

CONGREGATION SHIR HA-MA'ALOT

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A LIFETIME OF BELONGING

## **SHM Religious School:** **A Center for Jewish Learning & Living**

### **Parent Handbook**

Any Questions? Always feel free to call or e-mail:

Heather Rosenthal, Senior Director of Education & Engagement

[hrosenthal@shmtemple.org](mailto:hrosenthal@shmtemple.org)

Ann Rubin-Saraci, Religious School Principal

(949) 857-2226, [ann@shmtemple.org](mailto:ann@shmtemple.org)

Get the latest Religious School News at <https://www.shmtemple.org/shm-religious-school>

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# Religious School Vision and Mission Statement

## **SHM Religious School Vision Statement**

Congregation Shir Ha-Ma'alot Religious School is a place where we strive to create and nurture strong Jewish identities by ...

- Establishing and sustaining a learning environment that is positive, exciting, and approachable for all our students
- Providing students with Jewish knowledge and skills
- Deepening an understanding of Jewish values and how they are put into action in everyday life
- Creating opportunities for students to explore and develop a relationship with God
- Connecting our students to each other and the Jewish community, at home and abroad

## Grade Level Curriculum

Our goal is to provide your child will a well-rounded, supplemental Jewish education that they can take into their adult lives and be able to proud to be Jewish. The curriculum topics that we teach in each grade level are designed to build upon the previous year, while also allowing new students to ease into our curriculum map.

In addition to this, we try to infuse Hebrew (Ivrit) into different aspects of our students' lives, so you will see many words in both Hebrew and English.

Torah Time/Tiny Tots-	Shabbat, Havdalah, and Holidays
Yeladim (Pre-K)-	Introduction to the 4 M's (SHM's Mission Statement)
Gan (Kinder)-	Jewish traditions, Shabbat, and Holidays
Kitah Alef (1 <sup>st</sup> Grade)-	Tradition: Torah Stories from Creation to Prophets
Kitah Bet (2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade)-	Jewish Lifecycles and How to Celebrate Them
Kitah Gimel (3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade)-	God and Introduction to Israeli Culture and Land
Kitah Dalet (4 <sup>th</sup> Grade)-	Jewish Stories from Creation to the Exodus
Kitah Hey (5 <sup>th</sup> Grade)-	Ancient Prophets & How They Guide Us in Life
Kitah Vav (6 <sup>th</sup> Grade)-	Exploring Israel's History & Making Sense of It All
Kitah Zayin (7 <sup>th</sup> Grade)-	Becoming Adults in the Jewish Community
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade-	Time & Space: Memorializing the Holocaust
9 <sup>th</sup> Grade-	Understanding Israel's Complicated Existence
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade/ Confirmation-	Do the Ten Commandments Really Apply to Me?
Rappin' with the Rabbi	Post-Confirmation Exploration- How to Connect
(11 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> Grades)-	with their Judaism as a Young Adult in Society

## School Information

### **Sunday Class Times**

#### Sunday Hebrew (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>)

8:30-9:55am

#### Sibling Club (Pre-K-2<sup>nd</sup>)

8:30-9:55am

#### Sunday Judaica (Pre-K-7<sup>th</sup> Grade)

10:00am-12:30pm

#### Tiny Tots (one Sunday/month)

10:15-11:15am

#### Torah Time for Tots (two Sundays/month)

10:15-11:45am

### **Tuesday Class Times**

#### Tuesday Hebrew (3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>)

4:30-6:00pm

\*Optional dinner from 6-6:30pm  
(Must RSVP by the Monday before class)

#### Chai School (7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)

6:30-8:00pm

\*Optional dinner from 6-6:30pm  
(Must RSVP by the Monday before class)

### **Temple Business Hours**

Monday-Friday  
9:00am-5:00pm

### **Temple Phone Number**

949-857-2226

On Sunday mornings and/or Tuesday evening past 5pm, please direct all questions/comments to Ann Rubin-Saraci on Parent Square.

# **SHM Religious School Education Committee**

Farrell Eisenberg, Ed Committee Chair

## **Members at Large:**

Matt Kramer  
Jennifer Salinger  
Corie Yutkin  
Lisa Grier  
Wendy Burdei  
Adam Rosenblum

Paula Greenberger  
Wendy Seiden  
Sara Roberts  
Beth Cohen  
Rabbi Corie Yutkin

**Are you interested in joining?**

## **What is the Education Committee at SHM?**

The Education Committee is a group of parents who volunteer within the Religious School and Youth Programming community with a shared vision of supporting the students, teachers, families, and staff that are enrolled in the overall school programming. The Education Committee uses the Religious School Vision Statement to lead their programs and leadership. The Ed Committee aims to build strong and lasting relationships amongst its members, connecting parents across a diversity of experiences.

