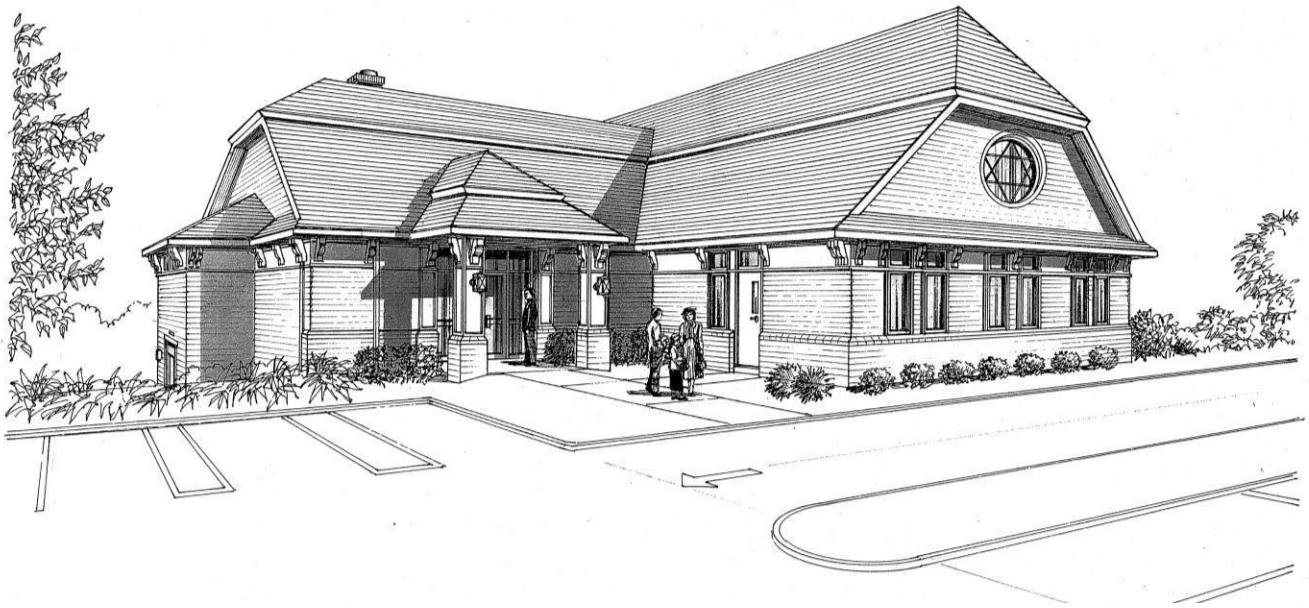


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# Nezvesky School for Jewish Education



## Congregation Adath Israel

115 Huntingtown Road • P.O. Box 623 • Newtown, CT 06470 • (203) 426-5188  
[www.congadathisrael.org](http://www.congadathisrael.org)

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Congregation Adath Israel  
Nezvesky School for Jewish Education

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אבבגדהוזהחטיפכךלמסנןסעפפףצץקרששת

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Dear Religious School Parents:

Welcome to the Nezvesky School for Jewish Education at Congregation Adath Israel of Newtown. The goals for our students are to build an association with their Judaic heritage and instill in them the value of lifelong learning.

Our education program extends from preschool through seventh grade.

In addition to being age-appropriate, our curriculum is developed to motivate students to ensure they thrive. We go beyond the textbooks -- and support book knowledge with fun activities, social and community events that our families can engage in as well. By using this approach, we are creating a positive, relevant learning environment that brings students' interests into their educational experience and enables them to develop a lasting interest in Judaism.

Younger students are offered a special music program each week filled with laughter, clapping, singing and dancing. We round out the program with art projects and crafts often associated with holidays. We use music to teach the Hebrew alphabet (Alef Bet) and the Jewish holidays.

As the students reach the upper grades, we encourage class discussions on core Jewish values in an open and safe environment. We want our students to explore their own spiritual questions, convictions, curiosities and challenges.

Once again, we welcome you to our community and congratulate you for giving your child the precious gift of a quality and meaningful Jewish education.

Please feel free to reach out if you would like to become better acquainted or have questions.

Sincerely,

The Education Committee:

Rabbi Barukh Schectman – [rabbi@congadathisrael.org](mailto:rabbi@congadathisrael.org) or 860-227-0912

David Smith – Education Chairperson – [educationchair@congadathisrael.org](mailto:educationchair@congadathisrael.org)

The Teachers of Adath Israel

**GOALS OF ADATH ISRAEL'S**  
**NEZVESKY SCHOOL FOR JEWISH EDUCATION**

The religious school's curriculum has been designed to accomplish the following goals:

To instill in our students a sense of their roles and responsibilities in participating in our Jewish community.

To provide our students with the opportunity to explore the roles of G-d, holiness and our Jewish ethical system in their lives.

To provide our students with a comprehensive understanding of, and appreciation for, the observance of Shabbat, Jewish holidays and Jewish life-cycle events.

