passing on our tradition to our children, only if we, ourselves, love our tradition. When one loves something, he or she will speak about it and be passionate about it in a way that is very different from something, which he or she does not love.

Some of us feel a connection to God and love our tradition. Some of us do not. For those of you who are feeling distant from our tradition and are not feeling the love, I challenge you to think about the things you do love about Judaism. That may be a specific memory with your parents or grandparents. It could be Shabbat dinners, Passover Seders, building a Sukkah, visiting the sick, supporting Israel, or something else. Let these aspects of Judaism uplift you and guide you.

One of the teachings of Judaism that continually inspires me is: *v'Ahavta l'rey'achach kamochah* “Love your fellow as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18). What would it mean if each of us took this statement to heart? How would it impact our behavior towards our friends, towards people we don’t always like, and towards strangers that we meet out in the world? And, what are the limits of this mitzvah? These are just some of the important and fascinating questions, which this mitzvah asks us to consider.

Educating our children Jewishly is an important task. At TBI Religious School, we are striving to create knowledgeable Jews, happy Jews, and *mentschen*. We cannot do it alone—we need you as partners. You must be involved in the process.

I look forward to seeing your children, teaching them, and learning from them. I also look forward to seeing you.

Shanah Tovah U'mitukah (May you have a sweet and good New Year).
B'shalom,

Rabbi Michael Mishkin

September, 2011

Dear Parents:

Welcome back! I hope that you all had a wonderful summer and that you are feeling renewed, refreshed and ready to begin an exciting year at TBI Religious School! Our classrooms are stocked with books and supplies and our teachers are eager to share their exciting plans with you!

This year we will continue to offer many enriching class trips and family programs. In response to your interest we have continued to offer many opportunities for our families to join together for Shabbat services and socializing over dinners.

We urge you to use this handbook as the valuable resource it is meant to be. It contains a great deal of information, including a full listing of our policies, and a school calendar. We hope that you will find this to be a useful guide.

Together with Rabbi, Michael Mishkin and all of our dedicated lay leaders, we will continue to strive to provide the best Jewish education possible for our students. To that end, our Education Vice President, Lisa Menasse-Palmer, her co-chair of the Religious School Committee, Sim Ezratty and the members of the Religious School Committee are actively engaged in helping to support and improve our programs. We are always happy to welcome new members to our committee, so feel free to join us.

One of our continuing goals is to maximize communication between the Religious School and your homes. You are always welcome to call or stop by the Religious School office. By sharing your concerns and suggestions, you help us to be as responsive and successful as possible. You are our most valued partners in our endeavor to educate and inspire our children as they grow into committed Jewish adults.

Very truly yours,

Alice Talmud
Principal

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 2011-2012 5772

<p>6 Opening Faculty Meeting 10 Tot Shabbat 11 Opening Assembly 13 Kitah Vav Etgar Program 17 Mini- Minyan/Jr. Congregation 20 Opening Day Hebrew HS 29 No Religious School</p>	SEPTEMBER '11	OCTOBER '11	<p>2 Open House ~ 11:30 AM Class Parent Mtg 10-11 AM 9 No RS -Columbus Day 13 No Religious School 15 Tot Shabbat 20 No Religious School 23 Faculty Meeting 29 Mini-Minyan/ Jr. Congregation</p>
<p>5 Tot Shabbat Change Clocks back 1 Hour 8 No RS- P/T Conferences 13 P/T Conferences 24-27 No RS -Thanksgiving Break</p>	NOVEMBER '11	DECEMBER '11	<p>3 Tot Shabbat 4 Faculty Meeting 10 Mini-Minyan/ Jr. Congregation 17 Family Service 18 Hanukkah Celebration 25-30 No RS - Winter Break</p>
<p>1 No RS - Winter Break 7 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 14 Tot Shabbat 15 No RS -MLK weekend 20 Family Service 21 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 27 Kitah Dalet Service/Dinner 29 Faculty Meeting</p>	JANUARY '12	FEBRUARY '12	<p>4 Tot Shabbat Kitah Gimel Havdallah 6:30 PM 10 Kitah Hei Service/Dinner 6:45 PM 11 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 19-26 Presidents' Week -no RS</p>
<p>2 Kitah Vav Service/Dinner 6:45 PM 3 Tot Shabbat 4 Purim Carnival 9 Kitah Bet/Gimel Service/ Dinner 6 PM 10 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation Change Clocks forward 1 Hr 11 Faculty Meeting 23 Shorashim/Alef Service/ Dinner 6 PM 24 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 31 Tot Shabbat</p>	MARCH '12	APRIL '12	<p>5-15 Passover Holiday 19 Yom Hashoah 21 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 26 Yom Hatzmaut 28 Tot Shabbat</p>
<p>5 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 6 Kitah Bet Siddur Ceremony/ Brunch 12 Tot Shabbat 13 Mother's Day - No RS 15 Last Day Hebrew H.S. 19 Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation 20 Moving-Up Ceremony 27 Confirmation!</p>	MAY '12	JUNE '12	<p>HAVE A FABULOUS SUMMER VACATION!</p>

TBI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CLASS SCHEDULE 2011-2012 - 5772

