

TEMPLE BETH DAVID RELIGIOUS SCHOOL WESTWOOD, MASSACHUSETTS



*HANDBOOK FOR
2017-2018 / 5778*

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V'shinantam l'vanecha ***“And you shall teach them to your children...”*** ***- Deuteronomy 6:7***

Temple Beth David offers engaging and enduring educational experiences for students of all ages. Children, teens, and adults are integral members of our warm and caring community. The values we teach reflect an appreciation for Jewish tradition and encourage interpretation and creative forms of religious expression. Embarking on a Jewish education is a life-long journey. Our goal is for students to gain experience and knowledge, which will enable them to continue to study, question, and participate actively in Jewish life. We embrace and teach the principles of Reform Judaism.

Classroom learning is paired with experiential education including social justice opportunities, prayer and holiday celebrations. We especially hope you will join us in the sanctuary at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays for opening songs and prayers and special community time. Our teachers are caring, dedicated, enthusiastic, creative and knowledgeable. Please support their efforts to make the coming year one of joyful Jewish learning.

This handbook contains explanations, guidelines, class and scheduling information. It is intended to answer many of your questions. Please take the time to read through it and let us know any other questions that you have.

We hope you will participate actively in our religious school and temple community. We are grateful for your support and involvement and will strive over the coming year to engage students and parents in our collective endeavor to teach the values, stories and traditions of Judaism to the next generation.

We are here to guide your child on a path of meaningful Jewish learning. Our doors are open and we look forward to getting to know you.

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Karen Citrin and Rabbi Micah Citrin
Co-Education Directors

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS:

Rabbi Karen Citrin, Grades K-6 RabbiKaren@templebethdavid.net
Rabbi Micah Citrin, Grades 7-12 RabbiMicah@templebethdavid.net
Rita Cohen, Administrative Assistant info@templebethdavid.net
Temple Beth David (781) 769-5270; President Paul Greenberg
Vice President Education Wendy Berliner

PHILOSOPHY

The Temple Beth David Religious School aims to foster love of Torah, Jewish knowledge and skills, and identification with the Jewish people. Students learn how to participate in and appreciate Jewish life. The teaching reflects the philosophy of Reform Judaism and embraces the diversity of families within the congregation. We believe in life-long learning and how Judaism can speak to us throughout the various ages and stages of our lives. We seek to make Judaism relevant to all ages of learners and hope that the experiences in the younger grades will motivate students to want to discover more as they grow older.

Parents are our partners in the education of their children, and we hope you will share your time and knowledge with our school. Involved parents are positive role models for their children. There are many ways in which parents can become involved in the Religious School and learn alongside your children. Taking an interest in his or her learning, participating in adult education or social programs, and participating in family activities offers parents an opportunity to connect and become part of the school and temple community. Working together, we create a positive, nurturing environment for learning. Parents can meet teachers and learn more about our program at the beginning of the school year. We look forward to guiding your family on your Jewish journey.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Teachers and parents are partners in supporting the educational and social-emotional goals of the program. The Religious School Committee is a vital component of our school program, consisting of the Education Directors, Vice President for Education, parents and other congregants. The committee provides input into the programs and budget, and acts as liaison between the school and the congregation. The committee also sponsors programs such as teacher appreciation and fundraisers. For more information, please contact the committee co-chairs, Dr. Roseli Weiss and Phoebe Peabody (roseli.weiss@gmail.com and phoebepeabody@verizon.net). We also look for parent volunteers to help with school wide and other special programs, Oneg Shabbat for services, holidays, field trips, and other events. Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering.

GUIDELINES

Guidelines are set by the Religious School Committee and Educators with the safety and well-being of all children in mind. Please contact Rabbi Karen or Rabbi Micah, the Religious School Committee chairs, or the Vice President of Education with any questions or concerns.

Our expectations are set with the purpose of promoting the highest quality experience for all students. We see religious education as part of teaching values and good choices, and being a *mensch*. We expect that students will behave in a manner that supports the learning process and contributes to a positive environment. Teachers, students, parents, and rabbis will be in close communication regarding appropriate behavior.

