



# Jewish Education at Shaarei Shamayim

## Overview

In past years, Bet Sefer, our children's education program, brought together 40 students for Jewish education, Hebrew tutoring, intergenerational Shabbat services, and holiday programming. Our Bnei Mitzvah program, teacher's assistant training program, and youth activities provided meaningful engagement for our teens. We also had a monthly Keshet program for 2-4 year olds.

This year we have had to adapt these programs or put them on hold. We decided to step back from Bet Sefer and implement a different program: The Jewish Learning Project. While the 2020-2021 year will be different, our approach to Jewish education remains the same.

## Goals

Through our curriculum and approach to teaching we seek to:

1. Support our students in developing a strong Jewish identity and commitment to Jewish community;
2. Instill in our students the Jewish values of compassion and open-heartedness, commitment to justice and equity, and intellectual curiosity and ethical deliberation;
3. Engage our students in Jewish teachings that will help them grapple with the most challenging issues of their time.

Building community is central to our vision. We want our students to feel connected and responsible to the other students in their class and in the larger program, and to the congregation as a whole. We believe that our most essential work is to foster meaningful, creative learning opportunities that bring together students, families, and other members together.

## Our Rabbi and Children's Education Director

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman was ordained in 2003 by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. As part of her work as the rabbi of Shaarei Shamayim, she oversees the congregation's children's education programs. She has written curricular materials for the program over the last 17 years. In 2015 she published a curriculum for children and teenagers entitled [\*Reframing Israel: Teaching Kids to Think Critically About the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict\*](#).