GRADE	CLASS	TEACHER	ROOM	HOURS
K	Shorashim	Marlene Barnett	Library	Sunday 9-12 Noon
1 st	Alef	Amy Hagler	Dwnstrs Mtg. Rm	Sunday 9-12 Noon
2 nd	Bet 1	Shahla Moadel	7	Sunday 9-12 Noon
	Bet 2	Taly Day	8	Tuesday 4-6 PM
3 rd	Gimel	Levana Lichter	6	Sunday 9-12 Noon
				Tuesday 4-6 PM
4 th	Dalet 1	Lois Welt	4	Sunday 9-12 Noon
	Dalet 2	Lisa Rosenbaum	5	Tuesday 4-6 PM
5 th	Hei	Ortal Hoffman	2	Sunday 9-12 Noon Tuesday 4-6 PM
6 th	Vav	Rebecca Goren	9	Sunday 9-12 Noon Tuesday 6:10-8:10 pm
7 th	Zayin 1	Adina Galai	2	Sunday 9-12 Noon
	Zayin 2	Susan Ahdoot	3	Tuesday 6:10-8:10 pm
2 nd - 7 th	Resource Room	Hagit Rahmani Janet Schriffrin		Sunday 9-12 Noon Tuesday 4-6 PM
	Music	Rochelle Potak	Class to Class 9	Sunday 9-12 Noon Tuesday 4-6 PM

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CLASS SCHEDULE

SUNDAY

9 AM - 12 Noon
Shorashim-Kitah Zayin

TUESDAY

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
Kitah Bet - Kitah Hei

THURSDAY*

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
See Below

6:10 PM - 8:10 PM
Kitah Vav - Kitah Zayin
Hebrew High School

*On Thursdays, there will be no regularly scheduled classes. We will offer small group sessions to children in Kitah Bet - Kitah Zayin to provide remediation between 4 PM and 6 PM. Based on our regular assessments, teacher evaluation and recommendation, children deemed to be in need of extra help will be asked to participate in these sessions. In addition, parents are invited to request that their children be included.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The education of our children can only be accomplished by a partnership of the synagogue, the families of the students, and the Religious School of Temple Beth Israel. Together, we will strive to create an environment, which will reinforce the Jewish tradition, skills, and values taught in the school. Our students, upon graduation, will have benefited from an exciting academic atmosphere, which is both motivating and demanding while it is socially attentive and nurturing. As part of an egalitarian Conservative congregation, we are committed to equal religious and educational opportunities for both genders, Jewish practice that is grounded in *halachah* (Jewish law), and respect for the entire spectrum of the greater Jewish community. We are committed to graduating students who have learned, firsthand, the joys and responsibilities of being Jewish, and who can understand and embrace their proud tradition.

This partnership in teaching is committed to:

- ✧ empowering our students and their families to lead fully Jewish lives, cognizant of the fact that being Jewish affects every aspect of living;
- ✧ providing our students and their families with the basic tools necessary for full participation in Conservative worship services and rituals;
- ✧ fostering the spiritual growth of our students and their families, inspiring them to perceive the Divine Presence in the world and enabling them to sanctify life through the performance of *mitzvot*;
- ✧ demonstrating to our students and their families the vital role of synagogue as the vehicle of community support, comfort and guidance;
- ✧ instilling in our students and their families a sense of their Jewish past and of the relevance of a Jewish present: who we are, where we came from, what we stand for, and what behavior and beliefs define a Conservative Jew;
- ✧ engendering in our children and their families a deep commitment to compassionate living and to the betterment of the world;
- ✧ communicating to our students and their families the pivotal role of the State of Israel in Jewish life;

- ✧ encouraging an appreciation of the Hebrew language as the vehicle through which our tradition has been transmitted from generation to generation;
- ✧ building a connection between students and their families to the worldwide family of Jews, a family dedicated to supporting and helping each other in time of trouble or need;
- ✧ providing meaning to Jewish experiences of holidays and life cycle events which can be transmitted to the home;
- ✧ stimulating in our students and their families the desire for lifelong Jewish learning.

Our School-Family-Synagogue alliance forges the chain, which links the past history of the Jewish people to its present challenges and future possibilities

TBI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL GOALS

At TBI, we want our graduates to be committed to a life of Torah (study), Avodah (worship), and Gemilut Hasadim (morality and social justice).

We strive to help our students feel comfortable:

- ✧ asking questions about life and growing up, while seeking answers within the framework of Jewish tradition.
- ✧ transmitting the Jewish tradition to the next generation.
- ✧ being linked to a rich and tradition filled past and realizing their place in this chain through the study of Jewish history and biography.
- ✧ using their skills regarding *Shabbat*, holidays, the *Haggadah* and other religious observances in the home.
- ✧ praying in the synagogue as part of a community of worshippers, and experiencing prayer as our attempt to draw closer to God.

As they progress through the school's curriculum, the students will learn to:

- ✧ be familiar with the Jewish calendar, and to celebrate life cycle events and the yearly cycle of holidays.
- ✧ read *siddur* Hebrew fluently and be aware of its theological themes and various liturgies, especially the *Shabbat* service.
- ✧ experience Jewish literature, music, and the arts as creative expressions of our heritage.
- ✧ recognize the *Tanakh* (Bible) as the record of the evolving *brit* (contract) between the Jewish people and God.
- ✧ recall stories of our ancestors and themes of ethical behavior from the *Tanakh*.
- ✧ identify *Torah* as the source of *mitzvot* (commandments).
- ✧ understand and willingly undertake *mitzvot* between themselves and others, as well as between themselves and God.
- ✧ have opportunities to lead others in Jewish experiences.
- ✧ accept responsibility for giving *tzedakah* and performing acts of *tikkun olam* (making the world a better place).
- ✧ understand that the world is God's gift to humanity and that it is our responsibility to protect and use it wisely.
- ✧ understand the value of the Jewish community and be committed to being a member of it.
- ✧ identify with all Jews as brothers and sisters and be committed to Israel as the historic homeland of the Jewish people.
- ✧ understand the principles of Conservative Judaism.

We want our students to experience:

- ✧ Temple Beth Israel as a joyful place of learning, friendship and community.
- ✧ Respect for the uniqueness of each individual learner.
- ✧ Jewish teachers and other Jewish professionals who are positive role models and skilled communicators of Jewish knowledge and values.
- ✧ Curriculum that illuminates the depth and beauty of Jewish knowledge and the relevance of ancient traditions to our daily lives.
- ✧ Moments and events of *kedushah* (holiness).
- ✧ Families who are committed to active participation in Jewish living and *mitzvot* .

