

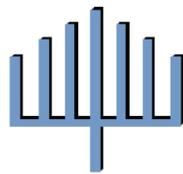


Temple Sinai Religious School

PARENT HANDBOOK

2016-2017/5777

Temple Sinai of Sharon
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(781) 784-6081
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www.temple-sinai.com



TEMPLE
SINAI
RELIGIOUS
SCHOOL

CONTACT INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATION & CLERGY

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Rabbi Joseph Meszler, Confirmation Teacher

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TEACHING STAFF

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Linda Diskin | Teacher/Special Ed. Coordinator |
| Stacey Gay | Teacher |
| Lisa Grossmann | Teacher |
| Lynne Mindes | Special Ed. Consultant |
| Ronna Orleck | Teacher/TELEM Coordinator |
| Miriam Preil | Teacher |
| Tsila Sloane | Teacher |
| Amy Wasserman | Teacher |
| Miri Zeman | Teacher |

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Chairperson:

Jeanette Fritz

Members:

Jill Goldberg-Arnold
Lisa Beatty
Beth Berkley
Lisa Fein
Roxanne Freedman
Stacey Gay, Faculty Representative
Lisa Grossmann, Faculty Representative
Lisa Jaffe
Shari Kalmowitz
Mamie Marcus
Maya Peltz
Ted Schnitzer
David Shore
Anne Yas

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome!

For many, Religious School at Temple Sinai of Sharon is their main contact with Judaism. It is the place where we first learn about the holidays, to sound out Hebrew letters, and to start grasping a bit of our long history. It is also a place where life-long friendships can be born

The goal of our Religious School is to enculturate a young person into the life of the synagogue. We do this by a) teaching prayer and ritual skills so that the student can walk into any synagogue anywhere and feel that they belong, and b) by creating memories and using vocabulary so that the student has positive memories of what it feels like to be Jewish. This is a tall order. We teach Hebrew, holidays, and history, and we try to do so in a fun, engaging way. Hopefully, when our young people grow up, they can join in the prayer service, remember what it was like to be in the sukkah, and have great memories of running around our social hall at our Field Day and Israel Day festivities.

Our teachers wear their hearts on their sleeves and try to communicate love of Judaism not just with what they teach but who they are. And yet, even with this huge emotional investment, we know that at best, our Religious School only gives a child one-fourth of what they need to have a solid Jewish identity. The other three pieces are: celebrating Shabbat and holidays as a family both at services and at home, attending a Jewish camp, and going on a trip to Israel. We do our twenty-five percent best, and we try to give you the tools to do the other three parts as well.

It is up to you! We want to be partners with you. Let us make some wonderful memories together at our synagogue.

Shalom,

Rabbi Joseph Meszler

Dear Religious School Parents and Guardians,

I look forward to this new school year with anticipation and excitement as I begin my third year as Education Director here at Temple Sinai. By sending your child to the religious school, you have made it clear that it is important for your child to start or continue their Jewish education and we are thrilled with your decision.

While we at the school are all here to teach your children, we are not the only ones that can do this. It is said that the most important teacher in a child's life are the parents. With that being the case, I would like to propose that this year be a year of partnership, volunteerism, and communication. Most of this will be done with activities that have already been built into the curriculum. We will be sending fliers and e-mails home with information on various upcoming events and programs. I also like to include in my weekly email a "Teacher's Corner" so that you know what your child is doing in class and can ask them questions.

When your child comes to the car at pick up time or tells you what they have learned in religious school, take a little time to let your child elaborate on the lessons. If your child responds with "nothing", then, kindly say, "Tell me about school today!" If your child is still reluctant then you could ask questions about the story, teacher, students, or if there were any activities that your child enjoyed during the day. My favorite questions are, "Who did you sit next to?" "Did anything funny happen?" or "Do you have any handouts for me?" These questions may sound like common sense for you, but they just might help you to get some information and they may open up, if only the littlest bit. I have twin boys and always thought I would have a 50% chance of getting the correct information but it was like pulling teeth!

This handbook contains important information regarding the program, philosophy and policies of our school. I hope it will enable you to work with us as partners, in providing a positive, quality Jewish learning experience for your children. Our Religious School strives to create a warm and enriching educational environment where our students and families can feel comfortable in their temple community, and enjoy learning about and connecting with Judaism. **NEW this year: Please see the curriculum section of the handbook as the topics of study have changed for each grade. Also, the Shabbat service requirements will be monitored and reminders sent. We will also have stronger make-up assignment requirements for students missing more than 2 consecutive classes including Judaic.**

In addition to standard classroom instruction, we offer a variety of learning opportunities to our students and families. Holiday festivals, family education programs, special services, field trips, music, art, and cooking are just some of the creative activities we use to supplement our curriculum and make learning fun. Again, I encourage you to be involved and help reinforce at home, what your children learn in school. It is an expectation that Hebrew review be done at least three times weekly.

If you have any questions regarding our policies, please first consult the handbook. If the answer to your question is not in the handbook, then please contact your child's teacher or me via email. Please also feel free to submit your ideas and suggestions to me. I look forward to working with you and your children during the year.

B'Shalom,

Beth Fine-Nelson
Director of Education



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VISION STATEMENT & GOALS

Our vision for Temple Sinai Religious School is to be a community where students can foster a Jewish identity through connections with God and Torah and pride in their Jewish heritage. It is a place where students and their families can learn to celebrate being Jewish. Through their partnership with the Religious School, we hope students and their families are inspired to deepen their commitment to Jewish values and involvement in Jewish life.

