

Temple Shalom Emeth
Parent Handbook
2008-2009



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THOUGHTS FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Joan R. Perlman

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not depart from it.
(*Proverbs 22:6*)

The above proverb reflects my personal feelings on Jewish Education. At Temple Shalom Emeth it is our responsibility to teach our children Torah, mitzvot, prayers, Hebrew, and their connection to Israel and the Jewish people to provide them with the solid Jewish foundation needed to foster a positive Jewish identity. I strongly believe that this background can enable our children and their families to live meaningful and spiritually satisfying Jewish lives.

Our educational team – the Rabbi, Director of Education, Family Life Educator, teachers, youth educators, parents, and Religious School Committee work together to keep abreast of the latest advances in Jewish education and make our religious school curriculum and programs both rewarding and meaningful for our students. Our goal is to not only afford our children a multi-faceted Jewish education, but also to make Hebrew School a fun and exciting place to be.

In keeping with the teachings of Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Fathers), "Who is wise? Someone who learns from every person." (Pirkei Avot 4:1) The Temple Shalom Emeth staff values each individual for the unique gifts and talents he/she brings to the community. We can all grow from our interactions with one another and together create this very special Kehillah Kedosha, holy community of Temple Shalom Emeth.

I look forward to a wonderful year together!

Temple Shalom Emeth Religious School

Mission Statement

Temple Shalom Emeth Religious School strives to provide a meaningful, engaging, formal, informal and family education program for grades K-12 within a safe, warm and caring environment. Our goal is to develop and inspire a community of educated and *menschlich* Jewish children, knowledgeable about and committed to the philosophy and practices of Judaism.

Our approach is not simply to teach about Judaism, but to create a stimulating, interactive program to enable our students and their families to experience the joy of Jewish living. The study of Jewish rituals, Hebrew, the holiday cycle, Torah, prayer and ethics, along with Jewish history, Israel and music, are key components of their education. This curriculum prepares our children to understand and live by the Jewish values of *Torah*, *Avodah* (Worship) and *Gimelut Chassidim* (Social Justice).

STUDENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

KIDDUSH CLUB

Designed to encourage regular attendance at Shabbat Services, the Kiddush Club recognizes and rewards those students who attend *Shabbat* services at Temple Shalom Emeth on a consistent basis. ***Students are reminded each week during services to sign their names on the Kiddush Club list that is*** posted on the Temple office door. A special party at the Religious School will be held in January for those students who have attended five (5) Shabbat Services. A second party will be held in April for those who have reached a total of ten (10) Shabbat Services during the school year.

MITZVAH HONOR SOCIETY

The welfare of the world is based on three parts - Study of Torah, Worship, and Mitzvot (Acts of Love and Kindness). Mitzvot are the ways in which we practice Judaism.

The Mitzvah Honor Society Program provides an awareness of the many facets of Jewish tradition and provides an incentive for them to incorporate into their home lives what is being taught in class. Each student will receive a Mitzvah chart with requirements and explanations at the beginning of the school year. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this program. Special recognition will be given at the staff appreciation Shabbat service and the Sunday closing ceremony for students who achieve their mitzvah goals.

HOMEWORK

Our goal is to engage our children in important discussions and to provide challenging activities. In order to obtain a knowledge base from which to draw information and formulate thoughtful opinions, students will be expected to complete small, weekly assignments. **Hebrew reading for 5-10 minutes each day is expected.** *If a child is absent, please contact the teacher or classroom buddy for homework.* The child will return confident, up-to-date and able to participate fully in the next class.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

CLASS SCHEDULES

Grades K – 2	Sundays	9:00 am - 11:00 am
Grades 3 - 6	Sundays	9:00 am -11:00 am
	Tuesdays	4:00 pm - 6:00 pm
Grade 7	Sundays – Special Schedule; Tuesdays 4:00 -6:00 pm	

SCHOOL CANCELLATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

If school in Burlington is either canceled or dismissed early due to snow, there will be no religious school. When snow or ice occurs in the afternoon or on Sunday mornings, cancellations will be announced on Channel 7 News and Channel 5. We will send out an email to notify you. There will also be a message on the temple answering machine.

