

Temple Beth Am Religious School

2009-2010 Family Handbook

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Contact Information

School Office

Director of Education	Rabbi Amanda Lurer education@tempbetham.org
School Administration	Jami Schultz school@tempbetham.org
School Phone	(508) 872-8312
Youth Educator	Jaime Brody (508) 872-8300 x109 youth@tempbetham.org

Temple Office

Temple Administrator	Ellen Jagher (508) 872-8300 shalom@tempbetham.org
Rabbi Miller's Study	(508) 872-8300 x103 rabbi@tempbetham.org
Cantor Schechtman's Study	(508) 872-8300 x104 cantor@tempbetham.org

Our Vision

The Commission on Jewish Education in 1975 set forth the following statement: “The goal of Jewish education within the Reform movement is the deepening of the Jewish experience and knowledge for all liberal Jews, in order to strengthen their faith in God, love of Torah, and identification with the Jewish people, through involvement in the synagogue and participation in Jewish life.”

At Temple Beth Am Religious School, we aim to help our students reach this goal by guiding them with a creative and well-balanced curriculum. We hope that through their years here, students will develop and maintain a positive Jewish attitude, which will lead them to pursue learning and feel comfortable about all aspects of their daily Jewish life and culture. We intend to transmit the concepts and practices of *Tzdekah* (righteousness), *Kedusha* (holiness) and *Gemilut Hasadim* (acts of loving kindness) – the very basics of Jewish values – to every student so that they grow to become valuable members of our Jewish community.

Schedule of Classes

Day	Grade	Time
Sunday	K, 1-6	9:00-10:45am
	2-6	11:15-1:00pm
Monday	7	4:00-6:00pm
	8-10	7:00-9:00pm
	11-12	7:00-9:00pm (monthly)
Wednesday	3-6	4:00-6:00pm
Thursday	3-6	4:00-6:00pm

Religious School Information and Policies

Students with Special Needs

In order to ensure a successful learning experience for your student, please let both your students' teachers and the Director of Education, Rabbi Amanda Lurer, know about any learning styles or techniques that work well for your student. Our goal is to make the learning experience at Temple Beth Am's Religious School as fun and positive as possible. Of course all information will be handled sensitively.

Homework

Beginning in 3rd grade, students are expected to complete regular homework assignments. Our teachers are aware that your students have additional homework from public school. Homework assigned by our religious school teachers will not take extensive amounts of time to complete and are aimed at reinforcing material covered in class. Please ensure that your child keeps up with their religious school work.

In addition to regular light homework assignments, this year we will be renewing our commitment to 10 minutes of Hebrew reading a day policy. Students in grades 3-6 are required to read at least ten minutes of Hebrew every day. Parents will be asked to sign off attesting to their students having read each day.

When your child needs to miss religious school his/her teacher will contact you via email describing what was covered in class and the homework assignment. The student is expected to complete his/her homework by the time he/she returns to class. The purpose of homework is to keep the material fresh in the student's mind in between class sessions.

It is the parent's responsibility to make sure your student is punctual. If you need to pick up your child early, please notify his/her teacher in writing. Under no circumstances will any student be permitted to leave the school grounds during school hours without a parent/guardian. Please come to the school office to sign out your student before your pick them up from their class. **To ensure their safety, students leaving early will not be able to meet you outside.**

Progress Reports

In an effort to "go green," we will be emailing progress reports home in December and May. Progress reports and any other communication will be sent to the email address on the registration forms. Please let us know if your email address changes.

Shabbat Service Requirements

The following Shabbat Service requirements need to be met by all students by the end of each school year. Please remind your students to sign in for service credit on the bulletin board outside the school office.

Up to and including grade 7, all services must be at Temple Beth Am to count toward service credits. From 8th grade and beyond, service requirements can be met at any synagogue, but students are required to attend the Confirmation service at Temple Beth Am.

Grade	Requirement
2	Any 2 services
3	Any 3 services
4	4 services- 2 Friday night, 1 Jr. Congregation and 1 B'nai mitzvah
5	5 services - 2 Friday night, 2 Jr. Congregation and 1 B'nai Mitzvah
6	6 services- 2 Friday night, 1 Jr. Congregation, 2 B'nai Mitzvah + Confirmation
7	7 services- any combination of Family and B'nai Mitzvah + Confirmation
8	Any 4 services plus Confirmation
9	Any 4 services plus Confirmation
10	Any 4 services plus Confirmation

Student Visitors

Due to the fact that student visitors (friends/relatives of our students) tend to place a strain on the classroom environment, visitors are not permitted to attend Religious School.