Together with the parents, Temple Beth Israel Religious School plants the seeds of Judaism in the students: with nourishment from the home and cultivation from the school, our students' Judaism will grow and continue to flourish throughout their lives.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FAMILY EDUCATION GOALS

To facilitate Jewish continuity for our children and grandchildren, the goals of our family education efforts will be to:

- ✧ encourage strong friendships and communal connections among families.
- ✧ provide environments for parents to explore and enhance their own Jewish behaviors and knowledge.
- ✧ help parents become the principal Jewish educators and role models for their children.
- ✧
- ✧ increase the amount of regular home observances.
- ✧ increase involvement in Temple activities and develop a sense of community around the shul.
- ✧ increase the desire to participate in religious services.
- ✧ foster Jewish pride and enjoyment at all ages.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL **CURRICULUM**

SHORASHIM (Kindergarten) three hours per week

Our focus in the Shorashim class is on a positive introduction to the study of Judaism and Hebrew language. Through song, dance, art and stories the children begin to identify with the joy of being Jewish, learning about our heritage and developing early Hebrew reading skills.

Objectives:

- 1) Holidays: An understanding of our holidays and traditions with a particular emphasis on Shabbat.
- 2) Torah: A familiarity with the stories associated with the book of Genesis
- 3) Hebrew Language: Familiarity with the letters and sounds of the Hebrew alphabet.
- 4) Prayer: The children will learn the prayers and blessings associated with the celebration of Kabbalat Shabbat at home (i.e. washing hands, lighting candles, blessings over wine and Challah) and elements of the Kabbalat Shabbat Service.
- 5) Music: An emerging familiarity with the music of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel as well as the liturgy of the Friday night service at TBI.

Materials:

Various sources are provided including storybooks, coloring sheets, art media, and music.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

KITAH ALEF (First Grade) three hours per week

In Kitah Alef we begin to build on the knowledge and experiences of Shorashim. The curriculum recognizes the growing sophistication and ability of the first grade student as it begins to delve into the holidays, Torah stories and Hebrew reading skills.

Objectives:

- 1) Holidays: An understanding of the Jewish calendar with special emphasis on the days of the week and the months of the year. A deepening knowledge of the Jewish holidays and the traditions that accompany them.
- 2) Torah: A further knowledge of the Torah stories with a special emphasis on Creation, the Garden of Eden, and Noah and the Flood.
- 3) Hebrew Language: Knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet, the sounds of the letters and the vowels, with an emerging interest in decoding.
- 4) Prayer: Familiarity with the Shema, Shalom Aleichem, L'chu Neranenah, Romemu, blessings on various foods and Birkat Hamazon.
- 5) Music: An increasing knowledge of the lyrics and music associated with the Jewish holidays and Israel as well as the liturgy of the Friday night service at TBI.

Materials:

Jewish Calendars

The Alphabet from Alef to Tav – Torah Aura Productions

Let's Discover the Bible – Behrman House

Various art media, music, story books

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL **CURRICULUM**

KITAH BET (Second Grade) five hours per week

In Kitah Bet our curriculum continues to focus on the ultimate goals of the Religious School. Children will learn to read and write in Hebrew, and begin to be proficient in various prayers associated with Synagogue services.

Objectives:

- 1) Holidays: A continued familiarity with the Jewish holidays with an emphasis on the prayers and blessings associated with them. Knowledge and understanding of the four Passover questions.
- 2) Tradition: An appreciation of the role of the Synagogue in our lives and in the lives of our fellow Jews throughout the world. An understanding of those elements that are common to all of us and those that distinguish various traditions within Judaism (e.g.: Sephardic vs. Ashkenazic).
- 3) Torah: A study of the Matriarchs and Patriarchs and the events that shaped their lives, with an emphasis on the values that they teach and how they connect directly to our lives as Jews today.
- 4) Hebrew Language: A facility with decoding Hebrew.
- 5) Prayer: Fluency in reciting Adon Olam, Aleinu, blessings over various foods, and Birkat Hamazon.
- 6) Music: Comfort with, and appreciation of, an ever more sophisticated repertoire of Jewish music.

Materials:

A Child's Bible – Book 1 – Behrman House
Shalom U'vracha – The New Hebrew Primer – Behrman House
The Jewish Holiday Treasure Trail – Behrman House

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

KITAH GIMEL (Third Grade) five hours per week

In Kitah Gimel the students are ready to use their ability to read and write in Hebrew to tackle the language of the Jewish people. Our Torah focus this year leads to an in depth understanding of the centrality of the Passover story to our history. Through active participation, children learn to lead the Havdallah service.

Objectives:

1. Holidays: An in-depth understanding of the Passover experience with a study of the Haggadah. Fluency in recitation of all four Passover questions, various elements of the Haggadah and the Hannukah blessings.
2. Torah: A familiarity with Exodus as it relates to יציאת מצרים (Yitziat Mitzraim = the Exodus from Egypt) and the Covenant between the Jewish people and God.
3. Hebrew Language: An increasing fluency in Hebrew reading. An emerging knowledge of basic Siddur Hebrew vocabulary and Siddur skills.
4. Israel: An awareness and understanding of the central part that the State of Israel holds in the hearts of the Jewish people.
5. Prayer: the Havdallah service, the Avot and Gevurot (opening prayers of the Amidah).
6. Music: A deepening understanding of the lyrics associated with the music of the Jewish holidays, celebrations and Israel.

Please note: Each child's Hebrew reading will be evaluated at the beginning of Kitah Gimel. The results will be compared with a similar assessment at the end of the Gimel year and each subsequent year to monitor progress toward the ultimate goal of Hebrew reading fluency.