SCHOOL CELL PHONE NUMBER

During school hours, you may reach Joan Perlman, Director of Education, by calling: **508-314-8533**. The best way to contact Joan outside of school hours is through e-mail: joanperlman63@hotmail.com

STUDENT EVALUATION

The Temple Shalom Emeth Religious School faculty work hard at creating an atmosphere in which children like being Jewish and have positive Jewish experiences. We praise them, challenge them and encourage them to work to the best of their abilities. We offer an opportunity to learn new skills and explore ideas in a safe, yet challenging environment.

If a child is having difficulty in school, we will let you know. When s/he needs extra attention, we will custom tailor it. When a child does his/her best, we will praise him/her.

Progress reports are sent home twice a year – January and May. Please read them over, discuss them with your child(ren) and feel free to discuss them with your child’s teacher or the educational director.

This year we are planning on reinstating our parent/teacher conferences.

TZEDAKAH

At each class meeting, money will be collected from the students and placed in a Tzedakah Box designated for that class. At the end of the school year, the class, or in some cases the school as a whole, will collaboratively decide what charity to support using the money collected.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Temple Shalom Emeth, we place a high value on learning and being part of a learning community. Consistency and participation are very important to a child's education. Children are expected to attend 85% of all classes and complete 85% of all work. Absences in excess will require the completion of all make up work in order to progress to the next grade. Any exceptions are at the discretion of the Director of Education.

TRAFFIC PROCEDURES:

Supervision:

Parents of students in Kitah Gan (K) through Kitah Vav (6) are expected to supervise school dismissal a minimum of two Sundays per year. Parents of students in Kitah Gimmel (3) through Kitah Zayin (7) are expected to supervise school dismissal a minimum of two Tuesdays per year (in addition to the two Sundays per year). Parents are requested to sign up for dates on the first day of school at the opening program, or dates will be assigned to them.

Dismissal Line:

Drop-off

Cars will enter by Peach Orchard Road, proceed down the access road to the soccer fields, turn around and return to drop off students at the rear entrance of the Marshall Simonds Middle School.

Pick-up

The pick-up area for students is in the **front of the Marshall Simonds School.** Cars will enter by Peach Orchard Road, proceed down the access road to the soccer fields, turn around and return to pick up students at the front of the school, as directed by parent volunteers.

Parent volunteers will direct students to the cars for pick up. The first several cars will "load up" beginning at the school entrance. **Each pickup car will display a TSE placard** in the front right side of the windshield. The TSE placard (provided by the TSE Religious School Committee) will contain the names (first and last) of the students being picked up. This will help the parent volunteers load the students more efficiently. We will try to load up the cars as quickly as possible.

For your child's safety:

- Please do not park in the small lot located opposite the side entrance. This creates a dangerous situation when parents ask children to cross in front of incoming and outgoing cars.
- Please do not get out of line if your car has loaded up faster than a car ahead of you.
- Please do not call your child to the car until a volunteer directs them. They will not be allowed to go out of their waiting area.
- Parents who need to pickup up early are welcome to come in to the office to sign out their child(ren). An aide will get your child from the classroom. Please do not come in at regular dismissal time as it disrupts the flow of traffic.

Please note: two of our Temple families have purchased the first two spaces in line for Sunday and Tuesday pickups. Therefore, the line begins at the *third* space.

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL (GRADES 3 AND 7)

The Myra and Robert Kraft **Passport to Israel program** is a special savings plan that helps fund an educational trip to Israel during the teen years. A visit to Israel, for a teenager, has been shown to be an invaluable aid in helping to strengthen a young person's long-term commitment to Judaism. The program unites families, congregations and Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) in a partnership to help make an Israel experience an affordable part of our children's education. **This program begins when a child enters the 3rd or 7th grade.** To foster a closer connection to Israel, mini-units are sprinkled throughout the curriculum, as well as major units about our homeland in grades 3 and 6. Please note the cost of an Israel experience ranges from \$2,500 to \$5,000. This savings plan is for approximately \$2,500.

THE MADRICHIM (TEACHER'S ASSISTANT) PROGRAM

A madrich who worked in a religious school once wrote,

"I have learned many things about children's behavior, teaching methods and new perspectives on my religion. However, I have also learned about my teaching ability, my love for children and how important Judaism is to me. Thank you for helping me become a better, more responsible member of our congregation."