Teachers have a responsibility to develop and encourage positive behavior through teaching and classroom management.

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that is in the best interest of Temple Beth David and its students.

Parents have a responsibility to help students develop positive attitudes toward study and participation.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is important. Our teachers have limited time, and consistency and continuity are essential to helping your child learn and form connections with their peers and temple community. We hope you will make every effort to have your child attend. Please speak with Rabbi Karen if you need special accommodations with your child's schedule.

It is expected that all students maintain at least a 75% record of attendance. Please call or email to notify the school office if your child will be absent. This will support our safety procedures. Please make every effort to be on time. Students are expected to be in class, ready to learn, when class begins. Students and families are also expected to actively participate in Shabbat services and family education programs. To become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, a student must attend the Temple Beth David Religious School (or equivalent) for at least three years prior to and including the year of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Any exceptions will be at the discretion of the Rabbis.

At all times, our Jewish values guide our actions:

Brit Kavod – A Covenant of Respect

Brit means “covenant” and *Kavod* means “respect” or “honor.” Being part of our covenantal community means that we show *kavod* for each other, for this place, and for our programs. Temple Beth David recognizes that each person has a unique learning style and that we experience education and Judaism differently. There are also core Jewish values that bind us together in one community. All parents, students and teachers will strive to uphold the following values of our *Brit*:

1. KAVOD FOR OTHERS – We expect every person to demonstrate self-respect and respect for other people.

*“V’ahavta l’reiacha kamocho – Love your fellow person as yourself.”
(Leviticus 19:18)*

Each person is created “*B’tzelem Elohim*” (in God’s image) and we honor the holiness in each person with our words and our actions. We treat one another how we want to be treated.

2. KAVOD FOR PLACE – We expect every person to demonstrate respect for our Synagogue and grounds.

“Ma tovu ohalecha Ya’akov mishk’notecha Yisrael – How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel.” (Numbers 24:5)

Out of respect for our sacred space, we are responsible for caring for everyone and everything in and around our temple home. We are responsible for keeping each other safe.

3. KAVOD FOR OUR PROGRAM – We expect every person to be present and considerate and to contribute positively toward our learning environment.

“Na’aseh v’nishma – We will do and we will hear.” (Exodus 24:7)

It is a privilege to learn about our Jewish heritage. We have the responsibility to help ourselves and others to learn by listening and following all instructions. We strengthen our educational experience when we attend regularly and participate actively in our temple community.

In all these ways, we work together to demonstrate kavod for ourselves, for each other, for TBD and for our community.

COMMUNICATIONS

Parents will receive updates about what your children are learning and their progress during the year. We encourage parents and teachers to communicate with each other. Parents are encouraged to discuss temple activities with their children. Please look out for religious school eblasts that contain important information. Parents are welcome to call the rabbis with any questions.

SNACKS

Students in grades K-2 have a snack during the morning on Sundays. Parents are assigned a day to supply challah and juice for the class. Students in Grades 3-6 may bring a small snack from home to eat during the break time on Sunday morning. We are sensitive to students' busy schedules and know that students often come to Religious School from other activities in the afternoons. Please try to give your child an afternoon snack if needed before coming to temple. Students should not be eating in class with the exception of special celebrations.

TRANSPORTATION

Parents are encouraged to park and come inside the Temple. For everyone's safety, please observe the following rules when picking up children:

- As you enter the driveway, do not turn right, toward the building. Drive straight, around the island of trees in the middle of the parking lot until you reach the front entrance.
- The driveway in front of the Temple is a fire lane. Cars are not allowed to park there at any time. Parents may drop children off at the front door. If you come inside, please park in the lot. Do not leave your car unattended.
- Please be courteous and do not pass other cars. Stay in line and wait. It is difficult to see children entering or exiting cars.
- On Sunday, parents of children in grades K through 2 should park and come into the building to pick up children from the classrooms.
- Parents of children in grades 3-6 and teens may park and come in or wait in the pick-up line at the end of each session. Teachers will assist children and instruct drivers to pull up in front of the Temple entrance.
- Please contact the Religious School office if you must pick up your child early or have any other change in your regular pick-up procedure.
- Children need parent's permission in order to walk home.

