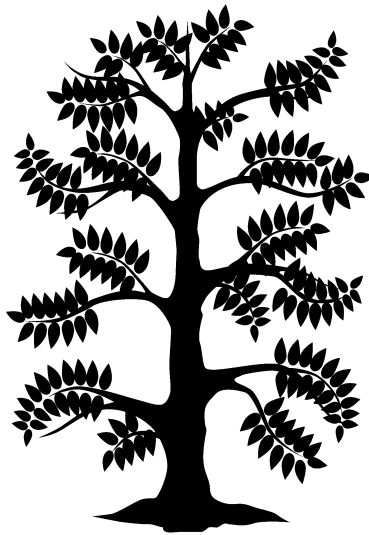


TEMPLE B'NAI TORAH
BEIT MIDRASH
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL HANDBOOK



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MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Temple B'nai Torah Religious School is to provide a quality, Reform Jewish religious education/experience from Preschool through 12th grade that will be a building block in the spiritual and moral foundation upon which students build fulfilling lives for themselves, practice life-long Jewish learning, and sustain Jewish traditions in years to come.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The Temple B'nai Torah curriculum rests on the firm foundation of Torah, its learning, practices and beliefs. Temple B'nai Torah Religious School curriculum is in keeping with the goals of Reform Jewish Education: to deepen Jewish experience and knowledge in order to strengthen faith in God, love of Torah and identification with the Jewish people. This curriculum utilizes a spiral form that provides an opportunity at each grade level to help our students become Jews, who:

- Affirm their Jewish identity and bind themselves inseparably to their people by word and deed.
- Bear witness to the covenant between God and the Jewish people by embracing Torah through the study and observance of *mitzvot* (commandment) as interpreted in the light of historic development and contemporary thought.
- Affirm their historic bond to the land of Israel.
- Cherish and study Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people.
- Value and know how to engage in prayer.
- Further the causes of justice, freedom and peace by pursuing *tzedek* (righteousness), *mishpat* (justice) and *chesed* (mercy) for all humankind.
- Observe Shabbat, the festivals and the rituals that mark the significant occasions in their lives.
- Hold in esteem their own person and that of others, their own family and the families of others, their own community and the communities of others.
- Express their kinship with *K'lal Yisrael* (all of Israel) by actively seeking the welfare of our brothers and sisters throughout the world.
- Participate in and support the life of the synagogue.

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Ruach Enrichment Program for Preschool - 2nd Grade

9:00 am - 9:20 am *Tefillah* (prayer)
9:20 am - 9:50 am *Zim'ria* (music and movement)
9:50 am - 10:00 am Move to classroom and break
10:00 am - 11:00 am Class

3rd - 6th Grade

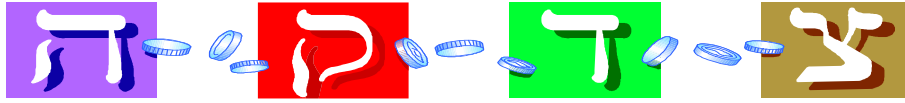
9:00 am - 12:00 pm Class
12:00 pm - 12:30 pm *Tefillah* (prayer) & *Zim'ria* (music)

7th Grade

9:00 am - 10:00 am Torah Study
10:00 am - 10:30 am Bagels & Schmooze
10:30 am - 12:00 pm Shabbat Service

High School for 8th - 12th Grade

6:30 pm - 7:00 pm Dinner & Social Time
7:00 pm - 8:15 pm Class



TZEDAKAH

Tzedakah comes from a Hebrew root meaning "justice, righteousness, that which is right". Other words for giving - charity and philanthropy - come from Latin and Greek roots meaning "love". Giving *tzedakah* (giving money to the poor) is not dependent on a feeling of love, but on the recognition of the obligation of giving, even when one is unloving, uncaring, angry; even when one is poor. We teach that the act of giving *tzedakah* is holy and is a *mitzvah* (commandment). *Tzedakah* is collected from students each week. Each class decides where the funds will be distributed. *Tzedakah* projects are also organized by classes to augment lessons in the curriculum.