The Education Committee (Ed Co) is a group of parents whose children are part of the Religious School, and they volunteer their time to meet monthly with our Religious School Principal to discuss topics such as policies and procedures, supporting upcoming holiday celebrations and family programming, volunteer to help in classrooms and/or at events, as well as be a sounding board for the parent kehillah (community).

Their meetings occur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:30pm online, which is helpful for busy parents who can log in from wherever they happen to be at that time. Anyone can join the committee at any time, so if you are interested, please reach out the Education Committee Chair, Farrell Eisenberg, at [phera@aol.com](mailto:phera@aol.com).

## **Contact Information**

Heather Rosenthal	Senior Director of Education & Engagement	<a href="mailto:hrosenthal@shmtemple.org">hrosenthal@shmtemple.org</a>
Ann Rubin-Saraci	Religious School Principal	<a href="mailto:ann@shmtemple.org">ann@shmtemple.org</a>
Andrea Charrette	Family Engagement Coordinator	<a href="mailto:andrea@shmtemple.org">andrea@shmtemple.org</a>
Ayah Klugman	Youth Advisor	<a href="mailto:youthgroup@shmtemple.org">youthgroup@shmtemple.org</a>
Rachel Bickford	Religious School Administrator	<a href="mailto:rsadmin@shmtemple.org">rsadmin@shmtemple.org</a>
Adeena Homampour	Inclusion Specialist	<a href="mailto:ahomampour@gmail.com">ahomampour@gmail.com</a>

## Policies and Procedures

Since we are a supplemental Religious School, we know that our students do Jewish when they are within our walls, and we need your help to continue the learning and engagement in Jewish life at home and in day-to-day life. Many of the following procedures are put in place to help everyone feel like they are committed members to the Religious School, and more importantly, to SHM. We know you lead a busy life outside of SHM, and we are thankful for your dedication to raising your children Jewishly in Orange County. Help us make their Jewish life that much more fulfilling by being our partners in this sacred work we do.

### Attendance

We strongly encourage our Religious School students to be present for a minimum of 70% of all scheduled classes. If your child misses a session, please notify your child's teacher on Parent Square (our parent communication tool) by sending a message to the teacher and/or the principal. To see directions on how to send a direct message on Parent Square, [please click here](#).

If your child misses a Hebrew session, please reach out, so that we can offer the Babayit (homework) assignments or materials from that missed class. To progress to the next grade, a child needs to have experienced the classroom material, as each year of study builds on the foundation of previous years of learning.

If you need to pick up your child(ren) early or are bringing your child(ren) late to any class, please notify the teacher(s) and the Religious School Principal via Parent Square. To see directions on how to send a direct message on Parent Square, [please click here](#).

### B'nai Mitzvah Policy

All students are expected to complete at least four years of Hebrew and Judaica in a synagogue prior to becoming B'nai Mitzvah (3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades). This is different if a child attends a Jewish day school. Special considerations are reviewed by one of the Rabbis and Religious School Principal.

In addition, current school enrollment is required for students completing their B'nai Mitzvah study. B'nai Mitzvah study with the tutor will begin eight months prior to the date. Further information regarding B'nai Mitzvah requirements is found in the "B'nai Mitzvah Handbook" that can be requested

from the Temple office and/or by sending an email to Rabbi DePaolo at [sdepaolo@shmtemple.org](mailto:sdepaolo@shmtemple.org).

Traditionally, B'nai Mitzvah date request forms are sent out around 3 years prior to your child's B'nai Mitzvah. At the time of filling out the B'nai Mitzvah date request form, you will pay 50% of the deposit to secure the date. The total B'nai Mitzvah fee is in addition to Religious School tuition, and it covers the tutoring your child receives eight months before their date, along with the Friday night oneg (after service dessert), the Rabbis' time with your child, and the use of our Sanctuary on their special day. If a family requests additional tutoring, they should reach out to Rabbi DePaolo via email, and she will discuss the extra fees associated with this option. Additionally, to find out the various options for B'nai Mitzvah tutoring (in person or online), please reach out to Rabbi DePaolo's assistant, Joni Baker-Bronfeld, at [joni@shmtemple.org](mailto:joni@shmtemple.org) for that information.