To enhance the feeling of Jewish community, we will:

- Stimulate each student's identity with, and responsibility toward, the Jewish family, congregation, local and American Jewish community, and fellow Jews the world over.
- Educate each student about the State of Israel and instill a deep concern for Israel and its people.

To foster Jewish identity, we will:

- Provide each student with a deeper appreciation of one's Jewish heritage, its history, customs, and sacred texts.
- Enrich each student's life with Jewish culture in all its aspects, such as art, literature, music, and dance.
- Provide each student with happy, interesting, and motivating experiences and inspire a sense of joy and pride in being Jewish.

To help instill a connection with God and Torah, we will:

- Teach our students Hebrew reading skills, how to pray and to participate in the ritual life of the congregation.
- Inspire our students to take Jewish values into their hearts and daily lives.

CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Temple Sinai is firmly committed to providing a positive atmosphere in which all of our students can learn and thrive. *Derekh erez*, which means proper attitudes, behavior and respect, is the fundamental foundation of a positive learning experience. Everyone involved in our school – students, parents, teachers, and administration - plays a part in providing the proper educational environment.

1. Students are responsible for conducting themselves appropriately and following the rules of behavior set forth in this handbook and by their teachers. They are responsible to act with respect for their teachers, fellow students and for Temple Sinai.
2. Parents are responsible for developing in their children positive attitudes toward learning and behavior. Parents can show their support by making regular classroom attendance a priority, and participating in family programs and services.
3. Teachers are responsible for creating a rewarding classroom experience and implementing appropriate classroom management skills and techniques.
4. The Director of Education, the Rabbi and the Education Committee are responsible for providing standards and support for a safe, positive school environment, conducive to learning for all our students.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ABUSE

According to Massachusetts law, any teacher who, in his/her professional capacity, shall have reasonable cause to believe a child under eighteen (18) years of age is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse or from neglect, is required to report this to the Department of Social Services. All such reports are made in conjunction with the Director of Education. Any teacher who does not file reports of possible abuse or neglect could be fined up to One Thousand (\$1,000.00) Dollars according to law.

ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is critical to learning the curriculum and getting the most out of Religious School. Students are expected to attend a minimum of 80% of school classes each year. Parents should contact the Director if children will not be able to fulfill this minimum requirement so that other acceptable arrangements can be made. Absences are intended to be used for illness or occasional family events. **If a student will be absent two or more consecutive sessions, the parent is asked to notify the school. It is expected that any missed school work will be made up so that the student doesn't fall behind in class. It is the student's responsibility to work with the teacher to make up missed work. Assignments will be available on-line and can be sent directly to the Education Director. If your child can only attend one part of the day it is an expectation that a project will be done.**

***In order to ensure each student is promoted to the next grade, any student that does not meet classroom expectations during the end of the year assessments will be asked to attend a "summer school" session. These classes will begin after the religious school year has ended and will end once secular school lets out for the summer.**

B'NAI MITZVAH REQUIREMENTS

Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidates must be enrolled students in good standing who have had at least 5 years of Religious School prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This means that from the time the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is assigned through the school year in which it occurs, the student is expected to be enrolled in school and in good standing. Students are expected to be enrolled through the school year, regardless of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. For example, if their date is in September 2016, the student will need to be enrolled in school for the entire academic year ending in May 2017. Seventh grade meets only one day a week (Mondays), and during this time students learn extensively about Jewish history, including the **Holocaust and Israel**, as well as topics based on Jewish values. New this year is a learning service led by Rabbi Meszler. We obviously require this on principle because we believe this is essential learning for all Jewish adults.

- A student is considered "enrolled" once he or she has registered for Temple Sinai Religious School, been assigned to a given Judaic and/or Hebrew class, and has satisfied all tuition and school fee obligations.
- A student is considered in "good standing" if he or she has attended a minimum of 80% of school classes, or has made other suitable arrangements in consultation with the Director of Education.

If a student is not enrolled and in good standing, the scheduled B'nai Mitzvah date may be forfeited until such time that the student is registered and returns to school. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah date may be reassigned based on the current calendar availability.

Parents should contact the School Office if their child will not be able to fulfill the minimum attendance requirement, so that alternative arrangements can be made. We are very flexible and

work hard to keep all students involved. The student will need to work with his or her teacher to complete any missed work and, in some cases, outside tutoring may be recommended. Families will be responsible for all costs associated with outside tutoring, and no adjustments will be made to Religious School tuition for excessive absences.

More information on Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be found in the Simcha Handbook available through Temple Sinai's Administration Office.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation is available from the three Sharon Elementary schools and Middle School as a courtesy to parents. It is a fee-for-service and sign-ups occur at time of school registration. Students riding the bus are expected to follow proper rules of behavior including remaining seated and conducting themselves as they would in school. Any student who does not exhibit proper behavior on the bus will be reprimanded and may lose the privilege to ride the bus.

CELL PHONE & ELECTRONIC DEVICE USE

In order to maintain an environment conducive to learning, cell phones and electronic equipment such as iPods, video games, cameras, etc. **are not to be turned on, used or visible during school unless written or verbal permission is granted by the Director.** In cases of obvious emergency, the Director will review any violation of the policy with consideration of the circumstances. Any of the above items will be confiscated if they are found to be turned on or in use. Parents may always contact students by calling the school office.

