



**Temple Shir Shalom  
The Berkowitz Family Religious School  
Handbook**

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## A WORD ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

As far as we are concerned, our religious school is our most important product. We have worked hard, along with our teachers, to create what we believe is the best educational program. Each and every year, our goal is to provide a quality Jewish educational experience for our children and families.

Parents are an integral part of our educational team, helping to achieve our goal of making our children proud, literate and compassionate Jewish individuals. The reality we must understand is that religious school begins at home. Our children follow our actions. Judaism is important to them; it is a priority for them, when they see it as a priority in our homes.

Our Jewish education is not an option. Just as we expect our children to study math or English, so too, should we want them to see their religious education in a similar context. If we make Jewish learning optional, then our children will sense that it is not important to us.

As you can see in reading through this curriculum, each year, we have created different goals for our children, and we have different expectations of what we will accomplish. Yet the facts of our religion are only part of the story. It is the values which underscore everything that we do, every ritual we learn, every Hebrew word we read, every Biblical story we tell. Our Judaism is so much more than rituals and facts. The values which we glean from all these ultimately help us in everything we experience and in every decision we make.

If we do our job well, our students will come home with much more than candle sticks or kiddush cups. They will learn the stories behind the ritual; the values inherent within each of these stories. With all this combined, they will know what it means to live as a Jew in our world.

Our goal is grand, yet simple...we want our children to be morally grounded in Jewish values and to feel proud about their Judaism. Lofty? Yes. Possible? Yes. Important? Definitely!

May this be God's will.

Rabbi Dannel I. Schwartz  
Rabbi Michael L. Moskowitz  
Amy Seidman



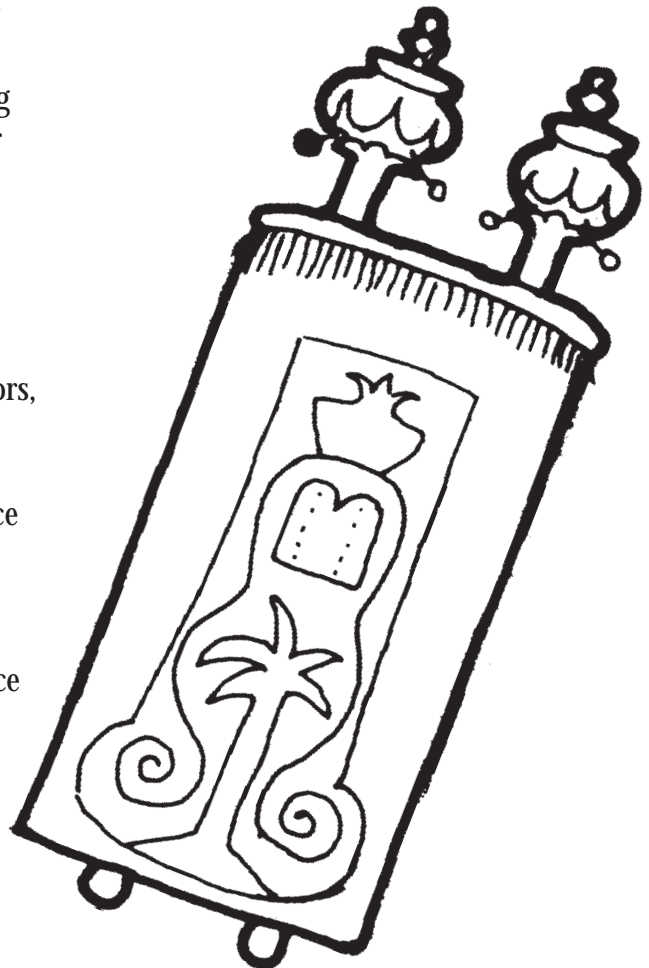
## An Overview of our School Program, PK/K - 12th grade

THE OVERALL GOAL OF OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM is for our children to love their Judaism. Learning is natural for children, and should be enjoyable; Jewish learning is no different! We want children to feel part of our temple community, and part of the community of *Klal Yisrael*, the Jewish people. With this privilege comes the responsibility for knowledge about our people, our history, our traditions, our culture, our language and our relationship with God. With this privilege comes the joy inherent in being part of a people committed to *tikkun olam*, the repair of our world. The theme we wish to convey to our children is connectedness - to their teachers, their classmates, their rabbis, their congregation and their Jewish world.

The goal of our education program is for our children to love their Judaism.

We do this with interesting, age-appropriate lessons and programs designed to spark and inspire this vibrant connection to our Judaism.

THE GOAL OF OUR HEBREW PROGRAM is to give our children the ability to read the essential prayers of our Shabbat services in Hebrew. We teach ancient, prayer Hebrew for fluency and understanding, and we begin introducing these concepts with our youngest students, always in an age-appropriate way. The primary text for our entire Hebrew program is our own prayerbook, *The Fifth Direction*. Many other Hebrew texts and materials are utilized in the teaching of basic reading skills -- we emphasize READING over writing. We have found that no one curriculum serves our school's needs completely. Conversational Hebrew vocabulary is included to the extent that it is interesting for children—for instance, the learning of numbers, colors, and some conversational phrases. It is not taught to displace our primary learning of our prayers, only to enhance it. We offer a separate conversational Hebrew class as an option on Wednesday afternoons for those students who wish to learn and enhance their knowledge. Specific information will be sent home as a flyer, included with all school mailings through the month of September.