Teaching assistants give us the opportunity to be enriched on three levels—the school, the madrich/madricha him/herself and the community.

Madrachim provide extra hands to teach, do clerical work, update records, take attendance, collect tzedakah and operate audio-visual equipment. They help with children who need extra tutoring, who need emotional support and can lead small group sessions. They are role models for our children. The madrich has a chance to build skills and confidence in working with young students. It is a chance to learn responsibility, experience a sense of being needed, and develop identity with the temple, teachers and other madrichim. It's a chance to gain satisfaction that what they do can positively affect the lives of others. Madrichim are post b'nai mitzvah students. If you are interested in becoming a madrich, please contact Joan Perlman, Director of Education. It involves a commitment to Sundays and/or Tuesdays and a couple of workshops each year.

TEMPLE SHALOM EMETH RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

KITAH GAN (K)

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To become familiar with the stories, rituals, home and synagogue celebration for each holiday
- ✧ To identify symbols, foods and melodies related to the festivals.
- ✧ To explore the concepts of "mitzvot" and ethical values.
- ✧ To engage in discussions about God.
- ✧ To become familiar with the first stories of the Torah.

CURRICULUM:

Our kindergarteners will be delighted with our experiential curriculum of holidays, customs and values, taught through a variety of activities, including stories, music, drama and arts and crafts. The children will receive "Let's Discover the Holidays", a series of pamphlets filled with lovely full color photos, lively illustrations, playful activities and a simple text that young children can understand, even if they can not yet read. In addition, children will receive a wonderful series of pamphlets filled with exciting stories

from the Torah and taught on a young child's learning level. Families join their children on special occasions including a family education program held on a Sunday morning at the temple. Every few weeks the children will have the opportunity to take home a Jewish book from the library cart. All students new to our school will be invited to the bimah during Sukkot services for a special welcome and blessing as they begin their journey of Jewish education as members of our community.

LJL Family Workshop: Shabbatopoly

Students and their families will play a giant board game which teaches the structure of the Friday night service. At the end of the workshop, families will take home a "Picture book Siddur" that they create themselves.

KITAH ALEPH (1)

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To experience the joy in the celebration of holidays and Shabbat.
- ✧ To become familiar with selected stories from the Midrash and the lessons they teach.
- ✧ To explore ethical concepts.
- ✧ To engage in discussions about God.
- ✧ To begin learning the letters and vowels of the Hebrew alphabet.

CURRICULUM:

Our first graders will be treated to an exciting, interactive curriculum which focuses on holidays, ethics and the Hebrew aleph-bet. The students will explore their own Jewish environment by learning about people, prayers, objects and celebrations. This multi-faceted approach will include music story-telling, games and arts and crafts. In addition, the children will be introduced to part of the Hebrew alphabet and have the opportunity to take home books from the library cart. Parents will be actively involved during the year in family learning experiences. These include Shubi the Bear and family grade level programs.

LJL Family Workshop: Home is Where Shabbat Is

In this fun workshop families will participate in a "hands-on, how-to, why-to" Shabbat experience complete with cooking! Not only the how-to, but also the "why" and origins of many Shabbat rituals will be discussed.

KITAH BET (2)

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To engage students in ethical discussions relating to biblical narratives
- ✧ To familiarize students with the synagogue, its clergy and its sacred objects.
- ✧ To draw a connection between ritual objects and their usage during Shabbat and holiday observances.
- ✧ To engage in discussions about God.
- ✧ To review previous learned letters of the Hebrew alphabet, introduce new letters and vowels, some simple words and prayers.
- ✧ To learn about Jewish ethics and values.

CURRICULUM:

Drawing on a second graders sense of wonder and ability to identify with Bible heroes, the students will study Bible using an integrated approach with the textbook, *The Bible From Aleph -Tav*. Building on their previous year's introductory lessons, the children will receive a lively and engaging magazine for each holiday to study in class and to take home for family review. Another area of exploration will be the synagogue – a house of prayer, a house of study and a house of assembly. In addition, the study of mitzvot will be explored. Also, children will continue to learn the Hebrew alphabet.

