

Temple Beth Sholom Religious School

2009-20010 Parents' Manual

WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER:

Our weekly e-newsletters are our primary means of communication with you. They contain detailed information regarding upcoming events and programs. Please report any changes in your email address, home address, work telephone, home telephone, or emergency contacts to the office immediately, so that we continue to communicate all the information you need.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY:

The goals of Jewish education at Temple Beth Sholom are to deepen our Jewish experience and knowledge, to strengthen our faith in God, our love of Torah, and our identification with the Jewish people, and to further our commitment to the values and principles of Reform Judaism. Toward this end, we have established a religious school that provides a positive educational, spiritual, physical, and emotional environment. We have a motivated and skilled teaching staff.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS:

We want our families:

- To be proud of their Jewish identities
- To desire to continue their Jewish studies
- To be committed to social justice
- To be dedicated to maintaining the State of Israel
- To understand the relevance of Hebrew as a modern language and as the language of prayer
- To appreciate and participate in private and communal prayer
- To create a sense of spirituality in their homes
- To value the contributions of the Jewish people to modern life
- To appreciate Jewish art, music, and literature.
- To be committed to the values and principles of Reform Judaism

We want our families to have the skills to:

- Perform *mitzvot* and carry out the commandments of our tradition
- Further the cause of justice, freedom, and peace
- Practice *tzedakah* (justice)
- Observe Shabbat, Jewish holidays, and Jewish life-cycle events
- Work for the welfare of Jews, all people, and our planet
- Actively participate in religious services
- Engage in dialogue with persons of other religions

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED:

Our aim is to reach the hearts and minds of our students and to enrich and strengthen their Jewish knowledge. We want our next generation to understand its origins and look at itself with pride and respect. To accomplish these goals, we need your support. We believe that Judaism is studied in school, but experienced at home. You, as a parent, have the advantage of spending many hours with your child(ren), while we have them for only a few hours a week. Together, we can create good Jewish experiences for all of our children. Here are a few suggestions that may help:

- Prepare your child for the opening of school. Discuss the importance of gaining knowledge about our culture and religion, as well as the importance of acting for justice in our world.
- Take an active interest in school projects. Join us in holiday celebrations, special family programs, and social justice actions.
- Take an interest in your child's studies, in our school's e-newsletter, and in the materials and notices your child brings home. Your interest will show your child that you really care.
- Bring Judaism into your home. Encourage your child to read Jewish books and listen to Jewish music. Display Jewish art and ritual objects.
- Welcome the spirit of Shabbat and holidays into your home.
- Attend services regularly as a family—the joy of Shabbat and holidays can be a beautiful experience.
- Keep in touch with your child's teacher and the Education Office. Call (714) 628-4620 to make an appointment with your child's teacher or the Director of Education.
- Education must have application and reinforcement. We count on your support!

TEACHER-PARENT COMMUNICATION

Schools succeed because parents and teachers communicate and support each other. Please introduce yourself to all of your child(ren)'s teachers: Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Stop by the classroom periodically, before and after class, to check on your child's progress and participation. Feel free to leave notes for teachers or to call a teacher through the Education Office if you would like to discuss something. All of our teachers welcome the opportunity to communicate with parents. We urge you to discuss anything you deem pertinent or necessary with teachers, the Director of Education, and/or the Rabbi. Just make an appointment through the Education Office. If you would like a parent-teacher conference, feel free to contact the Director of Education to arrange one.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

In the event of a major emergency (i.e., earthquake), we are prepared to do what is necessary to keep your child safe until you can arrive. We have emergency supplies on hand for first aid purposes, as well as food, water, and other supplies to last 72 hours following an emergency. For liability and safety purposes, during a major emergency, we will dismiss your child only to you or to those whom you have designated on the emergency form.

SAFETY, PARKING & TRANSPORTATION:

During school days, we will have many children at our facility and want to ensure their safety. When picking up or dropping off your child, only park in designated parking spaces. Please keep your child(ren) with you at all times. By the order of the Santa Ana fire department, fire lanes must be kept clear. Violators will be issued citations. Please do not wait at the curb. Please enter the lot via Fairhaven and exit via Tustin Avenue. Please drive slowly through the parking lot to ensure the safety of all of our children.

Drop Off: Please wait and watch your child(ren) enter the school building area. After children are dropped off at school, they are not permitted to leave the premises.

Pick Up: All students in Grades K-6 must be picked up by a parent from the classroom.

