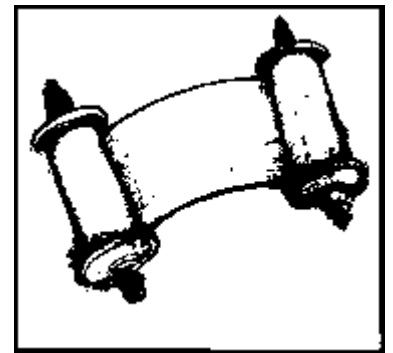


**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM  
OF THE WOODLANDS**

**CBSW RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
HANDBOOK**



**“And you shall teach your children. . .”**

***Deuteronomy 6***



# CBSW RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

## PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Congregation Beth Shalom is committed to nurturing skills, experiences, beliefs and emotional attachment within our students and their families that will enable them to instill into their lives the values of: *Torah*, *Avodah*, and *Gemilut Chasadim* – Jewish learning, worship, and the doing of good deeds. And to practice these values daily.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## CLASS SCHEDULES

<i>Gan Yeladim</i> (Nursery, Pre-K)	Sunday	9:30 am – 12:00 noon
<i>Halutzim</i> (Kindergarten – 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade)	Sunday	9:30 am – 12:00 noon
<i>Kadimah</i> (3 <sup>rd</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Sunday Wednesday	9:30 am – 12:00 noon 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
Post B'nai Mitzvah (8 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Sunday	9:30am–10:50 am (Services & Class) 10:50am–12:00noon (Madrachim)

We look forward to having all of our children (from Pre-K to High School) together on Sunday mornings; creating an exciting sense of learning within the CBSW Jewish community.

## SUNDAY'S CAR POOL LINE AND DROP OFF/PICK UP

In order to make the parking lot less hectic and safer we ask that you please use the parking lot **as one way traffic**. Please enter the drive and turn immediately to the right and go all the way around the parking lot towards the circle. If you park your vehicle - please exit by driving back around the loop - as one way traffic. The safety and well-being of your children is of our utmost concern. In order to better accomplish this we are established this procedure for drop off and pick up: PreK-2nd Grade Drop off and Pick up will not have a car line. Parents must drop off and pick up their child in the classroom only. Drop off 9:25am in the classroom, Pick up 12:00 Noon in the classroom.

Third Grade and above : Drop off 9:25am and Pick up will be at 12:10pm and will have a car line.

If older siblings wish to leave with younger ones then parents can pick both up in the younger classroom.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is crucial while providing students with a quality Jewish education. Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Candidates working toward a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or Confirmation, will be required to maintain a minimum attendance of 75% in each of the (3) three complete years prior to the ceremony. (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade for B'nai Mitzvah. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade for Confirmation). Dates for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah cannot be honored unless the attendance requirement is met.

## **TARDINESS**

It is expected that all students be present at the beginning of each class to ensure the day's curriculum be delivered timely without interruption. Students arriving more than 12 minutes late must be signed in by a parent inside the office of the Director of Education. 30 minutes or more will be counted absent.

## **ABSENTEES**

Both the student's teacher and the Religious School Office are notified if the student will be absent! Advance notification is to be sent via e-mail to:

[eddirector@cbsw.org](mailto:eddirector@cbsw.org)

Families with a student having two consecutive absences and did not provide the required advance notification will be contacted. Strict monitoring of said attendance policy will be enforced.

## **EARLY SIGN OUT**

If a student has to leave early, please send a note to the Education Office. We will only release the student to those listed on your emergency card.

## **CONDUCT**

All relationships in the context of Religious School will be characterized by mutual respect and inclusiveness. This is true for teacher/student interactions as well as student/student interactions. Students are expected to follow standards of courtesy to each other as well as to their teachers. The teacher will specify what is and is not permitted. But to keep all those individuals that are involved on the same page the following guidelines will be enforced:

- **\*When a student violates decorum the first time, that student will be asked to leave the classroom and have a conference with the Director of Education.**
- **\*The second time that student will meet with their teacher, parents, and Director of Education (and any others deemed necessary). The result will be a behavioral contract form signed by all involved.**
- **\*In the event of a third occurrence, the parents will be asked to pick up their child.**
- **\*In a fourth occurrence, the student may be suspended for two weeks or withdrawn from the program.**

**For the benefit of all involved, we must conduct our classes with order and purpose.**

**Use of Personal Technology:**

The use of personal technology (cell phones, iPods, toys, etc.) during any Religious School activity is inappropriate and distracting. If these items are brought, they are to remain off and unavailable during all Religious School activities. If contact with the student is required because of a potential problem at home, communication should be channeled through the Director of the Religious School who will contact the student. Students found in compliance with this policy will have said items stored with the teacher until the end of the Religious School day.

