

The Brotherhood Synagogue Hebrew School Parent Handbook 2016-2017 (5777)

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide an extraordinary educational environment and learning opportunities for Jewish children and their families, which will nourish them spiritually, intellectually and emotionally, and will inspire them to serve the Jewish community by devoting themselves to *Torah* (study), *avodah* (worship) and *gemilut hasadim* (acts of loving kindness).

We strive to create educational experiences that will engage our students in an authentic quest for *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tikkun ha middot* (personal spiritual growth). We believe that:

- Study should be a spiritual engagement that connects the mind and the heart.
- Study should strengthen us as a community and inspire each of us to increase our level of observance and participation in *tikkun olam* repairing the world.
- Study should reflect our commitment to Israel and the Jewish people.

The Brotherhood Synagogue Hebrew School Curriculum

I. Overall Goals

Our overall educational goals for the Hebrew School, which emerge from our mission and the principles above, are as follows:

1. Initiate our children into the study of Torah, with the goal of understanding Jewish values and ideals.
2. Create meaningful and developmentally appropriate prayer experiences which will guide our children toward a meaningful worship experience.
3. Build a community based on the principle of *gemilut hasadim*—acts of loving kindness—in which community members treat one another with care and respect.
4. Enable parents to participate in their children's journey of Jewish growth and discovery through family programming, which will include parents in many aspects of their children's learning.

II. Study of Hebrew at The Brotherhood Synagogue Hebrew School

1. In the lower grades (K-1), emphasis will be placed on becoming familiar with the letters and vowels of the Aleph-Bet and acquiring some basic vocabulary in modern Hebrew (family members, parts of the body).
2. Starting with Kitah Bet, a new aspect of Hebrew language will be introduced: reading and writing. Improving reading fluency year by year will be one aspect of the Hebrew program from Kitot Bet through Zayin.
3. The Hebrew studied in the upper grades will primarily be liturgical and Biblical Hebrew. The focus will be on reading and understanding various texts and prayers, starting with specific prayers and moving towards Biblical stories and rabbinic texts. Modern spoken Hebrew will play a less central role, though teachers are encouraged to use and teach modern Hebrew phrases.

III. Our Homework Policy

We recognize that children at The Brotherhood Hebrew School already receive a great deal of homework from their studies in secular school. At the same time, it is clear from an educational perspective that certain types of learning, particularly language learning, cannot be accomplished without some kind of consistent reinforcement. Therefore, we have adopted the following homework policy:

1. Homework for Hebrew Language will be given on Tuesday or Wednesday, to be completed for the following Monday or Tuesday. **Time required to complete Hebrew homework for 2nd and 3rd grades should not exceed 20 minutes. For grades 4th-6th, homework should not exceed 30-40 minutes.** We do not believe in "busy work" and we expect that Hebrew homework will be a review and reinforcement of what has already been studied in class. It is crucial for parents to ensure that homework is completed, so that their children can reap the educational benefits. Please take this aspect of learning seriously.
2. Homework for Judaic Studies will be given as is appropriate to the age and subject matter.

IV. Curriculum Outline 2016-2017

GAN (Kindergarten)

1. To introduce the holidays. Students will learn some of the symbols and celebrations for all the festivals.
2. To introduce Hebrew words, phrases and prayers orally and through music.
3. To focus on several special projects during the year: Shabbat; family members' names in Hebrew, visiting the sanctuary and learning about the important people and objects associated with this holy space.

ALEPH (First Grade)

1. To begin Torah study in an age-appropriate manner by exploring the beginning of the Book of Genesis through story, art, and drama.
2. To introduce the letters of the alphabet. Students will be able to recognize and identify these letters. Students will learn to sing the aleph-bet song. To continue oral Hebrew acquisition through song, learning Hebrew phrases, and Hebrew games.
3. To reinforce an understanding and review the symbols and rituals of the holidays.