When a child enrolls in 7<sup>th</sup> grade in our program, they are automatically enrolled in a program called BMC, B'nai Mitzvah Chavurah. BMC meets every Tuesday afternoon from 4-6pm with the option of staying for dinner, 6-6:30pm, for a nominal fee. During this time, 7<sup>th</sup> graders can hang out in the youth lounge, practice their Hebrew prayers with a buddy, do their homework, socialize, and be teens! There is no additional cost (besides dinner if they choose to stay) for this part of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and it is a drop-in opportunity.

If you should have any questions regarding flowers, room rental, recommendations for DJ, photographer, etc., please reach out to Rabbi DePaolo's assistant, Joni Baker-Bronfeld.

## Books

The Religious School supplies students with all necessary textbooks and learning materials in class. Students in Kitah Gimel (3<sup>rd</sup> grade) will receive their own "Alef Bet Quest" textbook that they will leave at SHM for use while in class. If a student loses a textbook, please notify your child's teacher as soon as possible to order a new one at the parents' expense.

Starting in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (or any new students in 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade), all Hebrew students will receive their very own SHM bag, which is perfect for transporting their Hebrew materials back and forth from home each class session.

In 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades, all students enrolled in Hebrew will receive their very own Hebrew Prayer Packet. It is vital that this comes to and from Religious School each time they have Hebrew class. In this prayer packet will be their weekly



Babayit (homework) assignment that parents need to sign off that it was done each week.

## Dress Code

To respect the holiness of our synagogue, students are asked to dress in appropriate attire for school and class level Shabbat Services. This includes having your midriff covered, bottoms at appropriate length, and wearing the correct footwear for activities for the day.

For services – please no jeans, t-shirts, and the like. Kippot are optional for both boys and girls, and we always have them available in the sanctuary during Shabbat services and class times should a student want to wear one.

## Early Dismissal

Because we care so much about the safety of your child, please follow these directions for early dismissal.

1. Parents requesting early dismissal of a student should come to the office, check in with school personnel, find out their location, and personally retrieve their child from the classroom with as little disruption as possible.
  - a. Since there are many moving parts to our daily schedule, it is imperative that a parent checks in with the school administrator, so they can locate where your child may be during the day.
  - b. Please do not send a text message to any SHM staff member as our cell phones are not being used in this manner during class time.
2. Please make sure that the child's teacher is aware of their departure before the beginning of that class session by messaging the teacher on the Parent Square app.
  - a. To learn how to send a direct message a person on Parent Square, [please click here](#).

## Guests

Students may occasionally request that a friend accompany them to class. Those students **MUST** receive permission by the Religious School Principal and a guest pass prior to bringing the guest into their classroom. Also, please be prepared to provide emergency contact information or all guests.

For safety reasons, we must know who is in the building during each class session. The principal reserves the right to decline permission to any potential guest.

## Hebrew Instruction

In our Religious School, there are three different options for students to receive Hebrew instruction in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grades. Our goal in our Hebrew program is to teach our students how to be decoders, having the ability to blend Hebrew letters and vowels together, sounding them out, making words. And the goal is by knowing meaning to many words in the prayers they learn, they will begin to form a unique meaning for each prayer that is unique to them.

### Hebrew Options:

Tuesday Hebrew is our least expensive option, and it allows students to have a second day of learning with SHM. Not only can students who choose this Hebrew option sleep in on Sunday mornings until Judaica begins, they also receive 29 sessions of Hebrew (as opposed to the 26 for Sunday). Our internal study has shown that students who choose Tuesday Hebrew have a 20-25% higher retention rate on their prayers, since Tuesday Hebrew students receive a second T'filah (prayer) service, in addition to the one they have on Sundays during Judaica.

Sunday Hebrew is the one-day option, where students come to Hebrew early in the morning and stay through the end of Judaica. This is a 6<sup>th</sup> day of students getting up early in their week for school and they are at SHM for 4 hours (8:30am-12:30pm). And there are 26 sessions in the school year, the same as Judaica sessions.

Individual Hebrew Instruction is our most customizable option because a Hebrew teacher comes to your home (or meets you on Zoom- whichever you prefer) at the time that works best for both your and the teacher's schedule. There is an increased price for this option, and it is not suggested for students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade as this year is crucial to being in-person with other students as they begin their "Alef Bet Quest" journey into decoding.