SAFETY (Evacuation/Earthquake/Safety Drill)

Two fire drills are held each year; one in the fall and one in the spring. An earthquake drill and a safety drill are held once a year. An evacuation plan is located on the wall in each classroom. Each teacher will be responsible for instructing students on the correct route to leave the building.

PARKING

Carpools are strongly encouraged and will comply with our Transportation Management Plan. Please call the school office for help in finding a carpool. Please obey the following parking/traffic regulations:

1. Everyone must enter through the entrance on the far east side of JDS and drop off/pick up children at the top of the TBT turn around.
2. Parking on the shoulder of NE 4th is prohibited by law and may result in a parking ticket.
3. Do not park on the side streets, the grass or in the church parking lot located across NE 4th.

SCHOOL CLOSING

The decision to close school due to inclement weather will be at the sole discretion of the Director of Education. We will make every effort to reach a decision regarding school closure as early as possible and no later than 6:00 am on Saturday and Sunday, or 1:00 pm for Tuesday school. Please be aware that if there is snow or ice anywhere in the area, we tend to close school since so many of our students and teachers live on hills and in the outlying area. School closure information will be updated as soon as a decision is made on the outgoing message of the Temple phone (425-603-9677) and on the home page of the Temple website: <http://www.templebnaitorah.org/>

TEXTBOOKS & SUPPLIES

Mitkadem (Hebrew) notebooks and some other textbooks are the property of the child. If your child loses a notebook or textbook during the year, you can pay for a replacement. Students should bring a pencil or pen, notebook and textbook to class each day. All other school supplies are provided by the school.

ATTENDANCE/EARLY DISMISSAL

1. In order to receive full benefit from the school, it is essential that your child attends regularly and is prepared to participate fully in class.
2. A student who has been absent should call a classmate or teacher to find out what was covered during the time he/she was absent.
3. Teachers will call parents and notify administration if a student misses three consecutive class sessions.
4. We urge parents to make sure that students arrive on time for classes as late arriving students are disruptive to the entire class.
5. If a student needs to leave early, parents must go to the classroom to pick up their student. Students will not be released from class early without a parent.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are prepared by teachers and mailed to parents twice a year. Feel free to contact your child's teachers with questions or concerns.

HOMEWORK

When homework is given, it will be meaningful and realistic. The teacher gives homework when it is necessary to supplement the student learning objectives for each grade. Hebrew students are expected to practice reading daily. Attendance at regular Shabbat services is also encouraged as a way to reinforce reading skills.

DRESS

Students should dress in a manner appropriate for the type of weather or classroom activity.

FOOD ISSUES

As a Reform synagogue, our dietary rules prohibit the use of pork or shellfish and foods which combine milk and meat products. We also have students with severe food allergies. If you are sending a snack for the class, please contact your child's teacher. Please take care to follow these limitations in planning any food prepared or purchased for a school event.

DISCIPLINE

Our Discipline Policy has been developed to keep our children safe, both physically and psychologically, while at school. Physical and verbal aggressions are not acceptable within our school. It is the policy of Temple B'nai Torah to provide a safe environment for all students. To this effect, the usage of all tobacco, drugs, and alcohol is strictly prohibited, as is leaving the school grounds without permission.

Behavior that is unsafe or potentially harmful is prohibited. It is our preference that problems that occur at school should be solved at school. We ask that our teachers utilize classroom management strategies that are reasonable and easily defined, use positive reinforcement, and employ consequences that are clear and predictable. Effective teaching and learning occurs in a relationship that includes respect for others, one's self, and the environment.