## What parents need to know:

- **Your support is essential.** Parents must be positive about religious education for children to also be positive. If you ever have questions about our program, you are encouraged to ask! Our rabbis, educator and teachers are always available to speak with parents about our school. Parents are strongly advised to partner with their children's teachers in order to provide a Jewish educational experience that is richly rewarding for everyone involved.
- **Starbucks Rabbi and You.** A place for parents to come together during Sunday school hours. Here parents are able to interact with one another and discuss issues relevant to Jewish life and creating a Jewish home.
- **We are an ungraded, noncompetitive program.** Judaism should be a safe haven from many of the pressures that our children face. Each child is encouraged to explore our religion in a way that is stimulating and nonthreatening — and in sync with his/her family's value system. Parents must be a part of this process, and communication, two-way, is the key. Notes and newsletters will go home, as well as information in *The Scribe*. Please read and respond! Parents need to keep us in the loop when there is information available that will benefit children.
- **Homework.** With a 26 session school year "homework" is critical, but not in the conventional sense. There has to be follow-up and participation in homes for our program to be a success. Children must see, hear, taste, smell, feel and live their Judaism! Shabbat, holidays and life-cycle events should appear in homes...attendance at services and temple events is essential. Permanent homework includes all of the above, plus READ JEWISH BOOKS to your children of all ages. REVIEW their prayers with them — we have transliterated prayer cards for parents! ASK your children about what they are learning in religious school, and LOOK at their projects and folders so that you can ask better questions. LISTEN to the stories they know and tell of our people and our history. And listen to the blessings and prayers that they are making part of their lives. HELP your children make Judaism an enjoyable part of your lives together.

## CHILDREN WHO ARE NEW TO OUR SCHOOL

Even though our Hebrew program begins with our youngest students, we can work well with all new families to accommodate student needs. We offer short-term tutorials when appropriate, as well as longer term support. Please speak to the director about evaluation and placement. Our goal always is to establish a smooth transition for the child.

- **Textbooks.** We have classroom sets of the books we use most frequently and these are updated on a regular basis. But we demand a much higher level of creativity on the part of our teachers than reliance on a textbook. Our curriculum is highly integrated, because Jewish life is! When we teach about a holiday, for example, we will teach its history, prayers, stories, blessings and vocabulary - but we will also add our own songs, projects, and favorite literature. We have yet to find a text that offers the complexity or flexibility that a talented teacher can bring to a topic. There are times though, when the background found in a particular text is very helpful, and we will use them for that purpose.
- **Absences - Choices.** Our children are involved in many wonderful activities, some of which impinge on their attendance at Religious School. We want to be a priority. We are also willing to work with you if there are conflicts. Please call the director if tardiness, early dismissals or absences will be more than occasional. It is our policy to call a student after three successive absences. We can provide parallel learning materials, and often teachers will provide missed work, but due to the experiential nature of what happens in our school, it is difficult to recreate the projects and interactions that take place. We will do our best though, so please keep the communication flow steady.



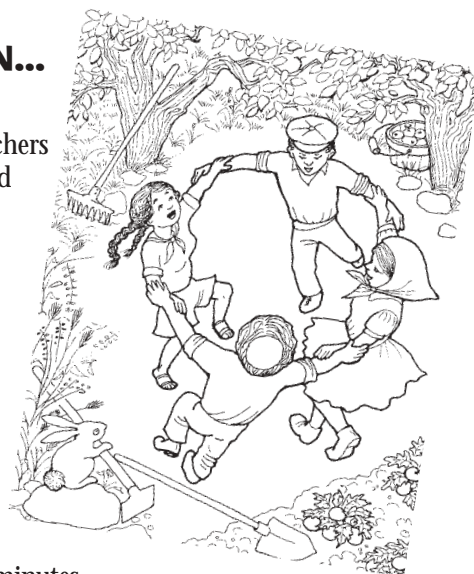
## Pre-Kindergarten - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:

Calendar-Driven, Tefillah Time, Stories, Songs, Friends and **FUN...**

**PRE-KINDERGARTEN/ KINDERGARTEN:** Our four and five year olds are together on Sunday mornings, with outstanding teachers who are nurturing, warm and fun. This is a developmentally based program, designed to have our youngest students love being part of our temple family. Highlights include:

- Shabbat and the holidays
- Tzedakah and mitzvot
- An introduction to Israel
- Beginning Bible stories
- Weekly exposure to Jewish children's literature

The Hebrew program for our youngest students includes 30 minutes of Hebrew each time we meet, known as *Tefillah Time*. Letters, sounds and simple blessings are introduced through games and songs, and the concept of *Beit Knesset*, a house of gathering/ worship, is begun through an ongoing simulation, as well as visits to the temple. Formal music classes happen every other week for 25 minutes.