All students in Pre-K-7<sup>th</sup> grade receive 15 minutes of Hebrew only instruction on a given Sunday, where they are building a relationship with the Hebrew language as a living language used in conversations in our modern world. We call this "Hebrew Through Movement" (HTM), and our students can bring home Hebrew words or phrases each week and teach you what they've learned!

## Home Reinforcement

Our time at Religious School is limited and precious, and therefore review at home is an essential part of the complete learning process. We need you to be our sacred partners in helping bridge the gap between Temple and home. Work to do at home may be given by any teacher who feels it will be meaningful for their students. Teachers are asked to keep in mind that assignments should not be lengthy and should be educational and interesting. Work which includes parental involvement, in all grades, is encouraged, as we strive to make Jewish learning a family activity.

For Hebrew classes in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade, the teachers will be providing a weekly Babayit (homework) assignment. This assignment should take no longer than 10-20 minutes to complete for the entire week.

Starting in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, all Hebrew students will receive a Hebrew Prayer Packet that has a weekly check-off list. The students will write in what part of the prayer(s) they are to work on at home and spend 5-10 minutes for 2-3 times a week to practice that assignment.

All Babayit (homework) should be signed off by a parent/guardian each week, which is the teacher's way of knowing that the assignment was completed at home. Some teachers may incentivize those students who do their Babayit weekly.

If you or your child need help on a particular prayer because they forgot or you don't read Hebrew, we have you covered! Please go to our [website](#) and click on "B'nai Mitzvah" under the title of "Engage", where you will see all prayers listed. On this page, there are the MP3 files for families to download for their child to practice hearing the prayer(s), as well as the most up-to-date Hebrew prayer packets by grade level. In addition to the prayer packets, we have a TRANSLITERATED version of all prayer packets that is perfect for a parent who may not know the Hebrew, so they can follow along with their child. \*It is important to note print out this version for your Hebrew student as our goal is to teach our students how to decode (blending Hebrew letters and vowels together), which will only strengthen their Hebrew reading skills.

Should a student lose their prayer packet, [please go here](#) to print them a new one as they will only receive 1 per school year.

## Judaica

Although Judaica can mean different things, at SHM, we believe that during Judaica classes, our students build their Jewish identity through the learning that occurs within the classroom. During Judaica, our students may learn

about Jewish stories from the Torah through the matriarchs and patriarchs that teach us lessons to live by, Jewish history, how to live a Jewish life, Jewish tradition, and so much more.

In Judaica, this is where Judaism comes alive through our hands-on, experiential approach to learning. Like our Senior Rabbi says, “It’s cool to be Jewish”, and our students know firsthand just how unique and awesome it is to be Jewish in our current world. We want to build our students’ Jewish neshama (soul) to be one that is proud to be Jewish!

To learn more about what each grade level learns each year, please refer to the “Grade Level Curriculum” section above. And if you ever want to observe a class (Hebrew or Judaica), please don’t hesitate to reach out to the principal, who can coordinate this for you.

## **Nut-Free & Peanut-Free Policy**

We are a nut and peanut free campus. To create the safest possible environment for all the children at SHM, we ask parents to please refrain from bringing peanuts, nuts, or nut products to school events or sending them with their child for snack.

Several children in our school have severe or fatal allergies to nuts and/or peanuts. If you choose to bringing snacks to class, please be sure that no peanut or nut products are included in the ingredients on the food label. Foods to avoid include trail mix, nut granola bars, cookies or brownies with nuts, peanut butter, and candy with nuts.

We suggest plenty of other snacks such as challah, cheese and crackers, cookies and candy without nuts, Rice Krispie bars, fruit, fruit snacks, etc. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the principal or Rabbi. We appreciate your effort and cooperation in ensuring the safety of our community.

## **Parking Lot Safety**

The safety of our students is our number one concern. With that in mind, we highly encourage all parents to park their cars and walk their children into the Temple at the start of school each session. At the end of the class, we also highly encourage parents to park and enter the building for pick-up.

To create a secure school, we will be shutting the parking lot gate at 9:55 am and not opening it up for pick-up until 12:30 pm. If you choose to pick-up your child(ren) by waiting in the pick-up line, please know that the gate will

not open before dismissal at 12:30 pm. We ask that you do not line up in front of the gate until 12:30 pm.

