

**A FAMILY GUIDE
TO
SINAI TEMPLE
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

V'shinantam l'vanecha - Teach the tradition diligently to your children so that they may in turn teach it diligently to theirs. At Sinai Temple we take this charge to heart. We look forward to an association with parents and children that helps children to develop a strong sense of Jewish identity and a foundation of learning that enables them to make Judaism a part of their lives so they will indeed pass their heritage on to others.

Dear Parents,

It is with great pleasure that I offer you the following information and guide to Sinai Temple Religious School and other programming for our students. I look forward to spending time with you and your child(ren) and growing our Jewish education together. If you have questions please do not hesitate to call the office.

L'Shalom

Sheila Shear, M.Ed., C.A.G.S.

Director of Education

**Sinai Temple Mission Statement
and
Religious School Goals**

Sinai Temple Mission Statement

Sinai Temple is a welcoming and inclusive Reform Congregation where our members pursue a continuing journey of Jewish growth. We are guided by the history and traditions of the Jewish people as we encounter the challenges of the modern world. We encourage participation in prayer, lifelong Jewish learning, and social justice within a joyful, creative, and compassionate community.

The Goals of Sinai Temple Religious School

The Religious School is a place where, in addition to acquiring the skills and knowledge to be committed adult Jews, our students are offered opportunities to cultivate a sense of community. We believe their having a sense of belonging and involvement will enhance their current and future learning and commitment.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

SUNDAY	GRADES K-7	9:00 a.m. -11:30a.m..
TUESDAY	GRADES	
	3-6	3:45p.m. - 5:15 p.m.
	7	5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
	8	6:30-8:00 or 8:00p.m.
	9	6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
	10	6:00 p.m.- 8:00 p.m.

Sunday Schedule

On Sunday mornings, the schedule for students in Grades 2 through 7 will be divided into three sessions. The rotation among these sessions will be adapted, depending on the season and other special occasions, in order to provide the best opportunities for all students to achieve their strongest connection with all facets of their Jewish Education. Students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 will maintain a consistent schedule to better meet their developmental needs.

***Schedule for
Kindergarten and Grade 1***

9:00 - 9:20	Introductory Activities
9:20-10:00	Talmud Torah (Religious Study), Special Topics*, Ivrit (Hebrew)
10:00-10:15	Music with Cantor
10:15-11:10	Story Time and Related Activities
11:10-11:30	T'filot (Prayer Service)

***Flexible Schedule for
Grades 2 through 7***

9:00-9:05	Arrival-11:10
9:05-11:05	Three 40 minute sessions consisting of Talmud Torah (Religious Study) Ivrit ,(Hebrew) Special Topics*

Music with the Cantor is regularly integrated into the schedule for all grades

11:05-11:10	Wrap Up
11:10-11:30	T'filot (Prayer Service)

Siddur (Prayer Book) Class for Sixth Graders

Siddur class is the first step in the preparation for B’Nai Mitzvah. All 6th Grade students participate in Siddur class during the Winter/Spring Semester on Sunday mornings during Ivrit(Hebrew).

*Special topics include but are not limited to Tzedakah, Israel, Holidays and the Arts

Important Dates 5772

Shabbat

Friday September 23	Dinner and Blessings Service Participation	7 th Grade Families Grades 5 and 6
Friday November 4	Service participation	Grades 3 and 4
Friday December 23	Shabbat Chanukah	Entire Congregation
Saturday February 4	Family Shabbat and Pot Luck Lunch	Entire Congregation
Friday March 30	Shabbat Dinner and Service	Grade 6
Friday May 11	Shabbat Dinner Teacher Appreciation	Kindergarten through 7 th Grade
Friday June 8	Confirmation Dinner and Service	Grade 10