To provide our students with a Hebrew program which focuses on gaining a working knowledge of grammar and Siddur vocabulary to build fluency and confidence as they participate in Jewish worship services.

To provide our students with a fundamental knowledge of the Biblical narrative and an appreciation for textual interpretation and the relevance of the Torah to their own lives.

To instill in our students a sense of the scope and continuity of Jewish history.

To provide our students with the opportunity to develop a relationship to the land and state of Israel.

To instill a value of lifelong learning and provide our families with the opportunity for in-school Jewish family education to help them make Judaism an integral part of their family life.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

### **Sunday:**

Kindergarten thru Grade 7 9:30 AM – 11:45 AM

### **Weekdays:**

Wednesday Hebrew School: Grades 4, 5 & 6 4:45 PM – 6:30 PM

Wednesday Hebrew School: Grade 7 3:30 PM – 5:15 PM

## **TARDINESS POLICY**

It is expected that children will arrive promptly so that they will be in their class, ready to begin at their scheduled times listed above. It creates a disruption and lack of continuity in our program when your child is tardy. Please adhere to the above schedule.

If your child is going to be more than 15 minutes late, the teacher must be notified or call the synagogue and leave a message on the answering machine (203-426-5188).

## **DISMISSAL POLICY**

Please pick up your child from school at their scheduled dismissal time. Please notify the school if you are going to be late. Since chronic lateness is a hardship on the teachers, if lateness persists, parents will be required to meet with the Rabbi, the education director, and the teacher to come up with a solution to this problem.

Please park and come into the building to pick up your child(ren). Children in all grades will be dismissed from the sanctuary. You are welcome to sit in on the song and prayer part of their classes in the sanctuary from 11:15 – 11:45. Please enter through the upstairs doors as the lower doors will be locked. Please have your key fob with you to enter the building.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

During the week, Hebrew School classes will be cancelled if Newtown Schools are closed or have an early dismissal. On Sunday, in the event of inclement weather, you will be notified by e-mail if there is a cancellation. Please be sure you are signed up for the “school” e-mail list.

Cancellations will also be listed on the following TV stations and their websites:

WTNH News Channel 8 or [www.wtnh.com](http://www.wtnh.com)

NBC (WVIT) Channel 6 or [www.nbcconnecticut.com](http://www.nbcconnecticut.com)

WFSB Channel 3 or [www.wfsb.com](http://www.wfsb.com)

Closings will also be posted on our synagogue website. Always check 2 sources, sometimes cancellation listings don't get through on the internet or TV right away or e-mail can be down.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR

In order to provide our students with the best possible education we feel it necessary to set a minimum number of days in which classes must be in session each year. The numbers of days are as follows:

- Sunday school classes (these are actual teaching days, not special program days) will have a minimum of 25 days.
- Weekday Hebrew classes will have a minimum of 30 days.

If for any unforeseen circumstances, a school day needs to be cancelled, it will only be made up at the end of the school year if the total number of days in session falls short of the minimum. Classes typically begin after Labor Day in September and conclude at the end of May or beginning of June. If any class needs to be extended, it will continue into June but will always conclude before the last day of Newtown's public school schedule.

To avoid extra days at the end of the year, some holiday services, if well attended by the students, may apply to the weekday count of classes.

## ATTENDANCE & STUDENT EVALUATION

Students must be in attendance for a minimum of three-quarters of the scheduled sessions per marking period. Good attendance and preparedness are an absolute must if children are to benefit from their studies at religious school. **We kindly ask for your full cooperation in ensuring that your child has a good attendance record and comes to class with the proper books, notebook, pen or pencil and completed homework assignments.** Please notify us if your child will be absent for an extended period of time.

Report cards are issued in January and June. A formal time for Parent / Teacher conferences will be set up in January. You may always request additional information from the Teacher, Rabbi, or Education Chair at a time convenient for all.

We are committed to handling your concerns with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity. If you have any questions at any time, please speak directly with your child's teacher. Working in the classroom directly with your children, teachers are a great resource and are there to help you with your concerns. If necessary, you may also contact the Education Chair or the Rabbi.

## HOMEWORK

Meaningful education requires review and reinforcement of new skills. The purpose of the homework is for continuity from one lesson to the next. To this end, your children's teachers will be assigning homework on a regular basis. Homework assignments vary from grade to grade and at the teacher's discretion and will generally take no longer than approximately 15 minutes for your child to complete in the early grades. A more intensive need for at home work may be required as your child prepares for B'nai Mitzvah. Your child's active review, especially in his or her Hebrew language studies, will reinforce the work done with the teacher in the classroom.

## **SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are a very important part of your child's education. Local field trips (such as those to nursing homes or to someone's home to bake holiday treats) are usually during weekday class time. Field trips to further locations such as New York City are typically scheduled for a Sunday morning so that entire families may join in, if so desired.

All children are expected to attend the field trip with their class. The field trips to New York will usually have some cost involved. If this is a financial hardship for you, please speak to the treasurer so arrangements can be worked out.