This is a safety concern as we cannot have cars backing up onto Michelson Drive. Again, if you park and walk in, you will most likely find your child(ren) faster than waiting in the pick-up line. And don't forget about the off-site parking at Irvine Lanes (map below). Lastly, if you decide to park in our lot during the pick-up time, please know that you cannot back up until the rush of traffic ends (around 12:45 pm).

If you cannot find parking within our lot, please know that there is off-site parking available at the corner of Michelson and Harvard, in the Irvine Lanes bowling alley that we rent on Sunday mornings. It is a -minute walk to SHM, and we have a security guard stationed at the backyard gate to let you in for a shorter walk into our building.

**Students will not be allowed to walk through the parking lot without a parent or guardian escorting them. This is all for the safety of all our members.**



## Policy for Neurodiverse Students

At SHM, we believe that every student has a right to a rich Jewish educational experience in a welcoming environment. We feel that a successful Jewish education is a partnership between families and synagogue; therefore, it is crucial for parents to share with the principal all information about their child's special needs. Classroom inclusion of students with special needs (physical, emotional, and/or learning challenges) is our goal whenever possible.

In cases where full inclusion is not a viable option, we will work with the parents to create a positive alternative Jewish learning experience for their child. By adopting this Special Needs Policy, we are not only providing a positive learning experience for our students with special needs, but we are

also increasing the sensitivity and broadening the experiences for all our Religious School students.

## Progress Reports

Student progress reports are issued twice a year (January and May) to provide parents with important information on the progress of their child in class. Currently, we only provide progress reports for students in kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. If you are surprised by any information you read in the Progress Reports, please reach out to our principal, and discuss your concerns sooner rather than later. We are here to ensure your child is successful in their Hebrew learning, so this open communication is vital.

For those students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade, there will be additional data about their child's Hebrew progress in the report, so it is important to read through this part of the report as well. This area shows parents how well their child knows how to identify, blend, and decode Hebrew letters and vowels, and for those in 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders, how well they can recite their grade level prayers.

If you see that your child's progress report is showing a lack of proficiency in any of their Hebrew prayers, please reach out to our principal to create a plan of action to support your child. You can also refer to the "Home Reinforcement" section above or go to our website and practice the Hebrew prayers with your child by [clicking here](#). Even if you don't know Hebrew yourself, we have transliteration of all prayers for parents to follow along should they need it. We ask that you not share the transliterated version of the prayers with your child as our goal is to make them decoders of Hebrew.

## Security in Place

The safety of our students is our number one concern. It is important to note that whenever there are children present for any of our events, we will have a security officer present at the front door. With that in mind, please know that we have several different safety and security measures in place. For the safety of our members, we will not be listing them here. But if you would like to discuss this further, please reach out to Heather or Ann for more information. We are happy to share any and all measures we have in place at SHM.

## Switching Classes

At SHM Religious School, we strive to create a positive learning environment for all our students. We ask parents to enroll in a particular session and

remain in that session for the year. The community that is created in a classroom is one that is strengthened by the continuity week after week. Please be committed to staying in the class for which you signed up.

If you have a conflict arise, please contact the principal **AND** your child's teacher to see what arrangements can be made through our Parent Square app. We will try our best to accommodate your request at that time. We prefer to make class changes at the end of the semester time (January) as we know that our students outside schedules can change at this time.

## Community and Life

### Café on Sundays

Because building community is vital to our success, our students are always greeted by our volunteers on Sunday morning. We are fortunate to have a group of Brotherhood members that choose to volunteer their time on Sundays that we lovingly call, "The Brew Crew". These dedicated people sell coffee, water bottles, juice, bagels, and snacks for our kehillah (community) on Sunday mornings during both Hebrew and Judaica. And as our students leave Judaica, they have the option to buy a hot dog and drink as they head off to their next activity for the day.

We encourage families to buy a "Brew Crew" book for use on Sundays at SHM, which allows the parents to pre-purchase tickets to use on the different items that the café sells. To purchase the 2023-2024 Brew Crew book, [please click here](#).

### Family Engagement Coordinator

We are lucky to have a Family Engagement Coordinator, Andrea Charrette, who will be working closely with families, connecting children with common interests, helping to set up "grade level get-togethers", coordinating the Horei Kitah (Room Parents), and more! Be on the lookout for emails from Andrea at [andrea@shmtemple.org](mailto:andrea@shmtemple.org).

### Family Camp on Sundays

Throughout the Religious School year, each grade level (Pre-K-6) participates in one "Family Camp" on a Sunday morning. These active and fun sessions designed for students and their parents are camp-style programs and are led

by the principal, the Senior Director of Education & Engagement, and/or one of the Rabbis.