Sundays

September		
11	First Day of School	Parent Program Grades Kindergarten-7
25	B'Mitzvotav Bike Ride	B'Nai Mitzvah Class 5772
October		
2	Bagels and Blocks	Preschool Families
16	Consecration Prep	Grade 1 Families
23	Rays of Hope	Grade 5
30	No Classes Teacher In Service Day	Teachers
November		
6	Family Learning Day	Grades 5-7 Families
	Bagels and Blocks	Preschool Families
20	Family Learning Day	Grades K-4 Families
December		
11	Bagels and Blocks	Preschool Families
January		
8	Sunday Classes Resume	Grades K-7
22	Bagels and Blocks	Preschool Families
February		
12	Israel Day	Grades K-7
March		
25	School Wide Seder	Whole School
April		
1	Bagels and Blocks	Preschool Families
May		
6	Bagels and Blocks	Preschool Families
20	Final Day Religious School Bar B Que sponsored by Men of Sinai	School

Tuesdays			
September			
13	Grade 10		
	First Day Hebrew School	3:45-5:15	Grades 3-6
	First Day Simchat Sheva	5:00-6:30	Grade 7
	First Day Confirmation	6:00-8:00	Grade 10
27	First Day Grades 8,9	6:00-8:00	Grades 8 and 9
	Joint Dinner Gr. 8,9,10		
October			
4	Regular Classes begin	6:30-8:00	Grades 8 and 9
11	No Classes*		Grades 3-9
November			
15	Final Class Term 1	Classes resume Jan. 10, 2012	Grade 9 only
22	No Class	6:30-8:00	Grades 8 and 9
December			
20	First Candle Celebration	6:00-8:00	All School Families
	Annual Tzedakah Faire		Grades K-10
27	No Classes		
January 2012			
10	Classes resume	No Grade 8	
February			
7	Classes resume	6:30-8:00	Grade 8
21		School Break	No classes
March			
6	No Classes		Grades 3-9**
20	Final Class		Grade 9 Only
April			
17	No Classes		Spring Break
24	Final Day		Grade 8 Only
May			
8	Final Day		Grade 7 Only
15	Final Day Hebrew School		Grades 3-6
<p>* Students are encouraged to attend Erev Sukkot services on Wednesday, October 12 at 6:00p.m.</p> <p>**All students will participate in the Megillah Reading/Purim Schpiel on Wednesday, March 7. Celebration will continue with dinner</p>			

Retreats and Other Noteworthy Dates	
September 2011	
28	Erev Rosh Hashanah
29	Rosh Hashanah Day
October	
7	Kol Nidre
8	Yom Kippur Day
12	Erev Sukkot
13	Sukkot Day
19	Erev Simchat Torah/ Consecration
20	Simchat Torah Day

December	7	Father and Son Super Hero Dinner
	20-27	Chanukah
	25-31	No Classes
February	8	Tu B'Shevat
	19-26	No Classes
March	2-5	Grades 9 and 10 to Religious Action Center
	7	Megillah
	8	Purim Day
	23-24	6 th Grade Retreat
April	6	First Seder
	7	Pesach Day
	15-22	No Classes Spring Break
	18	Erev Yom Hashoah
	19	Yom Hashoah
	25	Erev Yom HaAtzma'ut
	26	Yom HaAtzma'ut
May	11	Teacher Appreciation and SW Dinner
	15	Final Day of Hebrew School
	20	Final Day of Religious School
June	8	Confirmation Service

School Programming

Sunday morning is a special time at Sinai Temple Religious School for students in **Kindergarten through Grade 7**. Students attend from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. during which time they engage in the study of Torah, Jewish values, laws and customs, holidays, history, Hebrew language and other special topics.

Students are taught utilizing developmentally appropriate materials and methods to support them in their endeavors to live Jewishly and encourage the development of a life long interest in Jewish learning.

We work diligently to develop a sense of community among our students and parents. To that end we encourage parents to take advantage of our parent and family programming, and continue to develop school wide programs that bring either all or an extended part of our student body together.

Hebrew classes for students in **grades 3-6**, take place on Tuesday afternoons, classes run from 3:45-5:15. The Hebrew program is Mitkadem, an independent program for individual growth and progress. Students begin this program in Grade 1 and continue through the 7th grade.