Materials:

Holidays – Melton

Siddur Sim Shalom

Hineni-The New Hebrew Through Prayer, Vol. 1 – Behrman House

Passover Haggadah

Hebrew song sheets

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL **CURRICULUM**

KITAH DALET (Fourth Grade) five hours per week

In Kitah Dalet our children begin to use their facility with Prayer to practice to assume a leadership role in the Jewish community. As the children become more familiar with the Torah they are able to understand its place of prominence in our lives.

Objectives:

- 1) Holidays: An increasing understanding of our history and traditions along with a further facility with the more complex concepts involved.
- 2) Torah: A familiarity with the various elements of the Tanakh and the navigation thereof. An understanding of the importance of Torah study to our tradition and a discovery of the spiritual side of the text.
- 3) Hebrew Language: An increasing fluency in Hebrew reading as well as an increased knowledge of Siddur Hebrew vocabulary and Siddur skills.
- 4) Israel: An interest and awareness of the State of Israel, its geography and key locations.
- 5) Prayer: Fluency in, and the ability to lead the Kabbalat Shabbat Service
- 6) Music: An increasing participation in and enjoyment of our musical tradition.

Materials:

Holidays – Melton

Siddur Sim Shalom

Hineni – The New Hebrew Through Prayer, Vol. 2 – Behrman House

Being Torah – Torah Aura Productions

The Great Israel Scavenger Hunt – Behrman House

Hebrew song sheets

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

CURRICULUM

KITAH HEI (Fifth Grade) five hours per week

In Kitah Hei the children expand their horizons to include a study of the Prophets and their impact on our history. We expand on this theme through a study of both modern day and historic Jewish heroes. The students reach out to their peers in Israel to cement their connection to our other homeland.

Objectives:

- 1) Holidays: An increasing understanding of our history and traditions along with a further facility with the more complex concepts.
- 2) Torah: An introduction to the Prophets and an understanding of their impact on our tradition and emphasis on Jewish values. Through our study of the prophets, and in view of our understanding of the values that make them unique to our tradition, the children will extend their scope to look at other Jewish heroes, both past and present.
- 3) Israel: A growing identification with Israel through direct personal contact with the students' peers there. Children will establish "pen pal" relationships.
- 4) Hebrew Language: An increasing fluency in Hebrew reading as well as an increased knowledge of Siddur Hebrew vocabulary and Siddur skills.
- 5) Prayer: Increasing facility with the Kabbalat Shabbat Service, with an emphasis on leading TBI's Family Service.
- 6) Music: A continuation of the students' identification with the music of Israel. As the children continue to learn and understand the lyrics and the historical background that inspired them they will be able to participate in singing at Jewish gatherings both within the TBI community and in the Jewish world in general.

Materials:

Holidays – Melton

Siddur Sim Shalom

Hineni – The New Hebrew Through Prayer, Vol. 3 – Behrman House

The Explorers Bible, Vol. 2 – Behrman House

Welcome to Israel – Behrman House

Hebrew song sheets

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

KITAH VAV (Sixth Grade) five hours per week

Through the Etgar Curriculum developed by the Melton Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary the students will explore various elements of our Jewish world. They will learn to distinguish among our various key didactic writings and their influence over our Jewish life.

Objectives:

- 1) Sifrei Kodesh: The students will learn about our Sifrei Kodesh and understand the sources of these works as well as their impact on our lives.
- 2) Kashrut: The students will understand the significance of Kashrut in our tradition after studying the textual sources of the laws and they will know “how to” shop for and prepare a kosher meal.
- 3) Friendship: The students will study the textual sources dealing with friendship and apply this knowledge to their lives. Using the original sources in Pirkei Avot, the students will create their own teachings on the subject.
- 4) Bikkur Holim: The students will learn the importance of Bikkur Holim. They will understand and practice performing this mitzvah.
- 5) Hebrew Language: An increasing fluency in Hebrew reading.
- 6) Prayer: The children study the Torah Service, looking at both the liturgy as well as the choreography of this key element to our Shabbat morning practice. Through weekly evening Tefillah service with the Zayin class, students will become more comfortable with leading a service.

Materials:

Siddur Sim Shalom

Original textual sources, in addition to various materials provided by the Etgar Curriculum, including: workbooks, film/audio clips, pamphlets, etc.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

KITAH ZAYIN (Seventh Grade) five hours per week

In Kitah Zayin, continuing to build on the skills acquired in Kitah Vav, through the Etgar Curriculum, the students will engage in further exploration of topics of interest. Using their growing familiarity with our Jewish sources, the students will increase their understanding of the concept of Klal Yisrael and our responsibility for our fellow Jews.

Objectives:

- 1) Betselem (in the image): Since God created humankind “betselem Elokim” - in the image of God, students begin to see themselves as part of a family of humanity, cognizant of the divinity in all of us and the responsibility to act accordingly.
- 2) Arevoot (responsibility): The students will build on prior knowledge to study the responsibility that each Jew has for his/her fellow Jews. Of particular focus will be:
 - a. Pidyon Shvuyim – redemption of captives
 - b. Creation of the State of Israel
 - c. Our roles as Jews in North America today
- 3) Hiyyuv (obligation): The students will look at the Conservative Movement’s understanding of mitzvot and “commandedness” as related to their lives.
- 4) Shituf Pe’ulah (partnership): We will focus on our obligation to “tikun olam” - repairing the world. In this unit the class will take on its own tikkun olam project.
- 5) Hebrew Language: A continuing emphasis on fluency in Hebrew reading along with an understanding of the basic concepts behind the prayers.
- 6) Prayer: The students delve into the Shacharit (morning) service this year. They will focus on the overall structure of the service as well as on its individual elements. In their weekly prayer service with the Kitah Vav students, the Zayin students assume more and more of a leadership role with a view to their future as fully participating members of the TBI community.

