Learning at Westminster Synagogue
2019 - 2020
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Welcome to our 2019-2020 Education Brochure

Over the past year, our members have spoken about the importance of education to themselves, their children and the wider community. We have been working alongside lay leaders to create some wonderful lifelong learning programmes for members of all ages to help us to build for the future. We are proud to outline educational opportunities in the following pages which feature events aimed at specific age groups, and also intergenerational learning, as we grow and strengthen our connections together.

Our education journey begins with our children. For 0-3s we hold regular Tots Shabbat sessions which bring parents, carers and their little ones together to celebrate Shabbat at the Synagogue on Saturday mornings.

From the age of 3, we offer Or Shabbat, our Saturday morning religion school, teaching Jewish festivals, traditions, rituals, Israel and of course Hebrew, as well as giving our children the chance to make longlasting Jewish friendships - which our families tell us they value so highly. This leads to the B’nei Mitzvah programme for 11-13 year olds, as our children become Jewish adults.

The journey doesn’t stop there however; our teens programmes provide students with the chance to maintain and build on the relationships that they have developed over previous years as part of our Kabbalat Torah or GCSE in Religious Studies (featuring Judaism) groups or in training to become young leaders as Help Teachers at Or Shabbat.

We also continue to provide opportunities for our adult members to learn Hebrew, to acquire skills that would help them to participate in the service, and to explore Torah. We hold modern Hebrew conversation classes; our Access to Judaism class provides the chance for those converting to Judaism to learn alongside members who are keen to deepen their knowledge of our religion and culture; and Lunch and Learn, Torah in the City and monthly Oneg Shabbat sessions offer the chance to become better acquainted with the weekly Torah portion and to unpack prayers from the service and associated rituals.

We would not be a Synagogue without food and music. The cuisine at Westminster Synagogue is known to be legendary, so in addition to a range of chavurah potluck suppers and community dinners, we will be sharing delicious Kiddushim on Friday evenings featuring guest speakers and great conversation as part of our Westminster Voices scheme. On Friday evenings, our Or Shira and Shabbat Unplugged services offer the chance to learn new tunes for our services, led by a wonderful team of musicians, as well as a new singing team who will be building up confidence and knowledge about music for Friday and Saturday services.

We’ll also have a number of Education Events throughout the year, the first of which is ‘Westminster Chai’ - our day of workshops, talks and activities for all of the family - on Sunday 10th November - the beginning of Interfaith Week. Book in now and make sure you join us for a very special day.

If you have questions or require further information, please get in touch - and if there are other programmes that you would like to help us run and get involved in, then please do tell us.

We look forward to learning together with you.
Tots Shabbat
Selected Saturdays at 10:30am

It’s never too early to start Jewish learning, so take part in our special Shabbat experience for the youngest members of Westminster Synagogue (plus parents & grandparents!)

Held once a month for 0-3 year olds, our interactive Tots service brings Shabbat to life with songs, stories and arts & crafts. Sessions also look at Jewish festivals and are a great way to meet other young families in the community.

10:30-12:00pm on:
Saturday 2nd November
Saturday 7th December - Chanukah
Saturday 11th January
Saturday 8th February - Tu B’Shevat
Saturday 7th March - Purim
Saturday 9th May
Saturday 6th June
Saturday 4th July
Or Shabbat
Saturdays 10:00am-12:30pm

Our thriving and growing children’s educational programme for our young ones aged 3-10.

Or Shabbat meets Saturdays from 10:00-12:30pm. The children learn about Judaism and study Hebrew in a fun, friendly and very enriching way.

Parents are welcome to join us for assembly in the morning and Kiddush at 12:15pm.

Chanukah Term:
14th September - 7th December (Half Term: 19th & 26th October)

Pesach Term:
11th January - 28th March (Half Term 15th & 22nd February)

Shavuot Term:
25th April - 4th July (Half Term 23rd & 30th May)

Dates for your Diary:
10th November - Westminster Chai
22nd November - Czech Scrolls Service
8th February - Tu B’Shevat @ Or Shabbat

17th November - Mitzvah Day
27th December - Chanukah Fun
9th March - Purim Celebrations

Register by contacting
admin@westminstersynagogue.org
Our two year B’nei Mitzvah programme prepares students for Jewish adulthood and becoming Bar and Bat Mitzvah in an engaging and dynamic way.

Students meet, eat, bond, study Judaism and Hebrew, listen to speakers and participate in services. The programme also includes trips - both abroad and within the UK - led by our experienced teaching team.