SHABBAT SERVICES & CELEBRATION

At Beth David, we joyfully welcome Shabbat each week. We encourage students and families at Temple Beth David to participate in Shabbat services on a regular basis. Service attendance will help students apply the Hebrew prayer skills that they are learning in Religious School and help them gain an appreciation for Jewish worship and community.

Each student in grade three through ten is expected to attend Shabbat services (at least the number of their grade, i.e. 3 services for 3rd graders, etc.). Students and families are encouraged to attend whenever possible and to participate in other holidays celebrations as well. Grades K-2 are also encouraged to participate. Students can indicate their attendance in the binder in the Sanctuary.

Children are always welcome at services. We sometimes offer Shabbat dinners, which are a wonderful way to meet and connect with other families. Each grade helps to lead a Friday evening or Saturday morning Shabbat service during the year. The purpose of the service is to give the students the experience of being a prayer leader and to have the congregation participate with them. Students spend time preparing in class and at home. Families from each class host the *Oneg* for the service by providing challah and refreshments.

CONSECRATION

A celebration takes place during Simchat Torah for new students beginning Religious School. Children will be welcomed into the Temple community, participate in the service, and receive their own mini-Torah scroll and a blessing.

YOUNGER SIBLING & PRESCHOOL OPTIONS

Mazel Tots is our program for preschoolers scheduled on select Sunday mornings during the school year. Holiday programs, such as the Hanukah Happening and the Purim carnival are great entry points for this age group. We also offer Tot Shabbat and other family-friendly Shabbat experiences throughout the year.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

We believe that every child is unique and special and can learn at his or her own pace. Our small classes provide an atmosphere in which each student may benefit and progress. Hebrew tutors are available to assist students who need extra help. We are also fortunate to be able to partner with *Gateways: Access to Jewish Education*, in order to support all our students. Parents should discuss their student's learning needs with the Education Directors. It is vital to the child's education that the parent share all information regarding the child's learning style, individualized education plan, medical issues, or food allergies. This partnership between home and temple will help each student to reach his or her potential.

FAMILY EDUCATION

It is our goal to involve parents in your children's education. Children often are motivated to learn when they see their parents participating in Jewish study and acts. In addition to congregational education programs and holiday celebrations, each grade has one or more special programs designed to engage families. These programs are an integral part of the Religious School program. We also offer many parallel learning opportunities for parents and other adults on Sunday mornings. Families will receive a complete schedule at the start of the year.

TEFILAH & MUSIC

We begin all together on Sunday mornings at 9:30 in the Sanctuary for opening prayers and songs. Parents are encouraged to come in, sit with your children and participate. Student in grades 3-6 will have the opportunity to practice leading some of the prayers. Classroom learning is enhanced with active experiences in prayer and Jewish music.

SOCIAL ACTION

Social action is one of the tenets of Reform Judaism and is included in our Religious School education. Throughout the year, classes are involved in a variety of ongoing projects such as sack lunch making to help people in need. Some grades take field trips to help out in the community. Students in grade six participate in B'nai TELEM, and TELEM is offered as a Double Chai selection for grade eight and high school. Both programs utilize a service learning approach to help students develop ongoing relationships with *tikun olam* (repair of the world). Students study texts in order to understand the connection between Jewish tradition and social justice. Students are also encouraged to bring *tzedakah* change and food items for the Family Table Program when they come to temple.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

It is important that our students connect and feel comfortable with one another. Our Religious School draws from many surrounding towns. We intentionally help the kids get to know each other. Classes are enhanced with social opportunities, overnights, and retreats. Shabbat dinners and *Havdalah* gatherings help connect families. We hope students will make Jewish friendships for many years to come!

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

JUDAICA: Grades K - 6

Each grade has a specific Judaic theme or focus area on Sunday mornings. All students learn about and celebrate the cycle of Jewish holidays. Each year they explore different holiday customs and practices. Classroom study is enhanced with hands-on projects, social action, multi-age learning, field trips, and Jewish arts. 3rd-6th graders also have some elective choices such as music, Israeli dance, art, drama, cooking, modern Hebrew, technology, and more.