We celebrate the changing needs and abilities of our **seventh grade** students by changing the format for Hebrew School in Simchat Sheva on Tuesdays from 5:00p.m. to 6:30p.m. On occasion 7th graders join the 8th, 9th and 10 graders for dinner. During the first semester, through hands on activities and utilization of primary texts, students engage in the beginnings of adult study. In addition to delving into Jewish texts, what the texts are, and how they are relevant to the students, they focus their Hebrew study on the prayers of the Torah Service and Kaddish, During the second semester students begin their exploration of Jewish values and community through photography utilizing the Jewish Lens curriculum.

Grades 8-10

Our post B'Nai Mitzvah students have a number of opportunities to spend time together both socially and in study. Several times during the year the 8, 9, and 10th grade students get together for programs and dinner, or sometimes dessert at the end of the night. Having them all in the building together makes for a joyous and engaging atmosphere.

Our **8th graders** attend classes in four sessions of four to seven weeks, on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m. During the first term students interact with a group of our own Sinai Temple senior adults, utilizing the SPARK/HeartAction program, learning the central Jewish values related to aging and volunteering. The second term students explore world religions, the third term, students learn how Jewish text and values are valuable tools for guiding their self image and peer relationships, utilizing URJ's *Sacred Choices Curriculum*, Middle School Modules, and in the fourth session, student explore Jewish Values and Community through photography with the continuation of the **Jewish Lens** .

In acknowledgement of the changing needs and challenges of our **9th grade** students, this class meets on eight Tuesday evenings in the fall, and ten Tuesday evenings in late winter/early spring, from 6:30p.m. to 8:00p.m. In the fall term students continue their study of *Sacred Choices Curriculum* with High School modules that engage teens in Jewish text study and activities and discussions involving making safe and ethical choices in their dating and sexual behavior. During the Winter/Spring semester students study current social issues and the Reform Jewish response to these issues.

10th Grade students meet with the Rabbi each Tuesday night from 6:00p.m.to 8:00p.m. Students have dinner together, with the Rabbi, and continue the evening with study of what Judaism means in their lives.

Travel Experiences for 9th and 10th Graders

Students in 9th and 10th grades travel together on a two year rotation. In year one, students travel to the Religious Action Center in Washington D.C. where they will meet with about 250 other Reform Jewish teens from around the country to learn, socialize and make a trip to the congressional offices to lobby for an issue they feel is important. It is an amazing experience for all who attend. In the second year, students travel on a The Civil Rights Tour in Alabama and Georgia. These trips are the highlight of each year.

Curriculum Focus

Sunday Talmud Torah Grades K-7

On Sunday mornings classes engage in a grade level focus as well as utilizing school wide special curriculums for Holidays, Tzedakah and Israel. In grades K,1,5,6,7 students use a variety of texts and materials. In grades 2,3, and 4 students utilize the CHAI Curriculum which teaches Torah, Avodah(spiritual work or prayer), and G'milut Chasadim(acts of loving kindness) utilizing various sections of the Torah to help students understand how Torah relates to them in 20...

Kindergarten

- Introduction to the Holidays
- The Synagogue: the people, the places, ritual objects
- Shabbat
- Introduction to the Alef-Bet

Grade 1

- Holiday Symbols
- God
- Torah Stories
- Jewish Calendar
- Ivrit: Mitkadem Ramah 1/Part 1

Grade 2

- URJ Chai Curriculum. This level utilizes the book of Shemot (Exodus) to focus on: “I am part of the Jewish people,” and “The Torah teaches me how to be part of the Jewish people”
- Ivrit: Mitkadem Ramah 1/Part 2

Grade 3

- URJ Chai Curriculum. This level utilizes the book of Vayikra(Leviticus) to focus on the concept of holy living and the two categories of Mitzvot, those between humans and God and those between humans.
- Ivrit: Mitkadem, an independent program for individual progress

Grade 4

- URJ Chai Curriculum This level utilizes the books of Barmidbar(Numbers and D’varim(Deuteronomy) to focus on: Am Yisrael(The people of Israel,), Eretz Yisrael(The land of Israel) and Brit(The covenant).