**1ST GRADE:** The learning continues, building on the foundation of our PK/K program. First graders spend more time on their specific areas of focus. Projects become a little more complex and include several special student-made books. Social interaction is fostered through lots of sharing, including circle times, games and story discussions. Highlights include:

- Shabbat Extravaganza - a culminating family event that celebrates Shabbat
- Bible stories and projects, including Creation, Noah, and Moses - the concept of Torah
- Special activities celebrating holidays
- The idea of prayer is introduced

*Tefillah Time* continues with our first graders, who also have 30 minutes of Hebrew learning. Their personal *Siddur* will include the Shabbat blessings, *Shema*, *Barechu*, *Shehecheyanu*, *Chanukah blessings* and *The Four Questions*. These are introduced to the children in an age-appropriate and fun fashion - they are not expected to read at this age, only to establish a comfort with and early love of the Hebrew language. We hope to convey the integral role of the Hebrew language in our Judaism.

**2ND GRADE:** Our second grade program is a continuation of our early childhood approach to Jewish learning. Second graders have a routine, and a safe and loving classroom that is designed to allow those who are comfortable with reading and writing to be able to do so. Those children who are not ready to read and write, have lots of ways to express themselves through drawing, projects, dictating stories and singing songs. Highlights include:

- Developing the concept of Torah with a year-long, personal Torah project
- Review and enrichment of holidays throughout the year
- Havdalah, or saying "good-bye" to Shabbat, is the special celebration focus
- Partners with God, by Lila Gewirtz, is used as the primary reference for teaching early ideas about God

In Hebrew, there are many games and activities that reinforce the learning of the letters and vowels. Simple sounds are joined together and read, and prayer words are lifted out to illustrate the letters and vowels being taught or reviewed. Constant connections are being made to prayer, with the intent to read and have a simple understanding of the *Shema*, *Barechu*, *Oseh Shalom*, *all the Shabbat blessings* and *The Four Questions*. At this age, it is more important that the students understand the general ideas behind the prayers, and try to be curious enough to want to be able to read them on their own, as they become able. We will join with the 3rd grade to do a simple, weekly prayer service together.



### 3rd through 6th Grade:

Hebrew becomes more prayer reading based, Judaic studies include some calendar review. History, tzedakah, values, heroes, lifecycle events and the Holocaust round out our Jewish education before bar/t mitzvah.

**3RD GRADE:** Housed at Doherty Elementary School, our third grade classes include a deeper understanding of our forefathers and foremothers. Learning is expanded in third grade through games, stories, art and creative role plays. Holiday awareness is continued and deepened, for example, a *Tu B'Shevat Seder* is another step in learning about the "New Year of the Trees." Hebrew letters are reinforced with a year-long, special project. Highlights Include:

- Torah stories through the time of Moses are studied, including some of the lesser known stories of our ancestors
- Special projects include story murals, puppets and a special seder plate
- A year long Alef-Bet project helps develop vocabulary
- Torah, The Growing Gift is used as a resource text, as well as several children's bibles

Hebrew is now extended to 45 minutes, with the Alef-Bet of Blessing, by Rabbi Paul Yedwab, as the primary text. Prayer cards will supplement when the *Shema*, *Chanukah Blessings*, *Barechu*, *The Four Questions*, and the first two lines of the *V'ahavta* are introduced. A Hebrew specialist will come into the room or Hebrew may be taught by the classroom teacher. Music continues for third grade students, with increased attention to learning the melodies of our liturgy. By the end of third grade, students should be able to sound out most Hebrew words, and begin to read some prayer words. A prayer service during school will help reinforce the reading skills by putting them into context. 3rd grade will have a short, weekly service with the 2nd grade.

After enrollment in 3rd grade, families will be sent a letter requesting that they look ahead, and book a date with MarySue in the temple office, for the child's bar or bat mitzvah. Each child at Temple Shir Shalom becomes bar or bat mitzvah at Shabbat services by themselves - children do not "share" this experience, so early booking is necessary to ensure the date that is right for your child.

**4TH GRADE:** Students now come to temple, and report directly to the Sanctuary at 9:30 a.m. One of our rabbis always leads a short prayer service and assembly, and our cantorial soloist, Penny Steyer, is on hand to lead us in song. These weekly services provide an opportunity for us to connect as school family, and to review and learn more about our prayers and holidays. Fourth grade students then spend half their time in Hebrew and half in Judaic studies; this allows for some movement and variety during our time together on Sundays. Highlights include:

- Introduction to spirituality - learning how and why we pray. Living as Partners with God, by Lila Gewirtz, helps us explore this special relationship
- Focus areas include the Bible after Moses: The Prophets and Writings, by Seymour Rossel, is the primary resource text
- A special Shabbat program just for 4th graders is a wonderful experience in which we honor these students.
- An introduction to Jewish heroes begins the discussion of Jewish values

Hebrew in 4th grade is one full hour. It will be taught by a Hebrew specialist, who also may be your child's Judaica teacher - enrollment determines how staff is assigned. Letters and vowels are constantly reviewed. Added to the child's Hebrew banks are three major prayers: *Yotzer Or*, *Avot v'Imahot*, and *G'vurot*. Tefillah assemblies will be opportune times for 4th grade students to have additional prayer practice. Peer tutors are available on Sunday mornings for students who occasionally need a one-on-one "boost." Transliterated prayer cards will be sent home, so that parents can listen to their children read. A course-pack will be used, with information for students to take home to extend the learning.



