



The Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley

Dear Parents,

It is with *ruach* and excitement that I welcome you to the upcoming school year at Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley. The following information should be a helpful guide in ensuring your child(ren)'s success in our programs. Our school is proud to provide a caring and accepting environment in which Jewish education is used to create positive lifelong Jewish memories. We encourage your participation in helping us to reach this goal.

Take time to discuss the experiences your child is having. Use topics of study as a springboard for discussion at your Shabbat table. Attend services with your entire family. Spend time together in *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and discuss the *mitzvot* (commandments) you are fulfilling through your efforts. Each time your child observes your participation in Judaism is another opportunity for him/her to understand the value of Judaism throughout one's lifetime.

Make religious school a day for the whole family. Participate in *minyan*, adult education or congregational committees. Stop by your child's classroom to observe, participate or volunteer a skill. Your presence and commitment send a message of support to your child.

Please feel free to stop by or call whenever you have a question or idea to share. We look forward to working with your child and your family in continuing the success of our school, our congregation and our Jewish future.

I look forward to our challenge together and I thank you for your hard work and dedication.

B'shalom,

Stacy Ybarra
Religious School Director

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Philosophy of the Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley
It is the mission of the Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley to instill in its students and their families a love of Judaism and the desire to be life-long learners.

As Conservative Jews we believe in the importance of creatively maintaining tradition. We believe that quality education is three-fold: first it forms a knowledge base; second, it teaches skills to put the knowledge into practice; and third, creates a positive attitude that creates an environment where students want to use their knowledge and skills.

We deeply believe that the world has a need for Jews who live with an understanding and practice of Jewish ethical values. The survival of Judaism depends on the understanding of our heritage and the choice to be part of our rich history and tradition. We feel that Jewish education is a shared responsibility between the family, the religious school and the community.

The Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley recognizes and treats each student as an individual, allowing him/her to become an active participant in the learning process. All students will be respected for their ideas, and teachers will ever be cognizant of the need to strengthen young Jewish minds and hearts.

Our school enriches its students with an understanding of Judaism and what it means to be a Jew, a good American and ultimately a *mensch*. Our fundamental objective is that this education will enable our students to overcome challenges posed by living in the modern world through the wisdom and insight of Jewish tradition, ritual and custom.

Our Goals

Our religious school goals are designed to be life long. They are on-going and develop as the perception and commitment to Judaism mature.

1. To instill within our families an understanding of the importance of their involvement in the education of their children.
2. To foster Jewish pride and identity.
3. To instill a love of Judaism, its holidays, symbols, rituals, songs and Jewish values.
4. To delight in learning the Hebrew language through the alef-bet, vocabulary and the stories of our tradition.
5. To feel at home and participate in the life of the synagogue and learn about the power of *tefilah*.
6. To deepen our children's love and knowledge of the Torah and all Jewish scriptures as a means of establishing a relationship with God and community.
7. To embrace the commitment to the *Brit* according to the Conservative Movement.
8. To study, understand and celebrate with joy Shabbat and all Jewish Holidays.
9. To mark the significant occasions in the lives of our members' families and community with Jewish ceremonies.
10. To affirm our bond with *Eretz Yisrael*.
11. To further the causes of justice, freedom and peace by pursuing *tzedek* (righteousness), *mishpat* (justice), and *chesed* (loving kindness).
12. To seek actively and create kinship with other Jewish communities throughout the world (*klal Yisrael*).

Special Programs

Family Programs

While parents are always encouraged to participate in our school programs, throughout the year we will have several occasions where families are asked to participate together. Among these are Religious School Friday Night Services, grade level sponsored Shabbat dinners, and individual class/parent days. Services and Shabbat dinners are marked on the school year calendar. Class family days will be announced after the High Holy Days and special invitations will go out three to four weeks in advance. These are opportunities for families to bond with each other and for learning to occur throughout the community. During this time, we strongly recommend that parents or other significant adults participate with students. Every time our children see us participating in congregational activities, they are reminded that life-long learning is an essential part of Judaism.

