



TEMPLE BETH TORAH
MORRIS NIRENBERG RELIGIOUS SCHOOL



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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to a year of continuity and change – a time of growth and preservation. I am honored to serve this community as both Education Director and Cantorial Soloist. Over the summer, I have met with each of our teachers and am very excited to collaborate with such passionate and committed Jewish educators. Also, I have worked with the Education Committee and Sarit Ferreira to learn how the school works in order to provide a smooth transition. While most of our staff and organization will remain the same, there will be a few changes based on feedback I have received about what has worked well over the years, and what might be improved with some tweaking.

The most significant change will be a combination of Judaics and Hebrew studies for students in grades 4-6 on Sundays and Tuesdays. In discussions with teachers, the Education Committee, Rabbi Steve, and Stacey Lieberman, there was general consensus that students will benefit from the reinforcement of Hebrew reading twice a week. However, we don't want to short-change our Judaics curriculum or our commitment to project-based learning. The Education Committee suggested that we forego the Chuggim (electives) on Tuesday afternoons, so that classes can work on their Judaics projects on both Sundays and Tuesdays. I welcome your input on the effects of these change as the year goes on.

On most Sundays, I will lead the morning service from 10:00-10:30am with music, discussion of the meaning of prayers, and opportunities for students to lead prayer. **Although I know you are very very busy, I encourage you to participate in these services with your kids.** Sharing this time with your children will demonstrate – in a way no teacher can – that communal prayer is important. It may enable your family to communicate about what prayer means to each of us, why we pray, and how prayer can be an active vehicle to bring peace and wholeness to our lives.

I look forward to getting to know your family and becoming part of this inspiring Jewish community.

Linda Myer

Education Director, Cantorial Soloist

Administration

Linda Myer, Director of Education	Work: (508)429-6268	educationdirector@bethtorah.org
Rabbi Steven Edelman-Blank	Work: (508)429-7151	rabbi@bethtorah.org
Debka Janak, Office Administrator	Work: (508)429-6268	tbt@bethtorah.org
Nicole Glick, Education Chair	617-417-2623	NicoleLGlick@gmail.com
Stacey Lieberman, Temple President	508-634-6689	staceygoldie@aol.com

Teaching Staff

Grade/subject	Name	email
Gan & Aleph / Dalet (Sundays)	Karen Swartz	KSwartz@Lifespan.org
Bet / Gimel assistant	Beth Ecker	Aleph1213@gmail.com
Gimel	Laurie Canning	lauriecanning15@comcast.net
Dalet (Tuesdays)	Elyse Banak	banakse@verizon.net
Hey	Jane Kohuth	jkohuth@verizon.net
Vav	Charli Bernstein	cbbneb@comcast.net
K'sharim	Rabbi Edelman-Blank	rabbi@bethtorah.org

Communication

Communication is essential to our school community.

Up-to-date school-wide and class-specific information is available through:

- Temple Facebook page
- "Education Corner " in Torah Talk
- A monthly email newsletter
- Regular emails from teachers on student activities
- Lobby TV

Contact the teachers via email with questions, concerns, or comments. In the event that an issue requires additional support, please feel free to contact the Education Director, Linda Myer or Education Chair, Nicole Glick.

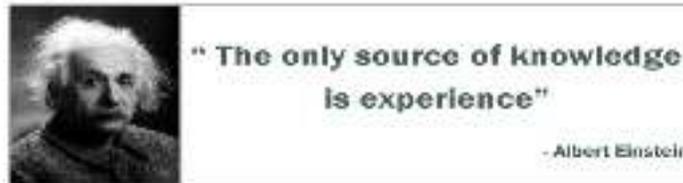
Temple Beth Torah's Religious School Vision

At Temple Beth Torah, we wish to create an ever-growing variety of engaging and well-planned educational programs for students and their families in order to provide a foundation for building strong and lasting Jewish identities.

