

THE UNITED JEWISH CENTER
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
HANDBOOK
2018 – 2019

REFORM JUDAISM
AND ME



THE UNITED JEWISH CENTER

141 Deer Hill Avenue

Danbury, Connecticut 06810

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The United Jewish Center Religious School

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Daryl Bain
Director of Education

Stefan Tiwy
Rabbi

Penny M. Kessler
Cantor

School Hours

Sunday

Preschool (3 & 4 year-olds)	9:00 am — 11:30 am
Kindergarten – 7th Grade	9:00 am — 11:30 am
8th – 10th Grades	11:30 am — 1:00 pm

Wednesday

2nd – 7th Grades	4:10 pm — 5:55 pm
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Holiday Schedule

2018 – 2019
5778 – 5779

Erev Rosh HaShanah	September 9
Rosh HaShanah Day 1 and 2	September 10 / 11
Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidrei)	September 18
Yom Kippur	September 19
Erev Sukkot / Sukkot Day	September 23 / 24
Erev Simchat Torah / Simchat Torah Day	September 30 / Oct. 1
Thanksgiving	November 22
Erev Chanukah (1st Candle)	December 2
Tu BiSh'vat	January 21
Erev Purim / Purim Day	March 20 / March 21
Erev Pesach (1st Seder)	April 19
Erev Sh'vi-i shel Pesach / Pesach Day 7	April 25 / 26
Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day)	May 2
Yom HaZikaron (Israel Memorial Day)	May 8
Yom HaAtzma-ut (Israel Independence Day)	May 9
Erev Shavuot / Shavuot Day	June 8 / 9

Welcome

*“Reform Judaism maintains faith in the Covenant between God and Israel
as expressed over the generations
in the teachings of an ever-evolving Torah and tradition.
Stirred by the mandate of tikkun olam,
Reform Judaism seeks to be the living expression of those teachings. [...]*
*It welcomes all who seek Jewish connection to pursue a life of meaning
as inspired by the Divine and proclaimed in the truths
grasped by Jewish teachers throughout time.”*

Union for Reform Judaism
(<https://urj.org/what-we-believe/what-reform-judaism>)

Welcome back to school! We are excited for a new year of learning with our kids, along with our dedicated faculty, and have an exciting year planned with many great programs and activities.

Our theme for the year is “Reform Judaism and Me.” We want to explore with our students what Reform Judaism has to teach us and how it informs the way we “do Jewish” in our lives. Apart from having a closer look at our Movement itself, we will also explore the range of Jewish expressions and what makes us unique compared to other denominations such as Conservative and Orthodox Judaism.

The overarching goal of the year is for our kids to develop both strong identities as Reform Jews and an appreciation for the multitude of Jewish expressions in contemporary America, and we are looking forward to working together as partners in education to achieve that goal. Be sure to ask your children to teach you what they have learned!

Let’s make this a wonderful year!

*Rabbi Stefan Tiwy
Cantor Penny M. Kessler
Daryl Bain, Director of Education*

Class Attendance Policy

A community does not function effectively without all of its members present. It is important that each child participate fully in our religious/Hebrew school. We expect children to be present for all sessions except for illness or other urgent reasons. When absences are excessive, a child will miss significant work.

It is for this reason that we request that students attend a minimum of 80% of all classes of both religious and Hebrew school.

Students whose absences exceed 20% (for a religious school year of 30 sessions, this equals 6 days; for a Hebrew school year of 60 sessions, this equals 12 days) of or Hebrew school classes will be required to make up the work. All work will be due prior to the end of the semester in which excessive absences have occurred. This way, make-up assignments will be timely and appropriately related to the classroom curriculum. Successful completion of make-up assignments will be one of the criteria used to promote a student into the next grade.

Please call the religious school office at (203) 743-1180 to let us know when your child will be absent. In order for us to keep in close touch with our students and to be aware of any difficulties that may have developed at home, a member of the faculty will call a student's home when a child has two (2) consecutive absences. The director of education (or a member of the faculty) will notify the parents of the work to be completed so that the child will be up to date when he/she returns to the classroom.

