



Parent Handbook
Rabbi Robert Lefkowitz

Religious School Administrator
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WELCOME TO OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Congregation Beth Shalom holds Religious School on Sundays for students in Kindergarten through seventh grade, from 10 am – 12 pm



706 Bryan Road
Brandon, Florida 33511
(813) 681-6547
www.bethshalom-brandon.org

CURRICULUM

We have enhanced our programming to include a wonderful series of books for our Judaic lessons. The curriculum focuses on learning about our History, the Jewish Holidays, and Jewish values in today's world while building a connection with Israel, our Jewish Homeland. We assess the students' understanding of these areas through activities, class discussions and projects. The Hebrew curriculum at the Beth Shalom Religious School is a prayer-based one. Our students are exposed to Hebrew letters and vowels with the goal of giving them the skills to be active participants in Shabbat and holiday services.

Pre-Kindergarten/1st Grade	Introduction to Hebrew letters through multi-sensory activities.
2nd/ 3rd Grade	Focus on learning the names and sounds of the Hebrew letters and vowels. Begin putting basic Hebrew words together and learning many simple prayers. We will be employing the Alef Bet Quest which has an online capability for home study.
4 th /5 th Grade	Review letters and vowels. Read more complex Hebrew words. Introduction to reading prayers. We will be using the Masoret series.
6 th /7 th Grade	Focus on reading and understanding the meaning of prayers from the Shabbat service.

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP

Students may be dropped off after 9:45 am Sunday mornings. For your child's safety, do NOT drop them off unattended. NO food or drink is permitted in the classrooms unless previously arranged with the Teacher or Administrator.

Student safety will always be our top priority. To address the concern of children in the parking lot as cars are pulling in and out, **students will remain in the Sanctuary and parents will need to come in to pick up their children.** Religious school staff will be at the sanctuary doors to ensure that no student leaves the area without an adult escort. *Please be advised that NO child will be allowed out of the sanctuary without being released to the adult responsible for their way home.*

ATTENDANCE

For your child to maximize his/her Jewish education, it is essential that attendance is a family priority. Please contact Christine Stockelman to report your child's absence. Teachers

will maintain attendance records for each student. If a student is absent for two consecutive sessions, the teacher or Religious School Director will contact the family. Students are expected to make-up any missed assignments due to an absence.

Repeated absences may result in additional assignments or a project to cover the missed work.

SUPPLIES

Students will be provided with a binder or folder for their materials and are expected to bring the binder to class each session; however, they should bring a pencil with an eraser for use in class in addition to any textbook or other materials given to the student. Students and their parents are held responsible for lost or damaged textbooks or materials.

HOMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Homework may be assigned each week in Judaic and Hebrew studies. All homework should be completed when due, as it is used to reinforce skills taught in class. Homework can also be used to bring Judaism into the child's life outside the walls of our temple. Parents are encouraged to review the homework, and to become an integral component in their child's Jewish education.

TZEDAKAH

Students are asked to contribute to the school's Tzedakah fund each week. Please discuss with your child the importance of charity and ensure that they arrive to class with a donation. Remember, it is the *practice* of giving, not the amount that is important with Tzedakah.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If your child has any medical, educational, or personal concerns that may affect their school performance, please arrange for a confidential meeting with the Religious School Administrator. Any information disclosed will be shared with the child's teacher on an "as needed" basis only.

DISCIPLINE

Students are expected to maintain the same standard of behavior as in the public and private schools in Hillsborough County. All students will have the right to participate in a safe, enriching environment that is conducive to learning. No student will be allowed to interfere with the learning environment of others. The teacher and/or Religious School Administrator will deal with inappropriate behaviors immediately. Please review the *Religious School Discipline*

Plan. The Youth Education Task Force and Religious School Administrator reserve the right to suspend a child from class for severe or continuously disruptive behavior.

DRESS CODE

A student's dress should not interfere or distract from the lessons being taught in the class. All students will be dressed in a fashion that is not inappropriately revealing.

SCHOOL CALENDAR/UPDATES

A Religious School calendar will be provided to all families enrolled and will also be posted on the congregation's website for reference. Please read the monthly *Kibbitzer* and Religious School eblast for important school events or calendar changes that may occur during the year.

