

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). It is my hope that together we will grow life long Jewish learners.

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

- To support students in developing a sense of community within the religious school, the congregation, and B'nai Yisrael
- To provide opportunities for students to explore and develop a personal relationship with God.
- To guide students in connecting Jewish values to actions that contribute to *Tikkun Olam* - repair of the world.
- To provide tools that enable children to live a Jewish life.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

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

A Word About the Sunday Schedule

On Sunday mornings, the schedule for students in Grades 2 through 7 is divided into three sessions. The rotation among these sessions is 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	Welcome and Introductory Activities
9:20-9:40	Music with the Cantor
9:40-10:20	Talmud Torah (Religious Study) Ivrit (Hebrew)
10:20-11:10	Kindergarten-Story Time with Ms Gloria
	Grade 1-Special Topics*
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 sessions consisting of Talmud Torah(Religious Study) Ivrit,(Hebrew), Special Topics* <i>(Music with the Cantor is also regularly integrated into the schedule.)</i>
11:05-11:10	Wrap Up
11:10-11:30	T'filot (Prayer Service)

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

Important Dates 5769-5770

Shabbat		
Friday October 2	Shabbat Dinner .	Kindergarten through 7 th Grade
Friday October 7	Erev Simchat Torah	1 st Grade Consecration all school participation
Friday October 23	Toarah and Games	Grades 5 and 6
Friday November 6	Greet and Read	Grade 7
Friday November 13	Tot Shabbat	Preschool
Friday November 20	Greet and Read	Grades 3 and 4
Friday December 18	Shabbat Chanukah	Entire Congregation
Saturday January 30	TuB'Shevat Morning	Program Havdalah for Tots 4-5:30
Saturday February 6	Shul In, Brookline MA	7 th and 8 th Grade
Friday February 26	Synaplex Purim	Entire Congregation
Friday March 12	Tot Shabbat	Preschool
Friday March 19	Greet and Read	Grade 5
Friday April 9	Shabbat Dinner and Service	Grade 6
Friday May 7	Shabbat Dinner	Kindergarten through 7 th Grade
	Teacher Appreciation	
Friday June 11	Confirmation Dinner and Service	Grade 10

Special Programming Sundays			
September			
13	First Day of School	Parent Program →	Grades Kindergarten-2
20	Family Program		Grades Kindergarten-2
	B'Mitzvotav Bike Ride		B'Nai Mitzvah Class 5770
October			
4	Consecration Prep		1 st Graders and Families
	Bagels and Blocks		Preschool
	Low Ropes Course at Springfield Col.		7 th Grade
18	Parent Program		Grades 3 and 4
25	Camp Presentation		School
November			
22	Family Learning Day		Grades Kindergarten-7
December			
13	Chanukah Program		School
20	Parent Conferences		All Parents Kindergarten-7
January			
10	Family Learning Day		Grades Kindergarten-7
	American Girl Tea	11:30-1:00	Watch for Info
February			
7	Bagels and Blocks		Preschool
	Family Program Retreat Intro.		Grade 6
28	Purim		School
March			
28	School Wide Seder		School
May			
16	Final Day Religious School		School
	Softball Sunday		

Important Dates Tuesdays

September				
	7	First Day Confirmation	6:00 p.m.	Grade 10
	15	First Day Hebrew School	3:45-5:15	Grades 3-6
		First Day Simchat Sheva	5:00-7:00*	} Dinner Grade 7
		First Day Pre Confirmation	6:00-8:00*	
October				
	6	9 th Grade returns		
December				
	1	Joint Dinner	6:00*	Grades 8,9,10
	15	Family Program	6:00-8:00	Grades 8,9,10
	22	DJ Night	5:15-7:00	Grades 5 and 6
January				
	5	Opening Class 2010	3:45-5:15	Grades 3-6
			5:00-6:30	Grade 7
			6:00-8:00	Grade 10
	26	Opening Class 2010	6:00-8:00*	Grades 8 and 9
April				
	13	Final Day	6:30-8:30*	Grade 9 only
		Confirmation Orientation	8:00-8:30	Grade 9 families
May				
	8	Final Day	6:30-8:00	Grade 8 only
	11	Final Day	3:45-5:15	Grades 3-6
		Final Day	5:00-6:30	Grade 7

***Please not the special time.**

Retreats and Other Noteworthy Dates

September 2009

	8	First Day Confirmation
	13	First Day of RS
	15	1 st day HS Gr. 3-6
		1 st Day Simchat Sheva
		1 st Day Grade 8 and 9
		Joint Dinner and Program Gr. 7-10
	18	Erev Rosh Hashanah
	19	Rosh Hashanah Day
	22 and 29	No 9 th Grade
	27	Erev Yom Kippur
	28	Yom Kippur

October 2009

	3	Sukkot Day
	6	9 th Grade returns class 2
	9	Erev Simchat Torah/Consecration
	10	Simchat Torah Day
	1	1 st Day 9 th Gr.

November

	24	No Grade 8 or 9 only
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December 2009

	11-18	Chanukah
	27-Jan 3	No Classes

Retreats and Other Noteworthy Dates (cont.)

