



Temple Beth Or
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**IS A CARING, WELCOMING, AND INCLUSIVE REFORM
JEWISH CONGREGATION THAT PROVIDES FOR THE
RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL
NEEDS OF ITS CONGREGANTS AND IS RESPONSIVE TO
THE COMMUNITY-AT-LARGE. TODAY . . . AND FOR
GENERATIONS.**

TEMPLE BETH OR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Mission Statement & Educational Philosophy

**Temple Beth Or Religious School
Is dedicated to educating the whole child
Through building a connection to Judaism, God, and
the world.**

**We create positive Jewish memories
And happy Jewish children.**

Turn the Torah over and over, for it contains everything.
Keep your eyes riveted to it.
Spend yourself on its study, never move from it,
For there is no better way of life than that.

Pirkei Avot 5:25

As part of a Reform Temple, the Temple Beth Or Religious School has a point of view consistent with Reform Judaism. The school assumes the task of helping the learner develop, within him or herself, perceptual, sensorial, emotional and intellectual insights in relation to Judaism and the responsibilities of being Jewish.

Curriculum

Goal:

To create a curriculum that incorporates an experiential model of Jewish education with an emphasis on **informal education, creative teaching** and **independent thinking**.

Objectives:

Each year of the program will emphasize the importance of developing “**memory moments**”, those moments in which a positive Jewish memory will be introduced and reinforced. These moments will be woven together through a child’s journey at Beth Or culminating in an enriching, meaningful and lasting relationship with Judaism.

The acronym of **S.M.A.R.T.** will be used to describe the way in which the classes will be taught to engage all the senses and skills of our students.

- S** Storytelling
- M** Music
- A** Artistic Expression
- R** Reflection & Reinforcement
- T** Text & Torah

S-STORYTELLING

We are a people of the book. We as Jews have emphasized the importance of telling stories as teaching tools from our very beginnings. We also honor the importance of creating our own stories and interpretations. Our students are never too old to listen to a good story and never too young to create their own. During each class the students will take part in “story listening” and “story telling.” Depending on the age of the student these story sessions may consist of books, creative writing, film, and computer. The emphasis will be on “active listening” and adequate time to process the exercise.

M-MUSIC

Music can set a tone for a school. We begin our day with Jewish music playing in our halls. Each class will have access to music both through our cantor and music teacher and cds played throughout the class periods. Depending on the subject of the class curriculum the music may range from classical cantorial pieces to Israeli rock. The stimulation of the student’s auditory memory will allow for greater retention and a more relaxed attitude.

We also have an established Junior Choir and Drumming Group “Ha tof et ha Ruach-The Drum of the Spirit.”

A-ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Here at Beth Or we emphasize creative interpretation and imagination. The students need to feel a passionate connection to their Judaism and often art is an avenue for such an experience. We have an art teacher on staff and each class will contain an art component. Our hallways and classrooms serve as canvases for our student’s expressions.

R-REFLECTION & REINFORCEMENT

Students need to be seen and heard. This is their school. Ownership comes from active participation in all aspects of the school. Each class will contain a feedback session and all the students will have an opportunity to be heard. The material presented in class should be processed for full retention.

T-TEXT & TORAH

Torah and other Jewish Texts are integral to our success in creating memory moments. Text should be part of every less

Sacred Space

Teaching is a noble profession; in our hands we hold not just the minds and intellectual capacities of our students but their hearts and souls. We are charged with the sacred task to create Jewish Memories – that is the greatest gift we can give our children. For the journey itself is sacred. We as teachers are spiritual guides to our students.

Classrooms will become sacred spaces filled with student driven explorations of topics such as the search for God in our lives. Rituals such as in-class prayers, community services, and multi-grade open forums can be created and implemented. Students will be supported and commended not just for how hard they are trying but also in how compassionate they are being to fellow students. Concepts such as Tikkun Olam (Repairing the Worlds) and G'milut Chasidim (Acts of Loving Kindness) will be integrated into all aspects of school life.

Rabbi Wayne Dosick writes in his book Soul Judaism,

“Let everything you teach be infused with the presence of God. Put God at the very core of everything Jewish, of everything human. Let your main task be to help our children create their own personal, intimate relationship to God. Teach your children to seek God, to know God, to love God.”