Kindergarten and Grade One: Jewish Seeds

In a nurturing and welcoming environment, students explore the building blocks of Jewish life by getting to know the synagogue, blessings and rituals, Torah, Jewish stories and values. Students learn what is special about being Jewish by exploring Jewish objects and celebrating holidays. Children experience living Jewishly through art, music, drama, stories, and cooking. Children begin to learn Hebrew letters and some Hebrew words and blessings. Holiday family education pamphlets provide a bridge between home and school. Getting to know Shabbat is encouraged at home with a “Shabbat kit” which rotates through the class.

Texts: *Building Jewish Life Beginnings, Let’s Discover the Alef Bet, A Garden of Torah*

Grade Two: Mitzvot (Sacred Actions)

The second grade focuses on our Jewish community and doing *mitzvot*. The students begin to think about God’s world and their place in it by exploring themes of creation, *tzedakah*, prayer, and holidays. Students learn the Hebrew letters and vowels. An introduction to the stories of the Torah and to the land of Israel gives students a sense of their place in the Jewish community. Parents are encouraged to read Jewish stories to the class through the Parent Connection.

Texts: *Let’s Discover Mitzvot, Building Jewish Life Alef to Tav, My Weekly Sidra*

Grade Three: Torah Tales and People

Third grade students become acquainted with some of the great biblical characters in Genesis and the beginning of Exodus, from Abraham to Moses. They discover the personalities, stories and lessons contained in the Torah. Through reading, discussion, writing and art, the students learn to comprehend, interpret, and apply the moral messages found within the stories of our Torah.

Texts: *The Explorer’s Bible volume 1, Experiencing the Jewish Holidays*

Grade Four: Torah and Jewish Values to Live By

The fourth grade curriculum focuses on Jewish values (*middot*) and the later part of the Torah (Exodus-Deuteronomy). The class explores how Jewish values such as honor, compassion, *tzedakah*, holy speech and others guide our lives today. Social action projects, art, and audio-visual materials enhance class discussions.

Texts: *Living Jewish Values, The Explorer’s Bible volume 2*

Grade Five: The Land and People of Israel

An innovative curriculum helps students experience Israel by connecting them with everyday Israeli life. Students tour Israel, meet its diverse people, and become immersed in elements of Israeli life such as food, sports, the environment, politics, technology and entertainment. Key Hebrew words and phrases are introduced. Interactive encounters help the students develop an appreciation for Israel as the Jewish homeland. Students participate in the collaborative program sponsored by the Boston-Haifa Connection of CJP, where our fifth grade class is paired with an Israeli fifth grade to share experiences around Jewish identity. The highlight of this program is writing to and Skyping with our Israeli peers. Students also learn about the diverse people of Israel, and explore Jewish communities around the world.

Texts: *Experience Modern Israel, The Amazing History of the Jews*

Grade Six: Doing Mitzvot, Jewish History & Heroes, Torah-Haftarah

The study and performance of *mitzvot* is a focus in preparation for becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Students are involved in *B'nai TELEM*, a service-learning program coordinated by the Jewish Community Relations Council. Students participate in six study units followed by six interactive projects or site visits focused on the environment, elderly, hunger, poverty, literacy and special needs. Students explore relevant Torah and Haftarah portions (passages from the prophets) and apply their messages for our time. Students study primary sources for holiday customs and traditions. There is a special Shabbaton retreat with the rabbis to explore the meaning and process of becoming *B'nai Mitzvah*.

Texts: *B'nai TELEM Curriculum, The Amazing History of the Jews, Rediscovering the Jewish Holidays*

ס HEBREW: Grades 3 – 6

Our Hebrew program introduces students to the Hebrew language. Students develop Hebrew reading skills and an understanding of key Hebrew concepts. Students gain proficiency in reading prayers from the Shabbat service as they prepare to become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and knowledgeable Jewish young adults. They gain a connection to Hebrew as the living language of the Jewish people.