January 2010	21-24	Confirmation Retreat
	26	Grade 8 and 9 Term 2 Begins
February 2010	6	7 th and 8 th Gr. Shul-In Brookline
	14-22	No Classes
March 2010	5-8	RAC
	26-27	6 th Grade Retreat
	29	1 st Seder
	30	Pesach Day
April 2010	13	Final Class 9 th Grade Only
		Confirmation Orientation
	18-26	No Classes
May 2010	4	Final Day Grade 8 Only
	11	Final Day Hebrew School
		Final Day Simchat Sheva
	16	Final Day Religious School
		Softball Sunday
June 2010	11	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 very 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 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. Through hands on learning and utilization of primary texts, students engage in the beginnings of adult study. In addition to delving into Jewish texts, learning 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,

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 trimesters of six and 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 citizens, utilizing the SPARK/HeartAction program, learning the central Jewish values related to service to the elderly and volunteering. The second term students explore world religions, and 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.

In acknowledgement of the changing needs and challenges of our **9th grade** students, this class meets on eight Wednesday evenings in the fall, and eight Wednesday 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. The semester culminates with a trip to the Religious Action Center in Washington D.C. where students 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 to them. It is an amazing experience for all who attend.

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. The Civil Rights Tour in Alabama is definitely a highlight of the year.

Curriculum Focus Sunday Talmud Torah

On Sunday mornings classes engage in a grade level focus as well as utilizing school wide special curriculums for Holidays, Tzedakah and Israel.

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

- This year, second graders will be piloting the URJ Chai Curriculum.

Grade 3

- Torah
 - Biblical Events
 - Values and how these events relate to us

Grade 4

- Prophets, Kings and Writings

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

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. The choir participates in synagogue and community programs. All students participating in choir will be responsible for participating in Shabbat services as designated by Cantor Levson.

Clubs

In our ever expanding geographic community it has become more and more challenging for our children to have an opportunity to engage socially with other Jewish children. Clubs run several times during the year, after Religious School. Each club is organized by grade level, and activities are designed to be appropriate and engaging for each level. The purpose of these clubs is to encourage students to build social connections, and a sense of belonging to Sinai Temple and his/her classmates, in a relaxed and non-academic way at a time that they can all participate.

- 0. **CLUB ALEF BET** is designed for students in Grades 1 and 2,
- . **CLUB GIMMEI DALET** is for students in grades 3 and 4 and
- 0. **CLUB HEY VAV** is for students in grades 5 and 6.
- 0. **JOY**, our Junior Youth Group for students in grades 7 and 8
- 0. **ROSH HODESH: IT'S A GIRL THING** is a values based, experiential and transdenominational Jewish program for pre-teen and teenage GIRLS in grades 6-12 that strengthens self-esteem and Jewish identity. We currently run two groups. One group for 6th and 7th grade girls and another for 8th and 9th grade girls who attend Sinai Temple Religious School.

Special Programs for Young Children

BAGELS AND BLOCKS: Do you have a 3 or 4 year old? Bagels and Blocks is specially designed for 3 and 4 year olds and their parents. It meets several times a year for music, activities, games and crafts related to Jewish holidays. If you are not currently on our mailing list and would like to be, please call the school office and ask to be added to the list.

TOT SHABBAT: A special Shabbat Service designed especially for your preschool child. Watch the calendar and the web site: www.sinai-temple.org.

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. With the intent of encouraging the success of all of our students, the Religious School Committee has adopted the following policy regarding absence and early dismissal of students from all classes.

In order for a student to progress effectively and be prepared for the following class, a student who misses a class, will be e-mailed a brief outline of the content covered in class, and, a reading and/or written assignment that is reflective of the content missed.

An assignment should be completed as soon as possible after it is received. The assignment should be returned to the student's teacher at or before the next class session. You may email the assignment to sshear@sinai-temple.org or send a hardcopy in with your child.

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.

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 snacks that have nuts or are coated with dairy products. Please send snack for your child only.

Weekdays

- We understand that our weekday Hebrew students sometimes come directly from school to Sinai Temple and do not have time to go home for a snack. If this is the case, please keep in mind the following: Water is recommended for an appropriate drink. Please do not send juice boxes or soda.
- Snacks may be eaten during the first 10 minutes of class only. If your child will be late for class please be certain she/he has had a snack before arriving at Hebrew School.

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 minimum requirement of three years in our Sunday and Hebrew programs for anyone moving into the area after Third Grade)

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 evaluated by the Rabbi, Cantor and/or Director of Education to determine their competency in Hebrew. Attending Sinai Temple Hebrew School will be at the discretion of the Rabbi, Cantor and Director of Education. Attendance at Sinai Temple's Sunday program will be required. In addition, 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:

- *Wearing skirts that are more than several inches above the knee is inappropriate.*
- *Girls exposing the midriff is not appropriate for the bimah.*
- *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. If in doubt call the office after 8:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings and after 2:00 p.m. on weekdays. When possible you will receive an email. If Longmeadow Public Schools are closed, there will be no Hebrew School. In case of inclement weather when there is school and you feel it is not in the best interest or safety of your family please do not attempt to come.

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)**. 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 be part of the classroom and synagogue community to the greatest extent possible. To that end, please notify us 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. The information is then shared with the teacher (with permission of the parents) either through the Director of Education or in a meeting with the parents. We know that this is sometimes 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 services, participate in family and parent programs. 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.