



Congregation Shir Ami Religious School Policies

Students will be placed in class based on their age as of Dec. 31 each year.

Available Classes:

- Level 1: ages 6-7 (for 2 hours on Sunday)
- Level 2: ages 8-9 (2 hours on Sunday, 2 hours on Wednesday for 9 year olds)
- B'nai Mitzvah Class for ages 10-13 (2 hours Sunday & Wednesday)
- Children with special needs will be mainstreamed in consultation with parents/guardians and educators.
- Other classes and/or teachers will be added as needed.

B'nai Mitzvah Ceremony Basic Requirements:

- To enter B'nai Mitzvah tutoring, a student **must** pass a Hebrew proficiency test. Students who do not pass the test will be tutored privately *at their own expense*.
- Students are required to attend a minimum of 1 year (with two years prior Religious School Education at Shir Ami or other Jewish Religious School) in the B'nai Mitzvah class before they can hold a B'nai Mitzvah ceremony at Shir Ami, regardless of their age at their B'nai Mitzvah ceremony.
- The proficiency test will be given in advance of setting a B'nai Mitzvah date, so the child can obtain extra tutoring, in advance of B'nai Mitzvah tutoring, if needed.

Religious School Attendance

- Students are expected to attend religious school regularly throughout the full year. If a child misses more than 30% of classes in a year, they must make arrangements for extra tutoring at their own expense using materials provided by the religious school, so they can complete the class and continue the following year. Special circumstances, such as a serious illness, will be handled on a case by case basis.
- Students are expected to arrive on time and leave at the end of class. Students who consistently arrive late or leave early will need to make arrangements for extra tutoring at their own expense so they can complete the class and continue the following year. Special circumstances can be addressed on a case by case basis by talking to the Director of Education **BEFORE** religious school begins.
- If a student must leave early, a note should be given to the teacher before school begins. The student will be picked up at the classroom.



Arrival/Departure Procedures

- Before the beginning of class, parents may escort their students to the classroom.
- When class is over, the *teachers* will escort the students to their parents. Students will not be allowed to leave with anyone other than their parent, unless an alternate adult is designated on the registration form or the parent sends a signed and dated note with the student the day of the change.

Cell Phone Policy

- Toys, games, cell phones, and other electronic devices etc. should not be brought to class. If they are brought to class, students will be asked to place them in the basket on the piano during class to encourage full engagement in the classroom environment. If students need to make a phone call during school hours, they may do so from the telephone in the Congregational Office. If you need to reach your child during school hours, please contact Rabbi Reice at the Congregational phone: 512-843-3539.

Tzedakah (Money for Charity)

- *Tzedakah* or **תְּצַדֵּק** is a Hebrew word that in the *Torah* meant righteousness or justice and in post-biblical times means charity or alms. From the first day of school, we will introduce our students to the importance of giving money as one righteous action that helps create justice in the world. *Tzedakah* is collected each class session (both on Sundays and Wednesdays) and students are encouraged to contribute what they can (even a penny can be a meaningful contribution!). Our classes will make their own collaborative decisions about where to donate their *tzedakah* after considering a variety of social service and charitable agencies. We view *tzedakah* as vital to a child's Jewish education, and look forward to studying and considering our donations to the following three categories of agencies: one agency benefiting animals, one Jewish charity in America, one Jewish charity in Israel. At the end of the year, during Final Fling, we will hold a small "*Tzedakah* Assembly" to vote and announce the recipients of our *tzedakah* to our families and share some of what we have learned about the organizations to which our *tzedakah* is given.

Homework

- Sometimes, homework is necessary to really drive the point home and help students internalize a lesson's meaning. Homework may be assigned by any teacher who believes it is meaningful for his or her students.



Evaluations

- Evaluations of student participation are performed twice per year. These consist of a brief narrative describing the course of study and a report on the student's progress among the faculty. Please feel free to contact Rabbi Reice and your child's teacher with any questions or concerns you have about your child's progress. Students with less than 70% attendance will receive marks of "Unable to Assess," as our teachers cannot sufficiently evaluate students with excessive absences. Make-up work may be assigned to bring students back to 70% attendance or above. If you would like to receive your student(s)'s assessment, please contact Rabbi Reice.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

- If a parent needs to meet with a teacher, they must make prior arrangements to do so. Teachers are unable to meet with parents at the beginning or end of class, as they have a responsibility to care for all their students at those times.
- All parent/teacher meetings will have the teacher and either the Director of Education or Vice President of Religious School committee member present.

Student Behavior

- Students are expected to treat their teachers, classmates and school property with respect. Please refer to the Behavior and Attendance Guidelines, which are required reading before the beginning of each school year.
- To ensure a safe and engaging learning environment, inappropriate or unsafe behavior from a student will result in the following actions:
 - 1st occurrence: conference with student and communication with parent/guardian
 - 2nd occurrence: conference with student, call to parent/guardian, parent/guardian will be responsible for supervising the student for the remainder of class that day
 - 3rd occurrence: conference with student, communication with parent/guardian, parent/guardian or their designated responsible adult helper will be required to attend all future religious school classes to supervise and assist the student in engaging in the learning environment



Policies regarding drop-offs, pick-ups, & parent visits

While we understand that parents will have reasons they need to meet with their child's (children's) teacher from time to time, it is important to stress that the teachers DO NOT have time to meet with parents at the *start or end of the class*. The teachers are occupied at these times with various aspects of preparation and completion of their classroom obligations as well as welcoming their students and seeing them to an appropriate guardian for pick-up. *Please make arrangements with the teacher to meet, or converse by phone, at some other time or wait until pick-up has concluded for all other families.*

If you would like to visit your child's (children's) class when it is not a Parent's Day, please coordinate with Rabbi Reice and the teacher ahead of time.

When you come to pick up your child/children, it is VERY important that you wait outside the classrooms. The last portion of the class is especially susceptible to disruption. We cannot stress this enough. If your child/children need to leave early for some reason, please notify your child's/children's teacher and Rabbi Rebecca Reice. Please provide advance notice, when possible.

Please come into the building to pick-up your child/children. In the interest of safety, it is important that the teachers see with whom EACH child leaves.

Thank you for your attention to these matters!