Materials:

Siddur Sim Shalom

Original textual sources, in addition to various materials provided by the Etgar Curriculum, including: workbooks, film/audio clips, pamphlets, etc.

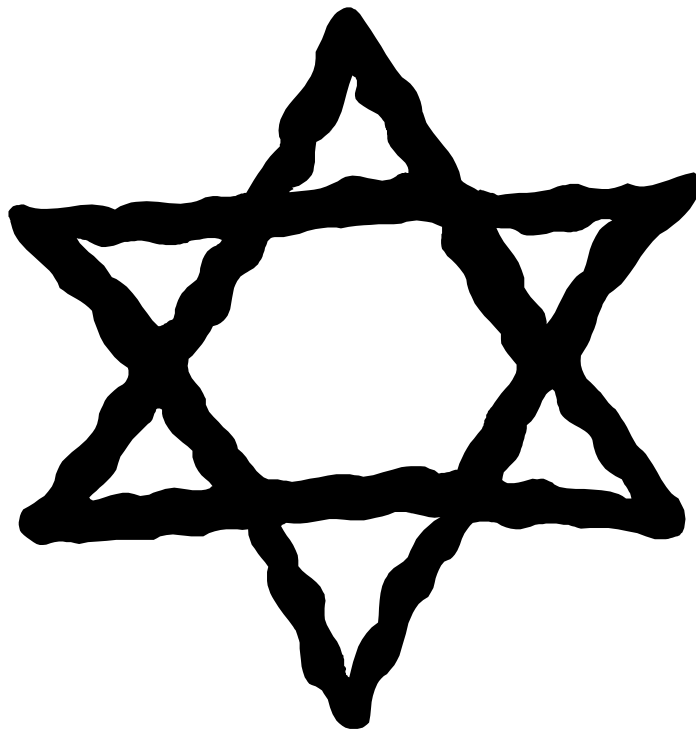
PROJECT ETGAR CURRICULUM

We are pleased that Temple Beth Israel has been selected by the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education of the Jewish Theological Seminar and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's Department of Education to participate in Project Etgar. Project Etgar is an integrated, scoped and sequenced middle school curriculum designed to create a positive and productive Jewish learning experience for early adolescents in Conservative congregational schools. It was developed by the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education of the Jewish Theological Seminary and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's Department of Jewish Education, using the "Statement on the Aims of the Conservative Synagogue School" articulated by the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education. This curriculum project seeks to put all of the necessary tools of active and engaging classroom instruction into the hands of teachers. These materials will enable teachers to facilitate their students' search for answers to their real-life questions from a Conservative Jewish perspective. A secondary aim of Project Etgar is to extend and apply Jewish learning beyond the boundaries of the classroom by involving parents, clergy, youth group and community in the students' education.

Project Etgar is a comprehensive 6 hour per week program that synthesizes the needs, talents, abilities and life experiences of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. Lessons were developed using Bernice McCarthy's 4MAT model, a cycle that begins with meaning and ends with integrating new learning into students' lives. McCarthy believes that each learner's journey is unique and teachers must create experiences that connect to their learners so that they value the learning and adapt it to their lives. Using the 4MAT model Project Etgar lessons tap into students' prior knowledge and experiences, add "new" Jewish-knowledge, promote practice, questioning and scrutiny of what has been learned, and enables students to construct their own Jewish understandings and identity. The role of the teacher is as a guide in this process, not merely a transmitter of Jewish knowledge.

In September we will continue our implementation of the Etgar curriculum with the sixth grade students at Temple Beth Israel. Topics that will be covered include four core units: Friendship, Sacred Texts, Kashrut and Bikkur Holim (Visiting the Sick). Gemilut Hasadim/Jewish Living programs are integrated into the units, incorporating formal learning into students' lives. We will also continue our implementation of the Etgar curriculum with our seventh grade students. The seventh grade topics will include units on *Betsalem Elokim* (in the image of God), *Arevoot* (responsibility), *Hiyyuv* (obligation) and *Shituf Pe'ulah* (partnership). Other components of the program include Project Box which offers students the opportunity to do individual projects in areas of the curriculum of interest to them and Moach Madness, 10 minute thinking and reflecting activities designed to be used at the beginning of class.

The Hebrew curriculum includes 4 key components: Hebrew language, Hebrew reading fluency, Iyun Tefillah and Tefillah. Hebrew language concentrates on understanding the meaning of key prayers by learning key Siddur vocabulary. Hebrew reading fluency will take place at the end of class and will focus on improving students' oral articulation of Hebrew. Iyun Tefillah is a weekly 30-minute session when students will discuss and gain a deeper understanding of the liturgy. Finally Tefillah (prayer), an abbreviated service will be conducted weekly during class time.



TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FACULTY

Our professional, enthusiastic faculty, combine Judaic and teaching backgrounds and serve as Jewish role models for our children. They regularly attend educational workshops, staff meetings, and curriculum implementation sessions. In order to assure the highest level of teaching possible, supervision and feedback are an important part of our commitment to the professional growth of our staff.