Philosophy of Jewish Education

We believe that children and adults learn best by doing. Examples of experiential learning include:

- ★ Experiencing the celebration of holidays and Shabbat
- ★ Building community (*Kehila*) with fellow students and Temple members
- ★ Impacting others in the real world by practicing Tikun Olam & Mitzvot
- ★ Meaningful Judaic long term projects that build a lasting Jewish identity
- ★ Connecting with Judaism via music, art, drama, debate, and more
- ★ Praying with the community at real services
- ★ Connecting with Israeli kids to learn from their first hand experiences
- ★ Using Hebrew as an everyday language through the use of conversational words and terms as well as prayer



Experiential Jewish Education

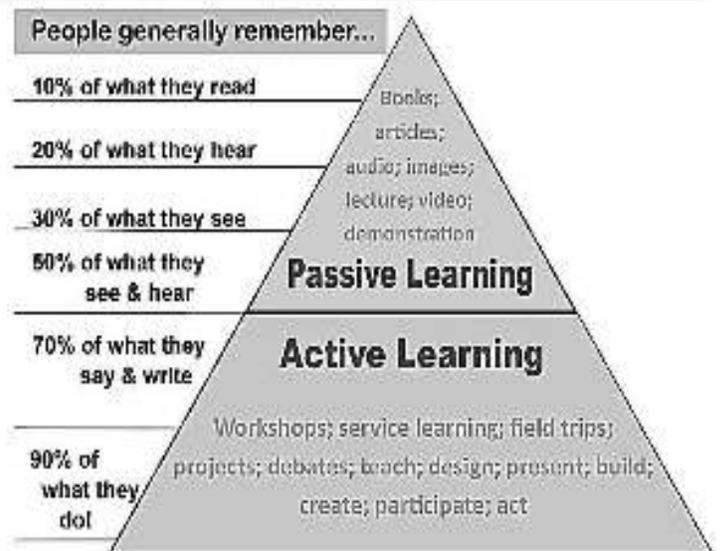
Experiential Jewish Education is the process of teaching Jewish life, and Jewish values, by building meaningful Jewish experiences – creating programs that combine traditional methods of text study, learning, and service, with physical and emotional interaction between learners. Experiential Jewish education works to inspire learners to embrace meaningful Jewish lives.

(Adapted from: <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/what-exactly-is-experiential-jewish-education/>)

Project Based Learning

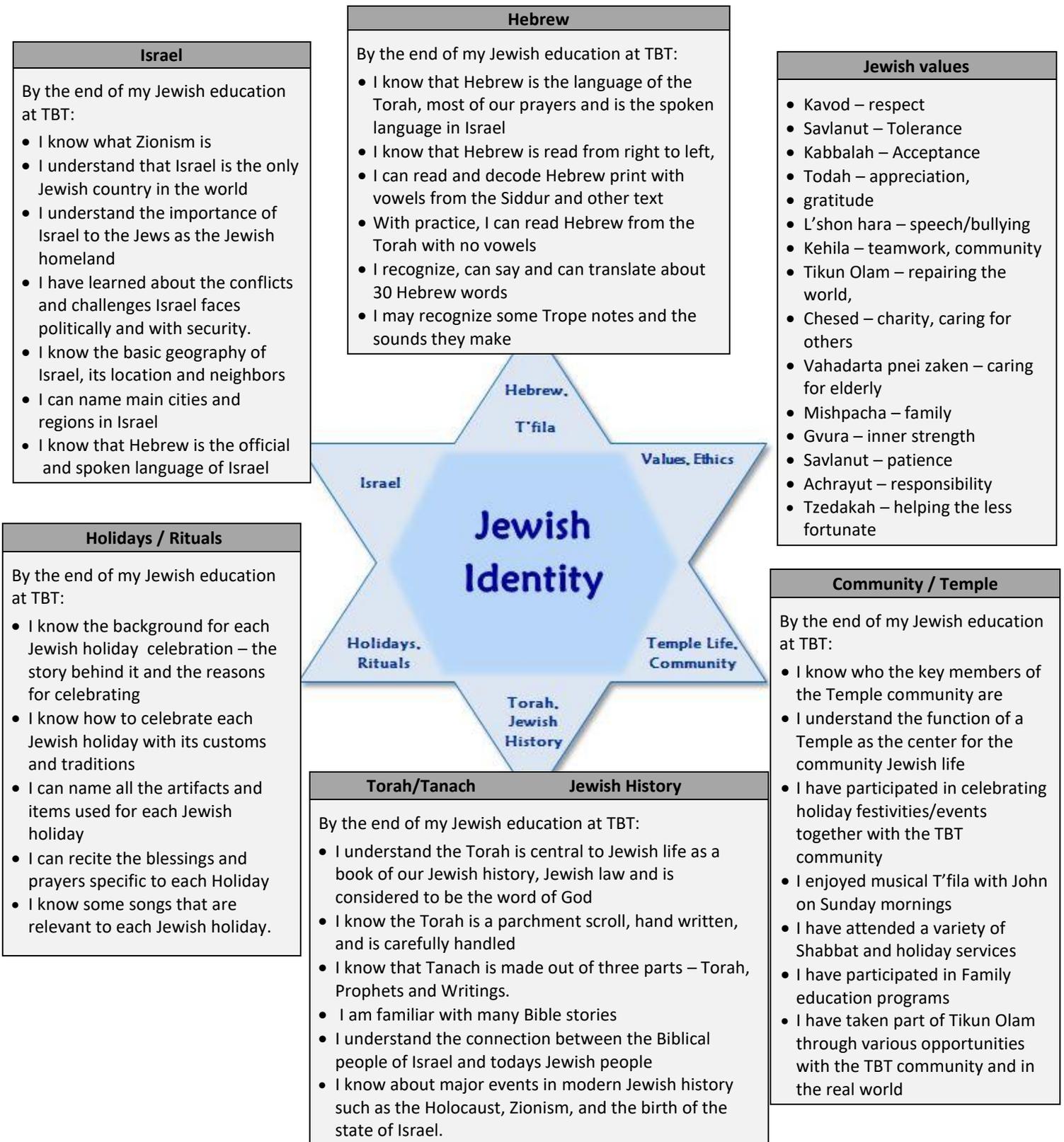
PBL moves students from the traditional Hebrew school setting of listening about Judaism to “really engaging in Judaism and taking ownership of it.” With project-based learning, the teacher moves from lecturer to partner, and teacher and student work together to create a project.