On a Family Camp Day, you can anticipate getting out of your chair and “learning by doing.” It is strongly recommended that at least one parent from a household attend with your child on their Family Camp Day. This is an opportunity for you and your child to actively learn together and be a part of their school year learning in their kitah (class). You can view the school calendar for this year’s dates by [clicking here](#).

Mark these dates in your calendar now!

Pre-K/Kinder	March 17 <sup>th</sup>
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	January 21 <sup>st</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	October 22 <sup>nd</sup>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	April 28 <sup>th</sup>
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	December 17 <sup>th</sup>
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	November 5 <sup>th</sup>
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	February 11 <sup>th</sup>

## Family Retreat

Every other year, we host a Family Retreat at an off-site location, where families sign up and join us for a long weekend of connection, Judaism, and meaningful experiences. The Family Retreat is hosted on Martin Luther King, Jr. 3-day weekend and there is no Religious School on the Sunday of this weekend, so that families join us for this once-in-a-lifetime engaging family retreat. To learn more about our Congregational Family Retreat happening January 12-14<sup>th</sup> in Running Springs, [please click here](#).

## Family Shabbat Services

Each class is given the honor of participating in two Shabbat Services throughout the school year. Family services begin at 6:30pm (2<sup>nd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades) and Tot Shabbat services begin at 6:00pm (Pre-K-1<sup>st</sup> grades) and are preceded by a dinner at the Temple for the participating grade level families. Please be on the lookout for a dinner RSVP the weeks leading up to your child’s grade level Shabbat.

It is customary for the parents of the students involved to “host” the oneg Shabbat by supplying baked goods. We ask that the item(s) you bring for oneg should be pre-plated, nut free dessert for everyone to enjoy after services end. Check the school calendar for this year’s dates by [clicking here](#).



Mark these dates in your calendar now!

Pre-K/K/1<sup>st</sup> Grade

2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Grade

6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Grade

November 17<sup>th</sup> and April 19<sup>th</sup>

November 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>

February 2<sup>nd</sup> and May 3<sup>rd</sup>

October 6<sup>th</sup> and January 5<sup>th</sup>

We are bringing back our Shabbat Incentive Cards, so every time you and your family attends a Friday night or Saturday morning service, you will receive a stamp. And the more stamps you collect, the better the reward!

Shabbat Shalom, שבת שלום  
All Year Long!!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport to SHM's Shabbat Experience

Come to Shabbat services, greet/thank the clergy, and have them initial and date a box! More services you attend, the better the prizes!

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More on back! ➡

## Horei Kitah (Room Parents)

At our Religious School, we believe that our parents help make our kehillah (community) even stronger! And we cannot do our programming alone, so we need your help. Unlike secular school parent groups, our Horei Kitah have a very specific role.

We are looking for parents to help collect funds for their child's grade level teachers' gifts that they receive two times a year- Chanukah and End of the Year. Since we want our teachers to feel the love and appreciation of the school kehillah (community), we elicit the help of our Horei Kitah for this purpose.

If you are interested in being a Horei Kitah, please reach out to our Family Engagement Coordinator, Andrea Charrette, at [andrea@shmtemple.org](mailto:andrea@shmtemple.org).

Please sign up [HERE](#) for opportunities to volunteers within our school.

## Kehillah Fair- First Day of School

On the first day of school, SHM hosts a Kehillah (Community) Fair, where we invite all SHM members (Religious School families or not) to learn about all the amazing programs, groups, events, and holiday celebrations that are in store for the new program year. This is a great opportunity for all members to meet new members and calendar all things they'd like to participate in.

And there are over 300 programs that members can engage in, so there is something for everyone from 1-101 years old!

## Monthly Family Happening Emails

Once a month, each family in the Religious School will receive an email that shares all that's in store for the upcoming month, including youth group activities, Family and Tot Shabbat services, holiday celebrations, and more. When this email comes out from our Religious School Administrator, Rachel Bickford ([rsadmin@shmtemple.org](mailto:rsadmin@shmtemple.org)), please add these events to your calendars as soon as possible as we know that life gets hectic, so planning ahead is the best way to prevent you missing these amazing events!

## Parent Communication

We use a parent communication tool, called Parent Square. To download SHM's Religious School Parent Square app, please view the QR codes below based on your type of phone.