1. Teachers have the right to expect reasonable and appropriate behavior from each student in class.
2. Teacher expectations will be clearly stated.
3. Discipline problems will be handled in a courteous and calm but firm manner.
4. Teachers will notify the parents if a student's behavior becomes unacceptable. The Director of Education will be informed of the call and the content of the conversation. The usual sequence of events with regard to continued unacceptable behavior is as follows:
 - A. Director of Education will contact a parent/guardian and meet to plan a strategy to resolve the behavior issues.
 - B. If behavior issues are still not resolved and the behavior is such that it is significantly affecting the quality of the class experience, the student may be suspended.
 - C. If all the above steps have been taken and, the student's behavior is still not acceptable, the student may be expelled.
 - D. Students and/or their parents may appeal suspension or expulsion by requesting a meeting with the Director of Education, Rabbi Mirel, and the Chair of the Beit Midrash Committee.

CURRICULUM

Preschool - Kindergarten: Jewish Awareness – Students, ages 3 - 5, are introduced to Jewish life, Holidays, Jewish music and stories. Particular attention is given to helping students get to know one another and begin the process of making friends.

1st - 2nd Grade: Jewish Awareness - Students continue to explore their Jewish identity by studying Jewish beliefs and practices of tzedakah and mitzvot. In addition, students become familiar with the symbols and objects in the synagogue, thus enhancing their growing experience in the Temple. Students begin learning the Hebrew letter recognition and decoding skills.

3rd - 6th Grade: Divided into three core curricula: Chai, Mitkadem and Heritage.

Chai: The Chai curriculum is developed by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) to be used in supplemental Reform Jewish education. The curriculum is designed to facilitate lifelong Jewish learning and focuses classroom learning on *Torah* (learning), *Avodah* (prayer) and *Gemilut Chasadim* (acts of loving kindness).

Mitkadem: Our goal is to provide Hebrew instruction that is appropriate to each child's need and ability. 3rd grade Hebrew uses a primer textbook and 4th - 6th grade uses the Mitkadem curriculum developed by the URJ. It is a self-paced, individualized and comprehensive multi-year program beginning with decoding skills and progressing through the study of a series of blessings and prayers. Mitkadem is divided into *ramot* (levels) based on students' competence level and students will work through the *ramot* at their own pace, progressing only when competency has been achieved. For more information on the Chai and Mitkadem Curriculum visit: <http://urj.org/chai>.

Heritage: The Heritage curriculum focuses on Jewish celebrations, history and Israel.

3rd Grade:

Chai: Torah - Vayikra, Living a Life of Kedushah/Holiness, **Avodah** - Ways We Experience God and **Gemilut Chasadim** - Taking Responsibility for Gemilut Chasadim, Planning and Doing

Heritage: Students refine their own understanding and definition of Kedushah (holiness) and apply that understanding to how ritual objects, symbols, prayer, and our behaviors can make moments and places special, holy and closer to God. Students learn about the land of Israel as a Jewish homeland. Students gain an understanding of the Jewish calendar and how it relates to the cycle of holidays.

4th Grade:

Chai: Torah - Bamidbar (Numbers), Devarim (Deuteronomy) and the Brit (Covenant), **Avodah** - Keva (practice) and Kavanah (intention) and **Gemilut Chasadim** - How Our Behavior Affects All of Our Relationships

Heritage: Students see a direct relationship between being a member of a community and our behaviors; through study of the relationship between the People and the Land in the Torah, the significance and the structure of communal prayer, and acts of *gemilut chasadim* affecting relationships.

5th Grade:

Chai: Torah - N'vi'im (Prophets) and Prophecy, **Avodah** - Prayer as a Discipline, Prayer as a Learning Process and **Gemilut Chasadim** - Our Community; reaching out

Heritage: Throughout this year, the theme of Reform Judaism and the power of community will connect the strands. How is Reform Judaism based on the message of the prophets? What is the role of the individual in a community? How has our Movement dealt with the prayers in the Siddur? How can we each reach out to those in our community?



6th Grade:

Chai: Torah - Ketuvim: My relationship with God, **Avodah** - Torah Service and My Role in it and **Gemilut Chasadim** - The World, Widening the Circles of Involvement

Heritage: What is revelation and how do we experience it? Is there a human role in divine revelation?

Students investigate Biblical texts which relate to the individual's relationship with God, study the components of the Torah service and the role of the *Sh'liach Tzibur* (prayer leader) and *Gemilut Chasadim* on a more universal level. In addition we include a focus on the Holocaust and the development of the nation of Israel.