Rabbi Dosick is addressing this charge to Jewish teachers. It resonates deeply within the goals of our religious school. Our teachers are the best of the best. Their goal will be to care for your children. This is our opportunity to nurture Jewish souls. This is our path.

As a school we will be supportive of making available outside educational opportunities for our staff. These may include further training in related fields, spiritual retreats, and reaching out to spouses and family to involve them in Temple Life.

The creation of Sacred Space takes place one child at a time, one spiritual guide at a time, one parent as a time, one member at a time.

Teachers

Our teachers are hired not only for their excellence in teaching, but also for their inherent ability to nurture our students. Each teacher and teacher's aide although assigned to a specific class, is available to any of the students to provide assistance and guidance.

At Temple Beth Or Religious School we see each moment as a teachable one and realize that some of our greatest teachings take place outside the classroom walls. Our teachers use the entire Temple as an open classroom. Our children and staff are always in the presence of God.

Abraham Joshua Heschel taught that, *“All it takes is God, a soul, and a moment. And the three are always there.”* It is this realization that will drive our learning and our living.

Judaic Studies on Sunday Mornings

Kindergarten Program

“We Are Keepers Of The Earth”

To introduce the students to Judaism through a program of environmental awareness. Topics such as God, Holidays, Blessings, Tikkun Olam, and Hebrew Alphabet will be explored through the lens of our responsibility as “Keepers of the Earth.”

First Grade Program

”You Are A Blessing”

Focusing on the importance of Blessings in Judaism students will engage with Torah stories, Holidays, Basic Prayers and Hebrew Alphabet. Students will learn about the Jewish blessing as it relates to each lesson. At the end of the year the students will create their own blessing books.

Second Grade Program

”A Year In Israel”

To introduce the students to the land, people, and culture of Israel. An experiential year of travel in which each day will be an adventure. Holidays, History, Music, Art, Bible Stories, Hebrew Alphabet and Vocabulary, and Prayers will be seen through the lens of the land of Israel.

Third Grade Program

”What Is A Jew”

To serve as a bridge between our intro courses and later curriculum. In this course the students will look at the basic formula of God –Torah –Israel as they continue to explore their own sense of Jewish Identity.

Fourth Grade Program

“A Jewish Life is a Journey”

To introduce the students to what we do as Jews to honor time. The Jewish calendar will be explored and learned. The class will also focus upon the Jewish Lifecycle events from Birth to Death.

Fifth Grade Program

“Where Do We Come From?”

Through hands on projects, Jewish History will come to life. Starting with an adventure in Biblical Archaeology the class will travel through the Jewish Timeline culminating in an exploration of American Reform Jewish History. Field Trips may be part of this class.

Sixth Grade Program

“Dancing In The Orchard Of Torah”

Using the Traditional model of Torah Study known as PARDES the class will analyze and engage with Torah. This class will look at the stories and characters of Genesis and Exodus with an emphasis on the student’s interpretations and relevancy to their own lives.

Seventh Grade Program

“A Dramatic History of the Jewish Journey”

An interactive reenactment and re-experiencing of Judaism’s most significant moment in time. This course taught in a creative and challenging multi media approach will help our students to see this part of Jewish history in a cutting edge and modern way. This is the home of Jewish Reenactment Theatre.

Eighth Grade Program

“Who am I and where do I fit in...”

Our 8th graders will study and experience the important and fascinating world of comparative religion. Realizing we need to understand ourselves before we can truly understand others this course begins with an in-depth exploration of Judaism and her different approaches. The second semester is spent on the road visiting other faith communities.

Bi Weekly Pre School Program

“Planting The Seeds Of Torah-Gan Yeledim”

To use our highly successful program designed for 3 and 4 year olds and their parents to explore Judaism using Story telling, Art and Music. Each class is 1 hour long in our special pre school room.