PARENTS, AND OTHERS, AS PARTNERS

The key to success for children in a synagogue Religious School lies in the tripartite partnership between synagogue, school, and home. When all three branches work together to provide an excellent educational experience for the children – it is going to happen. Here are ways you can help:

FOR PARENTS

- a) **Become an active partner** in your child's educational journey. Allow us to provide you with ways to reinforce what your child is learning in class, or to take it a step further. Only a few minutes each night can make a world of difference in your child's progress, and light years of difference in his or her attitude. When your child's Jewish education is your priority, it becomes a priority for your child as well. Please **contact your child's teachers** and let them know that you wish to participate fully with your child at home.
- b) Share with us a complete picture of your child's physical, emotional, and educational issues. It is essential for the Principal and teachers to know about any medical conditions or educational issues that your child may have so that our behavior concerning your child will be appropriate. This information will not be disseminated to the congregation or the community; it will allow us to make educational decisions, which will most benefit your child. Please provide us with your child/ren's **I.E.P.** (individual education plan) if you have already developed one.
- c) Key to the maximum functionality of a school is the parents. The **class parent** plays an essential role. The investment of time is minimal but the impact is great. Class parents coordinate phone chains for inclement weather and reminders for school and class events. Class parents work with their class teacher to help organize their class/family event. Whether you choose to take on the "official" position or just to volunteer your time in your child/ren's class or at an individual event, parent involvement provides reinforcement and enrichment to all of our children's religious education. **Please note** that we will

ask **all** parents in Kitah Gimel, Dalet, Hei and Vav (Grades 3 to 6) to participate in one Jr. Congregation Service with your child over the course of the school year. (Parents with more than one child in these grades will be assigned to **one** service only). Of course, we always invite and encourage all family members to attend.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL

The Temple Beth Israel Hebrew High School Program for 8th thru 10th graders helps usher our teens into Jewish adulthood by building on the solid education provided by our Religious School. Under the direction of Alice Talmud, once a week, the teens meet with their friends, share a meal, and discuss integrating Jewish values in our everyday world. It provides an opportunity for our students to stay “connected” with their friends, further strengthening their current and future bonds to Judaism. Rather than a textbook-based curriculum, our students do much of their learning in a *chevruta* (group discussion) environment. This format allows them to formulate their own ideas and concepts, as well as reflect on the opinions of their peers. Other elements of the curriculum include: Judaism and Social Activism; Holocaust and Israel Today; Prayer and the Mishna and Siddur; and, Leading an Ethical Life. Students will work with their peers in grade level classes for one period each week and then enjoy a regularly rotating elective series where they will have the opportunity to regroup and delve into topics selected to suit their particular interests. Hebrew High School culminates in a Confirmation Program, usually held during Shavuot services.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL YOUTH GROUP

Temple Beth Israel Youth Group seeks to expose our children to the joys of being Jewish by going beyond the classroom. The children are grouped by grade (Maccabees: Grade 4-5, Kadima: Grade 6-7 and USY: Grade 8-12) and learn through activities that contribute not only to our synagogue but also to our larger society and the Jewish people while having fun! USY also fosters interpersonal relationships with other Jewish Youth beyond our immediate community. Recent activities have included: rock climbing, inter-chapter socials, ice skating, cooking, trips to NYC (Broadway shows and museums), and of course charitable work.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a wonderful and exciting celebration of a child’s ongoing religious education. At this time in TBI’s history, each child is assigned his/her own Shabbat (children do not share the bimah for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah) approximately three years prior to the date. The Cantor begins working with the children approximately one year before, first in group lessons, then in individualized study.

All children who become Bar/Bat Mitzvah at TBI must have completed at least 5 years in the Religious School.. We encourage all of our Kitah Zayin graduates to continue their studies in Hebrew High School - a more adult, personalized learning experience which culminates in confirmation at the end of 10th grade.

Entering Students: We begin our Hebrew reading program in Shorashim (Kindergarten). Students who enter our school after Shorashim will be evaluated prior to the beginning of their studies at TBI to assess their Hebrew reading level. If a student is found to be below grade level, private tutoring will be required in addition to our individualized support services. Please note that while we will happily provide recommendations, all private tutors must be approved by the Religious School.

Books and Supplies: The student is always required to bring all his/her textbooks with him/her to class unless otherwise advised. Students should also bring pens, pencils, notebooks and other supplies as required by the teacher. **Please make sure to always keep extra kippot in your child's Religious School backpack.** Parents should check to make sure children are equipped with these materials *before* leaving the house. *We recommend a separate "TBI pack" which is used only for Religious School materials.*

Homework: At TBI, we recognize that our kids sometimes have even busier schedules than their parents. We realize that Religious School is in competition with public school and extra-curricular activities for the limited time of our students. Teachers will be assigning reasonable amounts of homework, aware of these other demands on the children's time. Homework assignments are used to reinforce previously learned material and to give students a chance to respond creatively. It is the School's expectation that students will be practicing Hebrew reading at home for at least 15 minutes each day, in order to insure steady progress. If you would like more materials for your child to work on at home, or, if your child has any problem with the homework, please let your child's teacher know immediately. We would love to help!

Contacting School Staff: Alice Talmud, can be reached in the Religious School office Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. If you would like to speak with a teacher please call the school office and leave a message. We welcome your inquiries and promise to return all calls as quickly as possible. Messages for teachers may be left in the Religious School office. Dorothy Ellner may be reached at ext. 14 or by e-mail TBIdorothy@aol.com.

Attendance: In order to accomplish our goal of providing our children with a fine, Jewish education, we expect attendance on a regular basis. In order to meet our 85% attendance requirement, we have established the following guideline for maximum absences: children in Shorashim and Kitah Alef may not exceed 4 absences in the school year; children in Kitah Bet and Kitah Gimel may not exceed 8 absences in the school

year; children in Kitah Dalet, Kitah Hei, Kitah Vav and Kitah Zayin may not exceed 12 absences in the school year. If a student is absent for more than two consecutive classes, the parent(s) will be called. Students will be expected to make up any work missed due to absences. Excessive absences may jeopardize the student's standing in the school.