7th Grade:

Students focus on the study of Torah and the specific *mitzvot* associated with becoming an adult. Students participate in Shabbat Torah Study and attend services as a class. Experiencing the year through the weekly Torah Portion gives the 7th graders a wonderful opportunity to understand the cycle of Torah and to discuss it in a way that is relevant to their lives.

8th Grade:

Eighth grade is divided into two semesters:

Jewish Values Through the Lives of Famous Jews:

Students will focus on contemporary well known Jews to frame an exploration of how Jewish values and ethics play out in the lives of Jews who had a great impact on our world.

Sacred Choices:

What does Judaism have to teach about sexual values in a world where teens are facing difficult choices? The middle school module of the Sacred Choices curriculum is developed by the URJ to help students make healthy choices about friendships and begin to develop their own sense of personal sexual ethics.

9th Grade:

Comparative Religion:

Understanding that people find many ways to form and express a relationship with God is a way for students to better understand their own choices about that relationship. Students will work together through the year to develop the inquiry into this subject by building a foundation with which to compare philosophies, dogma and ritual as a way of understanding our commonalities - rather than comparing and contrasting our differences.

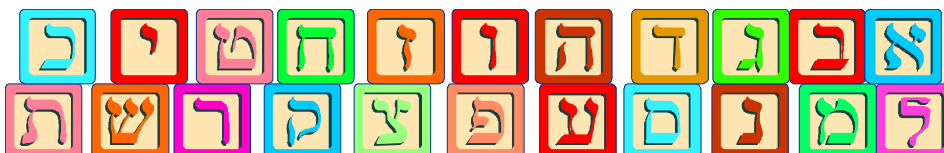
10th Grade (Confirmation):

Our 10th graders explore what living a Jewish life means to them and how it fits in the context of the *Mitzvot* (commandments) and customs of a Jewish life. The year culminates with a Confirmation Service during the holiday of Shavuot, the traditional time of celebrating the receiving of Torah. 10th grade also includes a class trip to Washington DC to participate in the L'taken Seminar presented by the Religious Action Center of the Union for Reform Judaism.

11th & 12th Grade:

Packing For College:

This curriculum, developed by the URJ will lead students through an exploration of what it means to be moving beyond high school and how their Jewish values can inform this next chapter in their lives. The second half of the year will incorporate a variety of local Jewish adults who work in interesting jobs as a way of creating an understanding of how to "take their Jewish education" out of the classroom and into their future.



HEBREW TUTORIAL

Private tutors are available to children who need catch-up work, special attention, or a different approach from the classroom, and to those who wish acceleration. Students may or may not be enrolled simultaneously in a Hebrew class. Parents are responsible for direct payment to the tutor and for the purchase of any textbooks needed by the students.

FAMILY EDUCATION

Teachers in our school are only one part of the long process of creating a new Jewish generation. Parents are the first teachers of children and continue as the most important influence in teaching Judaism to their children throughout their lives. Each year we have opportunities at each grade level for parents to be involved in actively learning with their children. Rabbi Kinberg designs and implements our Family Learning program for Preschool through 6th grade that bridges the learning from the classroom into the home.

CLASS SHABBATOT

Each grade has an opportunity to experience Shabbat together, getting to know one another, and worshipping together. Teachers prepare students to participate in the service and/or plan a special presentation during the Shabbat meal. All parents are encouraged to attend with their entire families.