## **CLASS LUNCHESES, DINNERS & HOLIDAYS**

Each student will also attend at least one Shabbat dinner and one luncheon as part of their school curriculum. Families should also attend the service as well as the luncheon or dinner... the service and meals are part of the child's class experience. Please see the first day of school handout or calendar for dates.

A holiday is also assigned to each grade to sponsor. The assigned grade is responsible for bringing in the requested refreshments, setting up and cleaning up. Your class room parent will contact you to coordinate what each family will bring. Each family in the class should help with their assigned holiday whether they will be present or not. Helping with a holiday celebration is part of the child's and parent's classroom experience. A suggested menu is included in the appendix at the back of this handbook for your convenience. All lunches, dinners and class holidays are noted on the calendar.

## **SNACKS**

Please send your child to school with a small healthy snack on Sundays, which they may eat during a 10 minute classroom snack time. There will also be a 10-minute break on Wednesday afternoons. All food sent in must be kosher (dairy or pareve). No meat or soda products are allowed. Some suggestions are fruit, cereal, yogurt, crackers, pretzels and a beverage.

Prior to snack time, all teachers will ask their students to wash their hands for sanitary reasons. No students are permitted to help themselves to food or beverages in the refrigerator. If there are leftover snacks from an oneg or event and a teacher wishes to offer it to their class, then the teacher is responsible for getting the snack and making sure their students clean up after themselves.

## ATTENDANCE AT SERVICES

**Friday Family Services:** The first Friday of each month is typically designated as our Family Service Night. As part of a continuing effort to educate your children in Jewish traditions, it is expected that all children and parent(s) will attend. Please check the current calendar on the website for exact dates. There will be a list on the door inside the Rabbi's office for the 4th, 5th, 6th & 7th grade students to write in the dates they attended services. The Friday Shabbat Service begins at 7:30pm and runs about 1 hour. During the Friday Family Services, school children who celebrate birthdays during the month are honored with a gift from our Sisterhood.

**Saturday Family Services:** Full Shabbat morning services will typically be held on one Saturday of each month from September through June. These services begin at 9:30 am. A second morning service in the month will be scheduled as a "Learning Service" for the B'nai Mitzvah class and all others who wish to attend. Sixth graders are encouraged to begin attending these practice sessions. Learning Services are one and a half hours long and take place on the bima. Students and parents will be practicing the choreography of the Torah Service, as well as reviewing the prayers. Please check the synagogue calendar on the website for dates of these services. A school luncheon will be scheduled once a year after a Saturday morning service.

These services are held as a way to gradually expose all students to the routines, rituals and prayers included in Jewish services. Children will participate in these services according to Grade level. It is an environment to start building friendships among classmates and extend classroom learning into practice in the sanctuary. Students will be able to join the Rabbi on the bima to help lead the congregation in prayer and song.

**As part of the 4th, 5th & 6th grade curriculum, each student is expected to attend at least one Saturday morning service a year in addition to their class service / luncheon.** This would be a service of your own choosing, but not one in which a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is scheduled. Parents should attend with their child, sit with them and help them to follow along through parts of the service.

**Bar and Bat Mitzvah Students:** As part of the B'nai Mitzvah program, each student must attend 2 Friday evening and 1 Saturday morning service per month beginning one year prior to the Bar / Bat Mitzvah for a total of 24 Friday and 15 to 20 Saturday services for the year. This expectation is intended to help our B'nai Mitzvah students be comfortably prepared for their ceremonies. If there are conflicts that prohibit meeting this requirement, please discuss them with Rabbi Schectman. Shabbat services are a family event and the presence of the whole family at services is what is desired. When that is not possible, the presence of at least one parent is required. Attendance will be taken. Please make sure you check off the dates you attend on the chart in the Rabbi's office.



## DRESS CODE

All those attending services should be dressed appropriately. Jeans and t-shirts are discouraged and bare shoulders should be covered with a sweater or shawl.

## CODE OF CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR POLICY

It is our goal to provide an environment based on respect for the rights and dignity of every person. Students have the right to attend school without being subjected to harassment of any nature. This right also extends to siblings, parents, congregants, faculty, staff, and visitors to the synagogue.

There are certain behaviors which, if tolerated, could undermine the type of environment to which Adath Israel congregants, students, and staff are entitled.

Students should not behave in a way that mocks or insults someone's social status, handicap, intelligence, race, ethnic heritage, culture, religion or family -- areas that are too personally sensitive to be the subject of "joking" or "fooling around." This is more than common courtesy; it is a tenet of Jewish teachings and tradition.

We expect all students to understand that such behaviors as hitting, bullying, threatening, or stealing are not acceptable and will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. In accordance with Connecticut State Law, students are specifically prohibited from bringing any weapons or other "dangerous devices" to the school. In addition, we ask that students not wear clothes or accessories that are vulgar, insensitive, or otherwise distracting or disruptive to the educational process.

