

Beth Israel Congregation Religious School

Our Mission Statement:

The mission of the Beth Israel Congregation's Religious School is to provide our students with a strong foundation of Jewish knowledge, leading to an adult life of Jewish commitment and observance. This foundation is fortified by regular attendance at Shabbat and holiday services in our synagogue, observance at home and the practice of tzedaka and tikun olam throughout the year. Our religious school will incorporate history, prayer, practice, ritual, ethical concepts, the Hebrew language and the study of Israel in an effort to develop a sense of positive Jewish identity. Each year, the students will explore these areas with a deeper perspective; building their studies on past experiences and knowledge, offering greater challenges as the students reach new levels. The goal is that our students become respected members of the Jewish community, and that they develop an appreciation and understanding of our shared responsibility for the future of the Jewish people, in Salisbury, in America and in the world.

Our Goals:

- To create an awareness of Jewish history, including major historical figures and events and to understand its impact on Jewish thought.
- To teach an appreciation of the Torah and its relevance to Jewish identity.
- To develop proficiency in Siddur (prayerbook), Hebrew and synagogue skills, so as to provide a sense of familiarity and comfort in any synagogue.
- To create the desire to initiate and participate in Shabbat, holiday, and Jewish home life rituals.
- To gain love and appreciation for the State of Israel.
- To understand the concepts of mitzvot (commandments), tzedakah (charity) and tikkun olam (repairing the world).

GENERAL POLICIES AND RULES

1. GRADE PLACEMENT AND SCHEDULES

- Grade placement will follow as close as possible to the student's secular school placement.
- Our religious school program (Sunday school) begins in kindergarten. Children will begin to learn about their Jewish identity through their study of holidays, Bible and other aspects of Judaism.
- Sunday school is held each Sunday from 10:00-noon. Our religious school program runs on the Wicomico County public school schedule. There will be no Sunday school on Sundays prior to a Monday public school day off.
- Hebrew classes begin as a child reaches 3rd grade in their secular school. Hebrew classes are held on either Tuesdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Check your child's class schedule.
- The policy of the Congregation requires students attend Hebrew/ Sunday school to be eligible for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Any questions about this should be addressed to Rabbi Beinstock.
- Every effort should be made to keep absences to a minimum, as there is so much to learn and experience!

Carefully check the school calendar regarding school closings and special programs (especially in the fall).

Please adjust your schedules accordingly.

2. ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

- Students should arrive 5 minutes early for class and should plan on staying for the entire class time. Our school year is short please make every effort not to miss any classes. It is very difficult for teachers to help student's "catch up" to the rest of the group.
- For your child's safety, please come into the building to pick up your child. Please use the back door for both Sunday school and Hebrew school. Under no circumstances are the students permitted to leave the building during school hours unless supervised by their teacher or parent.

3. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION:

- If you have a guest that would like to sit in on the class, please get permission in advance from the teacher and the Education Director.
- Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in the classroom (see Code of Conduct)
- Please do not let your child bring in cell phones, personal toys, Gameboys, cards, etc...
- In order to enforce the rules of Kasruth, if a small snack is brought to Hebrew School it needs to be marked "kosher" (U) etc... If you have any questions about acceptable snacks, please ask the Rabbi.
- Your child will be participating in Friday night and Saturday morning services. Please be sure to check the school calendar for details. You and your child are encouraged to attend all Shabbat and holiday services. However, certain dates have been assigned to the different classes. If your child's class is participating in a service, please be sure to attend, as your child will be given a part in the service.
- We teach the value of tzedekah as an integral part of Jewish life. One form of tzedekah is to give money to be distributed to the needy. Students are encouraged to bring a small amount of their own money to participate in the tradition of giving tzedekah. Another form of tzedekah is to provide food for the needy. For this form of tzedekah, we will be collecting food and personal hygiene items prior to Thanksgiving each year.
- To make it easier for students and teachers, all students should come to class prepared by bringing pencils, markers, a notebook, assignments, if applicable, and kippot for boys (Kippot can be found at the front entrance of the synagogue; all boys are asked to wear a kippa in synagogue/ religious school but please remember to return these upon leaving)

4. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

- In case of inclement weather, please call: Shari Silbert at 443-859-7242. We will also try to contact WBOC television.
- If Wicomico County public schools are closed, there will be no Hebrew school. Likewise, if Wicomico County schools close early, there will be no Hebrew School.