Please be prompt in dropping off and picking up your child. Arriving late disrupts the class and prevents your child from fully grasping the materials being taught. School begins promptly at the following times:

Day	School begins	School ends
Sunday (Preschool)	9:00 am	11:30 am
Sunday (K-7)	9:00 am	11:30 am
Sunday (8-10)	11:30 am	1:00 pm
Wednesday (2-7)	4:10 pm	5:55 pm

Service Attendance Policy

Attending the UJC's religious services gives our students a familiarity with Judaism and Jewish prayer that cannot be gained in a classroom. Below are the expectations of our religious school, broken down by grade:

Grades 4 & 5

- Attend a minimum of eight Shabbat services per religious school year. These can be either Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat services.
- Teacher will keep prayer chart in classroom to keep track of attendance at services.

Grade 6

- Attend a minimum of ten Shabbat services. Of the ten services, six should be Saturday morning Shabbat services. The remaining four can be Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat services.
- Teacher will keep prayer chart in classroom to keep track of attendance at services.

Grade 7 (Bar/Bat Mitzvah Year)

- Attend a minimum of thirteen Shabbat services. Of the thirteen services, seven should be Saturday morning Shabbat services. The remaining six can be Friday night or Saturday morning Shabbat services.
- Students may begin attending services to meet these requirements twelve months before their bar/bat mitzvah.
- Teacher will keep prayer chart in classroom to keep track of attendance at services.
- Attendance at other synagogues' Shabbat services as well as camp services throughout the summer can be used for up to two required Shabbat services.

Post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

Our post-bar/bat mitzvah program begins in 8th grade and continues throughout 10th grade, culminating in the celebration of confirmation. As part of this program, our students meet alternately with Rabbi Tiwy, Cantor Kessler, and Mrs. Sarna during several Sundays throughout the year.

Why do we think continuing beyond the bar/bat mitzvah year is so important? Why do we ask our students to commit to participating in the UJC religious school beyond their bar/bat mitzvah?

For one thing, the post-bar/bat mitzvah years are a time of developing and reinforcing friendships that have been made throughout their years at the UJC religious school. We know of tens of dozens of students whose UJC high school friendships are still solid, even decades after their years here.

Beyond the social setting, once our students have become bar/bat mitzvah and are considered adults in the Jewish community, they can dive into new and exciting learning adventures:

With our rabbi and cantor, the 8th and 9th grade students explore subjects that would not have been appropriate for younger students. In addition to more in-depth looks at the Jewish holidays, they include a Jewish point of view on a variety of topics of teen interest, such as relationships, current events, and health-related issues, as well as practical skills, such as coping with peer pressure and bullying.

In addition to the sessions with our clergy, Mrs. Sarna helps our 8th and 9th graders develop and run the yearly Purim Carnival, and she also leads the students on local and in-house mitzvah projects. It is not unusual to see our 8th and 9th graders helping families in need in the wider Danbury community.

The 10th grade confirmation class – concluding with the confirmation ceremony during Shavuot at the end of 10th grade – is truly unique. With Rabbi Tiwy and Cantor Kessler, the students help choose the topics for discussion as they begin the process of reaffirming and confirming their Jewish identities. The primary goal of the confirmation year is to help them consider Jewish adulthood in and beyond high school as they begin making lifestyle and educational choices.

Code of Conduct

At the UJC religious school, we are committed at all times to maintaining a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, respectful, and productive for our students and staff alike.

As part of this commitment, we have an established pattern of communication between the school and the home, which takes a number of forms and is used for a number of purposes. Report cards are one means of communicating twice a year. More immediately, we contact parents as needed to keep them informed about issues that may affect the learning of their child and classmates.

This code of conduct has been prepared so that all of us – students, parents, and faculty – are aware of the behaviors that are acceptable in our religious school. We have listed below the behavioral expectations of our students and staff that will ensure a healthy, safe learning environment

Behaviors that are inappropriate, hence not acceptable, include:

- calling out in class,
- name calling,
- pushing, hitting, tripping, or bullying other students,
- talking back to teachers,
- coming to class unprepared, without books or completed assignments.

