

Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School

Hebrew Program

Please read and complete

Hebrew is an exciting component of our students' learning and of the life of our school. In addition to enjoying experiential opportunities for learning and building a close sense of community, we aim for our students to gain mastery over Hebrew learning goals.

The study of Hebrew is an integral part of one's Jewish education. Why?

- 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.
- Our students can gain a wonderful skill and sense of accomplishment
- Hebrew facilitates our students' sense of community by facilitating their more active participation in the life of the community. It allows them to participate further in worship and study.

For these reasons, our Hebrew program is fully integrated into our Religious School program. This means that 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 an older group of students and listen to a short Hebrew skit or a review of a mastered prayer. On Tuesday afternoons, the 4th, 5th and 6th graders continue their study and, in the 6th grade, augment it with the learning of liturgical music and trope (our Torah and Haftara chanting system) with **Julie Steinberg**, our Cantorial Soloist.

This year, the structure of our Hebrew learning will continue with changes we implemented in 2010-2011. Each student in **grades 1-3** will share a block of the morning to learn Hebrew together in level-based groups. Similarly, our **4-6 graders** will share a block of time for the same purpose.

Our Hebrew faculty will work with students grouped by Hebrew level. As students progress through Hebrew materials, they will have the opportunity to move to groups working at a higher level. Students who advance quickly through material will always have a Hebrew level, to which they can aspire, regardless of their grade level. Our Hebrew teaching staff members will oversee the number of groups that makes for the optimal learning of each student. They will be assisted by *Madrichim* (teen classroom assistants). The large group context in which these smaller groups will study will also allow us to engage in larger games and programs, making for more fun and hands on learning.

Tuesdays offer a longer block of time for our older students to both cover the content of various prayers in grade groups, and also work on Hebrew language skills in the level-based groups that work together on Sundays.

The goals of our Hebrew program include letter-recognition, reading fluency, prayer recitation, and understanding the purpose and meaning of both the prayers and the order of the service. We also hope through students' study of the prayer service that they develop a sense of personal connection to worship and deepen their theological exploration.

We further aim to introduce modern Hebrew as well, especially through simple phrases, holiday and other Judaic 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. **Please make sure that your child is here on time and participating.** We invite **both you and your child** to sit with your child's class grade group.

We offer an excellent full Sunday/Tuesday Hebrew curriculum, and while we highly encourage all of our students to participate on Tuesday afternoons, we are aware that some of our 4th and 5th grade students are unable to attend Tuesday Hebrew due to distance or special learning needs. If you need to use a private tutor, please read and complete the attached form and return it with your other registration materials. ***Please also note that 6th 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. We are hopeful that many of the concerns that can arise from differing levels can be addressed through how we group our Hebrew learners. However, we may not meet every student's needs through this program. 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, our VP of Education, the Religious School Committee or Rabbi Alfi.

L'Shalom,

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

*Please note that students being tutored will be required to come to Sunday classes prepared to work on independent assignments, assigned by their tutor. Also, since the content of the prayers (as opposed to the language acquisition portions) are covered on Tuesdays, tutored students will be expected to cover this material as part of their tutoring.

Congregation B'nai Israel Religious School
Hebrew Program 5772 • Grades 4 & 5

Student's Name:(Print) _____ Grade: _____

Parent's Names:(Print) _____ Phone: _____

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

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

Rabbi King-Tornberg will call you to discuss finding an appropriate tutor who is familiar with our curriculum and standards.

With his/her tutor, your child will be expected to:

1. Meet or surpass our program goals and expectations for the Hebrew students attending our regular program.
2. Work with our textbook series. For each prayer: reading fluency, knowing keywords and understanding themes.
3. Check in at least twice a year for brief teacher update/evaluation.
4. Tutor must 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 _____

The best way for Rabbi King-Tornberg to reach us to discuss this request is:

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