

Dear Parents,

There are many things that our school does well. We have a stellar Hebrew program. Our B'nei Mitzvah students lead with confidence and expertise at their ceremonies, and they go on to be able to lead and chant for HHD youth services into their high school years and beyond. Our junior youth groups (Club 45 and Club 67) have been quite successful in keeping our kids engaged and bonded with one another, and our BEFTY chapter has continued to grow over the last several years. Our students have fantastic memories of their 4th grade wedding, the 6th Grade Ellis Island Trip, helping with the Oral Rehydration Project, working in the Chapel in the Woods, and so so much more. And, yet, just like every other congregation, we struggle to retain kids after B'nei Mitzvah.

In 2017, our Religious School and Youth Committee (now the RSY Team) created a Post Bnei Mitzvah Working Group. This working group produced a detailed report on the perceptions and realities of our Confirmation Program (8th-10th grades). Although elements of the suggestions were implemented in small ways into 7th, 8th, and 9th grades, the majority of the findings from the survey were never acted upon.

The survey revealed 10 priorities:

1. Socialization
2. Deep and Meaningful Learning (Comparative Judaism and Religion, Current Events, Israel, Holocaust)
3. Hands-On Learning
4. Social Justice
5. Electives (Art, Cooking, Debate, Drama, Music, Modern Hebrew, Photography, Book Club, etc.)
6. Combined Classes
7. Madrichim and Mitzvah Core
8. Leading Services
9. Learning After Confirmation
10. Trips

After engaging in conversations with parents and students, the RSY Team has decided to pilot a new Teen Program. This ***Teen Program Pilot (name to be announced)***, will address all of the priorities listed above, and it will ***begin on Sunday, August 30, 2020 and end on Sunday, May 17, 2021***. Please note that there is no attendance policy. We understand that our teens are busy. We recommend, however, that they attend at least 3 sessions per month.

***Madrichim and Mitzvah Core:***

We love our Madrichim. They do such important work, and we want them to be able to deepen their learning of leadership and teaching by serving in their placements during the Religious School Day. With this in mind, Madrichim and Mitzvah Core students will serve in their placements from **10AM-12PM on Sundays AND/OR 6:15-8PM on Wednesdays**. Both Madrichim and Mitzvah Core students are expected to be at their placements 15 minutes before classes begin, and to let their teachers or placement directors know they will be absent via text or e-mail at least 24 hours prior.

Our 8th graders are highly encouraged, but not required, to **apply and interview** to be Madrichim or in the Mitzvah Corps. They may attend our Teen Program regardless of whether or not they serve the community on Sunday mornings. Our 9th-12th graders are encouraged to be involved in Madrichim or Mitzvah Corps. Eight Grade Madrichim and Mitzvah Corps students can receive service hours for their work. Students in 9th-12th grade will have the option to take service hours or to be paid a small stipend per semester.

The Teen Program will be divided into 4 weeks.

- 1) Mercaz- Core Judaic Classes
- 2) Taglit- Explorations
- 3) Tikkun- Social Justice
- 4) Kehillah- Community Building and Youth Group

**1st Sunday: Mercaz-Core Classes (Grade Level)**

	Fall	Spring
8th Grade	Comparative Judaism	Combating Intolerance (Antisemitism and Racism)
9th Grade	Comparative Religions	What is my Israel Story?
10th Grade	Confirmation	Confirmation
11th/12th	Coffee with Clergy: Hot Topics, Current Events You ask. We answer.	Coffee with Clergy: Hot Topics, Current Events Israel? It's Complicated College Bound.

**2nd Sunday: Taglit (Mixed Grades)\*\***

Students will be able to sign up for 2 Explorations per semester.

*Leadership is required for 8th graders and all new Madrichim or Mitzvah Core participants.*

**Confirmation takes the place of one Exploration.**

1. Leadership (8th Graders)/Confirmation (10th Grade)/Mentorship\*

2. Eipho HaKitah? Modern Hebrew Speaking
3. Two Jews, Three Opinions: Debate with Mr. Siegal
4. Drama: From Fiddler to Stephen Schwartz
5. Jewish Music: From the Shtetl to Tel Aviv
6. Arts and Crafts: Judaica in Jewish Life and Around the World
7. Cooking Through the Diaspora
8. Comic Books and Jewish History
9. Yoga and Meditation
10. Board Games and Jewish Values

\*\*Offerings will depend on interest

### **3rd Sunday: Tikkun (Mixed Grades)**

Students will come together to learn about major issues facing our world today. They will then participate in a hands on social justice project.

### **4th Sunday: Kehilah (Mixed Grades-Community Time or Youth Group Activity)**

Students will join together for a fun social activity either as part of the Teen Program or through BEFTY.

### **Mentorship: (Optional)**

We recognize that our students need adult role models in their lives who help them to find their path. Any student in 8th-12th grade may sign up to participate in our mentorship program. Beth El will match your student with either a Jewish mentor through Beth El or in the Jewish Young Professional Community. If a student signs up for Mentorship, he or she can opt to meet with their Mentor instead of doing Explorations.

### **Cost:**

8th Grade \$625

9th Grade \$625

10th Grade \$625 \*Confirmation Fee \$400

11th/12th Grade \$350 \*\*Doesn't include coffee.

What does your tuition pay for?

1. Sunday Morning Bagels and Coffee
2. Great Teachers and Guest Speakers
3. Materials and Activities
4. Snacks (Because Teenagers!)

\*Canteen is additional