Parents will be actively involved during the school year in different learning opportunities. Second graders are invited to take a Jewish book home each from the library cart to read with a parent. Students will lead us in prayer one Shabbat evening.

LJL Family Workshop: Home is Where Shabbat Is

In this fun workshop families will participate in a “hands-on, how –to, why-to” Shabbat experience complete with cooking! Not only the how-to, but also the “why” and origins of many Shabbat rituals will be discussed.

KITAH GIMMEL (3)

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To investigate the covenant relationship between God and the Jewish people as found in narrative passages of Torah.
- ✧ To examine our relationship with Israel and her people by "visiting" our people's homeland and learning about her land and people.
- ✧ To explore the Jewish holidays through the world of experience.
- ✧ To review previously learned Hebrew letters and vowels, simple vocabulary and basic prayers.
- ✧ To begin to read Hebrew phrases and prayers.
- ✧ To engage students in ethical discussions.

CURRICULUM:

The brand new book *The Explorer's Bible* examines key individuals from our people's past, focusing on morality and spirituality and how they dealt with problems. We challenge our students to wrestle with their difficult decisions. There is an awareness that what seems to be ancient is, in reality, very timely. We engage the students in an imaginative and experiential approach to learning about Israel. This is highlighted by a “trip to Israel” - they receive their passports, “travel” to our homeland and experience Israel's lifestyle by “visiting” different cities and places. The students will study about ethical choices using the textbook *Jewish Values From Aleph to Tav*.

The students will review previously learned Hebrew letters and vowels and will be introduced to simple vocabulary, blessings and prayers. Hebrew script will be introduced. The highlight of the year will be a *Siyum HaSefer*, a family celebration for successful completion of the student's first Hebrew book. The children will lead us in prayer after a family Shabbat meal together at the temple.

Families will join the children on several occasions during the year. These are days of study and an opportunity to get to know other third grade families.

LJL Family Workshop: Torah Detective

This fun workshop will teach about the Torah scroll, how it is made and how it is written. Participants will then learn how to be a “Torah Detective” and find the deeper meanings in the Torah stories.

KITAH DALET (4) JUDAICA

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To identify what is a prophet and to link the message of a prophet with ethical behavior.
- ✧ To encourage the formation of a strong, Jewish identity and one's membership in the larger Jewish community.
- ✧ To engage in discussions about God.

CURRICULUM:

The children will continue their journey through the Bible. *The Explorer's Bible, Vol. II* introduces our children to the world of prophecy and what prophets do. The inherent ethical message points back to the covenant at Mt. Sinai and the agreement the Israelites made to follow God's laws. It was the laws and customs which enabled the Israelites to retain their identity. The wonderful book *I Have Some Questions About God* is an attempt to deal with the numerous questions children have about God. This book introduces the concept of God and holiness and provides children with a Jewish vocabulary for thinking and talking about God. Families will join their children on occasion for special programs and when they lead us in Shabbat services.

KITAH DALET (4) HEBREW

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To learn to sight read Hebrew.
- ✧ To learn the appropriate blessing to say in different situations and holidays.
- ✧ To practice reading fluency by studying key prayers in our *Siddur* Shabbat service.
- ✧ To learn some basic Hebrew language phrases

CURRICULUM:

The text *Hineni: Hebrew Through Prayer, Vol I* provides a strong foundation for siddur study. It contains information about the meaning of individual prayers, the structure of the prayer service and many moral insights to ponder. Chanukah blessings are reviewed and basic blessings from the Haggadah are taught. In *Ulpan Alef*, child will learn some basic Hebrew language phrases.

LJL Family Workshop: Prayer.com

This workshop helps students understand the origins, forms and structure of Jewish prayer. Through a series of fun activities, students and families will gain a deeper understanding what prayer is and how to use prayer to enhance their own spirituality.

KITAH HAY (5) JUDAICA

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To learn about our sacred texts (Tanach, Talmud, Midrash).
- ✧ To learn about famous Jewish commentators.
- ✧ To examine the rituals which are central to Jewish life cycle events
- ✧ To engage students in discussions on ethics, values and God.