Chanukah Term:
13th September - 6th December (Half Term: 18th & 25th October)

Pesach Term:
10th January - 27th March (Half Term 14th & 21st February)

Shavuot Term:
24th April - 26th June (Half Term 22nd & 29th May)

Dates for your Diary:
13th September - BM Chavurah 8th - 10th November - WS Residential
10th November - Westminster Chai 17th November - Mitzvah Day
27th December - Chanukah Fun 6th - 8th March - European Residential

Register by contacting
admin@westminstersynagogue.org
Kabbalat Torah

Fridays 5:30pm-7:30pm

Our two year programme for students in school years 9 and 10. The group meets monthly on Friday evenings as they get together to further their Jewish education and develop their Jewish relationships.

Sessions are led by our own staff, as well as external speakers, as we explore topics such as Israel, social action, Jewish life on university campus, spirituality and other topics of interest.

The course includes visits to places of Jewish interest including an interfaith visit, volunteering opportunities in the community, as well as mitzvot in Shabbat Services.

Sessions will be held on the following Fridays:

13th September
15th November
10th January
6th March
15th May

11th October
6th December
7th February
24th April
12th June

Register by contacting
admin@westminstersynagogue.org
GSCE in Religious Studies

Wednesdays 5:00pm-7:00pm

“Why do Jewish people vary so much in the way we understand and keep to the laws of Judaism?”
“What do Jews believe about God, the soul and the afterlife?”

Students tackle questions such as these through our two year GSCE programme, held both at Westminster Synagogue and from the comfort of your home.

Open to post BM students (and friends from outside who may wish to join them) we invite you to take this opportunity to pursue a two-year GCSE course in Religious Studies featuring Judaism and to achieve a full GCSE in year 10 or beyond.

Chanukah Term:
11th September - 11th December (Half Term: 23rd & 30th October)

Pesach Term:
8th January - 1st April (Half Term 19th & 26th February)

Shavuot Term:
22nd April - 1st July (Half Term 27th May & 3rd June)

Register by contacting admin@westminstersynagogue.org
Access to Judaism sessions are for those interested in furthering their Jewish knowledge whether as part of our conversion programme or as a Westminster member.

Led by Rabbi Benji, Yael Roberts and guest educators, the group covers a variety of topics including history, traditions and rituals, festivals, Jewish ethics and both ancient and modern Israel.

Classes are followed by a 45 minute Hebrew session.

Chanukah Term:
18th September - 11th December (Half Term: 23rd & 30th October)

Pesach Term:
8th January - 25th March (Half Term 19th & 26th February)

Shavuot Term:
22nd April - 8th July (Half Term 27th May & 3rd June)

Dates for your Diary:
10th November - Westminster Chai
22nd November - Czech Scrolls Service
12th February - Tu B’Shevat Seder
17th November - Mitzvah Day
27th December - Chanukah Fun
9th March - Purim Celebrations

To receive the Annual Syllabus, or enquire about conversion, contact the Synagogue Office
Torah in the City

Enjoy coffee and breakfast as we learn in Central London

We know that we have a number of members of our community who work in the City and want to further their Jewish knowledge. As such, we’re excited to offer monthly Torah in the City sessions - including tea, coffee and snacks.

Held near Liverpool Street, Rabbi Benji will explore a section of the week’s Torah portion with you: reading closely, teasing out questions, exploring ancient answers, and ultimately considering lessons for our lives.

Wednesdays 8:30am - 9:15am

16th October
20th November
11th December

Dates for 2020 tbc.

For more information or to be added to our Torah in the City mailing list, please contact the Synagogue Office
We are excited to offer a special opportunity for people who want to develop their skills as readers of Torah.

Our most sacred text is full of challenges, ambiguities, provocations – and inspiration! In these sessions we will reinforce replicable ways of reading to derive personal and relevant meaning. We will read closely, bringing our questions to the text, and we will build a toolkit to derive moving responses.

We ask members to bring a dish to add to the table, as we discover ways that the weekly Torah portion can connect to our lives.

We ask that members attend at least two of the three week course, and each session will be limited to 15 people.

Saturdays 12:45pm -2:15pm
29th February, 7th March & 14th March
25th July, 1st August & 8th August

For more information, please contact the Synagogue Office
Once a month we come together after the Shabbat morning service to share a meal and explore a chosen topic with Rabbi Benji, Yael Roberts or guest speakers.

Similar to our potluck Lunch and Learn sessions, these Oneg Shabbat Lunches allow members to discuss engaging themes from the Torah which impact our modern lives. If there is a topic that you would like to explore, please let us know!