We cannot overemphasize the important role that students' families play in meeting these high standards. We encourage your support of these goals and welcome the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

Additional building rules:

- No running in the building
- No hide and seek
- No outside recess unless under constant teacher supervision.
- No food or drink in the sanctuary.
- Always clean up after yourself.
- Alert an adult immediately if you observe any problems or questionable activity by adults or children.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

Learning is best in an interactive environment of mutual respect. Therefore, classroom discipline is essential. Each class will have its own set of behavior guidelines set by the teacher, or, by the teacher and the students jointly.

The goal is for our students to follow the basic rules of good behavior, as outlined above, without question. As discussed in detail below, when a child's behavior affects the learning ability of the student or has an adverse effect on the classroom experience, procedures will be followed.

1. The first time a student is disruptive or does not comply with the classroom policy, the teacher will speak with the student and discuss appropriate and expected behavior privately.
2. If a student is further disruptive, the teacher must notify the parents, the Rabbi, and Education Chair, who will discuss the behavior and develop a plan for a more successful learning experience with the student and family.
3. If the student's behavior continues to interfere with classroom learning, a conference will be arranged between the teacher, Rabbi, Education Chair and the family and a written plan for success will be developed and followed.

**CONGREGATION ADATH ISRAEL'S**  
**NEZVESKY SCHOOL FOR JEWISH EDUCATION**

**CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

Because we are a small school, the classes do not directly correspond to the grade levels in public schools. We will group children by academic and social groups and try to keep children in the same group throughout the school year. Therefore, we will list the objectives and materials in a multi-year format. Children will learn all the material listed for their range, but possibly in a different order depending on the year.

**Kindergarten - Third Grade**

This program creates a foundation of Jewish experiences with instruction in Hebrew, culture and Torah through crafts, songs, stories and in class observance of the holidays. The students are offered a special music program each week filled with laughter, clapping, singing and dancing. Children and families form bonds with each other and share their family experiences, integrate Jewish language, rituals and holidays. The Jewish values of Tikkun Olam (taking care of the world) and helping those in need through Tzedakah (charity) are introduced through helping others, sending cards and making gift baskets. We round out the program with art projects and crafts often associated with the holidays.

The following holidays are taught in season: Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Passover, Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Independence Day), Lag B'Omer and Shavuot.

The primary grades meet once a week on Sunday mornings.

**Fourth - Seventh Grades**

This program focuses on preparation for Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and Jewish living with courses in Hebrew, Jewish history, ritual, Torah, Israel and modern global politics. This program includes participation in services and public speaking as well as discussion and debate. It complements the B'nai Mitzvah program for Seventh Grades so that the children get a well-rounded Jewish education and can stand up for their Jewish Heritage as they enter adulthood.

The secondary grades meet both on Sunday mornings and one afternoon a week.

## Kindergarten and First Grade

Our main goal is to make Jewish learning fun by interactive teaching and integrating a variety of activities such as stories, songs, music, dance and crafts into the learning process. This will move from basic stories and crafts to exploring various themes of Jewish life:

*Jewish Holidays* - We will begin with stories and instruction that focus on what we do on the particular holiday at home, in the synagogue and at school. As they grow older, we will continue to present them in a variety of fun and entertaining ways; stories, songs, music, dance, crafts, handouts, field trips, etc. The holidays are explored through class discussion and experiential learning. The relevance of Shabbat is discussed at length.

*Biblical Characters and Bible Stories* - Bible stories are integrated into the context of Jewish Holidays and drawn out in the second year.

*Aleph bet* - The children are introduced to the Hebrew alphabet. They learn age appropriate Hebrew words associated with the letters learned. As they progress, they will learn to recognize, recite and write the aleph bet, sequentially.

*Hebrew Vocabulary* - In the second year, various Hebrew words are incorporated into the classroom vocabulary. The students learn to recognize and recite basic words such as colors, numbers to 14, days of the week, months of the year, etc.

*Food and Blessings* - Food and blessings associated with the holiday are highlighted in the first year and in the second year, the children learn to recite basic blessings for Shabbat (candles, wine, bread), Havdalah (candle, spices), Chanukah (candles) and Passover (The 4 questions).

*Shabbat* - Shabbat instruction includes blessings over the wine, challah and candles. The students will also learn the first line of the Shema.

*Jewish Symbols* - The students become familiar with Jewish symbols such as: tzedakah box, mezuzah, havdalah candle, spice box, challah cover, candlesticks, Star of David.

*Talmud Torah (Jewish Learning)* - The older children learn to understand Jewish Ethical Teachings. The students learn that a lasting commitment to Jewish learning can be a source of meaning and connection. Through classroom discussions and activities such as role-playing the students begin to personalize these themes. Specifically, these values include mitzvot (commandments) such as tzedakah (righteous giving), ma'achil re'eivim (feeding those who are hungry), Derech Eretz (treating people with respect), and visiting the sick.

### Teacher Resources:

Jewish Holidays & Crafts  
Kadimah! Get Ready For Hebrew

## **Second and Third Grade**

In this cluster, the concepts taught in the previous grades are reinforced and expanded upon. The Hebrew lessons evolve from letter recognition to reading entire words and by the end of the second year to some prayers. Various aspects of being Jewish are introduced and discussed. The children also begin to internalize many of the Jewish teachings by relating them to their own lives. Throughout, a variety of teaching methods are used to reinforce these topics, including class discussion, games and crafts.