CLASS PLACEMENTS

Class placements are made by the Director in consultation with teachers. The Director will not accept requests by parents for particular placements. In certain circumstances, however, parents may wish to bring to the attention of the Director certain educational or other issues relating to their child, which they would like the Director to consider in making a class placement. The Director will consider these issues. Parents should provide this information in a letter to the Director and should be sent with your child's school registration materials.

COMMUNICATIONS

Notifications of upcoming family education programs, grade level services, field trips, and other special school-wide events will be sent via email and/or electronic bulletin. Please make sure the school has your latest email address on file in order to receive these notifications. Teachers may also email parents periodically to inform them of classroom happenings. If a parent would like to contact a teacher, the parent may email the teacher.

CONFIRMATION

The culmination of the formal religious educational program is the ceremony of Confirmation, which is held on Erev Shavuot. Students are confirmed after the successful completion of three years of study in the high school (grades 8-10). Students attending Telem only in the 8th and 9th grade must attend the Confirmation class in 10th grade in order to participate in Confirmation. The confirmation year (10th grade) offers an enriching year of study with the Rabbi, highlighted by a weekend trip to Washington D.C.

DISMISSAL

If you are picking up their child early, please notify us in advance of the child(ren)'s dismissal time. Either a handwritten note, email, or phone call is acceptable and should be sent to the school administrative assistant or Education Director. Please make sure to include your name, your child's

name, your child's grade, the time they will be dismissed, and the name of the person picking them up.

No student may leave the Temple building during school hours without proper authorization. Any student who is to be picked up from the school rather than being picked up in the carpool lane, must have a parent or authorized representative come into the school office to pick up the student. This is for the safety and supervision of your child.

Students who are still waiting for parents to arrive after the pickup lane has dissipated, will wait with the Director of Education in the doorway or outside depending on the weather. If no one has arrived in a 5-10 minutes time-frame, the student(s) will go into the school office and wait while their parents are called. Parents are asked to be prompt in picking up their children and should phone/email ahead if they know they are running late.

DRESS CODE

We hope our students have a comfortable feeling about their congregation and enjoy being here. At the same time, Temple Sinai observes the Jewish value of *tzinuyut* or "modesty" and we ask that all students dress in an appropriate manner for Religious School.

The following is NOT considered appropriate:

- Tank tops, low cut tops, spaghetti straps, see through blouses, halter tops, or shirts/blouses that expose the midriff
- Short shorts or short skirts/dresses, including the skirts of cheerleading uniforms
- Any T-shirt that says or depicts anything offensive or inappropriate for school, such as obscene language or depictions of alcohol or drugs

In addition, strapless dresses without a jacket are inappropriate while in the sanctuary for Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. Covering oneself with a translucent shawl is inadequate, and relying on a *tallit* is an inappropriate use of a ritual object.

If the Rabbi or Director of Education deems the dress of any student inappropriate, they will try to correct the problem by giving the student an oversized T-shirt to wear. If this doesn't work, the student's parents will be called to either bring in appropriate clothing or to pick up the child.

FOOD POLICY

Temple Sinai's Religious School places a high priority on the safety of all students. We have many children in our school who have food allergies. These allergies include many different kinds of food and can be life-threatening. **We ask that all food and snacks brought into the school wing be free of peanuts, tree nuts, sesame seeds and all nut products.** We encourage our students not to share food with others due to concerns about allergies and other dietary restrictions.

Although the policy covers only the school wing, school functions that occur in other parts of the building (e.g. social hall, flex space) will be sensitive to the needs of students with these allergies, and a separate nut/seed-free food table will be set up to enable those students to be included in any food related activities.

Please be aware that while the Temple Sinai school wing strives to be an environment free of peanuts, tree nuts, and sesame seeds, we cannot guarantee that all food and snacks available are completely safe for children who have food allergies, especially those who are sensitive to trace exposures. Although all families are asked not to bring in any food items that contain any peanuts,

tree nuts or sesame seeds, people do make mistakes and may bring in items that contain trace amounts of nuts or other allergens.

Therefore, we suggest that if your child has food allergies that he or she be instructed to only eat what you have approved as safe or have provided from home, and does not share food with friends. Also, it is requested that you continue to advise the Religious School office of any severe food allergies so appropriate steps can be taken to protect your child and, at the same time, allow for your child to be included in all programs and activities.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

It is the belief of the Temple Sinai Education Committee and the Religious School Administration that the best interests of our students are served whenever teachers and parents work together on behalf of the children. Therefore, it is essential that all attempts to resolve problems be instituted in the most prudent manner possible.

The Education Committee has adopted the following guidelines to be used by parents or the public in order to expedite information giving and/or problem solving:

1. Questions and problems concerning individual students must first be addressed to the teacher or staff member in question
2. If unresolved, these matters and/or problems concerning individual students, should be directed to the Director of Education
3. If the matter is still unresolved, it may be directed to the Rabbi
4. If the Rabbi cannot bring about a satisfactory resolution to the matter, it may be brought to the Temple Board by way of the Education Committee

Please be advised that the school will be following this procedure whenever parental concerns are brought to our attention. We look forward to expediting the resolution of any future problems by adhering to this policy.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS

Progress Reports are issued once a year in June. Parents are encouraged to seek conferences with teachers or the Director of Education if there are any concerns.

SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS & EMERGENCIES

In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the Sharon Public Schools if they cancel so will we. All other times "no school" announcements will be aired on channels 4, 5 or 7, and on the Temple Sinai website (www.temple-sinai.com). In case of emergency we will contact you.

SHABBAT SERVICE ATTENDANCE

To help insure that our students are familiar and comfortable with Shabbat worship services at Temple Sinai, we **recommend** that our students in grades K-6 attend a minimum number of Shabbat services each year:

Grades K - 2: At least three services **during the school year** (either Friday evening or Saturday morning).

Grades 3 - 6: At least three Friday evening services and three Saturday morning services **during the school year**.

Please note that holiday services do not count toward the Shabbat service recommendations.

It should be no surprise that students who attend regular Shabbat services are able to master their prayers a lot easier than those who don't. This is especially apparent when they begin their B'nai Mitzvah tutoring. To further encourage our students, we offer a system to track service attendance and reward those who meet the minimum recommendations. At the conclusion of a service, the student or parent should check off the service attended in the "Shabbat

Service Attendance” binder located at the entrance of the sanctuary. We no longer issue index cards for tracking services. If you forget to mark a service in the binder, please email the school’s Administrative Assistant with your child(ren)’s name(s), grade(s), day(s), and date(s) of service(s) attended. Shabbat services at another **Reform** synagogue are counted and should be submitted via email as well. Those students who fulfill the above service recommendations are honored at our end-of-year school celebration. **NEW: We will be monitoring this book quarterly and reminders will be sent if no service has been attended. Student may be required to attend “Summer School” in May/June to be sure they are meeting grade expectations in the Hebrew program.**

TRAFFIC PLAN

The traffic control plan is instituted for the safety of all students and staff and we urge your cooperation. The following traffic pattern will be in effect.

1. All traffic is to enter the temple property from the second driveway. This is the one closest to the railroad bridge. The carpool lane will proceed into the first parking lot on the right and continue to the right along the building sidewalk.
2. All students will be dropped off at the side entrance and will enter the building through the side entrance **only**.
3. Cars dropping off students are to proceed through the first parking lot on the right, up the driveway to the main entrance, and after dropping off their child(ren), follow the pathway to the left of the center island in the parking area and proceed down the driveway around the building, and to the exit.
4. Cars picking up students will snake through the first parking lot on the right, up the driveway and follow the pathway closest to the building to the school wing entrance/exit. The first car should drive all the way up to the stop sign before stopping to pick up.
5. All traffic is to exit at the lower driveway (closest to North Main Street).
6. Every family will be given 2 placards with their Family name on them. Please place these on your dashboard for pick up **ONLY**. If you are not going to be picking your child up **PLEASE** give the placard to the person picking up so that we know that this is an approved driver. If they do not have the placard they will need to park and come show ID and get the student (**SAFETY FIRST**). If you are a part of a car pool please let the office know so that we can release the appropriate children to the correct car.

THANKS IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT IN THIS NEW SAFETY MEASURE.

TRAFFIC PLAN cont.

It is a safety hazard to have children crossing through the pickup lanes even if they are accompanied by an adult. We ask that either you proceed through the carpool lane in line, or come inside the building to pick up your child in the Religious School office after parking in the lot across from the Religious School wing. Teachers assigned to carpool duty will cross you to the parking lot at the stop sign on the corner of the school wing entrance. Parents are asked not to park in the spaces across from the JCC Preschool at the rear of the building when picking up students inside.

TUTORS

Tutors (called *Madrichim* in Hebrew) are available during Religious School hours to work with individual students who may need extra help. Tutors are assigned to needed classes by the Director in conjunction with the teachers.

VOLUNTEERS

Please join the group of parent volunteers who help at special programs and assist with holiday activities. Contact the school office or Education Committee Chair for more information.

SEVEN JEWISH VALUES

GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE JEWISH COMMUNITY

כבוד | **KAVOD**

RESPECT - Judaism teaches us to treat ourselves and others with respect; even the stranger is to be treated with respect. Kavod is a feeling of regard for the rights, dignity, feelings, wishes, and abilities of others. Teasing and name-calling disrespect and hurt everyone, so learn to respect people's differences.

שלום בית | **SHALOM BAYIT**

PEACE IN THE HOME - Our community centers, synagogues, youth groups, and camps are often our second homes. Everyone needs to feel comfortable, safe, welcome, and respected at home. Don't ostracize those who seem different. Strive to settle disagreements in peaceful and respectful ways that allow all community members to maintain their dignity.

בצלם אלוהים | **B'TZELEM ELOHIM**

IN GOD'S IMAGE - The Torah tells us that we are all created "b'tzelem Elohim" (Bereshit 1:26), in the image of God. This is a simple and profound idea that should guide our interactions with all people. We do not know the "image of God" except as it is reflected in the different types of people we encounter in the world. If we can remember that each of us, no matter how different, is created in God's image, this idea can lead us to find the connection we have with one another and help create truly inclusive communities.

כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה | **KOL YISRAEL AREVIM ZEH BA'ZEH**

COMMUNAL RESPONSIBILITY - The Jewish principle that "All Israel is responsible for one another" (Shavuot 39a) means that it is our responsibility to stand up for each other, especially for those who are vulnerable and cannot speak up for themselves.