Different Session Attendance

Students are not permitted to attend a session other than the one s/he is assigned to. Please speak with your child's teacher if you have a special circumstance.

B'nai Mitzvah Requirements

Students are required to complete five years of religious school prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students must also fulfill the Shabbat service requirements for their grade level as well as attending all 3 of the 6th grade family education programs. Students in the 6th and 7th grades are also obligated to participate in either our Ha'mitzvah Ha'zot program *or* Keshet 13. In the Ha'mitzvah Ha'zot program, students are required to complete a total of three projects demonstrating Jewish Living, Jewish Learning and Jewish Doing. Teachers will monitor the students' progress and they will be given an opportunity to share and discuss their projects in class. Keshet 13 is a wonderful program sponsored by the JFCS that enables young people to be involved in the Jewish celebrations of local seniors. An informational program will be held for 6th graders and their families in the fall.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students will work closely with Cantor Schechtman on Monday afternoons as she prepares them for their big day.

Continuing the tradition that was started last year, each bar/bat mitzvah student is also required to write a D'var Torah (sermon). Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family will attend a seminar given by Rabbi Miller to introduce them to the process of writing a D'var Torah. Rabbi Miller will then work individually with each student as they write their D'var Torah. In addition, students are expected to enroll in *and* attend our 8th grade Monday night program. **Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah does not signal the completion of their Jewish education.**

Snack and Food Policy

Students in grades K-2 have a set snack every Sunday. Parents can send in a healthy snack each Sunday.

Beginning in 3rd grade, there is no snack time during Religious School. Food is not permitted in the classrooms when school is in session. Students coming to Religious School directly from public school may bring a snack which they should finish *before* entering class. Please speak with your student's teacher if there are special circumstances. **Temple Beth Am has a no nuts policy.** Please read food labels to ensure all food brought in contain no nuts. **All food brought into the Temple must be in accordance with the synagogue's Kashrut policy.**

Guidelines for Keeping Sick Children Home from Religious School

If your child has a **fever** greater than 100°, s/he should remain at home. The child can return to school after s/he has been fever free for 24.

In the event that your child is suffering from **diarrhea or vomiting**, s/he should stay at home and return to school only after being symptom-free for 24 hours.

Lice Policy

Temple Beth Am has a no nit policy. Any student who comes to school with head lice or nits will be immediately sent home. Please speak with Rabbi Amanda Lurer if you have any questions.

Behavior Policy

In order to ensure a positive learning experience for all our students, we expect our students to conduct themselves with self-respect, respect for their peers and teachers and respect for Temple Beth Am. Each teacher will establish his/her own class rules which will be posted in the classroom and be sent home. If a student's behavior requires his/her dismissal from class, s/he will meet with the Director of Education, Rabbi Amanda Lurer, and continue his/her assignment in the school office. On the second occasion of being removed from class, parents will be called to meet with the teacher to discuss the best way to resolve the behavior issue. The third time the student needs to be removed from class his/her parents will be called to pick up their student and set up a meeting with the Director of Education. If the behavior continues without improvement, the student may be subject to suspension or expulsion from Religious School. **For any act of serious aggression or violence against another student, teacher or other individual, the student will be placed on immediate two-week suspension, during which time the school committee will convene to assess the situation. Violence will not be tolerated.**

Specials

Library

Students in grades K-4 will enjoy library time with Mrs. Massey every other week. They will have the opportunity to check out books and hear a wonderful story. Students in grades 5-6 will have library once a month and will be working on a special historical fiction project this year.

Music

Students in grades K-6 will have the opportunity to learn Jewish and holiday music as well as prepare for the class and junior congregation Shabbat services with Mr. Levey. In addition to learning music, students in grades 3-6 will meet with Mr. Levey to learn and practice their liturgy skills.

Midweek T'filah

This year our students in grades 3-6 will attend midweek t'filah (prayer services) in the sanctuary from 4:00-4:30pm. Each service will have a theme and will be led by a particular class and Cantor Schechtman. The grades will take turns teaching their fellow students about the Jewish Value theme of the week. Through regular practice, our students will gain fluency with the evening service and comfort with being on the bimah. Parents are always welcome to attend these services.