Areas of study include:

*Hebrew* - The Hebrew letters are reviewed out-of-order and many vocabulary words beginning with each letter are introduced. The students learn the vowels and begin to put letters and vowels together to make words.. Lessons build upon lessons, providing reinforcement as students develop siddur reading skills. Selected siddur words are presented with English translations, establishing a foundation for prayer comprehension. By the end of this course of study, students should be able to recognize, name, recite and write the Alef-Bet, vowels, consonant/vowel combinations, and read some multi-syllable words with varied vowels.

*Holidays* - All of the major Jewish holidays are discussed, including the story behind each holiday, its significance (both historical and contemporary), its symbols and rituals. Students are encouraged to share their traditions with the class and discuss the relevance of the holiday to their lives. Concepts are reinforced through class discussion, blessings, stories, activities and crafts.

*Bible* - Students learn stories from the Torah using a simplified textbook. Discussion of stories includes how lessons learned are applicable to their lives today. The third graders learn to understand *Peshat* - "What does it mean?", *Drash* - "What does it teach?" and *Remez* - "A Lesson about Torah". Through stories, the students are introduced to the patriarchs, with an emphasis on Abraham and his family. Jewish legends, which teach morals and ethics, are presented along with customs and rituals of Jewish life. By the end of this course of study, students should be able to name the 5 books of the Torah and explain the role each plays in the Jewish experience. Some points included in these discussions are:

- Who are the "Three Patriarchs" and the "Four Matriarchs" of the Bible and what does each have to do with Israel?
- What are the Ten Commandments? Who was Moses and what does he have to do with them?
- Who is Judah Maccabee and what does he have to do with Chanukah? Who was Noah and why was he caught in a flood?
- Why is Esther celebrated? What did she do? What lessons can be learned?

*Blessings, Prayers and Songs* - The blessings learned in Kindergarten and first grade are reviewed. These include the blessings for Shabbat (candles, wine, challah), Havdalah, Chanukah and Passover. The children also learn many of the prayers which are part of the Friday night and Saturday morning services. Several Hebrew and Israeli songs are also introduced.

*Talmud Torah (Jewish Learning)* - In second grade, students begin to apply Jewish teachings to their own lives. They explore various aspects of Jewish life, including the activities in and significance of the synagogue, the Jewish symbols in their daily lives, and the mitzvot that they are expected to follow. In addition, each week we read a biblical story or folktale that contains a (sometimes hidden) moral. Students are encouraged to seek out the moral and discuss the ways it applies to their own lives.

*Ethics* - The third grade students will explore the moral lessons of the Ten Commandments with timeless stories from the Bible, Talmud, and Jewish folklore. Presented in child-friendly, everyday English, each commandment is accompanied by hands-on activities to help students integrate the lessons into their own lives. Guiding principles for this section include the following:

- Why is “justice” an important principle in Judaism?
- Why is tzadakah an important responsibility in Judaism? How does it fit in to everyday life?
- Why is “tikkun olam” an important facet of growing up? How can this idea become part of everyday life?
- Illustrate how “Mitzvot” fits into everyday life.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Z'man Likro: Time to Read Hebrew – Book 1 and 2

Explorer's Bible, Vol. 1 – Creation to Exodus

Let's Explore Being Jewish

My Jewish Year

### **Fourth and Fifth Grade**

In fourth and fifth grades the children get a more intensive study of Hebrew and the Siddur. Holidays are discussed in greater depth than previously taught. The children will learn about the historic context and symbolism of Holiday traditions and laws, including the spiritual message of these traditions. The history of Judaism from the early prophets is discussed and how Judaism evolved into a religion and way of life. Students learn how the people gave relevance and reverence to a Supreme Being. We once again emphasize how Judaism relates to us as individuals and to the extended family. We use current events in our family, our school and our neighborhood to depict how we can be better Jews as well as better people in the broad sense.

*Hebrew* - Students become more familiar with Hebrew phrases as they are put into sentences and interpreted. Hebrew is now taught with an emphasis on fluent reading and comprehension. As they progress, they will be introduced to Trope

Chanting of Torah and Haftorah. The Torah service is rehearsed in class. Students gain a greater understanding of the specific content and sequence of the service. They also become accustomed to their Hebrew names and how they are called up to the Torah for an Aliyah.

*Blessings, Prayers and Songs* - The fourth grade students continue to reinforce the blessings, songs and prayers learned thus far. Over the course of these two years, specific prayers will include Bar'chu, Yotzer Or/ Ma'ariv Arvim, Mi Chamochah, Avot V'imahot, G'vurot, K'dushah, Rav Shalom, Sim Shalom, Oseh Shalom from the service, and Brahot shel Mitzvah, Brahot shel Shabbat, Kiddush, Havdalah, Brachot shel Yom Tov, Mah Nishtanah, Birkat HaMazon from daily living. These prayers will be learned according to the individual's ability. By the end of this sequence the students should memorize the first paragraph in the Shma Ve'ahavta.

