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CANTOR MICHAEL SMOLASH

The Stephen Gottlieb 27 Cantorial Chair

CANTOR NEIL MICHAELS

The Stephen Gottlieb 27 Cantorial Chair

RABBI ARIANNA L. GORDON, RJE
DIRECTOR, EDUCATION

RABBI JEFFREY STOMBAUGH
DIRECTOR, THE WELL

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CHIEF STRATEGIC OFFICER

5725 WALNUT LAKE ROAD
WEST BLOOMFIELD, MICHIGAN
48323-2373
(248) 661-5700
WWW.TEMPLE-ISRAEL.ORG

Dear Religious School Parents,

I recently read a tweet that says, "The question isn't 'How can they learn the V'ahavta virtually in third grade?' It's 'How can religious school be a source of constant love for third graders when the world is upside down?'" This quote resonates with me, as we try plan, and re-plan for our Religious School year.

We, like you, have been anxiously following the news, watching for updates from each school district, and trying to determine what is the best, safest possible program for our students this fall. We know there are no easy answers and that everyone must make the decision that is right for their families. Above all else, please know that we want to remain connected to your family, and to keep you engaged with Temple Israel and with Judaism. And that may look different for everyone this year as you try to meet all the demands on your time.

We have put together a program that we believe will keep our families safe and provide opportunities to connect remotely and occasionally in person. Everything is subject to change as the world continues to change! We have also made the decision to plan for and charge for one semester at a time. This allows us the most flexible approach to change our program as we monitor and evaluate what is realistic.

And so, our plan...

K-3rd grades will meet in person, outside, once in September and once in October, as well as participating in 5 interactive online sessions between September and December.

Similarly, 4-6 grade Judaica will meet in person, outside, once in September and once in October as well as participating in 5 online sessions.

We have completely overhauled our Judaica curriculum to focus on Jewish values and holidays while using a curriculum that is designed specifically for both virtual and in person learning, and we are looking forward to teaching our students using updated methodology.

We are excited to introduce you to our new Hebrew program for 4th, 5th and 6th grade students—Hebrew in the House! This individualized Hebrew learning program will allow students to work one-on-one with a teacher from the convenience of their homes at a time that fits into their schedule! For 25-30 minutes a week, each 4th-6th grade student will have the undivided attention of a Hebrew teacher, allowing them to move at a pace that is appropriate for their Hebrew level. We are confident that is actually a better Hebrew learning model, and we are working with #OnwardHebrew, Behrman House ShalomLearning and Jitap to access to the most cutting-edge Hebrew resources.

Throughout September and October, grades 7-12 will be meeting on alternating weeks outside, in person for engaging, experiential programs. In November and December, we will transition to virtual learning for our upper grades, maintaining a sense of community and interactive learning. Though we are excited about the opportunities that this semester's programming will create, please know that Temple Israel and Tyner Religious School is here for you and your family. If these plans do not work for your family in terms of health and safety, please be in touch with me. We are committed to making Jewish education work for your children and your family and partnering with you to foster a love of Judaism.

We can't wait to welcome you back to Religious School next month!

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Arianna Gordon