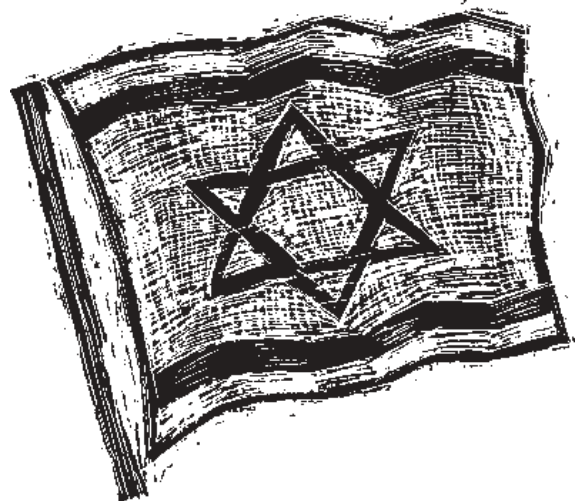
**5TH GRADE:** As in fourth grade, Sunday mornings begin with a prayer service and assembly. Students will be involved in Judaic learning that has several major focuses and uses many reference texts. The year includes at its midpoint a community-wide, 5th grade *Tzedakah Experience* in January, to help students begin thinking about their responsibility in our world as they move closer to preparing for their B'nai Mitzvah. Students in 5th grade enjoy many hands-on experiential lessons, particularly about *tzedakah*, literally meaning “justice,” and *tikkun olam*, the repair of our world. Highlights include:

- Tzedakah Experience, a day not to be missed! Mitzvah journals, kept daily in class, help lead up to the experience
- Life cycle events as another way of marking “Jewish Time” - this includes a section on family histories
- Israel - more in-depth: What does our homeland mean to us as Jews in the United States?
- Values are studied with greater intention in the 5th grade year: What Jewish values can we identify in our daily lives?

Hebrew in 5th grade builds upon what has already been learned, and students should be fluent with some of the major prayers. This does not preclude the need to review. Occasionally letters and vowels, particularly “look alike” will need to be relearned. By this time, learning Hebrew can become repetitious for students; teachers will work to enrich the experience of learning prayers. The rabbis will be invited in to classes to introduce new prayers and students will have many opportunities to ask questions. A 5th grade course pack with prayer cards will be utilized, and attendance at regular Shabbat services is encouraged. On going review of everything that has been covered, focusing on *Amidah* and *Yotzer Or*. This year we add the *Torah blessing* to their prayer banks and begin the *V'ahavta*.

**6TH GRADE:** As our oldest students in our Sunday morning program, 6th graders will be expected to help lead our assemblies during the school year. The 6th grade curriculum includes highlights of Jewish history, with attention to the writings of our greatest Rabbis and thinkers, and more recent history, which includes a study of the Holocaust. Prejudice, stereotyping, anti-Semitism and bias formation are looked at in the context of the major historical periods. A family visit to the Holocaust center is a key culminating activity in 6th grade, as well as a special Shabbat service and experience. Highlights include:

- *Great Jewish Thinkers*, by Naomi Pasachoff, is a primary reference text
- Several Holocaust readers are included, as well as Holocaust literature
- Community resources are essential — including materials from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Holocaust Center
- The development of Israel after the Holocaust is part of our continued study of *Eretz Yisrael*



The Hebrew program for 6th grade students completes the teaching of our prayers; including the in depth study of the *V'ahavta*, *Ma'ariv Arvim* and the full *Kiddush*. The *Haftarah blessings* and the completion of the Torah service will be added to their prayer banks. Once the students have mastered the portion of the service that they are to lead for their B'nai Mitzvah service, they may go on to learn the *Kaddish*, *Hashkiveinu* and the concluding prayers. 6th grade Hebrew is a time for review and refinement, so that there is a comfort level in reading all the major prayers and placing them in the context of our shabbat service. We have created a coursepack to help students master their prayers - but students should be reading aloud, at home, at least 15 minutes per night.



**7TH AND 8TH GRADE - OUR MADRICHIM PROGRAM:** Experiential, camp-style, social, fun!!! The Madrichim program continues to give our students great learning opportunities at a variety of sites —Camp Tamarack, Temple Shir Shalom, and various charitable organizations around the community. Please pay careful attention to the calendar, and mark the program dates! It is essential that students attend each session in order to create relationships and build community.

Rabbi Schwartz, Rabbi Moskowitz and Penny Steyer will continue to teach in this program. Mindy Nathan is our program coordinator for our Madrichim program. Our outstanding cadre of camp staff and specialists will be returning - including Dan Nichols, our music specialist who has been with the program since its inception. Remember: this is a TWO-YEAR program, and each thematic year is necessary to complete the learning. Social action is a centerpiece of our Madrichim program, and various community opportunities will once again be explored. The themes will alternate between *B'tselem Elohim*, that we are created in the image of God and *Kehila Kedusha*, a holy community, which will build on the idea that discovering our own holiness will lead us to understand and create community.

**The Madrichim calendar is unique to this program — students are no longer expected to attend on Sundays.**

**ALL Madrichim and their families should plan to attend High Holy Days Youth and Family services, as well as regular Shabbat services throughout the year — Friday evenings during the school year at 8:00 p.m. and Saturday mornings at 11:00 a.m.**

Our retreats are held at local camp grounds (such as Walled Lake Education Center and Tamarack). Transportation will be arranged by Temple staff. Often there is a pot-luck dinner after the retreat, depending on the schedule — we will let you know in plenty of time! Complete information is mailed to each student well in advance of the program.

