

Havurah Shalom Youth Hebrew Classes 5784 (2023-24)

Registration/Terms of Participation Agreement

Please read the Terms of Participation on the following pages with your child, sign the participation agreement (below) together, electronically. Thank you!

Havurah Hebrew classes are only for families enrolled in Shabbat School.

Participation Agreement

We, _____ (parent name) and
_____ (student name) have read and accepted the Terms of Participation for
the Havurah Shalom Youth Hebrew Classes. We agree to fully participate in the Hebrew classes, as outlined in
the sections **Introduction, Program Goals, Home Reinforcement and Parent Responsibility, and Curriculum.**

Parent signature

Date

Student signature

Date

Terms of Participation

INTRODUCTION

In the school year 2003-04, Shabbat School parents began bringing their children together to begin their Hebrew education in conjunction with their Shabbat School experience. Over thirty 8- to 11-year-olds now participate in three different levels of Hebrew classes on Saturday afternoons, right before Shabbat School.

The structure that has emerged is different from a conventional Hebrew School in two primary ways. Firstly, families may elect to participate; Hebrew classes are not a requirement for participation in Shabbat School or for eligibility to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the Havurah community. More importantly, considering the time needed for language acquisition, the current timeframe for student-teacher contact (15-16 sessions, one hour each) is very limited. The paucity of scheduled time is partly compensated through increased home reinforcement and parent involvement.

Unlike Shabbat School, which endeavors to create community within a group of children the same age, the Hebrew classes are focused on skill acquisition. Children advance through three levels of learning, based on the skills they acquire. The teacher will periodically assess each child's progress and may alert the parent and/or Education Director if a child is falling behind. Students are assessed each autumn and will not advance to the next level if their skills are not appropriate for the next level.

There are various factors that affect student progress:

1. Individual foreign language acquisition skills. Hebrew uses a different alphabet and is totally phonetic. Some children find it easier to learn to read Hebrew than to learn to read English; some children find it more difficult.
2. Quality and amount of home reinforcement.
3. Regular attendance.
4. Confidence / student comfort level / investment and enjoyment level.

PROGRAM GOALS

Given our limited timeframe, we can only offer the most basic introduction to the Hebrew language. These classes are for learning Hebrew reading and prayer vocabulary and concepts for their own sake. We believe that focusing on the language of tefillah (prayer) and Torah, which is an integral part of our community, is beneficial for children within Havurah. While the curriculum does include some vocabulary and skills that will be helpful for the students who want to learn Modern spoken Hebrew at a later time, the focus of these classes is not Modern Hebrew.

The Hebrew classes are good preparation for those who later undertake learning how to help lead a Shabbat morning service and read from the Torah. However, the classes are not a substitute for specific preparation for becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Parents will need to set up B'nai Mitzvah tutoring, beginning in 6th or 7th grades for many students. The Bnai Mitzvah preparation process is separate and supported by the Bnai Mitzvah Committee and Havurah staff.

The goals for the Hebrew classes are:

- Provide a basic introduction to Hebrew literacy (reading accuracy, decoding words, some vocabulary)

- Complement the Shabbat School model to enhance our children's education through Hebrew learning
- Enable and encourage youth/family participation in community Shabbat services by introducing concepts of prayer and prayer vocabulary.

HOME REINFORCEMENT AND PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents should recognize that providing their children with only 15 Hebrew classes a year is not optimal for language acquisition and affords much less time than conventional language classes. In order for it to be worthwhile, parent involvement and home reinforcement are essential. Students will only be successful if parents take an active role in their child's Hebrew education.

Homework: Teachers will send e-mail communication about homework and other matters after each class. Parents are expected to monitor homework and provide guidance for reading practice at home. Web sites and other tools may be provided to help parents who aren't fluent Hebrew readers themselves. However, children's progress can only be made with regular review and reinforcement between class sessions. **Families will be expected to use a Kriah (Reading) Chart 15 minutes a day, three to four times a week across all grades.** The Kriah Chart will be passed out during the first class session.

Participation in Family Shabbat services or other Shabbat services is also highly encouraged so that students have the chance to practice what they are learning and see their skills being applied within the context of Jewish living.

Attendance: Given the limited number of sessions, families need to commit to regular attendance. Parents ensure that their child arrives on time, prepared and ready to participate. **If you think your child might miss more than 3 sessions, please consider waiting until next year or finding an alternative. It is incumbent upon the family to take responsibility for missed sessions by contacting the teacher to find out how to catch up. Also, parents need to notify the teacher ahead of time if their child will miss a session.**

CURRICULUM

The general recommendation is that students begin the classes when they are in third grade. We use Torah Aura educational materials, a class book, a homework book and other tools. Hebrew students will need a bag with their name on it to transport their Hebrew books to and from Shabbat School.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The program must be self-supporting. Tuition is \$196 per student per year. In addition, there is a book fee of \$18. Tuition pays primarily for the teachers' salaries, with a small percentage going toward building maintenance. There is a Youth Education Fund with limited resources to support participation by families who would not otherwise be able to afford these classes. Speak to the Education Director if you need to make such arrangements.