Redirecting Undesired Behavior: The TBI Religious School believes in every one of our students. It is our intention to make the school a place that nurtures growth, both educationally and spiritually. We will act proactively to increase desired behaviors by our students at the same time that we act to diminish undesired behaviors. We hope you will be our partner in this. If we detect an area of concern that goes beyond gentle reminders in the class, we will ask for your input. We believe that when parents and teachers act together in the child's behalf, we have the greatest chance for success. Redirecting behavior is best accomplished by the student's teacher. When a teacher calls upon the Principal to step in, the child rightly views it as a lessening of the teacher's authority, and consequently the child's respect for the teacher is diminished. It is vitally important to any Jewish curriculum, that *kevod hamoreh*, respect for teachers, as well as respect for every human being, be taught. Part of our job as educators joins with yours as parents to help the children understand that teachers, by virtue of their learning, deserve respect, and that, while we are open to and welcome any discussion of the rules of behavior, there are appropriate times and ways to raise them. Therefore, if you have any concerns about behavior, please discuss the issues with the child's teacher first. The Principal will be in close communication with the teachers and will be guiding them when necessary. Only if you feel this avenue has been unsuccessful, should you consult with the Principal... but if you feel that way, please do! In all cases, our jobs – Principal, teacher, and parent – are to be advocates for your child, and to create an atmosphere, which is both safe and supportive for all the children.

Camp Ramah: We encourage parents to consider a Camp Ramah experience for their children. This Jewish education camp has sites in the Poconos, Berkshires, and New England, with sports, music, nature and art programs equal to the finest private camps in the country. It is available for both a four-week and eight week session.

Dress Code: We see TBI Religious School as an environment, which is safe and comfortable for all of our students. To this end, students are asked to be neat and clean at all times. Appropriate attire for Religious School includes modest clothing which is not overly revealing. Boys are required to keep their heads covered at TBI, and girls are also encouraged to do so.

Allergies: In consideration of the many children who have serious food allergies, we are extremely cautious about any food brought into the Religious School. For this reason we provide all classroom snacks on Sundays and Tuesdays and ask that no outside snack food come into the building. In the event of a special occasion, Alice Talmud must approve all food, in advance.

Kashrut: Literally "fit" food. Any food brought into the school must be dairy or parve and properly marked with a heksher (e.g. circle K or U), in keeping with Jewish dietary laws. Students are not permitted to bring any food into their classrooms unless authorized.

Tzedakah / Gemilut Hasadim: Caring for others is an important part of Jewish life. One way that we show we care about others is by giving Tzedakah. Students will be asked to contribute tzedakah money on a regular basis. We encourage the children to give of their own earnings, in order that their tzedakah be truly their contribution. Acts of loving kindness (*Gemilut Hasadim*) are highly encouraged both in the school community and in the outside community. There will be ongoing school projects related to these topics throughout the year. Periodically, classes will discuss appropriate charities and vote to decide how best to distribute their collected monies.

Absences and Early Dismissals: Because we care about your child, we like to know if your child will be missing school for any extended period. In the rare event that your child must leave school early, a parent or guardian must come to the school office to sign out the student. School policy requires no less than 85% attendance for advancement to the succeeding class. We will work with families to arrange for make-up work when ongoing absences are necessary. Of course we understand that there will be occasions when children will have to miss school, but please help us make the school successful by keeping these to an absolute minimum.

Guests in the Classroom: Having well behaved guests in our classroom gives us an opportunity to practice *haknusat orkhim* (the mitzvah of hospitality). We ask that you inform the Religious School office *ahead of time* if a friend or relative will be coming to school so that we have an accurate attendance list for emergencies.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL SPECIAL CLASS/FAMILY PROGRAMS

Each year our classes are highlighted during special Synagogue Services. These services are followed by a celebratory meal offering a wonderful opportunity for parents to get to know each other and for our children to socialize.

Shorashim and Kitah Alef will join together with their families for a special Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat Service and Dinner on Friday, March 23, 2012.

The children in ***Kitah Bet*** celebrate their accomplishments as they receive their own Siddurim. This ***Siddur Ceremony*** is held in the Sanctuary on a Sunday morning, May 6, 2012. In preparation for this event, parents create beautiful cloth Siddur covers. The class offers a presentation for their families and the parents present them with their personalized Siddurim. This ceremony is followed by Brunch.. ***Kitah Bet*** student will

also join together with *Kitah Gimel* students and their families for a special Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6:45 P.M. and Dinner on Friday, March 9, 2012.

The children in *Kitah Gimel* culminate their study of the Havdallah service with a special Saturday evening event. Our families gather at the conclusion of Shabbat with a joyful *Havdallah Service*. This program on Saturday, February 4, 2012 is followed by a dessert buffet. *Kitah Gimel* students will also join together with *Kitah Bet* students and their families for a special Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6:45 P.M. and Dinner on Friday, March 9, 2012.

Kitah Dalet, *Kitah Hei* and *Kitah Vav* each lead one Friday evening *Kabbalat Shabbat* service. These services are completely family friendly as the children lead the prayers that they have learned in class, and are held at 6:45 P.M. These services are followed by a family Shabbat Dinner. *Kitah Dalet* on January 27, 2012; *Kitah Hei* on February 10, 2012 and *Kitah Vav* on March 2, 2012.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL STUDENTS' SERVICE

TOT SHABBAT

is designed to introduce our youngest congregants (preschool through Shorashim (K)) to a Shabbat service on their level. The services are held from 10:30- 11:15 twice a month, usually alternating weeks with Mini-Minyan/Jr. Congregation (Please see calendar for exact dates). **Shahla Moadel** will lead the children in stories, songs, games and discussion about *Parshat Ha'Shavua* (weekly Torah portion), as well as performance of mitzvot. A kid-friendly kiddush follows.

MINI-MINYAN

is intended for our "beginner minyanaires" in Kitah Alef and Bet (grades 1 & 2). This service is also held twice a month, again usually alternating weeks with Tot Shabbat, from 10:30-11:30. (Please see calendar for exact dates). **Shahla Moadel** will lead the children in prayer, stories and discussions designed to help make connections and enrich their Religious School experience. A kiddush will follow.