CURRICULUM:

The fifth grade year is designed to challenge our maturing students to discover Jewish life as both a continuum and a daily living experience. The first unit is an experiential program that looks at the Jewish life cycle, using the text *Journey of a Lifetime*. The students will dramatize each life cycle

event, culminating with a mock Jewish wedding. The second piece of the curriculum is "Blueprint for Living Jewishly: The Rabbinic and Primary Texts". Using primary sources and other Jewish law and ethics materials, students will study and evaluate our past, try to discover how our people have endured as well as we have, and how the values and ethics found in our sacred texts apply to our lives, today.

KITAH HAY (5) HEBREW

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To review reading skills by working on accuracy, accent, pace and rhythm.
- ✧ To reinforce **Siddur** vocabulary by translating and understanding key phrases and words in important prayers.
- ✧ To begin understanding the structure of the prayer book, and where specific prayers fit into that structure.
- ✧ To learn some basic Hebrew language

CURRICULUM:

The students will continue with **Hineni: Hebrew Through Prayer, Vol II**, concentrating on prayers from the Friday night and Saturday morning service. They will continue to examine the meaning of the prayers, the placement of the prayers in the service and the ethical values associated with them. The students will lead the congregation in prayer one Shabbat evening during the year. In **Ulpan Bet**, the children will continue to learn Hebrew language phrases.

LJL Family Workshop: Jew Clue

The Hebrew word "Siddur" is based on the root meaning "order". In this workshop we learn about the "order" and structure of the Shabbat service by playing the game "Jew Clue". In the game, students and families will follow clues to solve the puzzle of reconstructing a Friday evening Shabbat service.

KITAH VAV (6) JUDAICA

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To explore ethical and moral issues found in the Bible
- ✧ To learn about modern Israel, her history, the people who built her, her importance to us as Jews and why it is imperative that she survive.
- ✧ To learn about current Jewish events and social issues

CURRICULUM:

The sixth graders will study and participate in three major curricular units during the year. Using **A Topical Bible**, students will wrestle with real-life social and ethical problems that confront many of today's youth. Each chapter presents a moral contemporary issue and examines it through the lens of the Bible. The State of Israel will be explored from its founding through issues confronting the Israelis today. In addition, the students will receive a teen magazine, entitled **Babaganewz**. Using this, they will discuss current issues and social events. There will be opportunities for parent-child learning experiences during the year.

KITAH VAV (6) HEBREW

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To strengthen reading and writing skills.
- ✧ To build *Siddur* fluency.
- ✧ To learn the Shabbat morning Torah service

CURRICULUM:

Hineni: Hebrew Through Prayer, Vol. III continues the order of the prayer service. Students will learn the important Torah service prayers. Volume III continues to explain the meaning of individual prayers, the structure of the prayer service and many and discuss moral insights. Students will become proficient in chanting the service in preparation for Bat/Bar Mitzvah. The class will lead the congregation in prayer one Friday night during the year.

LJL Family Workshop: Torah “Storhtelling”

Torah is not only the source text of our faith it is the fundamental root of our culture. Inspiring "reverence and relevance", participants will learn new ways to find meaning in our ancient stories and their connection to our everyday lives..

KITAH ZAYIN (7) GESHER PROGRAM

OBJECTIVES:

- ✧ To learn about different *Mitzvot* and actively perform them.
- ✧ To engage our students in discussions about God and ethics.
- ✧ To help our students prepare to become active members of the Jewish community.
- ✧ To challenge our students to consider Jewish life beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- ✧ To examine some important leaders of our people, discuss what made them leaders, and identify some of their significant contributions.
- ✧ To review elements of the Shabbat evening and Shabbat morning services for content and reading proficiency.
- ✧ To study aspects of American Jewish history.

CURRICULUM:

We have a very exciting, interactive, experiential curriculum planned just for our adolescent students. Students will not only have the opportunity to learn about *Mitzvot*, but will have the experience of performing *mitzvot*. In addition, they will learn about Jewish leaders and heroes and what makes someone a hero.

This class will meet every Tuesday and only on Sunday when there is a special activity. In addition, there will be a special Friday night service/program. Parents should refer to the special calendar sent home for this class. We will kick off the year with a retreat at Prindle Pond Conference Center in Charlton, MA. Please note: everyone is expected to attend the retreat and all special events. More information will be given out in September.