Ivrit: Mitkadem, an independent program for individual progress

Grade 5

- Life Cycle
- Mitzvot (Commandments)/Tikun Olam(Repairing the World)

Grade 6

- Jewish History from biblical to modern times
- Current Events in Israel and the Jewish World

Grade 7

- Holocaust Studies
- Jewish Ethics In Our Modern World

Hebrew on Sunday Mornings

Students in Kindergarten begin with an introduction to the alef-bet within the context of their classroom schedule. Students in grades 1 through 7 utilize the Mitkadem program on Sundays. Students in grade 1 remain in their classroom with their classroom staff for their learning. Students in grades 2-7 learn Hebrew with a designated Hebrew teacher. They continue their individual study as well as engaging in full class activities to enhance their learning.

Shir Fun

Shir Fun is our student choir, open to students in 3rd grade and up, led by Cantor Levson. Rehearsals take place during the final 40 minutes of classes Sunday morning. Though students must miss a period of class time to participate, the knowledge and experience gained from participating in Shir Fun is an invaluable addition to their Jewish learning. The choir participates in synagogue and community programs. All students participating in choir are responsible for participating in Shabbat services and other events as designated by Cantor Levson.

School Policies and Procedures

These policies are designed to assist in providing a positive learning environment and experience for our students.

Attendance

It is of great importance that students are in attendance when school is in session. We recognize that children have busy lives and engage in many activities, Religious and Hebrew School being one or two of them respectively. Because of the limited time we have to teach, a great deal of work is done in each session. When a student misses school he/she is missing the information to progress effectively and to feel competent to participate in class.

We endeavor to make a student's time spent in Religious and Hebrew School worthwhile. The best chance for your child to be successful is to view his/her time here as a serious commitment. Your support in encouraging this attitude is greatly appreciated.

Homework

We realize that students have demanding schedules. While teachers limit the amount of homework students receive, assignments may be necessary. This is particularly true for the acquisition of Hebrew. Students will be sent home with reading practice. Hebrew School students are requested to spend 15 minutes at least three times per week practicing their reading. Each ramah(level) has a corresponding prayer. To support your child's learning, Cantor Levson has recorded the chanting of each prayer for which chanting is required. These recording are available on the religious school web pages. Also available on this page is the link to our school blog where you can check what is going on in each class throughout the school and comment if you wish. Teachers post to this blog each week. The link for both is:

http://www.sinai-temple.org/Religious_School/startpage.php

Parent interest goes a long way to encourage student participation. If you have any questions or concerns about homework, please contact the teacher or the Director of Education.

Snacks and Food

Food used for any purpose in Sinai Temple Religious School must be considerate of the needs of **all** students in our school. Please let your child's teacher know if your child has food or other allergies which may impact participation in Religious/Hebrew School

activities. We ask all parents to be considerate particularly of nut and dairy allergies and not send food that has nuts or is coated with dairy products.

Weekdays

Because afternoon Hebrew School begins at 3:45 your child should have ample time to have a snack after school or on the way to Sinai. If for some reason this is not possible your child may come to the Religious School office and have their snack before going up to class.

Sunday

Children in Kindergarten through 2nd grade may bring a *small* snack on Sunday mornings if you wish. Please send only food that can be consumed during that time. Water is recommended for an appropriate drink. Please do not send juice boxes or soda. Food may be utilized occasionally for special programs, and may be integrated, with discretion, into specific curriculum and class procedures that will be enhanced by its use. You will receive notification from your child's teacher prior to this occurring.

Behavior

We at Sinai Temple recognize that all children want to be accepted and valued and to behave in a manner acceptable to those around them. To encourage appropriate behavior, the professional staff models and positively acknowledges acceptable behavior.

The standards that have been established for appropriate student behavior include the expectations that:

- Students behave in a respectful manner to those with whom they interact, including teachers, other students, temple members, and visitors to the building; (“Respectful” is defined as, listening to others when they are speaking, responding to others in an acceptable tone and with an acceptable attitude, and carefully considering the viewpoints, thoughts and feelings of others before responding)
- Students demonstrate respect for the rights and property of others by not damaging any property belonging to the temple, teachers, or other students and by returning all items to their proper location when finished using them.
- Students attend class regularly. Please see the attendance policy for information regarding absences.
- Students come to class prepared to participate in all classroom activities and having completed assignments as requested.