**WEDNESDAY HEBREW CLASSES:** 7th grade students will begin Wednesday afternoon Hebrew Prayer Practice classes, either from 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. or from 6:15 p.m. - 7:45 p.m. These classes are designed for our 7th grade Madrichim students who have not yet become B'nai Mitzvah. This is an essential prayer review for these students and is required for completion of our formal Hebrew program.

**Complete bar and bat mitzvah information is available through the temple office in a handbook that details our philosophy, policies and procedures. If you need one, please call the office.** These are distributed at our B'nai Mitzvah meetings and institutes held in the spring of each year.

**HIGH SCHOOL - GRADES 9-12:** Monday night is the night for High School at Shir Shalom! Students will meet from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. At 6:30pm dinner will be served, and high school will meet informally as the youth group during the first half hour. Class will begin at 7:00 p.m. The high school curriculum will focus on being Jewish in a non-Jewish world, and making our Judaism relevant in our modern lives. Community building, social action, field trips and guest speakers will continue to be offered, with expanded learning and social opportunities created through increased participation in NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth; our Reform youth movement) events and SSTY (Shir Shalom Temple Youth) programs. Getting out into our world and applying what we have learned about our Judaism is the goal of our high school program.

As we continue our participation in the community's Teen Missions to Israel, we are seeing great results. While it has been of great benefit to the number of students who participate, we have also seen an increased depth of commitment in individual students. We have a dedicated core of students who now bring to high school an enriched background of Jewish experiences. We have also seen increased participation in our youth group, SSTY, as a direct result of improved youth programming and experiences.



**HIGH SCHOOL TRIP:** All students in high school are encouraged to participate in this special opportunity to travel with their high school friends, chaperones, and one of our rabbis. A different destination each year is selected, with unique emphasis on the Jewish history and culture of the area, and some potential joint programs with that community's congregations.

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION:** A special service, in honor of our graduating seniors. The whole congregation should come and show their support! At this time we also recognize our outgoing and incoming SSTY boards. A special senior project is planned. Our graduating seniors will meet early in the year with Rabbi Schwartz and Rabbi Moskowitz to create a special project. This will entail some occasional extra time together, and will likely coincide with other youth group meetings.

**CONFIRMATION:** Confirmation is a special coming of age, when our students publicly "confirm" their faith — this happens at the end of 10th grade in our congregation. This is a beautiful service, and the entire temple family is invited to share in this service.

The confirmation class will meet approximately once a month, on Mondays, at 5:00 p.m. With both rabbis, a course of study will be pursued that focuses on the 10 Commandments, in preparation for the confirmation ceremony. These dates will be provided to confirmands early in the school year.

Again, we encourage all of our teenage members to enroll in our high school program. Certainly all teens are welcome at SSTY and NFTY events, so please call the office for more information if you are not receiving the mailings!

**TEEN MISSION TO ISRAEL:** Students who are entering 10th, 11th or 12th grade are eligible for this opportunity to travel to Israel as part of the Teen Mission. Rabbi Moskowitz will accompany the students on the experience of a lifetime, that takes place every other year. Information is available in the temple office, and enrollment will take place throughout the fall. Do not delay—reserve a spot as soon as possible for your teen; you will not be sorry. The Teen Missions take place every other year—in 2004, 2006 and 2008. If you are interested in traveling to Israel on the off years, call Rabbi Moskowitz and he will recommend other trips that are great options.



## **MUSIC PROGRAM: PK - 12TH GRADE**

Penny Steyer, our cantorial soloist, is in charge of our school music program, which includes youth choir. Youth choir is available to students once they are in the fourth grade. Penny publishes a music calendar early in the year and distributes it to the youth choir participants. During their time together, members of the youth choir will learn to sing the liturgy of our services, and be given practice and performance times for the year.

All students at Doherty will have music every other week, and students at temple will have music as part of the all-school service every Sunday morning. Those students in grades 4-6 who wish to have additional music are encouraged to participate in youth choir. Penny will also be available to teach prayer music to Hebrew classes in grades 4-6 on a visiting basis.

Penny participates in many programs with our Madrichim and High School students, in addition to helping out with our Ma'at Shabbat and Youth Services. She is also available to work with students who wish to chant at their B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies.

Penny is always looking for students with special musical abilities, both instrumental and vocal. Please call her if you are interested in knowing more about opportunities for musical involvement at Temple Shir Shalom.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS**

At Temple Shir Shalom we do our best to accommodate all students with special needs. It is our preference to include all children in our religious school program, and to explore other available options only when our school environment is not best suited to the needs of the child. We are now part of the "Opening the Doors" program, which entitles us to special education consultation through the Agency for Jewish Education. Please work with us at the religious school in order to use available resources and make the best Jewish educational decisions for all of our children.

Our building is completely accessible to people with physical disabilities. The south entrance of the building is equipped with special parking spaces, a ramp and automatic door entry, as well as proximity to the elevator. Our bima is also ramp accessible. Upon request, we can have signers available at our services, or at other times when needed.



## BASIC RELIGIOUS SCHOOL INFORMATION: Policies and Procedures

### 1. Sites for our Sunday Program

**PK - 3rd grade:** DOHERTY ELEMENTARY 3575 Walnut Lake Road. (one block east of temple)  
We operate our Sunday program in two locations - we are fortunate to rent Doherty School through West Bloomfield Schools Community Education, and this allows us to comfortably house our youngest students. A wonderful sidewalk allows us to take occasional walking trips to temple for special programs or events. It is important to us that our youngest students feel a closeness with temple, as well!