*Biblical & Modern History* - We begin by exploring the earliest prominent Biblical figures such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. We then move onto King David, King Solomon and the great temples of Jerusalem. We then explore Judaism after the destruction of the Temple, the formation of Rabbinical Judaism and the modern day Synagogue as a center for spiritual study and worship. The great legends and parables of the Talmud help us define the meaning of what it is to be Jewish and what responsibilities we accept as Jews in modern times. Both ancient and modern history is taught using textbooks, timelines and photos. Through discussion of classical Torah texts, students gain an understanding of the challenges, ethical dilemmas and moral issues that faced the Jewish people throughout history as well as an appreciation for how such challenges and ethical dilemmas affect us in our own daily lives. The history of Zionism and the modern state of Israel is also studied. The lives of modern Jewish historical figures such as Theodore Herzl, David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and more recent Israeli leaders are at the center of this study. The aim is to instill knowledge and pride for Israel and the Jewish people.

*Geography* - A look at the world and where Israel is in proximity to other important places is displayed, with maps, photos and printed material.

*Holidays* - Holidays are discussed in the context of when and where they occurred on the timeline of world history. The specifics of how each holiday is celebrated and observed is explored in the context of students soon having such responsibilities after their B'nai Mitzvah. Students gain greater awareness of the various streams of Judaism and the way that different families and types of Jews observe Judaism.

*Jewish Living* - We discuss and read about Jewish values and how it refines our sense of morality, our sense of fair play and our overall behavior and identity in today's society. We discuss real life situations that help us better understand the stories read in class. We discuss Mitzvot and why and how we should react to acts of kindness.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Hineni - The New Hebrew Through Prayer Book 1

Explorer's Bible, Vol. 2- From Sinai to the Nation of Israel

The Children's Illustrated Jewish Bible  
The Book of Jewish Holidays  
Count Me In  
Welcome to Israel

## **Sixth and Seventh Grade**

Students discuss Jewish ethics, morals and laws. Across the Sixth and Seventh grades we discuss both the historical and modern implications of leading a Jewish life. This can include a discussion of the parsha Hashavuah (portion of the week) as well as current events such as anti Semites, race relations, Holocaust reparations, Israeli politics and more are discussed as well as what it means to be Jewish in a Christian nation. Customs and holidays continue to be discussed at greater length.

Hebrew reading and comprehension continue through these years. There are two courses of study. The curriculum includes a general overview of ancient history to present time Israel. The classroom activities include student led discussions, current events, and games. The focus of this class is looking at our history, and prayers, and recognizing how they impact on our personal lives and how our interactions with the people in our community is enriched from our studies.

Students will play a more significant role in the service during these two years in preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs.

In addition,, we look at behavior at the level of personal interactions within a family or group and at the global level of nations. At the personal level we use a hypothetical event as the basis for a discussion of ethics and Jewish philosophy. At the global level we apply what we learned last year about the secular history of the Jews and the rise and fall of Middle Eastern and European societies as the basis for understanding the motivations of nations in the global spotlight and their significance for the Jewish community. We continue tracking current events abroad and discuss them in the context of:

- How what we see today is rooted to the past and may even be similar to historic events
- The implications of regional events for Israel
- Ethical implications and Jewish values that may apply

There are no right or wrong answers in this class. We try to build an awareness of the world that is broader and deeper than what is offered by the popular media.

*Hebrew* - The students will participate more fully in the regular services and study Hebrew from the Siddur to become confident in singing prayers and chanting Torah and Haftorah. In addition to regular classes, in the year before their B'nai Mitzvah, students will meet individually with the Rabbi on a weekly basis to help prepare for their bar/bat mitzvahs. Areas covered in this tutorial are: Haftorah and Torah Trope melody, speech writing and presentation and instruction on donning the tefillin.



*Blessings, Prayers and Songs* - Many blessings and prayers are read and translated. The prayers and blessings introduced in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade continue with emphasis on greater fluency and pronunciation. The translation of the Shma Ve'ahavta is reviewed and committed to memory. Specific prayers introduced include Ein Kamocha, Kee Mitsiyon, Birchot Ha'Torah, V'zot Ha'Torah, Birchot Hahaftarah, Eitz Hayyim Hi, Aleinu, Kaddish, Ein Keloheinu, Adon Olam. Students will be exposed to the basic elements of prayer; why one prays, when and where does one pray, and what is a Jewish prayer. The goal is to develop a deeper understanding of prayer. The three subject areas studied are G\*d, Prayer, and the Shema. Each subject is discussed and translations are reviewed to help connect and decode familiar Hebrew words and phrases. We also identify the artifacts in today's sanctuary with those of the ancient temples of Jerusalem. Two prayers of love (Avat Olam and Ahavah Rabbah) are reviewed with the intent of emphasizing our love for one another and G\*d's love for His people. The Amidah is also studied in an in-depth fashion. Each blessing is studied for its meaning and purpose. Torah Service and Concluding Prayers are also studied in the same manner.