MADRICHIM

Our *Madrachim* program allows students who are in the 8th grade or higher and have shown a degree of responsibility and interest in working with the teachers to work in the classrooms as an educational assistant. *Madrachim* are mentored by Daniel Alpern, meeting on a regular basis to be assisted in their understanding of classroom management and educational process. In the classrooms, *Madrachim* assist in the instructional process as needed by the teacher, helping individual students needing personal attention. Working with Daniel and the classroom teacher, *Madrachim* have the opportunity to develop and teach their own lesson plan during the year. *Madrachim* work with the teacher as needed between classes to plan the instructional time. The first year is a volunteer year and any subsequent years will be paid.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Junior Youth Group (JTY)

Junior Temple Youth (JTY) provides social and social action-centered events for our 7th and 8th graders throughout the year in an effort to further develop youth community. There is no “joining” - all 7th and 8th graders of Temple B’nai Torah are JiTY-ites! We make it a priority for all Temple youth to stay connected to each other, to Temple B’nai Torah and to Judaism. JTY is led by Youth Advisor, Molly Plotnik.

B’nai Torah Youth (BTY)

B’nai Torah Youth (BTY) is our senior youth group for 9th - 12th graders. BTY is associated with the Union for Reform Judaism’s (URJ) North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY). NFTY is divided into regions and BTY belongs to the NFTY Northwest region. All the Reform Temples send their youth on regional camping experiences four times a year. BTY also has many activities throughout the year that are designed help build life long friendships through fun, social activities and by working together for *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world). Through these experiences our children get to know young people from the larger Jewish community. BTY is led by an elected and appointed Youth Board. The President of the Youth Board also serves as a voting member of the Temple Board of Directors. BTY is supervised by our Youth Advisor, Molly Plotnik.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH PROGRAM

Rabbi Mirel must approve all Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates. Dates are usually arranged two years in advance of the child's thirteenth birthday. All specific questions regarding training and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony must be discussed directly with Cantor Serkin-Poole and Rabbi Mirel.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah and its attendant period of preparation constitute a very significant experience in the life of a Jewish adolescent. We believe that preparation for B'nai Mitzvah is a working partnership among the student, the parents, and the spiritual leadership of our Temple. Our goals for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student are to become knowledgeable about Judaism's ethics and traditions and to feel comfortable participating in the spiritual and cultural life of our synagogue. When a young person is called to the Bima to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it is with the mutual understanding of a continuing commitment to Jewish education through Confirmation and high school.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Attend and complete four years of Religious School.
2. Complete 6th Grade and be registered for 7th Grade.
3. Complete the B'nai Mitzvah Class.
4. Attend tutorial lessons with the B'nai Mitzvah tutor.
5. Attend at least 2 Shabbat services per month for the six months immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Regular attendance in our 7th grade Torah Study usually satisfies this requirement.
6. Meet with Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg to create a *Gemilut Chasadim* (acts of loving kindness) project.

B'nai Mitzvah is but a stepping stone in a life of learning Judaism and being Jewish. Therefore, we expect our students to continue with their Jewish education past becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, at least through 10th grade (Confirmation) and preferably through the end of High School.

Preparation for B'nai Mitzvah takes place in stages. The first step is the Parent Orientation Class. The second is the B'nai Mitzvah Class. The third stage is the tutorial by appointment.

PARENT ORIENTATION

An orientation is held twice a year, fall and spring, for parents of Bar/Bat Mitzvah students. During this meeting, parents learn about the Temple policies, expectations and procedures in planning for this special Shabbat. A B'nai Mitzvah Handbook will be distributed and discussed at this time. Parents usually attend this class 6 - 12 months prior to their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

B'NAI MITZVAH CLASS

During this class, Cantor Serkin-Poole will cover blessings, Torah and Haftarah Cantillation, what does it mean to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and discuss any questions or issues related to taking on the responsibility of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, "son or daughter of the commandments". Students are expected to take this class 6 months prior to their B'nai Mitzvah date.

TUTORIAL

Students work with a B'nai Mitzvah tutor on blessings, prayers, and Hebrew skills. Students begin this tutorial from 4-6 months prior to their scheduled date during or after taking the B'nai Mitzvah Class. At this time, students also meet with Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg to discuss and plan a *Gemilut Chasadim* project.

When students are ready to learn their Torah and Haftarah portion, they will meet with Cantor David Serkin-Poole. Rabbi Mirel meets with students during the last few weeks prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah to help them research and write their *D'var Torah* (words of Torah - based on their individual Torah portion chanted).