Nesiya- Preparing for the Journey Temple Beth Or High School Program



The high school years are of utmost importance to us at Temple Beth Or. Our 9th –12th grade programs seek to establish in each of our students a sense of Jewish identity and the importance of their spiritual journey. *NESIYA* means journey, for our teenagers are preparing to embark upon an important and powerful journey of self-realization and self-discovery. As we prepare them for their physical journeys away from home, we hope to equip them with the tools and insights they need to venture into the Jewish world.

The journey begins with our 9th grade program of Jewish Identity and Culture Project. The class will examine the role of Judaism as both a religion and a culture to its adherents. Students will look at modern Judaism through the lens of 21st century media and entertainment; learn Jewish cooking while studying our history and holidays; create their own Jewish Identity projects.

The *Nesiya* continues in our Confirmation year in 10th grade where Jewish texts will come alive with bi weekly in depth study with Rabbi Chessin on issues that face Jews in their contemporary lives. Ancient stories are brought to bear on the modern day dilemmas, which face our Jewish teens. This is a seminar style course culminates in a worship service created by our 10th graders as they confirm their choice of Judaism as young adults.

Our Post-confirmation Students prepare for the next more mobile stage in their journeys. When they go to college or out into the work force, they will interact with peers from diverse racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Nevertheless, when they are talking with their friends and questions come up about what Judaism believes in, will they know how to answer? Will they be able to explain Reform Judaism when faced with challenges from their more traditional Jewish peers? We teach in our schools the importance of the Land of Israel, but do we give our students the necessary knowledge about the complexity of the situation to face the attacks from campus anti-Zionists?

Our 11th and 12th grade students will be able to explore their spiritual and theological paths with both of our rabbis. In a monthly session they will explore not just Jewish liturgy, but explore what Jewish worship, prayer and meditation say and do to them! They will study not just who and what is a Jew, but define their own vision and sense of their Jewish future in our world. We will accomplish this through a lively seminar approach, food, debate, retreats and an out of town trip. The students will also be afforded

opportunities to teach their new insights in our religious school, under the supervision of Rabbi Burstein.

We are looking forward to providing food for their bodies, minds and souls as they prepare for the NESIYA, their Jewish journey ahead.

Hebrew Curriculum Grades 3-6

Combining Traditional Prayers with Progressive Methodology

We at Temple Beth Or realize the importance of liturgical Hebrew practice as we hope to see each of our students become a B'nai Mitzvah. We also realize that each student is a unique and special child with their own needs and learning styles. We offer both a traditional program of Hebrew School culminating in a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at age 13. As a school however we work within a flexible and holistic educational system. This allows us to tailor special programs and tutoring opportunities for students who may need extra attention. These programs include creative ceremonies, summer tutoring classes, and programs designed for older students.

Our classes cover not only letter and word recognition but also a love for the Hebrew language supported by our highly qualified staff. Hebrew is taught not just by rote repetition but experiential lessons. We are the only school in Dayton to offer services on Wednesday afternoons led by the teachers and students themselves.

Hebrew letter recognition begins in our Pre-School and Kindergarten classes. In our 1st and 2nd Grade classroom children are taught basic blessings, vocabulary and Modern Hebrew words and phrases through game playing and art. Grades 3-6 encompass our formal Hebrew school program. Each year builds upon the other with a focus on prayers, service leading and continued vocabulary. These skills are reinforced through practice in our monthly student led Friday night family services, weekly Sunday morning all school prayers, and Wednesday afternoon services.

We at Temple Beth Or value a multi-medium and experiential prayer experience. We use not only our classrooms for prayer but also our indoor and beautiful outdoor sanctuaries. . Each student is given the space to explore their own personal connection to God led by skilled and compassionate teachers.

Alternative Hebrew School

Many of our students travel great distances to attend school. For these students we will offer an intensive Hebrew School program from 1-2pm on Sundays. It is left to the discretion of the Director as to who qualifies for such a program.

On Site Specialists

We have both a Music Specialist and an Art Specialist on –staff. They are available to our teachers to help with curriculum development, special programs, and class lessons.

Parent Involvement

Our classrooms are always open for visits by parents. There will be opportunities to participate in Class Onegs, PTO, and Class Parents. During Family Days parent participation is necessary.