*Holidays* - Studies of the holidays focus on the main characters, the main religious artifacts used for each holiday, the historical setting of each of the holidays, such as Purim in Persia and Chanukah in Greek times, Passover in Egyptian times and their sequence on a timeline.

*Judaic Studies* - Students are introduced to the Talmud as the Oral Law and the Torah, Nevim and Ketuvim (Tenach) as the written law. The Torah as a code of law that has democratic principles as well as theological principles is presented. The role of Greece and Ancient Israel with their respective influences on our current Western civilization are explored. The existence and the formation of the Modern State of Israel is a big part of classroom discussions.

*Jewish Identity* - The student's social identity as Jews is discussed in a casual and supportive environment focusing on their own feelings about their Judaic faith and identity. The history of Jews from ancient times, the social standing of Jews throughout history and where we are now in our quest for freedom is discussed. Zionist concepts, the founding of the state of Israel, the yearning for Zion in liturgy and discussion of events in the world as they pertain to us as people and as Jews are topics of discussion.

*History* - We discuss the history of the Jewish People from ancient times to the present day with special emphasis on the strategies used by Jews to survive in different cultures and environments. Role playing, debates and discussions are used to help the students discover their own voices as they participate in our discovery of Jewish History. In the course of our history, we also discuss the growth of the religious service as we know it today and how different practices became traditional over time so that the students can make the traditions their own as they become Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

*Mitzvot* - Students are encouraged to give back to the community by performing mitzvot.

*Current Events* -

Articles from various media sources that relate to Israel and the Jewish people are

discussed.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Hineni - The New Hebrew through Prayer (Wednesdays)

Siddur & B'nai Mitzvah Notebooks (Wednesday)

Jewish History - The Big Picture

Today's Hot Topics - teacher reference

Sundry media sources

# **Bar and Bat Mitzvah Guidelines**

## ***Introduction***

A Bar / Bat Mitzvah is a special event for not only the child, but also the parents, siblings, grandparents, other relatives and friends. At Adath Israel, the Rabbi and the Ritual Committee are committed to make the Bar / Bat Mitzvah a memorable, enjoyable experience with the hope that this is the beginning of the child's deeper quest for knowledge of his or her Jewish roots. The following is intended as a checklist for parents and students.

## ***Requirements for Eligibility***

The skills and academic requirements of our B'nai Mitzvah are as follows:

1. Ability to read unfamiliar Hebrew words at a fairly fluent pace
2. Knowledge and ability to lead major sections of Friday and Saturday Shabbat services.
3. Knowledge of Jewish holidays, observances, prayers, history and culture as covered in our school curriculum.
4. Minimum of 5 years of Jewish education or equivalent. In our school, children in kindergarten through third grade meet once a week (Sundays). After third grade, students begin attending Hebrew school twice a week. Prior to entering the fourth grade, each student will be evaluated so that the Rabbi, Education Committee and the Ritual Committee may know the standing of the student and whether or not additional private tutorials, at the expense of the family, will be necessary to keep the student up to our required academic standards. This also pertains to any new student entering our Hebrew school program in grades 4 through 7.
5. A B'nai Mitzvah is both a celebration and a religious rite of passage for our youngsters. It is an affirmation of Jewish faith. As such, every B'nai Mitzvah candidate must be Jewish. Our Halachic standards are of Conservative Judaism which for our purposes simply state: A child whose mother was Jewish at the time they were born is Jewish. A child whose mother was not Jewish at the time they were born is presumed to be Jewish but may need further considerations to confirm their Jewish identity. If this is a matter that pertains to you, please be in touch with the Rabbi.

## **B'nai Mitzvah Date Selection**

There will be a parent meeting in the spring of your child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade year to discuss bar /bat mitzvah preparation and date selection. A more detailed guideline will be handed out to parents at this meeting. No dates shall be selected or agreed upon prior to this meeting. After a date has been requested, you will receive a letter from the Rabbi and administrative office confirming this date. The date should not be considered final until this letter is received.

## **FRIDAY FAMILY SHABBAT DINNER**

Suggested menu – serves 30 people

Any kosher dairy dish is acceptable

2 DOZEN EGGS (Egg Salad)

3 LARGE CANS OF WHITE TUNA (Tuna Salad)

1 LARGE TOSSED SALAD (salad dressing on the side)

1 LARGE FRUIT SALAD

BAKED SALMON

1 NOODLE PUDDING OR 2 TRAYS ZITI

1 DOZEN BLINTZES

1 CHALLAHS FOR DINNER, 1 CHALLAH FOR SERVICE

1 STICKS BUTTER

3 BOTTLES OF JUICE (at least 1 should be purple grape juice)  
(all should be 100% fruit juice)

OTHER BEVERAGES – NO SODA PLEASE

1 QUART MILK

1 LARGE BOTTLE OF KOSHER WINE

DESSERTS: Families attending also provide the dessert for the oneg after the service. In addition to your meal contribution, please bring 1 dessert item. (cake, cookies, brownies, pie or healthier choices are welcome)

**NO NUTS, Please!**

## SATURDAY YOUTH SERVICE LUNCHEON

Suggested menu – serves 30 people

Please adjust amounts to the number of people attending.

