

---

**From:** Sarah Grace Nadler <SarahGrace@templebeth-el.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 14, 2020 1:59 PM  
**Subject:** Sunday School Covid-19 and Influenza Adaptations



## **Updates and Resources for our Sunday School Families:**

*Please keep reading till the end for family resilience tips and recommendations.*

### **Hello Parents and Shabbat Shalom!**

I'm writing because in addition to the email communication you received from Temple leadership (which is copied below), I have information I can share regarding Temple Beth-El's plan for our Sunday School program and Covid-19/Influenza health risk management.

First, I want to affirm that it is normal to experience any or all of the feelings that naturally arise at a time like this. These can include stress, over-stimulation, fear, anger, grief over lost experiences, confusion, and even relief--for some of you the idea of social distancing might not sound so bad right now! :-). Sometimes we can be absorbing these feelings from outside sources even if we don't realize it. So, I want to remind you that self-care and self-compassion is a step one of supporting your family effectively in the weeks and months to come!

**Our Temple Beth-El Leadership and Staff Team have responded to the current situation with the following adaptations for Sunday School:**

- 1. The Teaching Team is currently developing alternatives for the following Sundays: March 29th and April 5th, as we will not be gathering as a school onsite those days. Sunday School is NOT canceled, however, so please keep your eyes peeled next week for messages from your Sunday School Teachers**

**and me about exciting opportunities for Jewish Learning on those days** that will maximize Jewish connectivity and minimize health risks according to best practices.

2. **Tarbut (the collaborative offsite Jewish learning adventure for grades 7th-10th) is continuing as planned for 3/29.** This is an outdoor event in which we can easily minimize risk and provide a much-needed opportunity for wellness and connection! Please look for communications from our Director of Youth Engagement, Bridget Siegel-Fultz, regarding details and health guidelines for this event.
3. As of now, the plan is to continue as planned for the rest of the year beyond those two dates, however adaptations for future Sundays and family events are currently being discussed. Things are constantly changing and we will make announcements as we continue to apply recommendations and address the needs of our families!

**also want to pass on a few resources. Your children are growing up in a time when heavy topics such as pandemics are swirling around them, getting information and emotions from every angle.**

I can personally recommend these two helpful outlines from the CDC:

[Talking with children about Coronavirus Disease 2019: Messages for parents, school staff, and others working with children](#) and [Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)

In addition to the tips in those two articles, I will add a few more ideas for your consideration:

- **Try to mediate confusing mixed messages your children may receive.** For example, sometimes in an attempt to comfort, adults will tell children "don't be afraid" or "there's no need to be scared" when they are simultaneously being inundated with fear-inducing messages. Instead, try continuing the conversation, allowing them to talk it out while normalizing their feelings with your own versions of the following:
  - "It makes sense that you would feel scared right now."
  - "Tell me more about why you are feeling those feelings."
  - "It's okay to be nervous--that helps us stay alert and aware of the things we can do to stay safe! What are the things we're all doing to stay healthy?"
  - "It sounds like we're already doing all the best things we can do to manage these difficult feelings -- is there anything else you can think of that you would like to do to help?"

- **As activities are canceled and the felt sense of panic ramps up, quality time and healthy outlets become more important than ever.** Some children will respond to this with increased energy and boundary-testing while others may respond by withdrawing into rooms and onto screens. Here are some potential strategies to make your own:
  - If you find your family "grounded" together or effectively quarantined due to cancellations, consider holding a family meeting to clearly acknowledge the changes and work together to create a game plan. [This](#) article offers following conversation starters (plus more info), "How could we devise a family contract?", "What do you think will be our biggest challenges?", "What are the strengths that we each have as an individual family member that can help out?", "What are the concerns and expectations we each have about this situation?", and "what role each person can play to make it better?"
  - A quick google of "activities for kids and families to do at home" will generate 100's of ideas, some of which you may have to adapt since some household items may not be available.
  - Is there a big project at home that you haven't been able to tackle as a family lately? How could this extra time and nervous energy be an opportunity?
  - Do self-care activities together. How about 5 minutes of yoga together in the morning or before bed? How about taking turns choosing guided meditations on Youtube or mindfulness apps to do together? Is there a coloring book lying around you could crack while watching TV together? What park could you visit for a 20 min stretch?
  - Challenge your children to complete a manageable project such as reading x number of books in the next 14 days, or finding one way to be of help others less fortunate during this time.
    - You could even put them up to creating a video or poster about an organization/issue that is important to them which we will share (one way or another) for the "Cause Share" component of Mitzvah Day this year!!! See more info [here](#).
  - I'm sure many of you have the added stressors of trying to balance working from home and managing this ongoing crisis at work as well. Challenge your kids to pick up the phone or FaceTime another loved one or a friend they haven't talked to in a while!! Connection is so important right now--not just for them but also for the loved ones they may reach out to!

[www.TempleBeth-El.com/Covid19Updates](http://www.TempleBeth-El.com/Covid19Updates)