Doherty's rooms are excellent for instruction, but we must be careful not to disturb the classrooms we borrow. Parents can help us by reminding our children that we are guests on Sunday mornings.

The phone number at Doherty on Sundays is: 539-2363. Please note it for use only in emergencies. You can also get a message to Doherty through the temple office on Sundays: 737-8700.

**4 - 6th grade:** TEMPLE SHIR SHALOM 3999 Walnut Lake Road

We use every inch of the temple building on Sundays, for grades 4-6. Often we may also hold adult education classes, using every available room including the kitchen and the rabbis' studies! Watch the signboard in the foyer for room information.

Our classrooms are upstairs, and children go up together after our all-school service. Please remind your children that this is our temple, and we all are responsible for its care. Students should never be running, shouting or littering in the building or around its grounds. Please help us with this most important aspect of student learning!

The office is staffed on Sunday mornings and it is a very busy place! We encourage students and parents to **limit phone calls to emergencies only**, and if possible, to limit temple business to the **weekdays**. We also discourage meetings on Sundays with the director unless there is an emergency. Children must be our first concern on Sundays!

**\*Note —  
all Monday,  
Wednesday and  
weekend programs  
are held at temple,  
unless otherwise  
noted.**

### 2. Arrival and Dismissal - NOTE STAGGERED TIMES!!!

**DOHERTY: 9:35 a.m. - 12:10 p.m. TEMPLE: 9:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**

**Older students should be dropped off at TEMPLE first**, in order to be on time for the service, and all students should report directly to the sanctuary. This year again, students at temple will begin their days with a short service led by our rabbis and Penny.

**Younger students should be at Doherty by 9:35 a.m., and picked up at 12:10 p.m..** Parents can then proceed to temple to pick up their older children.

Doherty students who are NOT picked up by 12:30 p.m. will be brought to TEMPLE. After 12:30 p.m., parents should come to the temple office to pick up their child(ren). Children will not be left alone, ever.

**EARLY DISMISSAL:** A note signed by a child's parent is required for early dismissal. The child should give the note to the classroom teacher. The teacher will initial it, and have it sent to the office with the attendance sheets. **Parents are asked to meet their children in the office**, either at Doherty or at temple.

### 3. Parking Lot Safety

This is an area of major concern. We are grateful for the care that most families take, as well as our diligent building staff and volunteers who monitor traffic flow at the temple.

**PLEASE DO NOT BE IN SUCH A HURRY THAT YOU ENDANGER YOUNG PEOPLE!**  
There is absolutely no parking, stopping or standing in EITHER drive — at Doherty or at temple. Parents are advised to park in the lots, walk their children into the building — the front door at Doherty and at temple.

Dismissal also requires caution. *For safety's sake* parents are asked to walk in so that they can pick up their children at Doherty, and temple. We know that this is a bit of a hassle, but children's safety is worth it. It also encourages parents and teachers to get to know one another.

Care and caution are advisable, and the staggered start and end times should help relieve parking lot problems. As always, your compliance and cooperation are all part of being a temple family, and are greatly appreciated.



#### 4. School Closings and Other Emergencies

In case of inclement weather, we participate in the police lien system, which will notify all the major television and radio stations of our closure. We also communicate with other religious schools. During the week, we follow the decisions of the West Bloomfield School District with regard to closure - this is true for the programs that go on in the afternoons and evenings as well. Voice mail will also have instructions as to changes in our schedule.

#### 5. Membership/ Payment/ Scholarship Information

In order to enroll in our religious school, you must be a member of temple. If for any reason this is a problem, you are asked to contact the Ways and Means Committee of temple, through the temple office.

**All school fees must be paid with enrollment and dues must be current. Tuition must be received in full, in order to be enrolled in religious school.** This policy ensures that our school can run on its own. Fees are included with your enrollment information.

Scholarships for school are available through the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit and are administered through our temple office. Please contact the office regarding scholarship information if you did not receive it as part of your enrollment packet.

Some scholarships are available to high school students for various SSTY and NFTY events, as well as travel and study opportunities in Israel. Please contact the office for more information.

#### 6. Teaching Staff

We are fortunate to be able to attract an outstanding cadre of teachers for our religious school, largely because we are open to new ideas. We seek out adults who truly enjoy being with children on Sunday mornings. Such individuals transmit their own joy in their Hebrew heritage and language. Our teachers come from all walks of life, including but not limited to education. This richness in backgrounds also sends a powerful message to children about adult Jewish role models who care deeply about conveying their own love of Judaism on Sunday mornings.

We are always on the lookout for special adults who wish to share their Sundays, particularly as substitute teachers. If you or someone you know loves being Jewish, and loves children, and/or may know Hebrew, please have them contact the office. We truly value those who want to be a part of guiding our next generations! Teaching on Sundays can be very rewarding...speak to the director if this is something you might like to consider.

#### 7. Class Size

Thanks to our temple board, we have a class size limit of 18 children. Occasionally we may have teaching teams, but the staff:student ratio will not exceed 1:18. This is done to optimize the educational experience for our students. It is always our preference to keep the class sizes as small as possible to enhance the program quality for everyone.