Once a family is part of our Religious School, we will send a "Welcome" invitation email from Parent Square, giving you access to our school's page. Once you have downloaded the app, accepted our invitation, and created your own account using your email or cell phone number, you will then begin to receive school posts, messages, alerts, and notifications. Should you need help getting started on Parent Square, [please click here](#) for a quick tutorial.

It is important for all Parent Square users to check their notification settings. Our Religious School uses different types of notifications to communicate with our parents- posts, messages, and alerts. And in your notification settings, you can choose how you'd like to receive these types of notifications- in-app, text, email, or combination of these. We suggest all parents [click here](#) to set-up their unique notifications.

Our teachers will post after each class on Parent Square, so it is important to identify the way in which you will receive notifications, so that you read what

happened in your child's class(es). And once you've read the post, you can "appreciate" the post by clicking on the heart in the app. This is a very helpful step for our teachers as they can see who has read their posts, and this type of online engagement helps build our kehillah (community).

Lastly, all teachers and the principal are eager to discuss your child's progress. By speaking together regularly, we can better ensure your child's success at Religious School. Schools succeed because parents, teachers, and staff communicate with each other regularly. We are always available to meet regarding your questions and concerns. Please contact the teacher first via Parent Square, and the second step would be to reach the principal at (949) 857-2226 or by email at [ann@shmtemeple.org](mailto:ann@shmtemeple.org).

## T'filah (Prayer Time)

On both Sundays and Tuesdays, our students engage in a meaningful, ruach-filled (spirited) T'filah session. These are done by grade levels, and it is an opportunity for those students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grade to practice the Hebrew prayers they are learning in their classes, and for those younger to listen and learn meaning to the prayers that we sing at Shabbat. We invite you to join us on any and all T'filah times to see what happen during these magical moments.

Pre-K/K/1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	Sundays from 10:00-10:15am
2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Sundays from 11:05-11:25am
5 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Sundays from 12:05-12:30pm
3 <sup>rd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Tuesday	Tuesday Hebrew from 5:45-6:00pm

## Tzedakah

The giving of *tzedakah* (charity) is a central part of living a Jewish life. Please remind your child to bring a weekly contribution to drop in the *tzedakah* box in their classroom. This can be in the form of coins or dollar bills, and it is important to tell your child that the money is for tzedakah as many students may use it to buy themselves something from the café that our Brotherhood volunteers run on Sunday mornings/afternoon.

Throughout the school year, the teachers will bring their classes tzedakah to our school office for collection, and at the end of the school year, we total all tzedakah collected and our Kitah Zayin (7<sup>th</sup> grade) students study different non-profit organizations (in their class time) and host a Tzedakah Fair on the last day of school for all students to participate in. Whatever percentage of votes were collected at the Tzedakah Fair is the percentage of tzedakah

given to that organization. This is truly great end of the year community building event that is solely run by the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.

## Youth Choir

The Shireinu Project Youth Choir, under the direction of Rabbi Zive and Dave Roberts, is open to all children in grades 1-12 to love to sing. This group meets on 1-2 Sundays a month after Religious School from 12:30-1:30pm and includes lunch.

The Youth Choir performs during select Shabbat Services throughout the school year, so join to be part of this fun, dynamic group of singers. The cost to join Youth Choir is \$36/year. Please sign up by visiting

## Youth Groups

Our youth groups are an exciting and integral part of our comprehensive Jewish educational and social programming. Three youth groups keep our young people involved and active at the Temple and are divided as follows: Mini-MiTY/MiTY (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades), JiFTY (6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grades) and SHMoFTY (9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> grades). Children do not need to be a part of our Religious School to attend, so if you know SHM families whose children don't attend, they are more than welcome to join in the fun!

### Youth Groups:

Mini-MiTY/MiTY- Starting as young as 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, we want your child to be engaged in building friendships with their Jewish kehillah (community). And one of the best ways to do this is through signing up your child for a Mini-MiTY/MiTY (MMM) events, which happen on one Sunday of the month after Religious School from 12:30-2pm. And included in the cost of the event is lunch, as well as a fun program designed to keep our students connected beyond Religious School.

JiFTY- Our students in grades 6-8 get to transition from Sunday afternoon events to Saturday evening programming, which may be on or off-site, and change every month. We are proud that our middle school youth group continues to be bucking the national trend of youth engagement because we have a strong presence in this age group, and we hope you can help us keep this going strong!

