

Temple Beth Emeth

Religious School Handbook

Mission Statement

Based on basic Jewish precepts, the mission of our religious education is to teach its students:

1. ***Tikkun Olam*** to be passionate about preserving G-d's world and making it a more compassionate, just and peaceful place through individual and collective commitment to programs of social action and public policy;
2. ***Torah L'Shmah*** to become lifelong learners inspired by a love of "learning for the sake of learning" through a rigorous comprehensive academic program of general and Judaic studies which places a priority on critical, independent and creative thought and expression;
3. ***Ahavat Torah*** to understand and appreciate the wisdom, spiritual depth and ethical guidance of Judaism;
4. ***K'dushah*** to understand and appreciate the perception of G-d's presence in the awe and wonder of our world, and how we can sanctify our lives through the practice and experience of the Mitzvot;
5. ***Ahavat Yisrael*** to form an inextricable bond with the Jewish people – past, present, and future – to foster a sense of commitment to the State of Israel and to appreciate and master the Hebrew language as the language of the Jewish people;
6. ***V'ahavta L'Rayakha*** to create a caring, moral community based upon the concepts of B'tzelem Elokim (each individual is created in the image of G-d) and Derekh Eretz (ethical decency) in which members respect each other's uniqueness and preciousness and are responsible for each other and the community.

We will strive towards the ideal of educating students who will go on to improve themselves and the world in which they live.

Goals

The Religious School will provide:

1. A student-centered environment designed to develop Jewish identity, Jewish values and kinship with other Jews;
2. Activities which create a knowledge base in Judaism;
3. A balance of academic and recreational activities fostering the learning of Jewish tradition, rituals and holidays;
4. Knowledge and experience of prayer, as it relates to each individual;

5. Knowledge and exposure to the Hebrew language, both as it is used in prayer and as a living language in Israel;
6. Knowledge and exposure to Israel's customs and current issues;
7. Activities that promote critical thinking to facilitate making educated choices;
8. Opportunities for all family members to work, study and play together as a team;
9. Mindfulness of the diverse nature of our congregation.

Religious School Admission Policy

Any child of one or both Jewish parents who wants to receive a Reform Jewish education is welcome to seek admission to Temple Beth Emeth.

Admission Guidelines

1. Admission to Religious School is dependent upon Temple Beth Emeth membership;
2. Membership dues must be current at the time of registration in Religious School;
3. Tuition must remain current for Religious School.
4. The following is the policy for placement in the appropriate grade of Religious School (updated 2010):

Temple Beth Emeth Religious School Grade Placement Policy

The mission of the Religious School of Temple Beth Emeth is to foster in its young congregants the desire to embrace Judaism and learn about the language and heritage of our people in an environment that is age- and socially appropriate.

Religious School runs as follows:

Festival 1	First Grade	Gimmel	Fifth Grade
Festival 2	Second Grade	Dalet	Sixth Grade
Aleph	Third Grade	Hay	Seventh Grade
Bet	Fourth Grade	Confirmation/Havurah	Eighth-Twelfth Grade

Our Religious School is minimally a five year program, Aleph through Hay, prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Some families, however, may enroll their children later. To accommodate these children, Temple Beth Emeth has the following policy, which will include at least **four years** of Religious School instruction:

If a child is entering Religious School at 4th grade:

- The child is placed into the age-appropriate religious school grade, Bet.
- All tuition and book fees must be paid
- Children are required to attend an additional Accelerated Hebrew Program for the first semester (through the end of December), which will meet for one hour weekly, day to be determined. At the end of the semester, the teacher will determine whether the child may "graduate" from this class

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be made during the year that the child turns 13, however, Hay class must be completed and the child must be enrolled and attend at least the first year of Confirmation.

If a child is entering Religious School at 5th grade:

- The child is placed into the age-appropriate religious school grade, Gimmel.
- All tuition and book fees must be paid
- Children are required to attend an additional Accelerated Hebrew Program for one full year, which will meet for one hour weekly, day to be determined. If the child is not proficient, additional private tutoring will be required at the parent's expense.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be made during the year that the child turns 14, however, the child must have completed the first year of Confirmation and be enrolled and attend the second year of Confirmation.