Adapted from: <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/project-based-learning-offers-deeper-and-better-way-to-teach-judaism/>



Curriculum Overview

Our curriculum encourages the development of Jewish identity in a personal and meaningful way.
Please check the Temple website and school blog for grade specific curriculum goals.



Hebrew instruction

Hebrew instruction at TBT religious school begins with our youngest members.

During the early years (preschool and kindergarten) we introduce Hebrew through a few channels:



- ★ General vocabulary that relates to holidays, Shabbat, and synagogue rituals.
- ★ Some conversational vocabulary words and terms.
- ★ First exposure to the Aleph-Bet letters through books, games, crafts, visuals and multisensory activities.
- ★ Singing Hebrew songs and chanting simple prayers and blessings in Hebrew.

As students get to Bet (second grade) they have the option of coming to school on Sundays only, or adding Tuesdays as well. On Sundays, Kitah Bet students use about half of the session studying Hebrew decoding. Through the use of a text book and hands-on activities, they gain mastery of the full set of Aleph Bet letters as well as vowels. They begin to read simple words and decode familiar as well as unfamiliar text.

Our students from Bet plus (2nd grade) to Vav (6th grade) attend sessions on Sunday mornings and Tuesday afternoons. On Sundays, students practice Hebrew reading skills in a logical progression during the first hour, and learn Judaics through project-based activities in the second hour. On Tuesdays, they study Hebrew prayers during half of the session and continue their Judaics projects with their classes till the end of the session.

During Ivrit (Hebrew) instruction the students are divided into three groups:

- **Bet Plus and Gimel:** Our 2nd graders (optional) and 3rd graders build on previous knowledge and develop the skills of decoding Hebrew letters, vowels and words. As they progress and improve their reading ability, students begin to study reading and chanting of Hebrew prayers from the Friday Kabbalat Shabbat service.
- **Dalet-Hey:** Our 4th and 5th graders use a variety of materials: text books, siddurim, worksheets, handouts, hands-on materials, audio, video, peer and teacher support to build fluency of reading and chanting prayers. They continue to master their decoding skills as well as understand the meaning and purpose of each prayer as an integral part of the learning process.
- **Vav:** Our 6th graders continue on the path of self-paced prayer study as they also study Haftorah Trope.