SHMoFTY- This group is comprised of High School aged-students who have an active board with elected positions. What's unique about this youth group is that it is teen-led by the youth group board members, and work together as leaders to build thoughtful and fun programming for their peers.

Keep your eyes open for information about upcoming events through Parent Square and direct emails from our Youth Advisor, Ayah Klugman, at [youthgroup@shmtemple.org](mailto:youthgroup@shmtemple.org).

## Positive Reinforcement

In the Kraut Education Center, you may see our teal blue “SHM Expectations” signs throughout the building. On Sunday mornings, you can hear our entire school singing the expectations to the tune of “Od Yavo”:

I will ...

Show respect

Honor our spaces

Make mentsch-like choices  
at SHM!

These SHM Expectations change based upon the location of the sign as our expectations for different parts of our day and/or area change. For example, what we do in the restroom to show respect is different than what we do in the Sanctuary during T’filah (prayer time). We encourage you to look at these SHM Expectations signs throughout our building, and you too, may start using the song at your own home!

A consistent focus of our school program is on the Jewish concept of “*derech erez - the way of the land.*” A broader translation is “respect” and how we treat our parents, friends, classmates, teachers, and strangers. We will make every attempt to encourage our students to follow this concept. Should any student have consistent difficulty conducting themselves in this manner, a conference will be arranged between student, parent, teacher, principal and/or Rabbi to work toward a positive resolution.

## Inclusion at School

One of the biggest benefits of being a part of our Religious School is that we are fortunate to have an Inclusion Specialist on site when your child is at school. We are but a very few supplemental Religious Schools that have an Inclusion Specialist on staff because we understand that every learner is unique, and all deserve to be supported. The Inclusion Specialist’s role is to ensure that ALL students, parents, and staff are feeling included and are part of our Kehillah Kedosha (Sacred Community).

The Inclusion Specialist may reach out to a family should there be a question about best ways to help your child in an educational setting, offer tips on

managing a behavior that we are seeing at SHM, and/or be a safe place to share any concerns you may have about your child's success at our school.

If your child has a 504 plan or an IEP, please reach out to our Inclusion Specialist, Adeena Homampour, as she can support your child in many ways. It is important to note that all children may not have an educational plan put into practice within their secular school setting (such as an IEP/504 plan), but this does not mean that our Inclusion Specialist cannot help your child. If our Inclusion Specialist reaches out to you, please know that we are wanting to make learning happen in the best way for your child. Adeena Homampour's email is [ahomampour@gmail.com](mailto:ahomampour@gmail.com).

## Procedures for Consequences

At SHM, we believe in a process called *teshuva* (*repentance*). During the teshuva process, we hope that everyone walks away from the situation better than they started, and we encourage all participants to give apologies, as needed, so that we can move on from the instance without holding grudges.

Here are the procedures for how our Religious School handles disciplines.

1. We will have a private conversation with the student(s) involved and try to find out what is happening. And we will redirect the behavior.
2. We will give a verbal warning, so that the person(s) knows that this behavior is not okay, why it's not showing respect or mensch-like behavior. It is now up to the student to change their choices. We will notify the students' teacher(s), as well as the Inclusion Specialist, so that she can support this child too.
3. If a verbal warning wasn't enough, we will talk to the student(s) and notify the parent(s) of the behavior. At this meeting, we will discuss how to change the choices that caused this discussion in the first place.
4. If after a discussion and the behavior doesn't change, we will invite the parent(s) to join for an in-person meeting with the child(ren) and the principal and discuss next steps. All involved will agree and the principal will make an actionable plan.
5. If final step is needed, we will involve one of our clergy members and a senior staff discussion will happen.

## Todah Rabah!

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to your child(ren)'s Jewish education! We know that we are all better as a *kehillah* (*community*),

and we cannot do it without your support. We invite you to join us on any day there is Religious School and be a part of your child(ren)'s Jewish supplemental education. Sit in on our *T'filah (prayer time)* and experience the *ruach (spirit)* that our children can develop here at SHM. Sit in our café on Sunday mornings, watch a sporting game on our TV and enjoy time with new and old friends. Volunteer to be a Horei Kitah (room parent) and see what's happening within the walls of our classrooms.

We know you'll be blown away with the breadth of knowledge our children have about Reform Judaism, and you will walk away knowing what Rabbi Steinberg always says- "It's Cool to be Jewish"!

Kol Tuv,

Ann Rubin-Saraci  
Religious School Principal

Heather Rosenthal  
Senior Director of Education & Engagement