Teachers will keep records of the completion of Shabbat service attendance requirements for pre-bar/bat mitzvah students. They will report immediately any verbal or physical assault on a student, as well as any observed bullying, teasing, harassment or intimidation of a student by another student.

If a teacher sends a child out of the classroom for disruptive or inappropriate behavior, a written note will be sent to the director of education. The information may become part of the child's school folder.

A variety of disciplinary actions have been identified, ranging from in-school detention, to a call to the parent, or even to a required conference with the parent and the director of education. In all cases, written documentation of behaviors, consequences, and recommendations will be kept.

Mission Statement

The United Jewish Center Religious School



- The goal of the United Jewish Center's religious school is to help our students form a positive Jewish identity, one that is rooted in core Jewish values and beliefs.
- We want our children to see Judaism as their way of life, both in making moral decisions and in celebrating the traditions, customs and ceremonies of our rich heritage.
- Through classroom instruction and experiential learning, we communicate this basic principle to our students and help them embrace the commitment that Jewish education is a lifelong pursuit.
- Ours is a supplement, not a substitute, for a Jewish home, as we strive to inform and reinforce the identity and cultural orientation of our students.

United Jewish Center Religious School 2018-19

Sunday class: 9:00-11:30am Wednesday class: 4:10-5:55pm

SEPTEMBER

- 10 Rosh Hashanah Children Service 10:30
- 16 Opening Day
- 19 Yom Kippur Children Service 10:30
- 21 Shabbat for All Ages
- 23 Regular class
- 26 Regular Wed. class
Pizza in the Hut 5:30
- 30 Regular class

OCTOBER

- 3 Regular Wed. class
- 10 Regular Wed. class
- 14 Regular class- Blessing of the Animals (bring pictures or stuffed animals)
- 17 Regular Wed. class
- 19 Shabbat for All Ages
- 21 Regular class
- 24 Regular Wed. class

NOVEMBER

- 4 Regular class-author visit
- 7 Regular Wed. class
- 14 Regular Wed. class
- 16 Shabbat for All Ages- Grade 4 receives prayerbooks
- 18 Regular class
POP Brunch 9:00
- 28 Regular Wed. class

DECEMBER

- 2 Regular class
- 5 Regular Wed. class
- 7 Menorah Lighting 6:50
Shabbat for All Ages 7:00
Chanukah Oneg
- 9 Regular class
- 12 Regular Wed. class
- 16 Family Day
& Latkepalooza
- 19 Regular Wed. class

JANUARY

- 2 Regular Wed. class
- 6 Regular class
- 9 Regular Wed. class
- 11 Shabbat for All Ages
- 13 Regular class
- 16 Tu B' Shevat Seder- Grades 2-7 5:00
- 23 Regular class
- 27 Regular class
- 30 Regular class

FEBRUARY

- 3 Regular class
- 6 Regular Wed. class
- 10 Regular class
- 13 Regular Wed. class
- 20 Regular Wed. class
- 22 Shabbat for All Ages & Pink Shabbat
- 24 Regular class
- 27 Regular Wed. class

MARCH

- 3 Regular class
- 6 Regular Wed. class
- 10 Regular class
- 13 Regular Wed. class
- 15 Shabbat for All Ages
- 17 Regular class
Model Megillah Reading 10:30
Purim Carnival 11:00
- 20 Regular Wed. class
Megillah Reading 5:30
- 24 Regular class

APRIL

- 3 Regular Wed. class
- 7 Regular class
Model Seder
- 10 Regular Wed. class
- 12 Shabbat for All Ages
- 24 Regular Wed. class
- 28 Regular class

MAY

- 1 Regular Wed. class
- 5 UJC Family Field Trip-TBD
- 8 Regular Wed. class
- 10 Shabbat for All Ages & Mother's Day Shabbat
- 12 Regular class
Teacher Appreciation 11:00
- 15 Regular Wed. class
- 19 Last Regular class
- 22 Last Regular Wed. class