Any kosher dairy dish is acceptable – you can make your own menu

2 DOZEN EGGS (Egg Salad)

3 LARGE CANS OF WHITE TUNA (Tuna Salad)

2 DOZEN BAGELS (Sliced)

2 (8 OZ.) PACKAGES OF CREAM CHEESE

2 STICKS BUTTER

LARGE TOSSED SALAD (salad dressing on the side)

GEFILTE FISH

3 BOTTLES OF JUICE (at least 1 should be purple grape juice)  
(all should be 100% fruit juice)

Other Beverages, if desired (No soda, please)

1 QUART MILK

CHEESE & CRACKERS (optional)

LARGE CHALLAH

KOSHER WINE

COFFEE

DESSERT: \*\*\*Each family must bring one dessert in addition to their meal contribution.  
Suggestions are: Fruit salad, cookies, cake, brownies, pies, etc.

NO NUTS, please!

## **MENU FOR TU B'SHEVAT SEDER**

**(Menu for 30 - includes students, teachers, teacher helpers and parent helpers)**

### **JUICE: WHITE GRAPE JUICE AND PURPLE GRAPE JUICE**

(Each child will get 4 small cups of juice – figure about a total of 10 oz. of juice per student / teacher) The first cup is white juice, the second is white mixed with a very small amount of purple juice, the third is white mixed with a little more purple and the fourth is all purple.

Please note: you will need more white grape juice than purple grape juice. It is easiest to mix the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> juice mixtures in a pitcher.

**(6 quarts white grape juice; 2 quarts purple grape juice)**

- **FRUIT/NUTS WITH A HARD (INEDIBLE) OUTER SHELL: ALMONDS (preferred), WALNUTS, PISTACHIOS, POMEGRANATES**

**(nuts should only be served if there are no children with nut allergies)**

**Please purchase one type of the fruits/nuts above for the Seder participants. Keep one whole fruit/nut for the Seder leader to show the participants.**

- **FRUIT WITH AN (INEDIBLE) INNER PIT: DATES (preferred), OLIVES, CHERRIES, PEACHES, PLUMS, APRICOTS**

**Please purchase one type of the fruit above and cut up into pieces for the Seder participants. Keep one whole fruit for the Seder leader to show the participants.**

- **FRUIT WITH BOTH AN INEDIBLE OUTER SHELL AND INNER PIT: ORANGES, MELONS, CANTALOUPE**

**Please purchase one type of the fruit above and cut up into pieces for the Seder participants. Keep one whole fruit for the Seder leader to show the participants.**

- **FRUIT THAT IS ENTIRELY EATEN: FIGS, RAISINS (or seedless grapes), BLUEBERRIES, STRAWBERRIES**

**Please purchase one type of the fruit above for the Seder participants. Each participant and the Seder leader should be given a few pieces of this fruit.**

- **WHEAT CRACKERS: SOMETHING LIKE WHEAT THINS OR TRISCUIT BUT THEY MUST BE KOSHER.**

**Figure 3 to 5 crackers per participant. (Number of boxes needed will be determined by size of box purchased – probably 2 or 3 boxes)**

Regardless of the fruits are selected we should have a sample of the seven fruits for which Eretz Israel is praised: figs, dates, pomegranates, grapes, olives, wheat and barley. If not already placed out for the earlier section they can be eaten with the wheat crackers.

## PASSOVER MODEL SEDER

(Menu for 40 to 50 – includes students, teachers, teacher helpers and parent helpers)

**MATZO:** 3 lbs.

**EGGS:** You need 1 per child / teacher / teacher helper / parent helper (about 50)

**MACAROONS:** Enough for each child / teacher / teacher helper / parent helper

**GRAPE JUICE:** 4 bottles

**APPLE JUICE:** 2 bottles

**CELERY:** 2 bunches cut into pieces and placed on each plate and on the Seder plate.

**PARSLEY:** One bunch - Small piece per child and for Seder plate.

**SALT WATER:** 2 small bowls or cups per table.

**BITTER HERBS:** fresh horseradish cut into small pieces and placed at each table  
and on the Seder plate.

**CHAROSET:** Walnuts\*, cinnamon, honey or sugar, grape juice, 3 lb. Bag of  
macintosh apples cut up into tiny pieces. All mixed together. Place a spoonful  
on each plate and Seder plate.

\*If children with nut allergies are present, charoset can be made without nuts\*

**1 SEDER PLATE:** (set up for the Rabbi on the center or head table) to contain....

**1 SHANK BONE – ROASTED**

**1 UNPEELED HARD BOILED EGG – ROASTED HORSERADISH**

**CHAROSET**

**PARSLEY / CELERY**