5. COMMUNICATION

- Teachers will communicate by phone or letter regarding their students' progress. However, if you have any questions or specific concerns about a class, please be sure to contact your child's teacher.
- Please feel free to call Rabbi Bienstock or Shari Silbert regarding any specific questions/concerns or ideas that you may have. Your input is always welcome.

GENERAL SCHOOL STANDARDS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS:

Students are expected to:

- Regularly attend Religious School, arrive on time and to be prepared to learn to the best of his or her ability.
- Respect the teachers and members of our community.
- Respect the right of others in an educational environment conducive to learning.
- Respect the property of others, as well as, the property and facilities of the synagogue.

Parents are expected to:

- Send their child to school regularly and on time.
- Respond to communications from the school pertaining to their child in a positive manner, and support the religious school rules and policies.
- Cooperate with the teachers and education committee in solving behavioral problems.
- Assist their child in developing a positive attitude toward the religious school and Beth Israel Congregation.

Beth Israel Religious School Curriculum: K-Grade 7

Grade level	Studies
K- 1st Primary	Children explore the synagogue and the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Purim, Shavuot, Passover, Chanukah and Tisha B'Av. Bible stories and the concept of tzedakah are introduced. Some brachot (blessings) dealing with food and Shabbat candles and tefillot (prayers) are taught. Children learn about Israel and some basic Hebrew vocabulary and develop a familiarity with the Alef Bet. Children enjoy learning through music and art.
2nd-3rd	Students examine the book of Beresheet (Genesis), beginning with Creation and continue into Exodus (Shemot) to the ten plagues in Egypt. Children will learn about Jewish heroes; Abraham to Moses. They will develop Hebrew vocabulary sufficient to understand the key words in Shabbat and Holiday services (ex: the Shema and the Berachot). Children will examine their relationship with G-d and will be introduced to the Shabbat evening and morning service and will participate in these services. Children will continue to learn about the State of Israel.

<p>4th and 5th</p>	<p>Students continue to learn Torah (Prophets and Writings) and will master Jewish History from the Exodus to the destruction of the second Temple. Students will study the concepts of tzedukah and will continue to study the Shabbat and holiday service and customs. Students will begin to learn about the Jewish life cycles, including naming ceremonies, brit milah, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, the Jewish home, death and mourning. In addition, current events, and their role in modern Jewish life will be discussed and students will be encouraged to bring in news items that pertain to Judaism. Students will also enjoy the BABAGANEWS.</p>
<p>6th and 7th</p>	<p>Students will fully understand the structure and meaning of daily, Shabbat and holiday services and customs. Students will be able to follow along the most important prayers and the basics of the service. (Bar and Bat mitzvah students will learn Torah reading and chant, Haftorah chant and the blessings before and after the Torah and Haftorah). Students will discuss weekly Torah portions and will understand the sequence of the Torah. History will be taught from the time of the destruction of the temple through the Holocaust to modern times. The concepts of tikun olam will be emphasized and the students will partake in a monthly tikun olam project.</p>

Hebrew School Curriculum will emphasize the acquisition of the Hebrew language as it pertains to Jewish prayer and study. Studies will begin with learning to recognize the letters, simple but meaningful vocabulary and students will progress to an understanding of the prayer service. The ultimate goal will be that the students will be able to read and participate in a Shabbat or holiday service. In addition, students will have a grasp for some limited conversational Hebrew.