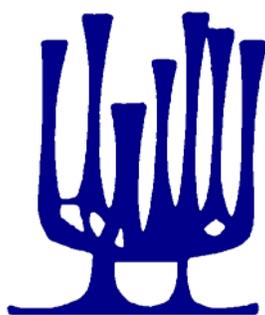


The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah  
**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

2011-2012 ~ 5772  
**PARENT HANDBOOK**



"Train a child in the way that he should go.  
And even when he is old,  
he will not depart from it."

--Proverbs 22:6

## **WHAT THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL IS ABOUT:**

The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah has a long and vibrant tradition of educating Reform Jews, who strive to make the world a better place. Both within the Jewish community and society at large, graduates of B'nai Jehudah's educational system put Torah into action throughout their lives.

The religious school introduces students to Jewish history, beliefs, prayer, culture, and the Hebrew language. This knowledge connects the students to their heritage and people. The manner in which students interact with others reflects the depth and quality of what is taught.

Judaism is presented as a way of life. Students learn that the cycles of Jewish life provide the framework supporting their development. Students are provided multiple opportunities that encourage thinking about how the core values of Judaism impact their every thought, word and action.

The parents, teachers, clergy, and congregation compose a powerful alliance. All are engaged in creating a vibrant Jewish future through the rearing of knowledgeable and caring Jewish children. They look forward to the day when their children's children enroll in the Congregation B'nai Jehudah religious school.

The religious school offers classes for members' children from a year prior to entering kindergarten through Confirmation (10th grade). Opportunities for post-confirmation, formal and informal learning experiences extend the Jewish learning bridge to Hillel during the college years, which generally occur away from the student's congregational home.

Consecration, B'nai Mitzvah and Confirmation are benchmarks in a Jewish child's development. Each signifies accomplishments and commitment to continue Jewish growth. The Congregation B'nai Jehudah educational program has specific criteria that prepare students for each of these life cycle events.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY:**

B'nai Jehudah religious school program promotes Jewish education in a nurturing and stimulating environment designed to meet the unique needs of each student. The curriculum is designed to impart knowledge; and promote appreciation for the history, culture and values of Judaism; provide a connection to the Jewish community; and encourage the implementation of Jewish practices.

## **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES:**

- The congregation will provide the staff, facility, and support services necessary to create an effective and vibrant Jewish learning community.
- Every effort will be made to create a warm and welcoming environment that is inclusive and inspires learning.
- Continuous collaboration will occur between among the clergy, administration and lay leaders to will keep the educational system dynamic.
- Continuous evaluation will occur to maintain program excellence.

## **PARENT AND FAMILY COMMITMENT:**

**Parents** are the child's first and most influential teachers. Their interest and support of Jewish education affects the quality of learning.

**Parents** are expected to support their children's Jewish education by ensuring that students attend all sessions and special events.

**Parents** are encouraged to communicate with teachers. **Teachers** are asked to send weekly e-mails and/or newsletters to the parents.

**Parents** are encouraged to attend weekly services with their children (pre-k through 3rd grades at 9:15 am, and 4th through-6th grades at 11:30am-noon. Student attendance at services is an integral part of the religious school curriculum.

**Parents** are requested to come into the building with their child(ren) through 2nd grade, both at the beginning and end of each session. Parents are asked to walk with their children to the classroom after morning services. If students through 2nd grade are to be part of a carpool, the "carpool parent of the day" is asked to come into the building.

**Parents** of older students are encouraged to participate in congregational activities on Sunday morning. Meeting children at the Chapel to attend services creates a very positive bridge to the rest of the week.

**Parents** are invited once a year, pre-k through 6th grade, to learn with their child in a manner conducive to stimulating Jewish family life.

**Parents** are requested to come into the religious school office if an early dismissal becomes necessary. For security purposes, the student will be brought to the parent, in the office.

THE TEMPLE, CONGREGATION B'NAI JEHUDAH EDUCATION PROGRAM SEEKS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES, AS WELL AS PROVIDE SKILLS TO STRENGTHEN THE STUDENT'S FAMILY. THE GOALS ARE BASED ON THE URJ (UNION OF REFORM JUDAISM) GUIDELINES.