Religious School Policies and procedures

Religious School Schedule

Gan (K), Aleph (1st), Bet (2nd): Sundays 8:30am - 10:30am

Bet plus (2nd grade), Gimel (3rd), Dalet (4th), Hey (5th), Vav (6th): Sundays 10:00am - 12:30pm
& Tuesdays 5:00pm - 6:30pm

K'sharim (7th grade): Sundays 10:30am - 12:30pm



Drop Off/Pick Up

- **Student Drop-off:** Parents of students in Gan and Aleph **MUST** escort their child(ren) to their assigned classroom. All children who are brought to school prior to class should be supervised by the adult who brings them to school.
- **Student Pick-up:** Due to child safety concerns, parents are expected to pick up their child(ren) INDOORS.
- **Late Arrival/Early Dismissal:** Students who arrive at school after the start of class and/or adults who pick students up early must check in at the office. Adults are asked not to go to the classroom to retrieve a child as it is disruptive to the class.

Inclement Weather – School Cancellation

- On **Tuesdays**, Religious School classes will follow the Holliston Public School policy regarding cancellation of classes due to inclement weather. If Holliston schools are closed, or have an early dismissal, there will be no Religious School.
- On **Sundays**, school cancellations will be announced on TV (channels 4, 5 and 7) and emailed to our school families. In addition, you may access the TBT answering machine for updates after 7:30am.
- In the event of cancellation of a school day, make-up days may be added either during the school year or immediately thereafter, at the discretion of TBT.

General policies:

- To contact your child during Religious School hours, please call the Temple office 508-429-6268.
- Student may not leave the school building during Religious School hours without parent authorization.
- Please notify teacher about early dismissal before class begins. A parent or authorized representative must come into the office to pick the student up.
- Students are to come prepared for each class day, equipped with items needed for their Religious School experiences.
- Boys are expected to wear *kippot* at all times inside the Temple.
- Proper behavior and respect toward teachers, fellow students, the education process and the Temple building are expected at all times.

Medical Emergency

Our staff is CPR/first aid trained, and we have a basic first aid kit on the premises. However, in the case of a serious medical emergency, the school will contact the child's parent/guardian first. If the parent/guardian is not available, emergency contacts will be called.



School Attendance

- Regular attendance is essential. Not only do we have academic goals to achieve in a limited number of hours, but certain aspects of the religious school experience cannot be duplicated at home. Many of our classes rely on discussions, debates, technological activities and group work that enrich the student's personal Jewish experiences, and therefore, missed classes cannot always be made up through home assignments.
- Students are expected to arrive promptly and attend regularly. Please contact your child's teacher to notify her of any anticipated absences so plans can be made accordingly.
- For special circumstances, please consult your child's teacher and/or the Education Director. Families will be contacted after two consecutive unexplained absences.

Valuables / Devices

- Cell phones and other electronic devices are left at home unless approved by the teacher for classroom use.
- If your child needs to connect with you, he/she may use the office phone.
- TBT religious school is not responsible for any loss or damage of such devices if brought to Temple. Please remember that no cell phones or electronics of any kind are allowed to be used during Shabbat and/or religious holidays.



Food in School

- Only **Kosher** food in unopened packages may be brought into school. Please see the approved Kashrut symbols in the Temple kitchen, in the Temple office and at the end of this book.
- **Gum chewing is not allowed in the school OR sanctuary.**
- Due to the severity of nut allergies, we request that **NO NUT PRODUCTS** be brought into the school.
- If you have any questions about any aspect of this policy, please contact the Director of Education or Rabbi.

Guests Visitors and Volunteers

Volunteers are welcome and encouraged! Please inquire and/or arrange for opportunities with the classroom teacher and/or Director of Education. A CORI (background check) must be completed for anyone over the age of 16.

Madrichim (Teen Aides)

Madrichim are teens from our congregation who volunteer their time to work at our religious school. They are integrated into the classrooms on a preset schedule. Their role in the classroom varies and may include: assisting with class-wide activities, small group instruction, creating enrichment activities for students and helping in school events. Madrichim are supervised by classroom teachers and are trained by the Director of Education.