PROGRESS REPORTS AND PARENT CONFERENCES

Progress Reports are sent home twice a year in January and June. The Progress Report serves as a formal communication between the school and home. Parent Conferences provide an opportunity to discuss your child's progress and to plan for the student's future education. Parent Conferences may be scheduled upon request.

WORSHIP

Our collective goal is to lead our children to live meaningful Jewish lives. In the classroom, the children are taught about prayer and belonging to a holy community, yet the classroom experience can never replace actively joining a community in prayer on a regular basis. Parents and children are encouraged to attend Shabbat services on Friday evenings and High Holy Days services. This will serve to reinforce

classroom lessons and foster a feeling of community within our congregation.

Students will participate in a Friday Shabbat service at least once a year. The families will be responsible for hosting the Oneg Shabbat, which will be coordinated by the Homeroom Parent for that class.

FUNDRAISING

Our Religious School will hold fundraising projects throughout the year. The monies raised are used for the Religious School and other important programming in the Synagogue that directly benefit our children and families. The success of the fundraisers is dependent on your support, and it is essential that we have volunteers to coordinate these different efforts. To help with one or more of these fundraising projects, please contact your Religious School Administrator.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Participating in the CBS Religious School involves various parental responsibilities, including as follows:

- Modeling positive Jewish values and behaviors and being supportive of the educational process.
- Bringing your child to school on time with all necessary books and completed homework assignments.
- Regularly checking your child's folder for important notices.
- Participating in Family Education programs and volunteering to assist with at least two special school events.
- Maintaining communication with the Religious School. Please do not hesitate to contact the Religious School staff to express any comments or concerns you may have.



Rituals and Disciplinary Plan on next page.

RITUALS

CONSECRATION

All students entering first grade, or who are enrolled in a higher grade and new to the Religious School, will be consecrated at the Chanukah Shabbat service. This special worship service signifies the official beginning of a child's religious education. Each consecrant will receive a special certificate during the service. The families of the children being honored will be asked to host the Oneg for that evening.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH

To be eligible to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student will be required to complete a minimum of two years of religious school at Congregation Beth Shalom of Brandon. Exceptions may be made when a family moves to the area within the two years prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The student must have attended religious school elsewhere during that period and will be evaluated to determine their level of Hebrew proficiency. **A student must be enrolled in Religious School during the year of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, with an 85% attendance during the year.**

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is a three-year post B'nai Mitzvah program; classes are held bi-monthly on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm. The program culminates with a confirmation ceremony and worship service lead by the confirmation students. The students' families will be asked to host the Oneg Shabbat for that evening.

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PLAN

Our hope is that parents will make all students aware that the **Congregation Beth Shalom Religious School** is just that, both a **Jewish** school, and a place where **Jewish** religion is taught and practiced. It is a school that promotes responsibility, respect (*kavod*), civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. Judaism teaches that all people are created in God's image and shall be treated with *kavod* (respect).

Expected Behavior

- Treat your teacher with respect (*kibud morim*).
- Respect the subject (Judaica).
- Respect the feelings of others.
- Respect the school's property.
- Religious
- Follow teachers' instructions.
- Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
- Do not bring items from home to class, unless given special permission from the teacher

Disciplinary Procedures

The staff will make every effort to deal with disciplinary problems in a positive and productive manner. Students will be treated with respect. Each teacher will discuss with her or his class proper behavior. Every effort will be made to deal with disciplinary problems within the classroom and school. Occasionally, however, such efforts may prove ineffective. In that case, the following measures will be taken:

1. Verbal warning.
2. Written warning from teacher or religious school director.
3. Child is removed from class and sent to religious school director. Phone call from student to parent to resolve problem will occur.

Congregation Beth Shalom is a small congregation. Teachers in the religious school are dedicated instructors giving of their time to help your child learn. Disruptive children make it impossible for other children in class to learn. Parents of children with ongoing disruptive behavioral problems will be required to attend religious school with their child. If all attempts to resolve a problem fail, the Religious School Task Force reserves the right to remove a child from religious school due to excessive, continued disruptive behavior.