## CBSW School Code of Conduct

The goal of the code of conduct is to ensure the safety of CBSW students and staff at all times. It is also important to protect personal and school property from damage. The code of conduct is based on respect for oneself and others as the Torah requires that the highest respect be shown to parents, teachers, adults and peers.

In order to ensure the physical safety of students and staff, people's bodies and personal space are to be treated with respect. This means that physical aggression, the threat of physical aggression, and the invasion of personal space are not acceptable.

In order to ensure the emotional safety of students and staff, people's feelings are to be treated with respect. This means that teasing and inappropriate language (including remarks about a person's appearance or background or sexual comments or innuendo) are not acceptable.

In order to ensure the safety of personal and school property, all property is to be treated with respect.

This means that a student may not touch or take items that do not belong to him/her without permission from the owner of the item or from a CBSW staff member. All property is to be treated carefully and never used in a destructive or dangerous manner.

In addition, the following rules and expectations are in effect at all times:

- Students will comply with the directions of and will be respectful at all times to each other and CBSW staff.
- Students will not bring any items from home to CBSW unless requested to do so by a staff member.
- Students will remain at all times in areas supervised by school staff.
- Students will make a positive effort to participate in class lessons and school activities.

When a student makes a choice not to meet conduct expectations, he or she can expect the following consequences:

First Misconduct	Warning and possible parent call
Second Misconduct	Reprimand and parent call
Third Misconduct	Removal from snack time/recess
Fourth Misconduct	Meeting with parents with Helen and teacher(s)
Fifth Misconduct	Suspension from CBSW Religious School for specified period of time

It is at the discretion of the Education Director and the Rabbi to skip steps as deemed necessary by the seriousness of the action by student.

Furthermore, there will be a zero tolerance policy as it applies to weapons, drugs, alcohol, and violent behavior at CBSW. This includes but is not limited to:

Use, possession or brandishing of a weapon will result in a recommendation for extended suspension including up to permanent expulsion and authorities will be contacted. A weapon is defined as, but not limited to, a firearm, pistol replica, starter pistol, stun gun, BB gun or pellet gun, a knife of any size or type, razor, slingshot, any explosives or fireworks. Essentially a weapon will be considered any object used in a dangerous manner.

Incidents of fighting, violent acts, or causing serious injury to another person will result in a recommendation for expulsion from CBSW for a specified period of time, as determined by the Educational Director and the Rabbi. Repeated incidents will lead to extended suspension up to permanent expulsion.

CBSW has a no alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use policy. If a student is found to be selling, furnishing, or possessing any amount of these items the student will be recommended for suspension for a specified period of time including up to permanent expulsion, as determined by the Educational Director and the Rabbi. Students who are caught vandalizing and/or defacing CBSW property will be subject to disciplinary action, including suspension, as well as, any financial remuneration to replace damaged property.

Attempting to commit or committing a sexual assault and/or sexual battery will lead to permanent expulsion and authorities being contacted.

The zero tolerance policy requires a recommendation for suspension and possible permanent expulsion if the offense occurs at CBSW or at a CBSW activity, whether on or off CBSW property

## **VISITORS**

Any nonmembers of CBSW Religious School MUST have a pre-approval from the Director of Education as well as the classroom teacher. A MINIMUM of 2 days notice is required so a guest may be permitted onto CBSW grounds (Madrichim included). In addition, a signed parental permission form must be provided. Without the required pre-approvals, the student's parents will be called to pick up the visitor(s). Safety for all students comes first

## **HEBREW**

Hebrew is the language of the Jewish people. It has united us from generation to generation. Hebrew is also central to Jewish worship. Jews all over the world unite as we utter the Hebrew words of our liturgy. Hebrew school is not just a time to prepare for a *bar/bat mitzvah*. Moreover, it is an opportunity for students to become part of a synagogue's family by praying in the language of our ancestors. Furthermore it will help them build their own connection and understandings of these prayers. While we The Religious School aims to having our students well-read in Hebrew well; we also want to ensure that our students have an understanding of the prayers they are learning. The Hebrew curriculum is integrated throughout the classroom experience. Learning a new language is a step-by-step process that one cannot accomplish without first mastering what has come before. Just as a wall cannot be constructed without its foundation, the same is true of a language. We realize that there are many pressures and after school activities that may cause students to miss both Sunday mornings and particularly Wednesday evening class. But it is ESSENTIAL, to maintain weekly attendance, to work at home when necessary, and to progress sufficiently in learning Hebrew. In addition, we find it extremely helpful for students to attend worship services on a regular basis. Please understand this is not intended to be punitive. We want all of our students to be successful and proud. CBSW asks that you help us to place priority upon Jewish values that will prove to be essential for a successful and meaningful life.