Special Needs

We recognize that children have various learning styles and we strive to be sensitive to your child's needs.

- Please bring any medical, learning or emotional issues to the attention of the Education Director so that we may best serve your child.
- We strive to design our learning environment to accommodate all children. Should a special situation develop after the registration form has been completed, please contact the Education Director so accommodations can be made as needed. (i.e. illness, death in the family, divorce, changes of address, etc.)
- To receive a copy of our Special Needs Policy, please see the Education Director or check our education page on the TBT website at www.bethtorah.org.



Behavior management

We expect that students will follow basic school rules for conduct. Disciplinary action will be implemented as needed for behaviors which include, but are not limited to:

- Interfering with other students' learning
- Theft or vandalism of personal, school, Temple property, or property of a field trip destination
- Any smoking or illicit drug use on Temple premises

The Education Committee has adopted the following procedure for disciplinary action:

- If a behavioral problem arises, student and teacher will confer and seek to resolve the matter. The behavior will be documented.
- If a second disciplinary action is required, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the teacher, the Director of Education will be notified and a Student Disciplinary Conduct Form will be sent home for the child's parent(s)/guardian to sign and return to the Education Director.
- If a third disciplinary action is required, the Director of Education will meet with the teacher, student and parent(s)/guardian. The Chair of Education, Temple President or Vice Presidents may be consulted at any point deemed necessary.

A disciplinary action plan may be implemented at any point in this procedure. If the disciplinary action plan is unsuccessful, suspension or dismissal may result. Restitution will be required for any damage to another child's belongings, school or Temple property and/or property of a field trip destination. In the event that the first incident is serious in nature, the Director of Education reserves the right to respond and/or contact the parent(s)/guardian without following the above procedure. The Director of Education may contact the Chair of Education, Temple President or Vice Presidents at any point deemed necessary for purposes of appropriate actions for all involved.

Jewish Holiday programs

Holiday programs take place throughout the school year. Please consult the Temple Calendar on the Temple website www.bethtorah.org, Torah Talk (Temple update emails), and emails from the classroom teacher for updated information.



General information

Library

Our library is an excellent resource of books available to students and families. It contains a wide range of Jewish topics with literature geared toward young children through adulthood. Please contact the Education Director to schedule a time to check books out.

Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)

In an effort to teach our children the importance of Tzedakah and to develop a greater sense of community, our Religious School promotes participation in Tikkun Olam projects throughout the year.

Some examples of Tikkun Olam are:

- K'sharim program participate in B'nai Telem, integrating community service, learning, and reflection and providing opportunities to effect real change.
- Temple wide Mitzvah Day and other events promoting activities of social service and charity.
- Donating *tzedakah* throughout the year to charity organizations. Look for notification in the school newsletter for details.

Volunteers

We rely on your help to ensure the success of our school! Volunteering as a room parent, helping with an Oneg and/or Kiddush luncheon set-up/clean-up, helping in the classroom, or participating on the Education Committee – **we need you!**

To volunteer, please contact Linda Myer, educationdirector@bethtorah.org.

Student and family participation services and events

Students have multiple opportunities to lead prayers during Friday evening and/or Shabbat Morning prayer services. Students can lead portions of the service in designated school services, as well as most Friday night or Shabbat services during the year.



In addition to Shabbat services, we offer other opportunities for families to participate in educational workshops and community events.

On the inside back cover is a list of designated student/family services as well as other events for the 2017-2018 school year. Change to these dates may occur as the year goes along – please check your email for reminders for the various events and communication regarding date change via Torah Talk, a designated email and the school newsletter.

HAVERIM: JEWISH TEENS TOGETHER

New program with Temple Etz Chaim (Franklin)

4 different modules – 3 sessions each + 3 general programs

Kickoff dinner – Oct.16

Hanukkah Celebration – Dec. 12

Passover Experience – April 9

MEDIA MODULE: Oct. 23, 30 and Nov. 13

COOKING MODULE: Jan. 8, 15, 22

ART MODULE: Feb. 5, 12, 26

ENVIRONMENT: March 12, 19, 26