**Saturdays 12:45pm-2:15pm**

- 5th October
- 19th October
- 14th December
- 22nd February
- 28th March
- 25th April
- 16th May
- 6th June
- 18th July

For more information, please contact the Synagogue Office.
Thursday Evenings
Intermediates’ class: 6:00pm-7:20pm
Beginners’ 1 class: 7:30pm-8:50pm
Beginners’ 2 class: 9:00pm-10:20pm

Want to feel at home on your next visit to Tel Aviv?
Sign up to Westminster Synagogue and WZO’s 30 week Ulpan course that will get you speaking Hebrew like an Israeli!

Our interactive Hebrew Ulpan classes are taught by experienced language teacher Shai Grosskopf.

Whether you want to make Aliyah or just want to learn a new language, this class will bring Hebrew to life and help you converse with ease.

Chanukah Term:
12th September - 19th December (Half Term: 17th October)

Pesach Term:
9th January - 2nd April (Half Term: 20th February)

Shavuot Term:
23rd April - 25th June (Half Term 28th May)

For more information or to be added to our Ulpan mailing list, please contact the Synagogue Office
Switch off and connect with our Shabbat Unplugged services.

Welcome in Shabbat with beautiful melodies that everyone can join in with. The service starts at 6:30pm, but feel free to pop along at 6:00pm if you want to learn some of the tunes that we will be singing in the service.

Afterwards join us downstairs for a plentiful Kiddush or a community meal.

Friday Evenings
6:00pm-6:30pm - Learning the music
6:30pm-7:15pm - Shabbat service

6th September 20th September
18th October 25th October
22nd November 29th November
13th December 31st January
28th February 27th March
24th April 22nd May
26th June 31st July

For more information about Shabbat Unplugged, to host a Shabbat Dinner or to be added to our mailing list, please contact the Synagogue Office.
Dates for your Diary

Friday 13th September - B’nei Mitzvah Chavurah Supper
Saturday 21st September - Selichot Supper, Study and Service
Sunday 29th & Monday 30th September - Erev Rosh Hashanah & Rosh Hashanah
Tuesday 8th & Wednesday 9th October - Kol Nidre & Yom Kippur
Sunday 13th & Monday 14th October - Erev Sukkot Shira & Sukkot First Day
Sunday 20th & Monday 21st October - Erev Simchat Torah & Simchat Torah
Friday 8th - Sunday 10th November - BM Westminster Residential Trip
Sunday 10th November - Westminster Chai
Sunday 17th November - Mitzvah Day
Sunday 17th - 24th November - Peace of Mind
Friday 22nd November - WS Czech Scrolls Commemorative Service
Friday 27th December - Westminster Chanukah Celebrations
Sunday 23rd February - Westminster Questions?
Friday 6th - Sunday 8th March - BM European Residential Trip
Monday 9th March - Purim Spiel and Celebrations
Wednesday 8th April - First Night Seder
Monday 20th April - Erev Yom HaShoah with WLS
Thursday 28th May - Erev Shavuot Service and Supper
Friday 19th June - B’nei Mitzvah Graduation

Useful Contacts

Our Rabbis
Rabbi Benji Stanley - rabbi@westminstersynagogue.org
Rabbi Dr Thomas Salamon, Rabbi Emeritus - thomas@westminstersynagogue.org

Education Enquiries
Yael Roberts, Director of Community and Education - yael@westminstersynagogue.org
Nivi Chatterjee Duari, Office Administrator - admin@westminstersynagogue.org

Lifecylcle Enquiries
Ben Shaw, PA to Rabbinic Team - ben@westminstersynagogue.org

Festival and Cultural Event Enquiries
Jon Zecharia, Events and Communications Manager - jon@westminstersynagouge.org
Louise Wendel, Events Coordinator - louise@westminstersynagogue.org

Membership Enquiries
Hilary Ashleigh, Membership Administrator - hilary@westminstersynagogue.org

Executive Director
Gary Sakol - gary@westminstersynagogue.org
Cook for Kiddush
Join with other members to help us celebrate Shabbat with a tasty treat after the service

Purim Players
Write, sing or act with our great troupe to tell the story of Esther with a twist

WYP Team
Join our Young Professional Team to create social, cultural & educational events

GET INVOLVED
contact admin@westminstersynagogue.org for more information about these groups

Voices
Help build Westminster Voices, a series of small talks after the Friday service with great food

Meet & Greet
Sign up to be one of our friendly faces there on a Saturday Morning to welcome members and visitors

Be a Connector
Become a Community Connector and build relationships with members outside our WS walls
Our community has spoken and vowed to dedicate this year to focus on these four areas. Whether you want to be part of a core team or be an attendee, do get involved with the great opportunities these themes bring out.

Whether it’s learning to sing with confidence, hosting a Shabbat dinner, connecting with lonely members or engaging in education, we hope this year brings something new and meaningful to you at Westminster Synagogue.