BET (Second Grade)

1. To continue the study of the book of Genesis with the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob, Rachel, and Leah. To begin focusing on making a personal connection, asking the question: what do these family stories have in common with our lives?
2. To review the letters of the alphabet. To learn the vowels and final letters and to begin reading and writing Hebrew.

GIMMEL (Third Grade)

1. To explore the rhythms and cycles of the Jewish calendar. Students will learn about the Hebrew months and the lunar calendar and will deepen their understandings of the holidays by incorporating a more personal approach to study. Curriculum will develop from a focus on holiday symbols to a focus on the deeper meaning of the holidays.
2. To study selected stories from the books of Exodus and Numbers, focusing on our ancestors experience in Egypt, our journey to freedom, and our experiences in the desert.
3. To continue the development of reading skills and spoken Hebrew fluency and introducing new vocabulary.

DALET (Fourth Grade)

1. To introduce traditional methods of Torah study. Students are asked to take a closer look at the texts, to approach them on the basis of *pshat* (what is the literal meaning of the text), *drash* (what does the text teach), and *remez* (what are the larger issues that are hinted at in this text). Students will choose several stories to study in depth in order to and internalize the messages of these stories, culminating in a dramatic or artistic project to be presented toward the end of the year.
2. To develop greater fluency in reading and speaking Hebrew, and to expand vocabulary knowledge.

HEY (Fifth Grade)

1. To begin to explore the history of the land of Israel.
2. To explore contemporary life in modern day Israel.
3. To begin exploration of personal theology through a student-centered curriculum which emerges from student questions.
4. To continue Hebrew Language study.

VAV (Sixth Grade)

1. In Judaic Studies the 6th graders will be learning about 20th century Jewish life in Europe, Israel and the United States.
2. To continue Hebrew Language study.

ZAYIN (Seventh Grade)

1. To make the mitzvah of tzedakah a reality in the students' lives by (a) studying Jewish perspectives on poverty, tzedakah, and how best to work towards repairing the world; and (b) undertaking a project-oriented unit on tzedakah in which students will take responsibility for researching and choosing a worthy cause and supporting that cause; and (c) performing various social action projects throughout the year.
2. To introduce students to the basic skills of conversational Hebrew.
3. To continue to develop a richer understanding of the prayers and the siddur.

CHET (Eighth Grade)

1. To explore contemporary social issues that impact our lives as Jews. There will be discussion groups based on topics "ripped from the headlines," and how our Jewish tradition and our texts inform the discussion and debate.
2. To continue the study of *tefillah* (prayers) and the structure of the Hebrew language, including building basic skills of modern conversational Hebrew.
3. To provide social opportunities for the eighth graders to continue to build social bonds.

TET (Ninth Grade)

1. To explore 21st century Jewish life in communities around the world, through visits to exhibits in museums and galleries, first person presentations about Jewish life in Africa, Asia, Europe, South America, Australia and North America, films and theatrical presentations.
2. To continue the study of *tefillah* (prayers) and the structure of the Hebrew language, including building basic skills of modern conversational Hebrew.
3. To provide social opportunities for the ninth graders to continue to build social bonds and strengthen Jewish community.

YOD (Tenth Grade)

1. To explore 21st century Jewish life in Israel by learning about her culture, languages, peoples, music, art, sports, literature, and sights.
2. To research and participate in Israeli cultural life, as exhibited by Israeli's here in NYC
3. To plan a class trip to Israel.