## **TZEDAKAH**

From the early grades, our students learn to give Tzedakah. Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew word "Tzedek" which means "Righteousness". By giving "Tzedakah" and doing "Gimilut Chasadim", acts of loving kindness, we encourage our students to act upon the principles that they learn in their classrooms. It is an essential part of our identity as Jews that we must perform these acts. Each year, our Religious School sets a goal to carry on the tradition of directing our Tzedakah Funds to the Federation of Greater Houston. It is an expression of appreciation for all the help and support they give to CBSW and other Outreach congregations. With this donation comes the knowledge that it will be used to assist our community and its agencies along with overseas needs. Tzedakah will be collected every Sunday and Wednesday. Please appropriately enable your children to participate in this important part of the Religious School experience.

## **ATTENDANCE AT WORSHIP SERVICES**

Attendance at religious worship services is an integral part of the educational experience at Congregation Beth Shalom. Kabbalat Shabbat services are held each Friday evening and Shabbat morning services are held periodically throughout the year. Beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, it is mandatory for all students to attend religious services as a part of their religious school curriculum. Worship service attendance will be monitored as follows:

	Friday evenings	Shabbat mornings
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade students	4	2
4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> grade students	6	3
6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> grade students	8	4

If these requirements are not met - it may affect your child's eligibility for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Please have your child look for his/her index card placed in the Shabbat attendance box located in the lobby. Place the index card inside the mail box slot. In front of the Education office is a bulletin board showing the pre-K to 7th grade student's weekly Shabbat attendance. Please have your children dress accordingly for services.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

The textbooks and materials are included in the tuition fees. Some teachers may send textbooks home with their students in the hopes that the parents will share and be partners to their child's Jewish education. Students will be expected to bring textbooks with them to each class session. Should a textbook be lost, the student's family is expected to purchase a replacement copy.

## **B'NAI MITZVAH PROGRAM**

Upon completing a course of study, our students become candidates for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Our B'nai Mitzvah program is comprised of preparatory coursework integrated into Religious School curriculum, attendance at Shabbat Services, private tutorials, and a series of study sessions. B'nai Mitzvah preparation focuses on the process of Torah, the meaning of B'nai Mitzvah, an analysis of the student's Torah and Haftara portions, and mastering the Shabbat liturgy. B'nai Mitzvot at Congregation Beth Shalom are both family and congregational celebrations. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads the Shabbat morning service and participates in the Friday evening service. The entire congregation is invited to join in celebrating the family's Simcha.

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a very important step on the road to Jewish adult life. It is not the beginning of Jewish Education and it certainly is not the end. Can you imagine only learning how to read in fifth or sixth grade and then



dropping out of school and not continuing on in middle and high school? What kind of job or career would you be able to pursue?

We have sadly discovered that some families feel they can begin their Jewish and especially their Hebrew education one or two years before a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and then never continue learning about Jewish values and concepts beyond the level of a seventh grade education. **We here at CBSW do not believe in providing our students such an unsatisfactory knowledge of Judaism.**

Our tutors have brought to our attention that many students begin their intensive preparation knowing very little about Hebrew and Jewish prayer. Instead of picking up students who are well versed in reading and reciting Hebrew prayers that are common to most of our services, tutors must do remedial work to help our students to discover what an *Aleph* or a *Bet* looks like. Our tutors are there to focus on what is unique about each Bar or Bat Mitzvah, namely a different Torah and Haftarah portion for each Shabbat. Instead our tutors must use their time for basic material just to get our students to a level where they can learn the text. This means that students end up frantically trying to learn material at the last minute such that they do not embarrass themselves or their families by not being adequately prepared for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Below are the requirements for attending services by both the student and parent(s) in the years prior to the seventh grade. These requirements are designed to help Bar and Bat Mitzvah students and their families become familiar with the prayers and the flow of the service. If this requirement is not met, CBSW retains the option of postponing the date of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony originally scheduled to insure adequate preparation. We understand that there are many demands on time and activity for emerging teenagers, but priorities must be established for this religious experience. One cannot become a successful athlete without practice and preparation. One cannot lead worship without ever attending services.