#### GOALS OF THE URJ CURRICULUM:

- To nurture students in the development of their Jewish identity and bind themselves inseparably to the Jewish people by word and deed.
- To encourage students to bear witness to the b'rit, the covenant between God and the Jewish people, through the practice of mitzvot (commandments), as explained in the Torah and the classic Jewish literature, and interpreted in light of historical developments and contemporary liberal thought.
- To connect students to Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel.
- To encourage students to cherish and study Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people.
- To educate students to value and appreciate tefilah (prayer).
- To motivate students to further the causes of justice, freedom, and peace by pursuing tzedek (righteousness), mishpat (justice) and chesed (loving deeds).
- To help students celebrate Shabbat and festivals and observe the Jewish ceremonies marking the significant occasions in their lives.
- To challenge students to appreciate their Jewish identity and respect others' identities.
- To inspire students to express kinship with K'lal Yisrael (All Jewish people) by actively advancing the welfare of Jews throughout the world.
- To influence students to support and participate in the life of the synagogue.

#### GOALS OF THE TEMPLE, CONGREGATION B'NAI JEHUDAH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL:

- Students will learn to look at the world through Jewish eyes.
- Students will learn to live life Jewishly and have fun being Jewish.
- Students will have the opportunity to socialize with peers and make life-long friends.
- Students will be introduced to Jewish knowledge and values.
- Students will be encouraged to develop their Jewish identity.
- Students will learn how to tell the Jewish story and their individual history.

## ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES:

Regular attendance is expected for a quality learning experience. When students miss a class, there is a break in the continuity of their learning. Learning is a communal experience and everyone benefits from classroom participation. Being on time allows the student and class to make the most of each session.

- Families are requested to communicate with the school administrator if there are extenuating circumstances.
- The school will work with each family as situations arise.
- Parents are asked to work with the teacher and administrator in assisting students with attendance, punctuality and make-up work.
- Should cumulative attendance for a given year drop below 80%, additional appropriate educational requirements will be assigned. In order for a student to progress to the following grade, such additional requirements must be completed in a satisfactory manner. The Religious School Director, in partnership with the family and the clergy, will determine these educational requirements.
- After 2 consecutive absences (where the teacher/Religious School Director is unaware of the reason for the absences), the teacher or Religious School Director shall contact the family to determine if there is a problem and/or address any issues the family may have.
- A tutor to assist the student in completing make-up work due to extenuating circumstances may need to be retained by a parent.
- The Educational Director, in consultation with clergy, can create an individualized program due to extenuating circumstances.
- Students must be in good standing in order to begin the B'nai Mitzvah training program:
  1. Satisfactory completion of each prior grade level.
  2. Three years of prior Jewish education, or its' equivalent, is required before acceptance into the B'nai Mitzvah Program.

**Extenuating circumstances may occur where families are unable to participate in aspects of the religious school program. Families must request and receive approval from the school administrator (in consultation with the rabbi, Education Committee, and the B'nai Mitzvah Committee, as appropriate) for an alternative program. Compliance with the program's attendance and participation standards is expected, absent extenuating circumstances. Failure to meet these standards may result in the postponement of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.**

Students are expected to attend special activities scheduled by the school, including grade level Sunday morning & Shabbat services, Shabbatons, and Confirmation events. These are considered curriculum requirements.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:**

The school's philosophy on discipline is designed to assist students in making good choices. It is important to be accountable for actions and to learn from each experience.

Students are to treat others as they wish to be treated. They are to be courteous and respectful to one another and to their teachers. Students have a right to learn and teachers have a right to teach; anything interfering in the process must be addressed.

The teacher will keep the administrator informed of all incidents.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE:**

1. First incident of misbehavior: The teacher and student discuss the problem.
2. Second incident: The student will be asked to go to the office.
3. Third incident: The student will be asked to go to the office. A meeting of the student, parent(s), teacher and administrator will be convened. The desired outcome is to have the student return to class and behave appropriately.

## **OFFENSES THAT RESULT IN IMMEDIATE REMOVAL FROM SCHOOL:**

- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, harmful or dangerous objects
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Placing self or others in danger
- Extreme disregard for school rules

## **ITEMS SUBJECT TO CONFISCATION IF BROUGHT TO SCHOOL THAT DISTRACT FROM LEARNING:**

- Cell phones
- Walkman/iPod/CD players, etc.
- Balls
- Skateboards
- Cards (playing or trading)

## **COMMUNICATION:**

- Teachers are asked to communicate by e-mail or class newsletter to keep parents informed of what students are learning.
- Individual student reports to parents are issued at the end of each semester.
- Parents are encouraged to get acquainted with teachers early in the school year to form a supportive partnership.
- The Education Religious School Committee will meet several times during the year. The congregation's President appoints the chairperson. All Education school Committee members serve voluntarily.
- The Education school Committee is happy to hear all comments, suggestions and compliments. Any concerns or individual situations should be addressed with the teacher and administrator before approaching the Education School Committee.

### **CANCELLATION PROCEDURE:**

School may be cancelled in the event of severe weather or other emergency. Watch local television channels for notice of cancellation. The decision will be made by both the school and building administrator. Always choose what is best for your family.

### **VISITING THE CLASSROOM:**

- Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom. Please let the teacher and administrator know in advance.
- Specific requests for guests should be directed to the administrator prior to the class.

### **ILLNESS:**

- When a child becomes sick at school, parents will be called. If parents are unreachable, then emergency numbers provided on the registration form will be called.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS/ (SASONE):**

- Including all students in the Jewish classroom is the primary goal of Sasone, a communally funded and administered program.
- A Sasone consultant provides strategies for the students with special needs, their parents and their teachers.
- Information about special circumstances is requested on the school registration form. This information allows the administrator to engage the consultant.
- Parents are encouraged to make the school aware of their child's challenges.
- As a team, the parent, teacher, administrator, and Sasone consultant, determine how to best meet a student's needs.

### **JEWISH SUMMER CAMP:**

Families are encouraged to send their children to a Jewish summer camp. The congregation has scholarship funds for member families.

### **YOUTH ACTIVITIES/YOUTH GROUP:**

A variety of youth activities are available for 9th through 12th graders. NFTY (National Federation of Temple Youth) connects teens throughout the Midwest and nationally within leadership development and enriched Jewish learning experiences. Junior youth groups for 7th and 8th graders introduce members to informal Jewish social and learning opportunities.

### **PASSPORT TO ISRAEL PROGRAM:**

- A communal program that encourages families to plan ahead for their child's teen summer learning experience in Israel.
- Beginning in 3rd grade, parents are able to open a Passport to Israel savings account.
- **Families annually contribute \$200 per child.**
- The contributions are invested through the Jewish Community Foundation.
- The Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City annually provides an additional \$100 per participant.
- Depending on interest rates and time of commencement of contributions, when it is time for the teen's trip to Israel, as much as \$2,000 may be in the account.
- Contact CAJE (913-327-8145) for more information.

### **B'NAI TZEDEK:**

- The Jewish Community Foundation has established this program to encourage students at the time of their B'nai Mitzvah to open an account with the Jewish Community Foundation.
- Participants deposit a minimum of \$125. The Jewish Community Foundation places an additional \$375 in the student's account the first year.
- The interest annually generated can be designated by the participant to benefit a Jewish project or institution of their choice.
- The B'nai Mitzvah students with B'nai Tzedek accounts are invited to participate in programs that teach about the needs of the community and how philanthropic decisions are made.
- Others can make contributions to individual student philanthropic accounts for special occasions and student honors.
- Contact the Jewish Community Foundation (913-327-8100) for further information.

### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES:**

- Registration packets for the coming school year are mailed each year in May.
- Completed forms and fees are to be returned to the school office by the deadline stated in the packets.
- The Executive Director of The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah informs the school if a student's family is not in good financial standing, preventing the student's enrollment. All financial issues are to be directed to the Executive Director's office.