JR. CONGREGATION

is for the more experienced junior members of our congregation, Kitah Gimel-Vav (grades 3-6) and Day School students. Students are invited to take a more active role in participating and leading elements of the service and the lively discussions surrounding *Parshat Ha'Shavua* (weekly Torah portion). Students have the opportunity, along with the parents of the week, to make the leap from the classroom to experience the real spirit of Shabbat. This service is held twice a month, also alternating with Tot Shabbat, from 10:30-12 noon. (Please see calendar for exact dates). Kiddush will follow.

TEEN SERVICE

Please watch your mail for notices as we plan a series of special Teen Services during the course of the year.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL SERVICE ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. For **Shorashim (K)** and **Kitah Alef (Grade 1)**: Each student is encouraged to attend a minimum of **six** services per year. These six services may include **two Friday evening** and **two Shabbat morning** services and may include **one High Holiday** service and any **Sukkot, Pesach, and/or Shavuot** services. Parents are encouraged to give their children an early start in Shabbat pleasure and prayer skills by having them participate in age-appropriate children's services. Tot Shabbat is designed for our pre-readers (ages 3-5) and Mini-Minyan is for our 5-7 year-olds.

2. For **Kitah Bet (Grade 2)** and **Kitah Gimel (Grade 3)**: Each student is encouraged to attend a minimum of **eight** services per year. These eight services may include **three Friday evening** and **three Shabbat morning** services and may include **one High Holiday** service and any **Sukkot, Pesach, and/or Shavuot** services. Mini-Minyan is suitable for our second-graders, whereas Junior Congregation is more appropriate for third-graders and above.

3. For **Kitah Dalet (Grade 4)** and **Kitah Hei (Grade 5)**: Each student is encouraged to attend a minimum of **ten** services per year. These ten services may include **four Friday evening** and **four Shabbat morning** services and may include **one High Holiday** service and any **Sukkot, Pesach, and/or Shavuot** services. Junior Congregation is appropriate for fourth and fifth graders.

Children in all classes will track their service attendance when they come to Religious School on Sunday morning. Each class will have an incentive chart to which stickers can be added for each service attended.

4. For **Kitah Vav (Grade 6)** and **Kitah Zayin (Grade 7)**: Attending Shabbat prayer services enables us to learn the prayers (or learn them better). By knowing the prayers, we can talk to God using our own words and the words Jews have used for thousands of years. Knowing the prayers also connects us to Jews from the past, Jews all over the world, and Jews of the future. While we strongly encourage children in grades K through 5 and their families to attend the services often, *we continue to require the students in 6th and 7th grade to attend.* A minimum of **thirteen** services must include at least **five Friday evening** and **five Shabbat morning** services and may include **one High Holiday** service and any **Sukkot, Pesach, and/or Shavout** services. The reason for the requirement is that these students will be approaching and then having their B'nai Mitzvah. It is particularly valuable for them to be in services to gain a greater

familiarity and comfort with the services in general, and the prayers in particular. We hope you will work with us and honor this requirement. For the families of 6th and 7th graders, there is a real opportunity to develop a closer relationship to Jewish prayer and the Jewish tradition. We hope you will take full advantage of this opportunity.

TRACKING ATTENDANCE IN (6TH AND 7TH GRADE): To assure that, in addition to an enjoyable and enriching experience, **Kitah Vav and Kitah Zayin** students also get credit for the services they attend, the following system will be in place. Religious School students attending services will have their cards pulled by the synagogue board member on the bimah at the conclusion of services.

If, for some reason, your child did not have a card pulled a simple note or email to the office (tbidorothy@aol.com) will help us to keep accurate records. A tally will be sent to you periodically for your review.

Synagogue services attended during the summer months will be counted toward the next school year's Service Attendance Requirement. Please be aware that these are congregational services held in the main sanctuary. (Please consult the synagogue bulletin for times as these may vary in the summer months). In addition, the school office is closed when school is not in session so the index card/file box system will not be accessible to our synagogue board members on the bimah to help track attendance. They have been enlisted to help keep tabs on our children's' attendance but, in order to maintain accurate records, please send an e-mail after Shabbat to tbidorothy@aol.com) with the date(s) on which your child(ren) attended services.

As always, all attendance information will be recorded after Shabbat.

Please note the following:

All parents of students in Kitah Gimel (Grade 3) through Kitah Vav (Grade 6) will be asked to participate in one Junior Congregation service with their child during the school year. Parents who have more than one child in these classes will be assigned to one service only.

Children (and families) are loved and appreciated at Temple Beth Israel. Temple Beth Israel is noted for being a child-friendly synagogue. Children of all ages are always welcome to attend services in the main sanctuary with their families. We trust parents to realize that these are not "drop-off" services. Please take unhappy children out of earshot of the service until they have calmed down and please respect the families who are celebrating life cycle events by not disturbing key moments in the ceremonies.

Please make sure that dress is appropriate for worship services. Sports uniforms, play clothes and overly revealing clothing are **NOT** appropriate attire for either Friday night or Shabbat morning services.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL/UNITED SYNAGOGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM AWARDS

At the end of each school year we recognize students for their accomplishments.

At our Moving Up Ceremony, award certificates provided by the METNY Region of United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism, are presented:

- 1) ***Service Attendance Award*** for all students who have fulfilled their service attendance requirement
- 2) ***Judaic Scholar Award*** to all students in Kitah Gimel through Kitah Vav (grades 3 through 6) who:
 - excel in all areas of Religious School study
 - exhibit a positive attitude and respect for classmates, teachers, school, and community
 - show respect and enthusiasm for Jewish learning
 - have excellent Religious School Attendance

In addition, at our Moving Up Ceremony, we acknowledge the recipients of the ***Keter Torah Award***. This honor is presented by the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism to Kitah Zayin students who have been awarded the Judaic Scholar Award for the past 4 years and continue to meet its requirements. This extremely prestigious award is presented annually at a regional ceremony.