Shabbat and Holiday Programming

This year, we are fortunate that several holidays fall on Sunday. Instead of canceling class, we will be holding “class” in a holiday friendly format. In this way we will be able to promote living a Jewish life instead of just learning about it. These days are already noted on the calendar. We encourage you to come and participate in our TBS-EV community and not just drop-off your students. All activities will be age appropriate.

Curriculum Overview

Temple Beth Sholom of the East Valley believes in providing a curriculum and educational program in which all students create life-long, joyous Jewish memories. In accordance with United Synagogue's *Aims Statement on Conservative Synagogue Schools*, our curriculum is five-fold. Through *B'nai Mitzvah* our curriculum consists of Spirituality, History & Tradition, Hebrew, Jewish Living and Community.

Keshet (Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten) – This is a time of Jewish exploration and developing a Jewish self-identity. Hands-on learning through music, movement, art and play will be utilized. Topics will include: the synagogue through symbols; blessings over the Shabbat candles, wine and challah; beginning the Four Questions for Passover; Bible stories that coincide with holidays; an introduction to the *aleph-bet* and basic vocabulary; symbols of Jewish life, Shabbat and major Holidays; and *tzeddakah* and *tikkun olam*.

Shemesh (First & Second Grades) – Students continue to develop their Jewish identity through the use of stories. Topics include: the *Shema and Ma Tovv*; the Four Questions for Passover; identifying Hebrew letter and their sounds; beginning Hebrew reading: basic Hebrew vocabulary; the Jewish Calendar and Holidays; the Books of Genesis and Exodus; *Israel and Mitzvot*

Kitah Aleph (Third Grade) – This class is titled *Kitah Aleph* which shows the importance of Hebrew in this year. The highlight is the *Siddur Ceremony* in which students are presented with their own siddurs to mark their knowledge of reading Hebrew and the beginning of reading prayer. Prayers studied include *Ma Tovv*, *Shema & V'Ahavta*, *Shalom Alechem*, *Lecha Dodi*, *Adon Olam*, *V'Shamru* and *Tsaddik Catamar*. Reading Hebrew with fluency and confidence are key. Students will also study major holidays, the Book of Numbers, the Book of Leviticus. Key mitzvot are feeding the hungry and guarding one's tongue. Students will also be utilizing the text, The Great Israel Scavenger Hunt.

Kitot Bet V'Gimmel (Fourth & Fifth Grades) – Being a *mensch* is a key aspect of this year. Student will utilize *The Mensch Handbook* Prayers studied include: *Kabbalat Shabbat Nusach*, *Magen Avot*, *Mi Chamocha*, *Aleynu*, *Kiddush*, *Ahavat Olam*, *Birchot Hashachar*, *Baruch She'Amar*, *Ayn Kelohaynu*, *Halleluyah* (p. 150), *Ahavah Raba*, *Barchu*, and *Vayechulu*. . History is another major focus. Students will study Jewish history from the Middle Ages through the present and Israeli History. Reading Hebrew with fluency and confidence are still emphasized. Minor holidays are also taught.

Pre-B'nai Mitzvah Class – Personal meaning and understanding is the theme for this class. Prayers taught include: *Shabbat Amidah/Musaf*, *Hatzi Kaddish*, *Kaddish Shalem*, *Torah Service* and *V'al Kulam* (last 3 of *Amidah*). Students will look at their own personal meaning of the holidays and current events. Jewish Immigration to the U.S., Famous Jewish People and Israel Government will also be covered. . Reading Hebrew with fluency and confidence are still of utmost importance.

B'nai Mitzvah Class – The B'nai Mitzvah class curriculum is two-fold and focuses on living a Jewish life. Sundays will focus on *Middot* (Jewish values). Wednesdays will be taught by Rabbi Bramly and is a B'nai Mitzvah Finishing School.