שמירת הלשון | **SHMIRAT HA'LASHON**

GUARDING ONE'S USE OF LANGUAGE - The Talmud warns us that we must take care in how we use language. Talking about others behind their backs, even if what we are saying is true, is prohibited. The guidelines for "shmirat halashon" remind us that what we say about others affects them in ways we can never predict. Words can hurt or heal depending on how we use them.

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

| **V'AHAVTAH L'REIECHA KAMOCHA**

"LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" - Commenting on Leviticus 19:18, Rabbi Hillel once stated that this was the foundational value of the Torah. It begins with loving ourselves. We must love and

accept our whole selves, and in doing so create the capacity for extending that love and acceptance to others.

אל תפרוש מן הציבור | **AL TIFROSH MIN HATZIBUR**

SOLIDARITY - "Don't separate yourself from the community" (Pirke Avot 2:5). When you feel different from others in your community, don't isolate yourself. Find allies and supporters who you can talk to. If you know someone who is feeling isolated, reach out; be an ally and a friend.

KESHET www.keshetonline.org | info@keshetonline.org | 617.524.9227

STUDENT BEHAVIOR

STUDENT CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

In order to create a safe, comfortable and productive environment for everyone, we expect the following from our students:

1. Students are expected to act with respect for all school staff, fellow students and for Temple Sinai.
2. No student may leave the temple building during school hours without proper authorization.
3. Students are expected to be prepared for class equipped with books, notebooks, and pencil.
4. Students are expected to dress appropriately for school. (See Dress Code section for more information)
5. Students are expected to respect school property and do their part to keep classrooms attractive, clean and safe.
6. Students who ride the bus are expected to conduct themselves according to the same standards as in school.
7. Rude or disruptive behavior is not allowed. Pushing, shoving, rough play and fighting are unacceptable at any time. Bullying will not be tolerated.

CORRECTING INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The following procedure will be used to correct inappropriate behavior in our school:

Teachers will employ classroom management skills and techniques to maintain discipline in their classroom. In the event that this is not successful, the following steps will be taken.

1. A verbal warning will be given by the teacher. If the misbehavior continues, the student will be sent to the Director of Education's office for the rest of that class period and be expected to complete their class' assignment.
2. If a teacher sends a student to the Director a second time during the school year, the teacher will call the student's parents and document the call to keep an on-going account.

3. In the event of a third issue, the Director will call the student's parents to arrange a meeting with the all of the parties involved and discuss the best way to resolve the behavior issue. The student will not be allowed to return to religious school until this meeting occurs. The Director will prepare a summary of the meeting and will require the parents to review and sign the report. When the student returns to class, the teacher will monitor their behavior and update the parents on the student's progress resolving the issue.
4. If a student persists with the behavior and is removed from class after a parent meeting, parents will be called again and another meeting will take place. The student will not be allowed back into the classroom until a plan, which has been determined by the parents, teacher, and Director, has been put into effect.
5. If the student's behavior continues, the Rabbi will be notified and, a meeting will be arranged as necessary with him, the parents, teacher, Director, and student to determine if the student should be allowed to remain in school. The student may be subject to suspension or expulsion and the Director will determine the duration of any suspension and any conditions for reinstatement of the student. Subject to the Director's approval, the student's parents will be required to pay for a tutor to follow a course of study approved for the period of any school suspension in order to continue to meet the educational requirements for Bar and Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation.



CURRICULUM

GRADES K-2

Students begin their Jewish studies by attending school once a week for 1 hour and 30 minutes. The main objective at this level is to provide enjoyable learning experiences, which will create pleasurable associations and identification with Judaism. The emphasis is on customs and rituals in the Jewish home as well as holiday observances in the synagogue. The students also learn Jewish and Hebrew songs with our Cantor.

Students in **Kindergarten (Gan) & First Grade (Aleph)** learn about the synagogue, its symbols and various ritual objects. Children take a trip to the Sanctuary and learn what we see and why we go there. They learn how to celebrate holidays with blessings and ceremonies. Students are also introduced to home rituals and customs including a special family education program that focuses on bedtime rituals and a chance to make your own mezuzah.

There focus is on God & Mitzvot. Children are given a basic introduction to God and learn about Jewish values such as tzedakkah and the concept of a mitzvah. Family Education focuses on Shabbat and making your own Friday night ritual objects. Holiday celebrations focus on the symbols of each holiday. There is also an introduction to Hebrew with colorful pamphlets that teach the letter and make a connection through a Hebrew word. For example- gimmel=glida=ice cream (serve ice cream as a snack)

NEW THIS YEAR: Jewish & Me Series – The students will explore the holidays and mitzvot using 4 page folders that encourage hands on learning. Students will explore the basics, get up and move, build Jewish identity, and discover the joys of our Jewish tradition

Grade Two (Bet):

Hebrew: The children formally begin their Hebrew education by working with the book Ready, Set...Go Alef Bet! It is the only Hebrew per-primer with an integrated digital companion. It prepares young students to decode by teaching all 32 letters and vowels. This is part of the five-level Alef bet-Quest/Kol Yisrael series that takes students seamlessly from letter recognition through B'nai mitzvah prep.

Judaic: The students will receive an introduction to all things Jewish through the Let's Explore Being Jewish series. This is a set of 7 magazines that touch on such topics as Mitzvot, The Bible, Israel people and places, The Synagogue, Jewish symbols and Life Cycle. It will answer such questions as: Why is Israel important to the Jewish people? Why must we be kind to animals? What happens at a Jewish wedding? How do we dress a Torah?