#### 8. Report Cards

Report cards are sent home twice a year, in January and in June, for grades PK-6. Parent updates are sent home for students in the Madrichim and High School programs through letters, newsletters, and other communications.

Our religious school is ungraded and students are allowed to progress at their own rate. Teachers are required to assess students on a regular basis, and to contact the director if they detect learning issues early on. Teachers are also encouraged to contact parents well in advance of report card completion if there are any problems or concerns. Our philosophy is to work together to benefit children, and to intervene where there may be problems as early as possible. If you have any concerns about your child's Jewish learning, please let us know. Report cards are only a "picture in time" of how your child is doing; through increased home interaction, Hebrew review and practice, parents should have an early indication of how their children are doing in school. Report cards are designed with a tear sheet for feedback — you are urged to send back your comments.

Of critical importance to the success of each student is that you establish a positive working relationship with your child's teacher. This should be your first point of contact if problems arise. Of course, when you are pleased with what you see, please note that, too! In the business of Jewish education, we typically do not hear the positives, and teachers in our Sunday program truly appreciate your kind words of encouragement.



## 9. Attendance - Missed Work — Workshops/ Field Trips/ Special Programming

Attendance makes all the difference in understanding the ideas and concepts covered in class, yet we know that absences will occur... we just hope they are kept at a minimum. Parents are required to call and tell us when their child will be absent. After three consecutive absences teachers are instructed to contact families to find out if there is a problem, and to make arrangements for missed information to be shared. Of course, some projects and lively classroom discussions cannot be recreated, but often materials and books can be provided to fill in the learning. Certainly Hebrew materials will be made available, and tutorials arranged in the case of extended absences.

**CLASS MATERIALS and HOME REVIEW:** Your child will be given a folder and various materials during class. Often there are important notices and flyers sent home - PLEASE ASK YOUR CHILD IF ANY NOTES WERE SENT HOME EVERY SUNDAY AFTER SCHOOL! Often the child's teacher will include reading material and Hebrew review for children and parents to do at home. Teachers have also been asked to send home frequent newsletters about what is being studied in the classrooms. It is essential that parents review this material with their children, and that when questions arise, the teacher is contacted directly.

It is also important to help your child develop positive habits with regard to Sunday School materials. **Have a regular place where these are kept at home, and create ways to help children remember to bring their folders to and from class.** This kind of system will send a strong message to students that Sunday School is an important endeavor, and one to be taken seriously!

It is also essential that you help children find 10-15 minutes a day for Hebrew practice. Make it part of your after dinner routine, or create some special, set-aside time. Daily practice will make the learning of Hebrew prayers a way of life for our students, and will maximize their level of preparation for class!

**WORKSHOPS, FIELD TRIPS, SPECIAL PROGRAMMING:** Special events, offered through the religious school are part of the instructional program. We believe that varied experiences enhance learning opportunities for our students and families. Teaching staff and parent volunteers spend a great deal of time preparing for these "extravaganzas," and the intent is to constantly discover new and exciting ways to share special aspects of Jewish life. Workshops, field trips, special programs and social action field experiences are to be considered part of the instructional program, and parent participation is a strong, positive message to children. In fact, the religious school welcomes your ideas and help with family educational programs of all types - whether on Sundays, as part of holidays, or at other times during the week!

## 10. Behavior and Discipline

Most of our students are very well-behaved and this is a credit to the families that impart these positive values to their children. Some students do occasionally require some guidance, however, and teachers are asked to send these students to the office. Disciplinary records are kept in a file for office use only, and the policy is to contact parents after one noted warning is issued. Most behavior problems are cared for in the context of the classroom, and ongoing parent dialogue is encouraged to solve these problems. Please contact the office if you have concerns regarding disciplinary policy or behavior issues. Again, your support is what makes all the difference in the attitude and behavior of our students.



## 11. Service Attendance - Something for Everyone!!!

The more our children are exposed to prayer Hebrew, the more literate they will become. Though our regular Shabbat services are designed for children above the age of 10, it is up to parents to decide how their children will handle the experience. Children of all ages are welcome in our sanctuary - but their best interest must be the ultimate determining factor in choosing to have them attend. Very young children will enjoy our Ma'at Shabbat Service, or "Little Shabbat" held one Saturday per month, from 9:30 a.m.- 11:00 a.m. Young children and their families will also enjoy our Family Shabbat Service, held on Friday evenings at 7:30 p.m., once a month, and preceded by a Family Shabbat Dinner. Children in grades 7 and above should attend our regular weekly services, as well as youth group led services.

*We strongly encourage families to join us for services.* Shabbat at Temple Shir Shalom is a moving and spiritually satisfying experience - one in which children and families can find benefit. Because of our now famous tradition of "the tish," literally translated as the rabbi's table - but really a question and answer time, no one needs to leave our services with unanswered questions; our rabbis answer whatever is asked of them during this particular part of the weekly service. Services are an integral part of the learning we do, and we hope to see you there!

Families of children becoming bar and bat mitzvah are required to attend at least three services as a family during the year preceding the event. This and other important information is available in our B'nai Mitzvah handbook, available through the Religious School office.

Shabbat at Shir Shalom is a moving and spiritually satisfying experience.