Halutzim (Eighth Grade) – This Post B'nai Mitzvah class is also two-fold. The first section focuses on challenges and opportunities by looking at current events through the lens of Judaism. The second component is learning and growing from the Shoah to understand the world we live in.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance, Arrival and Dismissal

Since we have so little time with our students and a very demanding curriculum, it is crucial that parents and students strive for the goal of attending classes on a regular basis and that students do their best to arrive on time and to stay through the end of class. Sunday classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 12:15 p.m. Wednesday classes begin at 4:30 p.m. and end at 6:15 p.m. Teachers arrive in their classrooms 10 minutes prior to start time, and are available for students and parents at that time. In case of absence, please notify the office at 480-897-3636 or e-mail the Religious School Director at rsdirector@templebethsholomaz.org. If a student needs to leave class early, parents must check them out at the Religious School Director's Office.

Drop-off and Pick-Up

Students in pre-kindergarten thru second grade are to be walked to class and picked-up in the classroom by parents. There is a sign-in book that parents need to sign both upon arrival and pick-up. No child is to enter or leave the room without a parent. Students in grades third thru seventh may walk to class themselves but must be walked into the courtyard area. We do not want parents dropping off students in front of the courtyard. We have had several near accidents with other vehicles trying to pass while students are unloading. All parents must park and walk their students to campus.

Guest Policy

Students who are not enrolled in our religious school are welcome to visit the classroom on an occasional basis provided that arrangements are made with the classroom teacher and the Religious School Director prior to the scheduled visit. Guests must be checked in through the office and are required to follow the classroom and school rules at all times. Parents of students are always welcome in the classroom..

Homework

There are many valid arguments for and against homework in the religious school. While we recognize the demanding schedules of our students, there may be times when a teacher feels it is meaningful and necessary for the students to complete homework. As a general guideline, weekly homework should not exceed 30 minutes for Pre-K – 2nd and one hour for 3rd – 7th grade students unless otherwise needed for special projects. Hebrew reading and B'nai Mitzvah study may require more regular at-home study.

Parent/Teacher Communication

The relationship between home and school is crucial for our students' success. For this reason we take communication very seriously. Twice a year, students will receive written report cards. In addition teachers will either:

1. E-mail parents within 24 hours of each class. Include what was accomplished in class and any homework. OR
2. Utilize the homework log. Students are to keep the log in their religious school folder and bring it to each class. Students will fill out the log each day and teachers will record any comments. Parents may make comments on the log and they will be checked by the teacher during each class. .

In addition the Religious School Director will send monthly e-mails during the first week of every month and additional e-mails as needed.

It is equally important that you communicate with us. If there is a significant change in your home life or if you have information that is pertinent to our staff, we need to hear from you. If you would like to speak with a teacher, they are available ten minutes before or after class or by appointment. The Religious School Director is available at 480-897-3636. A school directory will be going home by the end of October to further enhance communication.

Recess and Snacks

This year's schedule is very tight and allows for only short breaks. Sunday classes will have a fifteen minute break and snack and Wednesday classes will begin with in the social hall with a ten minute snack period and no break.

In an effort to stretch our budget further, we are asking families to donate snack items for the Religious School. We like to provide a healthy snack that includes an item with protein and an item that is a carbohydrate or fresh fruit. We need enough snack for approximately 50 students for each Wednesday class and 100 students for each Sunday class. Any amount that can be donated will be appreciated. We avoid peanuts, due to the high allergy reaction. We would be happy to accept any donations starting the second week of Religious School and may need to ask for additional donated snacks occasionally during the school year.

Following you will find a list of desired items that we will ask you to donate to share with the students. We respectfully ask that all items be Kosher and the packaging should have a Kosher symbol. Please keep in mind the Kosher policies of TBS-EV.