An additional expectation we have is that Bar or Bat Mitzvah is **NOT** the end of Jewish education. We expect all our students to continue their studies not only through Confirmation but also to high school graduation (and hopefully into college) so that they can become responsible, educated and involved Jewish adults.

Attendance at religious worship services is an integral part of the educational experience at Congregation Beth Shalom. Kabbalat Shabbat services are held each Friday evening and Shabbat morning services are held periodically throughout the year. Beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, it is mandatory for all students to attend religious services as a part of their religious school curriculum.

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6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> grade students	8	4

Please have your children dress accordingly for services.

If these requirements are not met - it may affect your child's eligibility for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

# CURRICULUM

## **GAN YELADIM - Early Childhood Program**

The Gan Yeladim program offers a general introduction to Judaism. We stress the concept of the Jewish child living in a Jewish community. Students study Shabbat, holidays and selected Bible stories. They learn through activities such as singing, arts and crafts, cooking and storytelling.

**Pre-K students must be fully potty trained.**

## **KINDERGARTEN**

In the Kindergarten class, students learn about the traditions and rituals of our synagogue. Holiday and Bible storytelling, introduction to holiday objects, rituals, and vocabulary reinforce these new concepts.

## **KITAH ALEF - 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE**

First grade students study the celebration of the Jewish holidays along with exploring the core of Jewish Life: Mitzvot, Bible, Israel, Synagogue, Jewish Symbols and Life Cycles. These are learned through stories, songs and activities. Students are also exposed to Hebrew letters and sounds.

## **KITAH BET - 2<sup>ND</sup> GRADE**

This year the students will explore the Jewish community and their role within it. They will be exposed to a variety of activities that demonstrate the community in the synagogue through: holiday celebrations, life cycle events and symbols that identify Jewish people and places. The students will begin their exploration of Israel as the Jewish homeland. As students mature, they will delve deeper into their exploration of Jewish life, gaining greater skills and knowledge of the rubrics of Jewish life. (Focus: Israel in the fall and Synagogue and symbols in the spring)

## **KITAH GIMMEL - 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE**

Third grade students begin their formal study of Hebrew reading, writing and prayers. Students are introduced to key concepts of the Shabbat service. In addition to their Hebrew studies, the Bible comes alive through art, drama, and creative activities. Students' spirituality will deepen as they develop Jewish God-concepts and contemplate their relationship with God. The class will continue to increase their appreciation and understanding of Jewish holidays. Explore Texas Jewish history.

## **KITAH DALED - 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Students will continue their exploration of Jewish spirituality, gaining insights into the meanings of the stories in Prophets and Writings; developing an understanding of what it means to be a partner with God. The students continue their exploration of Israel as the Jewish homeland. Jewish holidays will be explored with increased sophistication. They will learn the history of the different Jewish holidays and the values they express. Students start to learn some highlights of Jewish history. Hebrew study in fourth grade includes the development of Hebrew reading ability and mastering new prayers and vocabulary. Students explore the building blocks of Jewish life and Jewish values through study and discussion. Explore Texas Jewish history.

## **KITAH HEY - 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

During the fifth grade, students study life-cycle events. Some of the most significant milestones are discussed through text and activity. The year is concluded with a 5<sup>th</sup> grade "wedding celebration". Highlights of Jewish history are studied to enable the students to understand the historical continuity essential to the development of a confident Jewish identity. Students become more fluent in Hebrew reading and are introduced to essential prayers. They also continue to build a relationship with Israel and to recognize that there are Jewish values and experiences that link all Jews.

## **KITAH VAV - 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Students in the sixth grade study the connections between religion and everyday life through learning Talmud and The Bible. Students are encouraged to discover the interconnectedness of life through the reading and discussion of selected Rabbinic *Midrashim* (stories). As students continue to develop intellectually and spiritually and prepare for their bar/bat mitzvah celebration, they

will delve deeply into Jewish sources and critically examine three core areas of Judaism: *Torah*, God and *mitzvot*. Students will study the weekly *Torah* portion, using a sophisticated and multi-faceted approach, exploring traditional and modern commentaries on each weekly *Torah* portion, and probing the text for its multiple layers of meaning. Students will also explore the concept of *mitzvah* (a divine commandment or obligation) and the relevance of particular *mitzvot* in their everyday lives. Hebrew study focuses on prayers and a more advanced vocabulary. Students continue to improve their reading ability.

