

Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School  
Hebrew Program • Grades 4, 5, & 6

**Please read and complete**

I want to update you concerning our Hebrew program and ask for your support. Please fully read the letter and discuss the class goals and structure with your child(ren). The study of Hebrew is an integral part of one's Jewish education—not just for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but for every child. Why teach Hebrew?

- The Hebrew language is the linchpin of our Jewish identity. It links Jews all over the world.
- Hebrew is our holy language.
- Hebrew is woven through the Jewish tradition.
- Jewish values are embedded and expressed in Hebrew.

For these reasons, our Hebrew program is fully integrated into our Religious School program. This means at some point on Sunday morning every student in our program is studying not only Judaica, but also Hebrew. It is as exciting to peek into Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms and hear the *alef-bet* song as it is to walk by the sixth grade Hebrew class and listen to a short Hebrew skit or a review of Hebrew holiday terminology. On Tuesday afternoons, the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms are filled with siddur reading, chanting and trope study and discussions to understand the meaning of key prayers in the Friday evening and Saturday morning services. It is a pleasure to watch our 4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> graders practice on the bema.

**In our Sunday morning 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Hebrew classes**, we have several goals:

- To understand that Hebrew is an integral part of holidays, services and Jewish life.
- To introduce Hebrew as a LIVING language used in every day conversation as well as prayer.
- To improve reading skills and writing skills.
- To introduce and use Hebrew names for commonly used words and phrases in the classroom.

To meet these goals, teachers spend Sunday mornings teaching holiday-related vocabulary and concepts during the appropriate weeks. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade holiday curriculum builds on itself each year.

In addition, we expose our students to modern Hebrew vocabulary using numerous resources. This year several grades will try out a fun new modern Hebrew series, [Sarah & David](#). We will be figuring out which materials belong in which grades. I am impressed with the methodology and I believe that it will be an outstanding addition to our Hebrew classes. The purpose of these materials is the understanding that Hebrew is a spoken language and also the opportunity to gain a sense that Hebrew is an alphabet that is mastered in order to decode prayers and Torah portions as well as contemporary writings such as books and newspapers.

On Sunday mornings, we also spend time practicing reading (decoding) and writing Hebrew. Using simple, fun readings and dialogues and simple Hebrew comic books, we concentrate on fun ways to get the students reading. It is also another chance to build vocabulary.

As you know, we begin **every Sunday morning with a short *tefillah* (prayer) service at 9:30 a.m. *Tefillah* is fully a part of our religious school program.** It is also a “feel good” way to start the morning, but more importantly, it is a weekly time to practice, lead and use the prayers that we teach. This year, at each grade level, our students will have a chance to assist Rabbi Alfi in leading prayers. **Please make sure that your child is here on time and participating.**

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**The Tuesday afternoon Hebrew classes are a required part of our program.** Using our prayer textbook series, [Journey through the Siddur](#), our students will:

- be able to perform the basic prayers from the Friday evening service, Shabbat morning service and the Torah service.
- develop an understanding of the generalized meaning of these prayers.
- explore the personal meaning of these prayers through stories and shared experiences.
- extend their knowledge of how the Hebrew language operates.

Each Tuesday, the classes will spend time with Julie Steinberg learning the prayer melodies— for aural learners this is a more fun way to learn and “feel” the prayers. In addition, Julie will introduce the concept of trope to our 5<sup>th</sup> graders and she will continue with thorough trope studies in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Tuesday classes. Each of our students will be able to chant Torah. Our 5<sup>th</sup> graders will also learn Hebrew script—a faster way to write Hebrew.

We offer an excellent full Sunday/Tuesday Hebrew curriculum, and while we highly encourage all of our students to participate on Tuesdays afternoons, we are aware that some of our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students are unable to attend Tuesday Hebrew due to scheduling conflicts or distance. If you plan to use a private tutor, please read and complete page 3 and return it with your other registration materials. **Please note that 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are required to attend Tuesday classes in order to develop their trope studies.**

We all have differing abilities when it comes to learning. This is especially true when it comes to language acquisition. If there are any special needs or issues related to your child, please fill out the Confidential Form and speak with me so that we can plan an appropriate course of study.

As always, if you have any questions, please call. Our teachers are always open to discussing the Hebrew curriculum and how your child is doing. And, we know that neither our curriculum nor our teaching is perfect – we are always trying to improve – if you have any suggestions please feel free to share them with me, your child’s teachers, the Religious School Committee or the Rabbi.

L’Shalom,

Rabbi Shoshanah King-Tornberg, RJE  
Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning

RKT/eb

Cc: Rabbi [Mona Alfi](#)  
[Marc Ortega](#), Chair, Religious School Committee  
[Lisa Brodkey](#), VP Education

Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School  
Hebrew Program 5770 • Grades 4 & 5

Student's Name:(Print)\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Names:(Print)\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**If your 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade child cannot attend our Tuesday afternoon Hebrew, please complete this form. All 6<sup>th</sup> graders are required to participate in Tuesday classes at CBI.**

1. Please explain why your child is unable to attend on Tuesday:

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2. What alternative Hebrew program is he/she participating in:

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3. Tutor's Name and Phone Number:\_\_\_\_\_

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The tutor should plan to meet with Rabbi King-Tornberg, Director of Lifelong Jewish Learning before tutoring begins in the fall.

The expectations for students being privately tutored:

1. In working with students, tutors must meet or surpass our program goals and expectations for each grade.
2. Complete our textbook series. For each prayer: reading fluency, knowing keywords and understanding themes.
3. Students check in quarterly for brief teacher update/evaluation. Parents set these appointments with the child's CBI Hebrew teacher.
4. Tutor to provide school and parents with thorough written student evaluation for January and May CBI evaluations.

**We have read the Hebrew Program letter and fully understand and will follow the expectations as listed.**

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please return this form with your registration materials.*