Programs and Events

Family Education Programs

Each grade will have one family education program a year. These programs are designed to give families an opportunity to learn together and to get a taste of what goes on in the classroom. As a result, at least one parent or grandparent must attend. Please do not send your student alone (or with younger siblings) on these days. **Family Education Programs for grades K-6 take place on Sundays during your student's regularly scheduled school session.**

Grade	Date
K	Feb. 7, 2010
1	Oct. 18, 2009
2	Dec. 13, 2009
3	Nov. 15, 2009
4	April 11, 2010
5	Dec. 20, 2009
6	Oct. 4, 2009; Jan. 10, 2010; March 14, 2010; May 23, 2010*
7	April 28, 2010
8	Oct. 19, 2009; Nov. 15, 2009
9	Jan. 11, 2009

*The last Family Education program will take place from 9:00-1:00pm; students from both sessions will attend the entire time.

Junior Choir

Students in grades 3-7 who are interested in singing at Family Shabbat services and being a member of the largest Junior Choir in New England should contact Cantor Schechtman, (508) 872-2260 or cantor@tempbetham.org.

Youth Group

For information on BATY (grades 9-12), J-BAT (grades 7-8) or Club 34 (grades 3-4) and Club 56 (grades 5-6) please contact our Youth Educator, youth@tempbetham.org.

Passport to Israel

Myra and Robert Kraft Passport to Israel Program

Academic and anecdotal evidence have clearly illustrated that even a short visit to Israel can create a Jewish identity where one never existed.

CJP's Myra and Robert Kraft Passport to Israel Program is an innovative savings plan that joins families, congregations and the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Boston together to help make a visit to Israel part of the Jewish education of our teenagers. The classic model for this program enrolls children in the third grade. As long as the child remains enrolled in TBA's religious school, the three partners – the parents, the congregation and CJP – contribute to the Passport to Israel Fund each year through 10th grade.

Between the sophomore year of high school and the start of college, the fund pays approximately \$2200 toward an educational trip to Israel. Yearly contributions for the seven-year savings plan are \$100 per child from the family matched by \$100 from the congregation in addition to \$700 contributed by CJP.

Through congregation-wide participation in the Passport to Israel Program, we have the opportunity to make a teen Israel experience the norm in congregational life at Temple Beth Am.

This is a terrific opportunity for your child. We encourage you to take advantage of it! Contact Mark Stetson for more details. (508-626-3634)

Tzedakah/Keren Ami

Although Tzedakah is usually translated as "charity," this is not a precise translation. Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew root meaning justice and righteousness. We give tzedakah not necessarily out of the goodness of our hearts, but rather because we are obligated to do so. Judaism teaches that because each of us is created in God's image, we are all equally entitled to have our basic needs met. If there is someone who cannot have those needs met, than it is our responsibility as a community to do what we can to help out.

We encourage every student to participate in this mitzvah. It is traditional to give 10% of our income to Tzedakah. Tzedakah is collected every day of Religious School in your child's classroom. At the end of the year, the students and faculty get to vote to decide where they would like to donate the money.

Family Services and Junior Congregation

Junior Congregation

Grades 3-6 lead one Saturday morning service (Junior Congregation) each year. This is an opportunity for the students to demonstrate all of the Hebrew and liturgy skills they have learned in class. The students are called up to the Bima in small groups as they lead us through the Shabbat morning service.

Grade	Date	Time
3 rd Grade	Feb. 6, 2010	10:30am
4 th Grade	Jan. 9, 2010	10:30am
5 th grade	Nov. 21, 2009	10:30am
6 th grade	Dec. 19, 2009	10:30am

Family Services

In addition to Junior Congregation, each grade helps lead one Friday night service during the school year. Students will prepare for their service during class time. The night of the service, students should be in the sanctuary 15 minutes prior to the service and they should sit with their class in the front rows. Please remember that we do not permit photography or videotaping during the service. These services are intended to be “family” services, so please feel free to bring younger and older siblings!

Grade	Date
K+1	May 14, 2010
2	Feb. 5, 2010
3	March 5, 2010
4	Dec. 11, 2009
5	Jan. 8, 2010

6	Nov. 13, 2009
7+8	Oct. 2, 2009
9+10	Oct. 9, 2009

Contributions to the Religious School

The following funds are dedicated to the school. Donations can be made for any occasion or in honor/memory of someone.