DAY TO DAY MATTERS

CONTACT INFORMATION

ALL CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

The Brotherhood Synagogue Hebrew School
28 Gramercy Park South
New York, NY 10003

Barbara Simon, Principal, (212) 674-5750, ext. 209
Email: bsimon@brotherhoodsynagogue.org

Bunny Blei, School Administrator, (212) 674-5750, ext. 210
Email: bblei@brotherhoodsynagogue.org

ARRIVAL

Classes begin promptly at 4:00 p.m. Students are welcome to wait in the community room starting at 3:00 p.m. A staff member will be on hand. **Students who arrive later than 4:00 p.m. must report to the Hebrew School Office before going to class. (Otherwise, they may be considered absent, as they may not have been in class when attendance was being taken.)**

SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Gan (Kindergarten)	Tuesdays	3:50-5:15 p.m.
Aleph (First Grade)	Tuesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Bet (Second Grade)	Tuesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Gimmel (Third Grade)	Mondays and Wednesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Dalet (Fourth Grade)	Mondays and Wednesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Hey (Fifth Grade)	Mondays and Wednesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Vav (Sixth Grade)	Mondays and Wednesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Zayin (Seventh Grade)	Tuesdays	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Chet (Eighth Grade)	Tuesdays/Other Days	4:00-6:00 p.m.
Tet (Ninth Grade)	TBD	To Be Determined
Yod (Tenth Grade)	TBD	To Be Determined

SNACK

Please send a small dairy/parve snack and drink with your child(ren) to Hebrew School.

Please note: We are a NUT-FREE & Kosher food building. No nuts (including peanuts) and no non-Kosher food is permitted in the Synagogue.

DISMISSAL

In order to ensure the safety and proper supervision of your child, it is very important that you contact the Hebrew School office if there is a change in who will be picking up your child at the end of the school day. When picking up a child, please come to the Hebrew School office first. A staff person from the office will escort you to pick up your child. Should you arrive later than 6:10 p.m. to pick up your child(ren), please proceed to the school office where your child(ren) will be waiting.

- Students who walk home alone must provide the Hebrew School office with **written permission signed by a parent.**

ATTENDANCE

Attendance on a regular basis is a basic requirement of our students. When your child is unable to attend school for any reason, **we request that you call the school office at (212) 674-5750, ext. 210 no later than 3:30 p.m. to inform us that your child(ren) will be absent.** If you have not called and your child does not show up, we may need to call you to make sure that your child is safe. **Please help us with this task by calling us or emailing us if your child will be absent so we do not make unnecessary phone calls.** Students are responsible for making up any missed work.

For students attending once a week, more than 3 absences a year is considered excessive unless there are extenuating circumstances. For those attending twice a week, more than 6 absences a year are considered excessive unless there are extenuating circumstances. When students reach/approach these absence limits, parents will be called to discuss the situation.

LOST AND FOUND

We share classroom space with the Nursery School. After we finish, maintenance staff clean all the classrooms and left items are brought to the clear plastic box outside of the Hebrew School office marked "LOST & FOUND." If your child forgets an item, please check with the Hebrew School office and with maintenance staff on the main floor. If your child remembers immediately after returning home, call the school office (212-674-5750 ext. 210) and we will try to locate it in the classroom or with the maintenance staff or in the Lost and Found Box. **(It is a good idea to label your children's clothing with a name tag.)**

HEALTH & SAFETY

If for any reason we need to evacuate the building for an extended period of time, The Calvary Church (21st Street and Park Avenue South) is our safe house.

If your child contracts an infectious disease (i.e. chicken pox, head lice, strep throat), please let the office know. If a child comes to the school office feeling ill (i.e. fever, cough) we will call you to come pick him or her up. **If your child is on any medication which may affect his or her performance in school, please inform the office.**

PARENT—SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

If you have a concern about your child, please first contact his/her teacher by leaving a message at the Hebrew School office (212-674-5750, x 210). If a parent-teacher discussion does not resolve the matter, Barbara Simon is available (x 209) to discuss any matter

concerning the students. (Barbara is happy to meet with you before 3:30 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Please feel free to call and set up an appointment.)

USE OF CELL PHONES & OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES PROHIBITED DURING SCHOOL HOURS

Use of cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted in the Hebrew School during class time. Parents and students who need to communicate during school hours will need to use school office phone (212-674-5750 @ extension 210).

PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

HEBREW SCHOOL FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

The post bar/bat mitzvah classes combine Jewish study, social service projects, and youth group socializing. These classes seek to engage the students in a higher level of Jewish learning as well as to challenge the students to create personal connections and relevance to the ancient Jewish traditions and customs.

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND FAMILY EDUCATION AT HEBREW SCHOOL

**“To educate a child without educating and involving the parents and the entire family can be compared to heating a house while leaving the window open.” -
Mordechai Kaplan**

At the Brotherhood Synagogue Hebrew School, we believe that the success of a child's Jewish education depends largely on the involvement and support of the parents. We also believe that a child's education can be a wonderful and unique opportunity for parents to begin or continue their own Jewish exploration and study. Finally, we understand that for parents to fully support their child's education, it is important for parents to know what is going on in the

classroom. Through our Mishpacha program, we invite parents to join their children as learners in the classroom. Please consult your calendar for dates.

FRIDAY NIGHT DINNER

Throughout the year, each class comes together to celebrate Shabbat with Shabbat Dinners on Friday nights. These meals are warm and friendly events which allow the parents to get to know one another in an informal setting, and allow the students to see each other outside the classroom. Consult the school calendar for the date of your child(ren)'s class dinners and write this date into your family's calendar now.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Synagogue attendance is essential to the education your children will receive in our school. Prayer, in the communal setting, will support your child's studies and enrich your family's Jewish experience. **Please be aware that attendance at a minimum of seven Shabbat services throughout the school year is required.** The following is a schedule of regular Shabbat morning services at the Brotherhood Synagogue:

Aleph Bet Club	(K-2)	11:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m.
Junior Congregation	(3-7)	10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Family Service	(N-1)	5:30 p.m.-6:15 p.m.
Famly Service	(2-7)	6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

(Please check your school calendar)

STUDENT VISITORS

In special situations, students may bring a guest to class. **However, it must be cleared with the office at least one week prior to the visit.** Guests are expected to be respectful observers for the day. If the teacher feels the guest is disruptive in any way, the guest will be asked to sit in the office for the remainder of the school session.

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

The Hebrew School provides a number of programs to celebrate specific Jewish holidays as a community. Please join us in celebrating Sukkot with our sukkah decorating party, dancing on Simchat Torah, candlelighting for Chanukah, our Chanukah party & concert, the Purim Spiel, dressing up and having fun at the Purim Carnival, commemoration of Yom Ha-Shoah (Holocaust Memorial Day), celebrating the State of Israel on Yom Ha-Atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day), and the receiving of Torah on Shavuot.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH AT THE BROTHERHOOD SYNAGOGUE

It is our goal at the Brotherhood Synagogue to make the Bar/Bat Mitzvah a spiritually, intellectually and socially meaningful experience for our children, their families and the congregation. We view the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a milestone on the continuum of a child's Jewish education and participation in synagogue life.

Scheduling

When your child enters Fifth Grade, you should receive notification to contact Rabbi Alder to set the date for your child's ceremony if you have not already done so. Dates are assigned on a first come, first served basis. If we do not hear from you by the end of the calendar year, you will be contacted to set a date.

Preparation

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah child will undertake a tutorial to learn to chant in Hebrew the Torah portion and corresponding Haftarah. The tutorial, taught by Phil Rothman, Rabbi Daniel Alder and Cantor Mike Weis, consists of half-hour long weekly sessions over the course of nine months (not including July and August). For children who are interested and able, the method and system of trope will be taught for chanting the Torah and Haftarah so that he or she can go on after the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to prepare to chant any portion if he or she desires.

Please note:

It is the expectation of the Brotherhood Synagogue that all B'nai Mitzvah will complete the 7th grade year in the Hebrew School and also that students not have their Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutorial during Hebrew School hours. Three mandatory family workshops will be held to prepare for the big event. Seventh grade students *must* attend a minimum of 25 classes in order to participate in the end of year graduation ceremony.