A Word About Discipline

We work to make classes engaging, interesting and developmentally appropriate for the students attending Sinai Temple's educational programs, thereby reducing the need for disciplinary intervention. Most incidents involving inappropriate behavior can be rectified with minimum intervention by redirecting the student's energy to the established task at hand. Occasionally, greater intervention may be necessary and the teacher will, in addition to redirecting his/her behavior, speak to the child regarding the

inappropriateness of the behavior. On occasion administrative intervention may become necessary. Should this happen, the Director of Education will speak to the child in an effort to resolve the issues causing the behavior. If these efforts are unsuccessful, and a student's behavior interferes with the learning of others or in some way jeopardizes the learning environment or safety of the classroom, parents will be called and required to pick their child up early. Upon return, the student must demonstrate that his/her behavior will no longer interfere with the learning or safety of others.

Parents will be kept informed of any behavioral concerns the staff may have, and teaching staff and administration will work cooperatively to resolve any concerns.

Education Requirements for Becoming A Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- ❖ Any student planning to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah must be enrolled in and attending Sinai Temple Religious/Hebrew School or an equivalent school which is organized and run under Jewish auspices.

This means that if the child becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah in Seventh Grade, he or she must be enrolled in, attend, and complete the Seventh Grade Sunday, and mid-week Hebrew programs. (There is a minimal requirement of three years in our Sunday and Hebrew programs for anyone moving into the area after Third Grade, which is the grade in which students begin their formal Hebrew studies.)

If the child becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah in Eighth Grade, he or she must be enrolled in, attend, and complete the Eighth Grade program offered by Sinai Temple.

It is also our understanding that becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is part of the larger educational program of life long Jewish learning at Sinai. All students are encouraged and expected to continue learning through to the end of Tenth Grade Confirmation.

- ❖ Students who previously attended a Jewish day School, but are not presently attending one, will be required to attend Sinai Temple's Sunday program. In addition, they will be evaluated by the Rabbi, Cantor and/or Director of Education to determine their competency in Hebrew. Any child attending a Jewish Day School at the time of Bar/Bat Mitzvah but not during the previous few years will be evaluated to determine their competency in Hebrew. If the child's competency is deemed satisfactory, he/she will be considered to have met the equivalent of the Hebrew program at Sinai. If the child's competency is unsatisfactory, individualized assignments according to need will be developed by the Director of Education and/or the Rabbi or Cantor.

Sinai Temple Religious School will make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of special needs learners. Parents of children with documented special needs may, in addition, elect to provide individual Hebrew tutoring for their children based on the following criteria:

- ❖ To be eligible, the child must have a current IEP in place and be receiving special services in school. Parents should share the IEP, relevant assessments and/or other appropriate information with the Director of Education.

- ❖ The Director of Education will monitor each child's progress with a minimum of 2 evaluations per year.
- ❖ The child's family must meet with the Rabbi, Cantor and Director of Education at least one year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to discuss the specifics of the ceremony.

Exceptions to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirement policies will be considered **if** submitted in writing to the Religious School Committee. The Committee will respond in writing within seven days following its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the family is not satisfied, they may seek review of their request by the Sinai Temple Board of Trustees. (All decisions of The Board of Trustees are final).

Dressing Up" for Temple"

The Board of Trustees passed the following resolution at its meeting on December 16, 2004. The resolution originated with the Ritual Committee as a result of some concern about the way in which some congregants have been dressed during Shabbat Services.