The students will also be partaking in the **Jewish Holiday Treasure Trail**. The students are invited to join Daniel and his Israeli cousin Rivkah along with the Prophet Elijah as they explore the Jewish holidays. We follow them as they travel through time and space, encountering people and places as old as the Bible and as new as Modern Israel. At the ancient Temple, they witness the Hanukkah miracle of the oil. Right before Passover, they cross the Sea of Reeds with the children of Israel. Readers are invited to go on-line and explore www.ElijahRocks.net for holiday games, activities and blessings to share with their family.

GRADES 3-6

Students in grades 3-6 attend school twice a week: 2 hours on Sunday morning, and 2 hours on a weekday afternoon. One hour of each day is spent on Judaica, and the other is spent on Hebrew. The curriculum also includes a prayer service of about 20 minutes each Sunday, and a music lesson of about 15 minutes on the weekday.

In 3rd Grade (Gimmel),

JUDAIC: The students are introduced to the Jewish concept of God and the importance of God to Judaism through the reading of various Bible Stories and doing crafts and activities to reinforce what is learned. (Holidays are reviewed through holiday-related stories and all school activities)

NEW THIS YEAR: Great Israel Scavenger Hunt – This book takes Rivkah and her cousin Daniel across Israel on an adventure in search of special objects. They are using a letter from their grandfather that gives clues for the “hunt”. The students have begun a two year program that focus’ on building their Jewish identity. This series introduces students to core experiences that are essential to developing a strong Jewish identity. It uses stories, interviews, and activities to explore the ethical teachings, laws, language, rituals, and symbols to help create a distinctive Jewish worldview. The focus for this year will be on Community and Sacred Time-The Jewish calendar and Life Cycle. Community involves how the history, stories and practices shape our identity and how they play a part in it. The sacred Time portion identifies the ways in which identity comes from living actively according to Jewish time- Shabbat, cycle of holidays, and life cycle events and develop and understanding of how time is an important and sacred part of Jewish life.

HEBREW: Students are expected to know their letters and vowels (although we are skill based and will place accordingly)

Students formally begin Hebrew reading with the text book Alef Bet Quest. This is the first multi-media Hebrew primer that fully integrates text-based lessons with computer software-teaches the students to decode Hebrew while it sends them on a guided digital adventure through Israel! Students learn Hebrew vowels and letters from key Jewish cultural words as well as everyday Hebrew words. Students can practice with on-line video games that reinforce their skills. See on-line demo at www.alefbetquest.com Student’s are introduced to writing Hebrew script this year as well as basic prayers. Preparation for the Grade 3 Siyum Ha’Sefer Ceremony (receive their own prayer book) becomes a highlight of the year. Family Education programs include a Shabbat component, service and dinner and a social action project.

In 4th Grade (Dalet),

JUDAIC: The students will learn what happens after Moses brings them to the Promised Land through the Early Prophetic Books of the Bible (Joshua, Judges, Samuel I and II) these are read and discussed and there are a variety of methods used to check for

understanding such as bibliodrama, crafts, dioramas, games, murals, etc. Family Education includes a B'simcha service and dinner, field trips, and a social action project.

NEW this Year: The 4th grade will begin to think about Jewish values and how they relate to their daily lives. They will be using material that will focus on Being a Good Friend and getting answers to such questions as How Can I Be a Good Friend? How is Gossip Dangerous? What is peer pressure?

Students also learn about the holidays through all school activities.

Grades 3-6 cont.

4th grade

HEBREW

A continued concentration on proper Hebrew reading is stressed throughout the year. Students begin Hebrew comprehension with a Hebrew prayer track of books called "Kol Yisrael " which include interactive CD-ROM's to assist in the learning process. This series continues through the 6th grade year. Students learn to read and chant the Friday night Kiddush, Sh'ma, and V'ahavta, prayers as well as start learning Ashrei. Students continue practicing their Hebrew script writing.

In 5th Grade (Hey),

JUDAIC: The theme is "Am Yisrael / Eretz Yisrael" or "The People of Israel / the Land of Israel". Students learn about the historical development of modern Israel, its cities, lifestyles and the importance of Israel to the Jewish people. In addition, our students participate in the Boston-Haifa Connection program with our partner school Ramot in Haifa, Israel. The program focuses on Jewish identity and creates a more personal connection between our students and those in Haifa. They exchange projects throughout the year and participate in a videoconference regularly as well as a pen pal e-mail program. There will be a service and dinner as well as a social action project.

They will also be looking at "Our Shared World" which has an emphasis on community, justice, mutual responsibility and repairing the world. The hope is that with the beginning of these discussions they will have a better understanding of how Jewish Values can play an important part in the way they think and live their lives as part of the greater community.

HEBREW: The students focus on the prayers of the Amidah, including the Avot v'imahot, G'vurot, and K'dushah. In addition, our students continue to learn Ashrei and how to sing Hatikvah. Continue to build on vocabulary and script writing.

In 6th Grade (Vav),

JUDAIC: our Judaica piece is entitled "Torah, Life, and Me." The first part of the year focuses on three approaches, corresponding with three Family Education programs preparing our children for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The students begin studying the "greatest hits" of the Torah in translation, so that by the time they start studying to give their d'var Torah, they are well prepared. Students also look at how life cycle events are commemorated in Judaism, putting Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the continuum of birth, education,

marriage, and remembrance. Field trips include a visit to Mayyim Hayyim, a liberal mikveh in Newton, and the Baker Street cemetery.