If a child is entering Religious School at 6th or 7th grade:

- The child is placed into the age-appropriate religious school grade, Dalet or Hay.
- All tuition and book fees must be paid
- Children are required to attend an additional Accelerated Hebrew Program for one full year, which will meet for one hour weekly, day to be determined. If the child is not proficient, additional private tutoring will be required at the parent's expense.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be made during the year that the child turns 15, however, the child must have completed the two years of Confirmation and be enrolled, and attend Havurah.

If a child wishes to receive a religious education at TBE from 8th grade to 12th grade, the child commences into Confirmation or Havurah, as appropriate. Tuition is paid and the child is privately tutored at the parent's expense. An individualized program will be developed for these children.

College students and older may join the Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah Class conducted by the Rabbi.

Attendance Policy

Except in cases of extraordinary events, enrollment in religious school requires regular attendance and participation in coursework. Students are expected to keep pace with the curriculum taught, regardless of any absences. Students are responsible to make-up any work due to their absences and should parents contact their child's teacher in the event of a protracted absence. The purpose of having an attendance policy is to facilitate the religious education of students. The following is the policy for students who have an extraordinary event:

This policy is for an extraordinary event in which a child cannot attend Hebrew School on the days offered. It is by no means a choice for parents or in lieu of regular Hebrew School attendance.

The parent/guardian of a child must contact the Education Committee, in writing, well in advance of the fall Religious School orientation to notify of the conflict in schedules. If the child cannot attend most of a class (that is, at least 90 minutes of each days class) then the following alternate arrangements should be offered:

1. The child must be registered for the current year of Religious School and the parent/guardian is responsible for the usual tuition and/or supplies;
2. The parent/guardian must obtain a private tutor, at their own expense, to follow the curriculum. The Religious School Teacher of the child's current grade will provide a curriculum to the parents and/or tutor;
3. In addition, the Teacher will provide to the parents and/or tutor, quarterly assessments to assure that the student is maintaining their Religious School grade level;
4. At the end of the year, the child will take a competency exam, provided by the teacher and upon passing, will move into the next grade in the following year.
5. In order to facilitate the child's connected feeling to the Temple, the parents must make a commitment for the child to attend at least two Shabbat services per year;
6. The child is required to attend mandated programs such as the Model Seder, scheduled class participation in Friday night Shabbat services, etc. The Religious School Teacher will work with the tutor to assign the child a part for this service.

Religious School Code of Conduct

The goal of this code is to promote conduct which will foster a positive environment that is conducive to Jewish education.

Temple Beth Emeth will support student conduct which is helpful to and cooperative with others, respectful of the rights and safety of others, and helps to resolve conflict. It will not support conduct which in in conflict with these aims.

Temple Beth Emeth Religious School will not tolerate disruption, harassment, theft, or willful property damage by any student which occurs during religious school, or at facilities used for religious school.

Disruption includes, but is not limited to, failure to follow classroom rules, failure to obey any directive from authorities, or any action or inaction that unreasonably interferes with the education of any student or any class program. Harassment fighting, verbal or physical threats against any person, any physical touching or threat to touch, bullying, or creating a hostile environment for any person because of race, gender, national origin or physical ability.

Any disruption by any student will result in immediate warning by the teacher or any other person in authority. Parents will be notified, if necessary. If inappropriate behavior continues, a meeting may be held with the parents. While it is not the policy to exclude children from

religious education, if disruptive behavior continues, a suspension from class may be necessary. This might jeopardize the student's Bar or Bat Mitzvah date.

Please keep in mind safety and have students wear proper attire. Roller skate shoes are not allowed. Also toys, cellphones, ipods, etc. are discouraged as they tend to be distracting. The following policy has been adopted for electronics:

Children who typically have a cell phone, I-pod, or electronic games (PSP, DS, etc.) should be aware that if they use them or become disruptive with them during Religious School hours, the teacher will remove them. Parents will then be asked to retrieve them from the teacher when picking their children up. This has become an issue in all schools and we feel this is a fair way to discourage inappropriate use. In other words, children may bring these items, but we don't want to see them!

It is assumed that parents will review this handbook with their child/children attending Temple Beth Emeth Religious School.