Students are exposed to Hebrew letters and words in the younger grades. 3rd-6th graders attend a small group Hebrew class on either Tuesday OR Wednesday afternoons. Small groups enable students to learn at their own pace with significant support. Hebrew is taught through a variety of formats including the *siddur*, textbooks, games, computer programs, conversation, music, and participation in services. Students become familiar with the synagogue service and its meaning for Jewish life today. In addition, students learn the blessings for holidays including Chanukah and Passover.

Each grade has specific learning and prayers goals. Students begin their study of Hebrew in grade three by learning to recognize and decode the Hebrew alphabet. Throughout the year they learn to read Hebrew blessings and to recognize key words associated with the letter sounds. Upon completion of the primer, students receive their own *siddur* (prayer book) with their names at a *siyum ha'sefer*, a special Shabbat service led by the class. Practice and focus on specific prayers and their meaning continues through the fourth and fifth grades. At the end of grade six, students will be able to participate in and lead the Shabbat evening and morning services. Sixth grade especially focuses on prayers of the Torah service. Recordings of the prayers are provided to help students learn how the prayers are chanted at Temple Beth David.

Third through sixth grade students will regularly be asked to practice their Hebrew reading at home. Home practice is used in order to reinforce classroom learning and experiences. It is helpful for students to practice about 15-20 minutes a week. There are occasional Judaic projects that will benefit from home assistance as well.

Hebrew texts/resources include:

Alef Bet Quest (3rd Grade)

Mishkan T'filah Shabbat Siddur

Shalom Ivrit and Prayer Companions

Hebrew in Harmony

Other textbook materials and computer programs

DOUBLE CHAI

Seventh grade students take one core class that includes in depth Torah study and Hebrew, Jewish ethics, a focus on the Holocaust and moral choices and responsibility, and other contemporary topics relevant to the Jewish identity of young adults. Seventh graders also have one elective class.

Our innovative program for eighth through twelfth students is designed to offer flexibility while maintaining important connection to Jewish peers. The program offers a variety of formal and informal educational selections from which students can choose in order to design an individualized program each year. In an effort to adapt to students' schedules and time available for Jewish studies, classes and activities are offered on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings, and are grouped into small segments. The year is divided into three trimesters.

A student accumulates 36 points (double "chai") each year on average for three years. In addition to a variety of exciting and relative elective choices, students can also receive points for participating in TELEM (service-learning), various trips, youth group, choir, and mitzvah projects. See the Double Chai brochure for more details about elective offerings.

There are many ways for Double Chai participants to maintain connections to their friends and to the temple community. Students have social time during dinner on Wednesday. They can elect to be a *madrich/a* (teacher's aide) in the Religious School classrooms, and participate in our NAWDTY youth group and regional NFTY events. High school students can participate in the *L'Taken Social Justice Seminar* in Washington D.C. sponsored by the Religious Action Center or other Jewish travel experiences.

CONFIRMATION

The Confirmation ceremony occurs at the end of the tenth grade for those students who have participated consistently the Double Chai Program. Tenth grade students participate in special classes with Rabbis Karen and Micah, and enjoy a Shabbat dinner in the rabbis' home. This class explores Jewish belief and practice, as well as preparation for the Confirmation service. During Confirmation, which is held near the holiday of Shavuot, students lead the service, speak on a topic that is meaningful to them, and chant from the Torah.

SCHEDULE

Grades K-6	Sunday 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Grades 3-6	Tuesday OR Wednesday afternoons for 1 hour
Grades 7-12 (Double Chai)	Wednesday 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (includes dinner)
Grades 8-10 (TELEM)	Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

***Please see the separate calendar page for all session dates.**

CANCELLATIONS

In case of inclement weather, cancellation notices will be broadcast on WBZ 1030 AM radio (Sunday cancellations), and television stations WHDH (7), WCVB (5) or FOX 25. Religious School will be cancelled when Westwood Public Schools close due to weather. Please check your email and the temple website. The safety and well being of our students is essential.