"Our Place in the Universe" is a new text book that we will using in the 6th grade. The students can now explore connections between what they believe and how they live by looking at environmentalism through a Jewish lens. Students will consider modern dilemmas including climate change, conservation and other environmental issues. They will develop and foster their critical thinking skills using Jewish texts, ideas and practices, using the powerful tool of a reflective journal.

NEW this year: Mitzvot with a focus on Tikun Olam (Repairing the World). The students will work towards a culminating activity called "Making a Difference Day".

HEBREW: Reading and chanting skills continue to be learned. Students study the Torah and Haftarah blessings, as well as the Kaddish. They polish all of the prayers that have been learned in previous years. They will complete Kol Yisrael 3 and move onto conversation if prayers are mastered.

GRADE 7

In 7th grade, students meet once a week (Monday afternoon), but cover 2 Judaic subjects.

The **Seventh Grade (Zayin)** curriculum is made up of two courses. The first, entitled "**Jewish History – The Modern Jewish Experience**", introduces students to the history, beliefs, and lifestyle of the Jews of Eastern Europe and its virtual destruction, anti-semitism, and the onset of the Holocaust. Students also learn about the birth of American Jewry and the creation of the State of Israel. Field trips include visiting the Holocaust Memorial in downtown Boston. **NEW THIS YEAR: Special "Artist-in-Residence Program" with Rosette Becker. Integrating and using art in teaching the Holocaust.**

In its second year: The Rabbi will spend about 20 minutes each week doing a range of activities including minyan, tefillah wrapping, current events, "ask the Rabbi", etc.

The second course is entitled "**Jewish Values**". Topics will be based on Jewish texts, activities, and five different categories ranging from holidays, to community. This will be a more informal, discussion, and activity based curriculum. **NEW THIS YEAR: There will be guest speakers visiting over the year in the class. The speakers will share how Jewish Ethics influences the decisions and interactions in their workplace.**

GRADES 8-10 – HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Hebrew High School is implementing a new program this year called the 4 T's. We understand that our students are pulled in many different directions, but still have the desire to stay connected to their Judaism and Temple Sinai. With this in mind we have developed the 4 T's Track System. Students will have an opportunity to choose either one track or as many tracks as they would like to follow. They will also have the ability to mix and match to fit their schedules and sports seasons. The tracks include **Traditional Learning, Tikun Olam** (Telem or social service projects of their choice), **Tefillah** (stay connected through services) and **TASTY** (Teenage Association of Sharon Temple Youth). The goal of this program is to help keep our

post B'nai Mitzvah students connected to their Judaism and at the same time enable them to have a positive learning experience.

Traditional Learning- This is the Tuesday night program that meets from 6:30-8:00 p.m. with 45 minutes spent in a core class and 45 minutes in electives that change per semester and are the student's choice. Some past classes have been Sephardic cooking, Jewish playwrights, Is Harry Potter Jewish?, American Sign Language, Current Events, and Israel and the Holocaust, just to name a few. The students must complete a series of credits in order to eventually be confirmed at a Shavuot service in 10th grade.

8th Grade: "This Week, Tonight"... *Finding Ourselves in parashat ha'shavu'ah* 8th grade students will explore current events in the context of the timeless cycle of engaging with central themes in the weekly *Torah* portion. They will read, translate, and analyze verses from the *Chumash*. Important narrative, moral, ethical and legislative themes will be clarified and discussed. Then, the *Torah* text will be brought to bear on a recent issue in current American or Israeli culture, politics, or economics relevant to students' lives.

9th Grade: "If I am not for Myself..." Our 9th grade course focuses on issues of character, self-esteem, sexuality, and identity. Judaism has long had a history of discussing *middot*, values of personal conduct. As Hillel said 2000 years ago, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?" We hope that our young people will be able to see the synagogue as a safe place of discovery when confronting issues of personal ethics. In addition, we help students make personal and meaningful connections between Israel and their own Jewish identity.

10th Grade/Confirmation: "Jewish Ethics in the 21st Century" Students study with Rabbi Meszler during their confirmation year. They address the Jewish view of social issues such as abortion, the death penalty, war, and the environment. The course includes a long weekend in Washington, DC with the Religious Action of Reform Judaism's *L'Taken* seminar to learn about social justice and advocacy, including actual lobbying visits on Capitol Hill. Students lead the Confirmation service on Erev Shavuot, the holiday that recalls the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

Tikkun Olam- This track will include our volunteer program Telem. Telem meets on Thursdays twice a month. A bus picks the students up at both the Sharon Middle and High School and transports them to the Westfield Child Care Center. The students spend time discussing a Jewish topic on mitzvot and then volunteer with the children. Some of the volunteer activities include homework help, reading, and playing active games.

If Telem does not fit into your schedule then you have the option of designing your own social service track (approved by the Director of Education). You would be required to log the hours worked and check in monthly with the Director of Education, as well as submit a monthly assessment of the experience and what it meant to you. Some possible places to volunteer are School on Wheels, Cradles to Crayons, SPCA, Moose Hill Farm, House of Possibilities, Main Spring and Jewish Family Table. (Minimum of 30 hours over the course of the school year)

Tefillah – This track enables the student to stay connected through prayer services. The student will be asked to participate in at least one worship service monthly. The Rabbi will work out a plan with the individual student if they choose this track.