Carbohydrates:

Cheez-Its
Granola Bars (Chocolate Chip are preferred)
Microwave Popcorn
Cereal
Bagels
Graham Crackers
Chex Mix
Pretzels

Fruit:

Seedless Grapes
Bananas
Oranges
Apples
Applesauce

Protein:

Gogurt
String Cheese
Pudding-Individual cups
Cream Cheese for Bagels

Choosing Kosher Products

The following is an assortment of products that can be used without special kosher certification. Please note that this list is not exhaustive but will be updated as new information becomes available. If you have questions about the *kashrut* of any product, please contact the rabbi.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: All fresh fruits and vegetables must be cleaned and checked for bugs before using. Special attention must be given to: blackberries, raspberries, dates, figs, green leafy vegetables and herbs.

Fresh Cut Fruits and Vegetables: All local grocery store processed and cut fruits and vegetables requires kosher certification as do all vegetable dips. However, commercially sliced fresh fruits and vegetables such as pineapple, mango, "baby" carrots, celery, sliced mushrooms, etc... are considered kosher without certification. Typically, these are prepared by companies which only process fruits and vegetables and therefore there are no *kashrut* concerns. (If such a product is purchased and contains a sealed non-kosher dip, the dip must be disposed of before delivering the tray to the synagogue).

Dairy Products: All commercially produced, domestic, rennet-free hard cheeses in block form do not require kosher certification. All artisan, foreign and soft cheeses and cheese products (American sliced, cream cheese, cheese spreads, cottage, and ricotta) require kosher certification. Due to the use of non-caking agents, all shredded, pre-sliced and pre-cut cheese requires kosher certification. Yogurts, butter, margarine, ice cream and ice cream products require kosher certification.

Water bottles will be issued and names placed on them. Please send the bottle back each week filled with cold water. Students will also be able to fill the bottles at the drinking fountain. **No food or drink is allowed in the Sanctuary Building or classrooms with the exception of water.**

Religious School Director Hours

Please be aware that the Religious School Director position is part-time and in theory 20 hours a week from August 15th thru June 15th. The Religious School Director keeps standard office hours of :

- ✧ Sundays 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
- ✧ Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- ✧ Wednesdays 4:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- ✧ Thursdays 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

You are always welcome to contact me at home at “OMITTED FOR WEBSITE” or on my cell at “OMITTED FOR WEBSITE”.

Tzedakah

Tikkun Olam – caring for our world is a vital concept. We teach this concept as a way of building life-long ideals and practices. Please encourage students to give *tzedakah* every week, and help them to understand that the amount is less important than the deed.

Volunteer Opportunities

Temple Beth Shalom of the East Valley and our school are volunteer driven. Our volunteers are at the heart of our success. There are many ways you can support your child’s education through volunteering, while sending the message that their Jewish education is important to you. Please remember that this year we are asking all families to complete 6 hours of volunteer time. Sign-ups will be available on the first day of class and posted outside the Director’s door.

Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities

Within each classroom, teachers will establish and review class rules, policies and procedures within the bounds of the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities.

We recognize the following individual rights and responsibilities:

The right to feel safe and the responsibility to make sure that others feel safe.

The right to be respected as an individual and the responsibility to respect others.

The right to use our land and the property on it and the responsibility to protect them.

To participate in the Religious School at TBS-EV community, parents, students and staff must affirm the following:

1. I am responsible for making this a safe environment. Some of the ways I can help do this are:
 - ✧ Keeping hands, feet and objects to myself
 - ✧ Walking on the school grounds
 - ✧ Being where I am expected to be
 - ✧ Keeping my actions safe for myself and others

2. I am responsible for making sure people respect themselves and one other. Some of the ways I can help do this are:
 - ✧ Speaking kindly to others
 - ✧ Listening when others are speaking
 - ✧ Including everyone so that no one feels left out
 - ✧ Using good manners
 - ✧ Treating others with care and respect
 - ✧ Helping others
 - ✧ Staying on task
 - ✧ Doing my best work always
 - ✧ Attending class regularly and bringing all required materials

3. I am responsible for taking care of the school property and everything around it. Some of the ways I can help do this are:
 - ✧ Cleaning up after myself
 - ✧ Keeping all property free from damage
 - ✧ Using property in the way it is intended to be used
 - ✧ Leaving classrooms, bathrooms and common areas clean and neat.