TBA Religious School Fund – provides money for general Religious School use and special projects

Norman Rosenblatt Fund – provides money for special needs and student resources

Howard Magier Teacher Enrichment Fund – provides money for teacher special projects

School Committee

The School Committee is comprised of parents who want to take an active part in the Religious School. We are always looking for members who are willing and able to contribute their talents to the committee. If you are interested, please call the School Committee Chair, Hillary Jacobson, (508) 877-2486.

School Cancellation

In the event of inclement weather, WBZ Channel 4, WCVB The Boston Channel 5, and 7 News NBC will carry announcements. The school Temple's website, www.tempbetham.org will also announce any closing.

TBA Religious School automatically cancels when the Framingham Public Schools close.

Temple Beth Am Religious School 2009-2010 Calendar

September 2009

- 10 Welcome Back Ice Cream Social for incoming 8th graders 7pm
- 13 Sunday Religious School begins
- 14 Monday Religious School begins;
Pizza Welcome dinner for 7th -10th students 6:00-7:00pm
- 16-17 Midweek Religious School begins 4:00-6:00pm
- 20 Rosh Hashanah – No School
- 27-28 Yom Kippur – No School

October 2009

- 2 Erev Sukkot: Sukkah Decorating 5:00pm; Pizza Dinner 6:00pm; Sukkot Services led by 7th and 8th Grades 7:00pm
- 4 6th Grade Family Education – Keshet 13
- 5 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 9 7:00pm Consecration Service led by 9th and 10th Grades
- 11-12 No School
- 18 1st Grade Family Education
- 19 Family Education 8th Grade, Family Table, 7:00pm

November 2009

- 9 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 11-12 Veterans Day – No School
- 13 6th Grade Family Service 7:00pm
- 15 3rd Grade Family Education Program
- 15 8th Grade Family Service Project at Family Table in Waltham 10:30-12pm
- 21 5th Grade Junior Congregation Service 10:30am
- 25-29 Thanksgiving Break – No School

December 2009

- 7 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 11 4th Grade Family Service 7:00pm
- 13 2nd Grade Family Education Program
- 19 6th Grade Junior Congregation Service 10:30am
- 20 5th Grade Family Education Program
- 23-31 Winter Break – No School

January 2010

- 1-3 Winter Break – No School
- 4 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 8 5th Grade Family Service 7:00pm
- 9 4th Grade Junior Congregation Service 10:30am
- 10 6th Grade Family Education Program
- 11 9th Grade Family Education 7:00pm
- 17-18 Martin Luther King Day – No School
- 25 Tu B'Shevat Seder – 8th -10th grades

February 2010

- 5 2nd Grade Family Service 7:00pm
- 6 3rd Grade Junior Congregation Service and Simchat Siddur 10:30am
- 7 Kindergarten Family Education Program
- 8 Post Confirmation; Pizza dinner 6:00-7:00pm
- 14-21 February Break – No School
- 28 Purim Celebration Special School Schedule: early session 9:00-10:30am; Communal Megillah Reading 10:30-11:30am; late session 11:30-1:00pm
- 28 Purim Carnival 1:00pm

March 2010

- 1 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 5 3rd Grade Family Service 7:00pm
- 7 It's My Party – Party Planning Expo 2:30pm
- 14 6th Grade Family Education Program
- 21 Junior Choir Zimriyah 1:00pm All Jr. Choir students to attend early session today.
- 28 School Passover Celebration
- 29-31 Passover Vacation – No School

April 2010

- 1 Passover Vacation – No School
- 5 Passover Vacation – No School
- 7 4th Grade giving of B'nai Mitzvah dates, 5:30pm
- 11 4th Grade Family Education Program
- 12 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 18-20 9th and 10th grade trip to NYC
- 18-25 Spring Vacation – No School
- 28 7th Grade Retention Program with parents, 7:00pm

May 2010

- 2 Mitzvah Day 9:00am- 1:00pm
- 3 Post Confirmation; Pizza Night 6:00-7:00pm
- 12-13 Last Midweek Religious School
- 14 K and 1st Grade Family Service 7:00pm; Education Shabbat – Honor our Teachers
- 17 Last Monday Night School
- 18 Confirmation and Shavout Service 7:00pm
- 23 Last Sunday Religious School; 6th Grade Family Education Program- Tallit Making 9:00-1:00pm

June 2010

- 11 Religious School High School Graduation 6:00pm