## **CHALON L'ATID – 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Our expectation is to have ALL students arrive at the start of classes at 9:30 AM and stay through dismissal at 12:00 Noon.

Chalon L'atid is an exciting city-wide program. It is sponsored by our congregation for religious school students of suburban Houston's congregations. Chalon L'atid provides students with a *gesher* (a bridge) to Jewish adulthood by offering a new way to experience Religious School. With the students from seven other congregations, our students will learn from a curriculum that is specially-designed to stimulate their exploration of what being Jewish means to them. In addition, the students will join together a few times during the year for special community gatherings (*Kallot*). This will allow students to interact in a community of their peers who are faced with the same questions and issues about Judaism. The two components of the program are designed to complement each other. Dates and information on the *Kallot* are described in the section on Special Programs. During the time after their formal class (10:50-12:00noon) we will assign post B'nai Mitzvah students who want to have a teaching experience to serve as Madrichim (assistant teachers).

## **CONFIRMATION - 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Classroom time is 10am-10:50am. During the time after their formal class (10:50-12:00noon) we will assign Confirmation students who want to have a teaching experience to serve as Madrichim (assistant teachers). Students in the Confirmation Class will meet weekly with our Rabbi for an exploration of Jewish Ethics and Values. The curriculum is designed to challenge the students to apply lessons they have learned throughout religious school to their lives in meaningful ways. Topics include a variety of Jewish values including: Leadership (*Hanhagah*), Friendship (*Y'didut*), Business ethics (*Musar*), Education (*Chinuch*), Family/community harmony (*Shalom Bayit*), Health (*Breeut*), and Remembrance (*Zachor*), among others. Dates and information on the Confirmation retreat are described in the section on Special Programs. In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students look at the modern state of Judaism. They explore cultural elements such as Jewish film, music, art, humor, and food, as well as look at current events in the Jewish world. They also have the opportunity to expose themselves to the other major faiths in the world, and analyze the similarities and differences between those faiths and Judaism. Due to the variety of topics that are covered, the ninth and tenth grade curriculum consists of 23 lessons divided into five modules. Each module has

from 3-4 lessons. Teachers and students are free to explore those areas that are most interesting to them.

## **MADRICHIM and 11<sup>TH</sup> and 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

Religious School Madrichim serve in our classrooms as teaching assistants and role models for our younger students. Madrichim are considered to be part of the Religious School faculty and are expected to maintain consistent attendance at classroom sessions and faculty meetings. Several Madrichim Seminars will be scheduled over the academic year. Madrichim may elect to serve in our classrooms either only on Sunday mornings or both Sunday mornings and Wednesday afternoons.

Teens who want to have a teaching experience to serve as Madrichim (assistant teachers) to classrooms based on the age of students they would enjoy working with. For those students not interested in working with a classroom, there will be other opportunities such as assisting with T'fillot (prayers), art projects, special activities, snacks, storytelling, music, etc.

Only students who have been confirmed by Congregation Beth Shalom are eligible to serve as Madrichim.\* Each Spring 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who serve as Madrichim in both 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades are awarded the *Shomrei HaKabbalah* Guardians of the Tradition Leadership Service Award at the Seniors Recognition/Shomrei HaKabbalah Shabbat Service.

- Students who join our congregation in or around the 10<sup>th</sup> grade may fulfill this eligibility requirement by completing a similar program in their home congregation.

Madrichim **MUST** attend at least **18 times per year** with the expectation of arriving 15 minutes before class and to stay afterwards to clean up their classroom.

If a Madrich cannot attend on a Sunday morning, he/she can substitute it by assisting on a Wednesday evening.

NFTY-TOR events in **DIRECT** conflict are considered excused absences.

To be on the *Shomrei HaKabbalah* plaque, teens **MUST** meet these expectations and standards.

Madrichim will be allowed to have social time in the Teens' Lounge each Sunday from **9:15 to 10am**. Teens are encouraged to attend the family services to increase their positions as role models. Madrichim need to stay where they decide to spend this time, **NO ROAMING AROUND THE BUILDINGS SHOULD OCCUR.**

**Teens driving to CBSW Religious School are expected to remain on campus during religious school hours.**

Teens must be active in classrooms and our expectation during school hours is to serve and assist as role models. **This should not be a social setting.**

The expectation is that each teen will be at their assigned positions from 10am until the teacher or adult they are assisting dismisses them.

One Sunday afternoon a month, from Noon to 1:30pm, Madrichim will be offered a social time and lunch following Religious School. If they choose, some of these gatherings can be outside of CBSW, such as bowling.