Although a Jew can pray anywhere or any time on his or her own, there is something special about praying in a community setting. Although services at Sinai Temple are not overly formal, there is something holy about what we do in the sanctuary. That is why the Ritual Committee and the Board of Trustees believe that dressing appropriately for services is important. In particular, we believe that anyone who participates in a service by coming up to the bimah should be aware of the following:

1. *Wearing skirts that are more than several inches above the knee is inappropriate.*
2. *Girls exposing the midriff is not appropriate for the bimah.*
3. *Boys will want to remember that when they are on the bimah, their shirts should be tucked in.*

In general, Sinai Temple recommends that children who participate in services or come up onto the bimah should dress the way they would dress for a public school concert.

Modesty and respectful dress is always appropriate.

School Closing

Should it be necessary to cancel school due to inclement weather, we will notify Television stations WGGB 40 and WWLP 22. Channel 22 only lists Religious/Hebrew School closings on their web site: www.wwlp.com. If Longmeadow Public Schools are closed, there will be no Hebrew School. Please remember you can always call Sinai Temple for information. Regardless of whether or not there is school, please do not place yourself or your child(ren) in jeopardy by trying to navigate unplowed or unsanded roads.

And Other Important Information

Communication and Evaluation

It is our hope that communication between teachers and parents will be on-going. We encourage our teachers to be in touch with you, both about the class and about your child, through the mail and by telephone or e-mail. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will send home a letter of introduction which includes their telephone number and other ways to be in touch. **(Please do not call teachers or the Director of Education on Shabbat).** The Director of Education is not in the office on Fridays or Saturdays. If you need to communicate with the DOE on either Friday or Saturday you may email at any time. sshear@sinai-temple.org. Written progress reports will be sent home in the winter and the spring. If there is an important occurrence in your child's life (family illness, birth of a child, etc.), it would be helpful to us and to your child if we are notified. These types of occurrences may effect your child's functioning in school and we want to be of assistance if we can. Should you have concern about your child's progress, please speak with the teacher or the Director of Education. The earlier we can identify and discuss any problems, the more likely we are to be able to find a constructive and successful solution. In other words, even if your concern is over something small, call! Better to deal with the concern when it is still small. Of course, it is also wonderful to hear from parents who have positive feedback to offer!

Special Needs Students

We want all students to have a positive Jewish education and to part of the classroom and synagogue community to the greatest extent possible. To that end, please notify your child's teacher and the DOE, at the beginning of the year, about any learning disabilities or other special needs to which we should be sensitive. For students with special needs, it is most helpful for parents (and the student as applicable) to talk about specific needs. Any written evaluations are also helpful. We recognize that this can sometimes be difficult. Please be assured that all information is kept strictly confidential. To the extent that we are able, we try to provide students with additional materials and personnel to assist them in the classroom.

Tzedakah

The *mitzvah* of tzedakah (righteous giving) is an important part of understanding Jewish values and putting them into action. During the course of the year the school will embark on several projects. We hope that each student will bring a small amount of tzedakah each Sunday. Taken together, the school as a whole can raise a great amount of money for the sake of important projects around the world.

The Mitzvah Habbit

Help us feed the hungry

You can't miss it! Every time you enter the Temple, you see the box for THE OPEN PANTRY on the floor outside the Temple office. Sometimes the box is full;

sometimes it's fairly empty. But every week the Open Pantry truck comes by to scoop up whatever the box contains and take it back to the Open Pantry.

You can help keep the box full. Here's how. Whenever you go shopping, buy an extra non-perishable food item. Then whenever you come to the Temple, bring along your food item and drop it in the box. If you're coming to a meeting or services, if you've got business in the office, if your child is coming to Religious School, start a new MITZVAH HABIT. Bring some food along and place it in the box for the OPEN PANTRY.

SIX THINGS TO MAKE THIS THE BEST YEAR EVER

- Make sure that your child attends school regularly and on time.
- Become familiar and involved with your child's Jewish learning.
- Encourage your child to behave appropriately in class.
- Model Jewish living and learning for your child by celebrating Shabbat and holidays at home and at the synagogue, attend family services, attend whole school learning days. Do some studying for your own learning.
- Encourage your child to tell you what he or she has studied by asking questions that require more than a yes/no answer. Send the message that Jewish education is important to you.
- Be in touch with your child's teachers.