## 12. Tzedakah and Social Action

We collect tzedakah each week to teach and reinforce the importance of our obligation as Jews to give to charity and those in need. The amount that is given is secondary - that this be given from the heart is what is key. Half of what is collected each year is given back to our school, and half is given to various charities of the children's choosing. This is done on a class by class basis. At times during the year, we participate as a school in a school tzedakah project. As an example we have created the Hanukkah for Hospice project, participated in the Orchards' Toy Drive, and have been part of the Women's American ORT Project Reach.

Of primary importance is that we instill in our children that as Jews we are commanded to care for others, to be grateful for what we have, and to find joy in giving. These values can only be reinforced in school - they are truly taught and modeled at home.

Also consider recognizing appreciation and success by making donations to the Religious School Fund or to our growing Shir Shalom library. This too sends an important message to students about the value of Jewish education.



## ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

We consider opportunities for adult learning to be a critical component of our children's Jewish education! The more you know, the more comfortable and confident you will feel in making new Jewish memories, understanding old ones, and embarking on an exciting journey as a family. Take advantage of these classes; learn or polish your Hebrew, and do it only in a day! Learn in a "hands-on" way how to enhance your celebrations with feeling and flair! Revisit Jewish history and/or become aware of the spiritual nature of every day life. Be reintroduced to Judaism, and spend great personal growth time studying with your rabbis.

Each semester, our rabbis will be offering a variety of different courses, ranging in topics from spirituality to history to philosophy. Watch your *Scribe* to learn of these courses and when they will be taught.

**Kamikaze Hebrew:** Learn how to read Hebrew in one day from a master teacher! A full day seminar of intensive Hebrew training for those who cannot read Hebrew or those who know a little but need a lot of help...A great beginning for adults who wish to become bar or bat mitzvah!

### **Introduction to Judaism:**

A beginner's guide to Judaism— required for those seeking conversion, great general knowledge for everyone else! A basic overview of Jewish history, holidays, festivals, life cycle events, the concept of peoplehood and understanding the differences between Jewish sects. You are guaranteed to learn something new, and spend great time with your rabbis.

**Hands-on Judaism:** The experiential component of the introduction to Judaism class, the how-to of being Jewish! You will learn how to bring traditions into your homes, as well as time-honored Jewish recipes.

### **Other Adult Education Opportunities:**

including our weekly Torah Study class held before services on Saturday mornings in the Gaynor Family Library Chapel. The group meets at 10:00 a.m. and all are welcome!

**We consider opportunities for adult learning to be a critical component of our children's Jewish education!**

**Adult Bar and Bat Mitzvah:** program is growing... begin with Kamikaze Hebrew or meet with our rabbis as we customize a program of study to meet your needs. The process takes approximately two years of study, and includes our Introduction to Judaism and Hands-on classes, as well as Hebrew prayer reading proficiency, two additional adult education classes as well as independent study to be completed with rabbinic supervision.

We will create adult Hebrew classes as demand requires, so please let us know if you are interested - tutorials are also available.

**Community Adult Learning Opportunities** including the SAJE program, Seminars in Adult Jewish Education, which is co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, Michigan Board of Rabbis, Agency for Jewish Education and Jewish Community Center. Courses are offered in January and February, and feature a large selection of interesting classes taught by area rabbis, including our own! Watch the *Jewish News* and temple publications in the late fall for more information.



## ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES:

*Attending services as a family is a core aspect of a complete Jewish education. Praying together is essential to our religious life, and becoming a part of the Shir Shalom worship experience is one of the best family activities that we can recommend!*

**High Holy Days Children's Services, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:** These services are approximately 45 minutes long, and designed for children, ages 0 - 8, with their families. Held in the sanctuary.

**High Holy Days Youth Services, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:** These services are written and conducted by our Shir Shalom Temple Youth (SSTY), are approximately one hour, and are designed for children and families, grades 4 and up. Held in the social hall.

**Ma'at Shabbat Services:** These "Little" Shabbat Services are for our youngest members. This Saturday morning worship features our rabbis as well as puppets, crafts, stories and songs to enrich our children's experience of Shabbat. This is appropriate for children ages 2-7; the service begins in the sanctuary and ends in the social all with arts and crafts and a snack. The program is from 9:30-11:00a.m.

**Family Dinners:** Enjoy Shabbat dinners with other temple families (make your reservations early), beginning at 6:30 p.m. They are fun and easy and include a Jewish activity for children. A family service featuring a shorter service and a story sermon follows each dinner at 7:30 p.m. This service is geared for young families, with children ages 3-8; of course, all children and adults are welcome!

**Sukkah Decorating:** Families get together informally to decorate the Temple Sukkah, located in the Carole and Henry Frank Interfaith Garden. Celebrate this harvest holiday with your temple family! Watch for further announcements - save the date.

**Consecration/ Simchat Torah:** This is the time that all students who are new to our school or new to Jewish learning receive a special blessing and a keepsake. This is traditionally done at Simchat Torah Services, when we march and celebrate the ending and beginning of the reading of the Torah for the year.

**Purim Carnival:** The fun begins at 9:30 a.m. with our famous Shir Shalom Purim Shpiel, and at 10:30 a.m. the carnival begins!

**Temple Seder:** Celebrate the story of the Exodus with your temple family. There is a special Haggadah created for children, and activities designed to transmit the meaning of this important holiday.





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