Social Time

Each of the classes will be allotted certain time during their day as free space to interact , share snack, and get to know each other. This is an essential component to a 3 hour program.

Fees

In order to enroll your child in Religious/Hebrew School, you must be a member in good standing at Temple Beth Or, and all dues and fees for the previous year must be paid in full. Religious School and Hebrew School payments are due on the first day of classes and are not refundable.

Absences

Satisfactory attendance means that the Director and Teacher are notified of special circumstances regarding attendance. A plan for helping the student become current is arranged as necessary for students who have excessive absences.

We will track each child's attendance and when absences become excessive the parent, child, teacher and Director of Education will meet to discuss a plan to help the student become current with the lessons and deter any future absences.

Early Dismissal

If early dismissal is necessary, please send a note to the classroom teacher and retrieve your child by coming to the office. A student will not be permitted to leave the building unaccompanied. Students will not be permitted to wait outside the building or their classrooms. For security reasons we ask that you come to the office to pick up your child and not go to his or her classroom.

Grievance Policy

Most classroom problems can be easily handled by a discussion between parent, student and teacher. If you are not satisfied with the solution after first consulting with the teacher, please address your complaints to the Director of Education.

Discipline Policy

When a student experiences difficulty with regards to behavior or class performance, a meeting with the Director of Education will be held. If a student requires subsequent meetings, a conference with the student, parents/guardian and the Director of Education may be necessary.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather, tune your radio to 1290 AM (WHIO) "Schoolwatch". Announcements will be broadcast by 8:00 a.m. on Sundays. If there is inclement weather on Wednesday, tune your radio to WHIO. If Centerville City Schools are closed, Hebrew School will be closed. The Education Office voice mail will also indicate if school is closed.

Guests

If your child would like to bring a guest to Religious School, please contact the teacher and the office prior to the visit. Parents are encouraged to attend classes. Please check with the teacher before the visit..

Tzedakah

Giving tzedakah enables the students of our school to contribute toward Jewish funds in a purposeful and educated manner. In the process, the students learn the art of participating in organized community life. The students develop the habit of and desire to contribute to Jewish causes on a regular basis, as well as the willingness to work for communal agencies. Giving tzedakah helps foster a personal sense of identity with Jew everywhere, and a personal feeling of responsibility for Jewish needs. Please encourage your children to donate from money they have earned and saved themselves.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Please refer to the current Bar/Bat Mitzvah handbook for a discussion of the requirement for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Questions should be directed to Rabbi Chessin or Rabbi Burstein.

Confirmation

Confirmation is the process by which individuals pledge their commitment to Judaism, and requires an understanding of the teachings and practice of Judaism. Before entry into Temple Beth Or's Confirmation class (Grade 10), students must have completed an uninterrupted course of Religious School study as prescribed by Temple Beth Or.

DAYTON JEWISH COMMUNITY STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH YOUTH CEREMONIES

The following standards, established by the Synagogue Forum of Greater Dayton, are the minimum requirements for any Jewish teenager to hold a public Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony in the Greater Dayton area during a Saturday morning, Friday evening, or any major holiday service:

1. Bar/Bat Mitzvah must attend either a Jewish Day School or their Synagogue Religious School for at least 5 years. The religious school must certify that the child has fulfilled its educational requirements. This requirement may be fulfilled by new members to the Dayton Jewish community by their religious school attendance in their former community, subject to approval of their local Synagogue Rabbi.
2. Bar/Bat Mitzvah must be enrolled in either a Jewish Day School or their synagogue Religious School for the two years prior to their celebration. The student is expected to complete the religious school year regardless of when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah occurs in the academic year.
3. The family must be members in good standing of the Synagogue where the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is being held. The family's financial obligations to their Synagogue and religious school must be current.
4. Exceptions to these rules may only be considered for special circumstances by recommendation of their Synagogue Rabbi with approval from their Synagogue Board of Trustees.

Adopted by: Beth Abraham Synagogue
Beth Jacob Congregation
Congregation Shomrei Emunah/Young Israel of Dayton
Temple Beth Or
Temple Israel

Unanimously endorsed by The Jewish Education Commission of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton.