

# Bruchim Habaim – Welcome to Midrasha

Dear Midrasha Students and Families,

Midrasha is different from previous years of Religious School in a number of ways. It is education that is beyond your B'Mitzvah and so it is the first time you are participating in Jewish adult education. Each year focuses on a specific subject in each grade/core class so these important topics can be taught in depth at a level that you might not have been capable of appreciating and understanding in your younger years. During Midrasha, you will also have some choices about what you want to learn. During the second hour of our weekly session, seventh, eighth, and ninth graders choose an elective and are in class together for each semester. As you mature, you become more of a partner in your own education and you have the power to make this year your best!

Morah Alicia Zahn, Religious School Director

## Table of Contents

Education Vision

Inclusion Policy

School Guidelines

Learning Objectives

Grade 7

Grade 8

Grade 9 (Confirmation)

Student Volunteer Opportunity

Parent Involvement

Contact Information

# Our Vision

The E. G. Scoblionko Religious School of Temple Beth El, a Conservative egalitarian synagogue affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, strives to foster deeper understanding and appreciation of how our rituals are rooted in Jewish history and spirituality. Temple Beth El's religious school encourages our students and their families to be active participants in prayer and to integrate Jewish customs and traditions into their daily lives. We strive to be an inclusive, joyous and supportive learning environment in which G-d, Torah, and community are the foundation of the learning experience.

## Mondays are for Midrasha!

Midrasha (grade 7,8,9) meets every Monday evening 6:30pm-8:30pm  
TBE Grade 7 students also meet Sunday mornings.

Each Midrasha session is two hours. The first hour is the core class when students meet by grade. The second hour is an elective when students have some choice in their studies and the three grades are mixed within each class.

### **Our Inclusion Policy**

***We are all made in the image of G-d and we believe a diverse, wholly inclusive student body enriches learning and serves as a model for community.***

***We strive to educate each child, with special attention to the identities and needs of each individual.***

***We welcome those with learning differences and know that diversity in education benefits everyone.***

***We welcome those with physical, emotional, social, or mental challenges and know that these challenges do not define a person.***

***We welcome those who label themselves as LGBTQ and those who do not wish to be labeled.***

***We welcome interfaith families and families at all levels of observance and know our similar beliefs about love and family far outweigh our differences.***

***We ask families to let us know how we can best include and accommodate them.***

# Midrasha Guidelines

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance is vital to the success of our program. Attendance will be taken at all sessions. If absences exceed two absences then core teacher may require make-up work. A meaningful experience in Midrasha is dependent upon consistent attendance and involvement.

1. To report a student absence, parents are to call or email the school office.
2. If tardy then students can buzz in and proceed to the school office before going to classroom.
3. Early dismissal requires a parent to call or email or send a note in to the school office. Prior to departure, the parent must sign the child out at the school office. We will then notify your child's classroom. **Please do not go directly to your child's classroom and please do not call them on a cell phone in class.** AT THIS TIME, WE ARE NOT HAVING PARENTS IN THE BUILDING SO PLEASE CALL SCHOOL OFFICE OR BUZZ DOOR WHEN YOU ARRIVE AND WE WILL BRING STUDENT OUT SO YOU CAN SIGN FOR EARLY DISMISSAL.



## **Emergency Cancellation**

We will list cancellations on WFMZ Channel 69 and on **WFMZ.com**. In addition, emails will be sent out.

**Please make sure you are receiving school office emails from ShulCloud**

## **Food and Kashrut**

A kosher and nut-free snack is provided around 7:30 between the core and elective classes. Any food brought into the school must be checked by the School Director. We encourage parents to sponsor a group snack for our Midrasha students – please see school director for details. AT THIS TIME, WE ARE NOT HAVING SNACKS DURING MIDRASHA HOURS.



## Tzedakah

Students are encouraged to bring tzedakah money to each and every session. We have a tzedakah box located in the common area usually on the snack tray. We collect for different causes throughout the year and learn about each cause. The Spring cause is traditionally chosen by the Confirmation class.

## Discipline

Derech Eretz (behaving appropriately) in all areas of life is at the essence of what we teach, no matter the subject or content of the lesson. Kavod (respect), Chesed (kindness), Emet (truth), and other Jewish values cannot be taught without the expectation that these behaviors will be modeled by our staff and demonstrated by our students.

Should a student's behavior become detrimental to the welfare of the class and/or hinder the learning of other children, we reserve the right to remove the child from the class. In this case, it is our hope that parents, child and school can work together to resolve any issues preventing successful participation.

**Drop Off and Pick Up Information** AT THIS TIME, WE ARE NOT PERMITTING PARENTS IN THE BUILDING DURING SCHOOL HOURS

### *Drop off Procedure*

All vehicles should enter the property using the Temple Beth El main driveway. Drop your child off at the curb and then proceed out of the parking lot using the Amherst Road exit.

You may park and drop off your child personally at anytime. **Midrasha students are not allowed to walk into the parking lot unattended regardless of age.**

### *Pick Up Procedures*

Make a one way line following the curb of the building, entering on Springhouse Road and exiting onto Amherst Road. The first car should pull up to just beyond the school doors.

Again, you may park and come into the building to pick up your child at anytime. Parents must accompany their child when entering the parking lot.

# Student Volunteer Opportunity

*Eighth and Ninth grade Midrasha students are eligible to volunteer on Sunday mornings as a member of our Madrichim Team. This is a fabulous learning experience and a mitzvah. If interested, please contact Alicia Zahn, Religious School*

## **Parent Involvement Opportunities**

### *Temple Beth El School Board*

The School Board serves as the congregation's representative in assessing its quality, maintaining its strong standards, and driving for continuous improvement. The work of this committee helps the school run efficiently.

The School Board is currently comprised of school parents, other congregants, a faculty representative, and the school director.

The Board is chaired by Michael Finley, Temple Beth El's Vice President of the Religious School. If you have comments or are interested in joining the School Board, please contact the school director to put you in touch with Michael.

### *P. T. O.*

We are currently looking for co-chairs to volunteer for our PTO. Please contact the school office if you might be interested in this rewarding position.

The PTO supports the religious school in several vital ways:

- Provides room parents for coordinating classroom specific events needing parental support.
- Supports fund-raising for specific school programs or needs not covered by the school budget.

If you would like to volunteer for the Religious School PTO or would like to volunteer as a class parent, please contact the school at 610-435-3521, extension 106

# Midrasha Learning Objectives

## **Kitah Zayin (Grade Seven)**

Grade Seven is unique because it is the transition grade that meets on Sundays and Mondays. This class is included in Religious School activities on Sunday mornings and participates in Midrasha on Monday evenings. The class overview and listed learning objectives are for the Midrasha hours of seventh grade.

### Gr 7 Midrasha Core Class: History of Israel

Spending one hour a week for an entire year focusing on Israel allows students the time to develop a personal relationship with Israel. Beginning with Abraham, the history of Jews in Israel will be studied with the emphasis on the modern State of Israel. Lessons will include Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, the War of Independence, subsequent wars, peace plans, key Israeli leaders, and an overview of the way Israel's history affects all Jews, especially in the United States. Students spend time articulating why Israel was important to Jews in the past and why it is still important now.

### Midrasha Learning Objectives for Grade Seven Core Class

1. Discuss the events that led up to the birth of the State of Israel.
2. Outline the history of Israel's formation and the initial waves of aliyot.
3. Use a timeline to discuss Israel from Abraham to the present, including during the Diaspora.
4. Explain key historical events 1948 to the present.
5. Identify key Israeli leaders and their impact.
6. Discuss the conflicts within Israeli society and the relationship Israel has with its neighbors.

## **Kitah Het (Grade Eight) Midrasha Core Class**

### An Overview of the Shoah

Studying the Shoah goes beyond understanding the historical fact that six million Jews and other innocent victims of the Germans and the collaborators were brutally murdered in Nazi-occupied Europe. The Holocaust is a lesson in what can happen when prejudice and discrimination are allowed to flourish and when individuals and government fail to take a stand against injustice. A comprehensive study of the events leading up to the Holocaust, and the Holocaust itself, provides students with opportunities to realize the relative ease with which fundamental human and civil rights can be denied and to understand the ramifications of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Ultimately, studying the Holocaust provides students the opportunity to define their own role as responsible citizens of the world. By crucially examining the past, they will better understand how to interpret hateful behaviors in their schools, communities, and societies.

### Midrasha Learning Objectives for Eighth Grade Core Class

1. Students will be able to explain the Holocaust as a significant event in history.
2. Students will be able to explain how the Holocaust continues to have universal implications.
3. Student will be able to explain the history of anti-Semitism.
4. Students take perspective of individuals in the holocaust and identify factors that may have influenced their choices or compounded their dilemmas.
5. Students will be able to identify the factors that contributed to prejudicial and discriminatory practices and explain how they escalated into violence; students will make comparisons to more recent events of genocide.
6. Students will develop a position on whether the Holocaust could happen again, and consider their role and responsibility in seeing that it does not.
7. Students will participate in discussions about tolerance and behavior that promotes acceptance and mutual respect.
8. Students will develop an understanding that, as Jews, they have a unique responsibility to become "witnesses" to the Holocaust to future generations, anticipating the decline in the future of actual witnesses.

### **Confirmation (Grade Nine)**

Ninth graders are enrolled in Confirmation preparation during their second semester elective class time.

Confirmation is a celebration of students confirming their commitment to Jewish education. It is NOT an ending, as we fully expect our students to continue in our high school program and become life-long learners.

Our Confirmation Ceremony is part of our Shavuot service and each Confirmand helps to lead parts of the service, as well as share reflections with the congregation.

### Midrasha Learning Objectives for Core Class Grade Nine

1. Students will connect Jewish values to social action projects as they explore how they want to make a difference in the world.
2. Students will develop leadership through self-selected activities.
3. Students will actively demonstrate an understanding of the historical differences between biblical and rabbinic texts. They will know the difference between peshat and derash. In addition, they will be able to uncover the important philosophical questions that are implicit in the midrashic texts and appreciate the diversity of approaches that exist in response to moral/ethical concerns.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the lessons of Megillat Ruth and the issues raised by the text, such as migration, hunger, and committed friendship.

## **Important Contact Information**

Temple Beth El

610-435-3521

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Check out the Temple Beth El Web Site at **[www.bethelallentown.org](http://www.bethelallentown.org)**