Some opportunities may include:

*Rosh Hashanah services (Torah reading/recite prayers)

*Yom Kippur

*Simchat Torah

- *Reading your Torah portion on the anniversary of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- *Megillah reading at the Purim Service
- *Participate at B'Simcha (monthly family Shabbat)
- *Help with the school Sunday morning *minyán* (30 minute interactive musical service)

TASTY – This track is the high school youth group that meets every Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. in the Youth Lounge. The Temple Sinai group is an active group that plans and participates in local activities as well as at a regional level (NFTY). Illyse Habbe is our Youth Director and she can be reached at illyse@msn.com

TELEM PROGRAM

As part of the high school program, students may choose a special social action track (TELEM) as an alternative to or in addition to the standard 8th and 9th grade classes. 10th graders are welcome, but must participate in Tuesday evening classes in order to be confirmed. 11th & 12th graders are also welcome in addition to or replacement of the Post-Confirmation class.

TELEM is a Jewish service learning program which integrates community service with learning, reflection, and opportunities to effect real change. In addition to doing community service, participants learn about Jewish values and social justice issues connected to their volunteer work. Currently Temple Sinai offers the Mentoring track through a partnership with the Greater Boston Jewish Coalition for Literacy, and the Westfield Daycare Center in Brockton.

Other possible tracks, available through the South Area TELEM Youth Program, include Connecting Generations, Hunger & Homelessness, and Special Needs. Please contact the Religious School Office for additional information.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

B'NAI MITZVAH PREPARATION

As our students and their families begin the process for becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, they are guided through the process by participating in the following two programs offered here at Temple Sinai: the Pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah Series and the Mitzvot and Jewish Identity (MJi) Program. The Pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Series is an educational program for students and their parents who are about a year to a year and a half away from their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The three part program covers the categories of Torah (Jewish learning) where students are introduced to their Torah portion, Avodah (worship) which reviews the Saturday morning service and the concept of honors, and Gemilut Hasadim (social action). Temple Sinai is a doorway to many charities and projects, and we encourage each student to not just give of their money but also their time.

FAMILY EDUCATION

Throughout the school year, we hold family education programs involving students and their parents. The purpose of these programs is to provide events that enable parents and their children to share positive Jewish learning experiences together. Each program usually consists of an initial study period with either the Rabbi or Education Director, and might be followed by singing, holiday craft activities, or a social action project. Refer to the Calendar section for a list of upcoming Family Education events.

FIELD TRIPS

We offer several field trips to our students and their families. Some planned for this year are: a fourth grade trip to Brookline for a "Scavenger Hunt of Jewish Boston," a trip to the New England Holocaust Memorial in Boston for 7th graders. Third grade trip to the Butcherie to learn about kashrut. 6th grade trip to Mayyim Hayyim, 5th grade trip to Touro Synagogue, 3rd grade field trip to the Matzoh Factory, and K-2 visit to Ward's Berry Farm, to name a few. Our high school students have also attended movies at the Boston Jewish Film Festival, and have gone on an overnight trip to Washington DC.

MUSIC & ART

All students in grades K-6 enjoy a 15 minute session of music and/or Trope with our Cantor each week, including both traditional and more contemporary arrangements.

In addition, we offer Creative Judaica, an elective, to our older students as part of the high school program. Arts and crafts, cooking, games and activities also accompany many of the education programs for all of our students.

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

The Myra and Robert Kraft Passport to Israel Program is a unique savings plan to help parents send their children on a life-changing teen trip to Israel. Parents contribute money to a fund for their child, which is then matched in part by Combined Jewish Philanthropies and Temple Sinai. Enrollment is in their 3rd or 7th grade year. For more information, please contact Illyse Habbe the Youth Director.

SPECIAL SERVICES & HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

There will be an all school service on Sunday mornings at 10:45 a.m. Students get together in the sanctuary to supplement their classroom learning and pray together. These "*Shacharit*" or morning services provide an opportunity for students to more actively participate in the service and become more familiar with our liturgy. **Music and drama was added to this service during the 2014-2015 school year and strongly encourage parent participation.**

SPECIAL SERVICES & HOLIDAY PROGRAMS (Continued)

In addition, we offer school holiday programs, celebrations, and special services to supplement the religious school curriculum. Some of these include:

- High Holiday Festival; youth services and enrichment
- Consecration services at Simchat Torah
- Class B'simcha Shabbat services and potluck dinners
- Decorating and visiting our Sukkah
- Hanukkah Family Celebration
- Purim Shpiel and TASTY Purim Carnival
- Tu B'Shevat and Pesach (Passover) programs
- Confirmation at Erev Shavuot Service

TZEDAKAH & SOCIAL ACTION

Performing Tzedakah is the act of fulfilling one's human responsibility to Justice. It is more than giving charity out of the goodness of one's heart; it is a sense of obligation to the moral force instilled in us. In our Religious School, we strive to impart this sense of obligation, to all of our students through a variety of activities and projects, including daily Tzedakah collection, varied Social Action programs, a temple-wide Mitzvah Day, participate in the Main Spring meal program and other hands-on learning experiences.

YOUTH GROUP

TASTY (Teenage Association of Sharon Temple Youth) is our youth group for teens in grades 9-12. The group plans fun activities and trips throughout the year, as well as participates in social action events. Jr. TASTY is open to students in grade 6-8, and also plans fun activities throughout the year. For more information, please contact Illyse Habbe the Youth Director.



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