TBS does not provide transportation. A roster sorted by zip codes is available if you would like to establish a car pool. The school, however, is not responsible for the operation of car pools.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular, punctual attendance is required to make the learning experience in our religious school complete and meaningful. We therefore ask that you cooperate by bringing your children to school regularly and on time. School policy requires that students attend a minimum of 75% of all class sessions during the year. Any student who does not fulfill this requirement must complete a summer assignment, and/or be privately tutored, in order to be promoted to the next grade level. Parents participating in our Family Learning Circle program must also adhere to the 75% attendance policy. Seventy-five percent (75%) attendance in both Adult Learning Tracks and Family Activities is required in order for your child to be eligible for the program the following year. If your child is ill or will miss more than two sessions in a row, please be in touch with the Education Office or your child(ren)'s teacher. In the case of any absence, we encourage your child(ren) to call another student in the class to review what was learned, or to call the teacher through the Education Office to find out what make-up work is required.

BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

Temple Beth Sholom's policy states that by the time of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students must be at least 13 years old and have completed a minimum of 4 years of Hebrew study. Any student who wishes to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah should be enrolled in the Religious School program or the Hebrew Connection (available only to students enrolled in the Family Learning Circle) when entering the third grade and remain enrolled until Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Since becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a statement about one's religious training and understanding, all candidates must be continually enrolled and in good standing in the religious school program. Reservations for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony are handled by the Temple office. A special orientation meeting is held at the end of the 6th Grade year with Rabbi Cohen, Cantorial Soloist Thompson, and April Akiva. At that time, you will receive a booklet describing the program and its requirements.

ASSIGNMENTS TO GRADES

Students will attend the same grade in religious school that they attend in secular school. Any variation of this must be discussed with the Director of Education. Hebrew School class assignments will be determined based on number of years in attendance and the student's Hebrew proficiency.

RETREATS

One weekend retreat experience is included in the tuition for students in Grades 3-8 and Grade 10. Grades 3-6 attend BJE Community Shabbatonim, Grade 7 has a TBS B'nei Mitzvah experience, Grade 8 has the BJE Jewish Values Weekend, and Grade 10 has a TBS Confirmation Trip. Attendance on other BJE Weekends and the Post Confirmation Trips (Grades 11-12) are encouraged (additional registration fees apply).

TZEDAKAH

The purpose of *tzedakah* is to encourage and enable our children to act for social justice in our world. Giving *tzedakah* trains children to act on their own and helps infuse them with a spirit of justice. It teaches them to give and act not because they feel charitable, but because they feel a sense of obligation and responsibility to the needs of others. If at all possible, when students bring in money for *tzedakah*, they should be encouraged to earn at least part of the money contributed. (We will collect *tzedakah* at all regular Jewish Studies class sessions.)

FAMILY SERVICES

Religious Education programs can only introduce a student to the important elements of the Jewish way of life. It is the home, the family, and the participation in Temple life that takes Judaism from the realm of theory into the realm of practice. To facilitate such a transition, the Temple sets aside the first Friday Evening Service each month as a Family Service. Please plan to attend these special services, which begin at 7:30 p.m. For the Family Service schedule, refer to the school and Temple calendars.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Progress reports, or another form of student evaluation, will be distributed at the end of each semester for students in Grades K-6.

LEARNING NEEDS:

We strive to offer individualized learning plans and accommodations for students with special needs in all of our education programs—Jewish studies, Hebrew studies, and bar/bat mitzvah instruction. The Director of Education welcomes the opportunity to discuss all options with you. Please call the Education Office to set up an appointment.

BEHAVIOR:

Disruptive behavior deprives other students of valuable learning time, while negatively affecting the concentration and morale of the teacher and the class. We believe that it is our responsibility as faculty and administrators to make every effort to help those individuals who have difficulty meeting standards of cooperation and participation. It is our responsibility to be supportive of all students, to counsel them and, if necessary, to provide alternatives. We may ask you to confer with us. At no time will physical or verbal abuse be tolerated. Because we must always weigh the needs of the group and the school as a whole against those of any individual student, the Director of Education, with the approval of the Religious Education Committee, may suspend or expel any student whose disruptive behavior persists despite these efforts.

GUESTS WHO VISIT:

Occasionally students may request that a friend accompany them to class. Those students must receive permission from the teachers and the Director of Education before bringing the guest into their classroom. (For safety reasons, we must know who is in our building each day.) The Director of Education reserves the right to decline permission to any potential guest. Of course, parents are always welcome to visit their child(ren)'s classroom. Please stop by the office to let us know you are here for security purposes.

DRESS

Each student is expected to dress appropriately and respectfully for religious school classes, activities, and services. Follow your public school's dress code. Keep in mind that part of some lessons may be conducted in the sanctuary.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE (REC)

REC members are appointed by the Vice President of Education. Any Temple member in good standing may be appointed to the REC. The Chairperson of the REC reports to the Vice President of Education. The REC seeks to achieve the maximum level of growth and development for TBS students and their parents by recommending changes to the Temple Board in all functional areas of the school. If you wish to be considered for membership on the Religious Education Committee, please contact the Education Office at (714) 628-4620.

