



CONGREGATION MISHKAN TEFILA

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RABBI ISRAEL J. AND BERNICE KAZIS RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

PARENTS' & GUARDIAN'S HANDBOOK

2009-2010

This handbook is designed to provide a basic introduction to our Religious School, its programs, expectations and requirements. Practical information in this booklet (class meeting times, school calendar, school cancellation information, special programs and listing of teachers by grade) will be updated throughout the school year. We hope that this introduction to our school will help you and your child to maximize the learning experience at Mishkan Tefila, and provide incentive to participate in the variety of activities available to children and adults. Thank you for supporting our efforts on behalf of our school.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen R. Simons

Director of Education

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A. Class Meeting Days and Times

Sunday hours for all students, K-7 (Gan-Zayin) are 9:00am-12:00 noon. The school will engage the younger students through creative educational programming, including formal learning, music, crafts, song, adequate breaks and snacks. This allows parents ample opportunity to attend auxiliary meetings and events, other adult educational offerings, and family education programs. We encourage you to participate in programs of interest to you.

Students in Grades 2 through 7 (Bet through Zayin) meet also on Tuesdays 3:30 - 6:00pm. Classes begin at 3:30. Most Tuesdays conclude with a mincha or maariv service and assembly in the Chapel.

B. Shabbat: A foundation of the educational experience.

Jewish civilization, the week revolves around Shabbat just as the sacred year revolves around the festivals and fast days. *Zechirat Shabbat*, remembering Shabbat, keeping Shabbat in mind, is a mitzvah that obligates us throughout the week. It encompasses our planning for Shabbat: food shopping, meal preparation, subjects for study and discussion at home, sacred family time, etc. *Shemirat Shabbat*, the observance of Shabbat, is a mitzvah for the twenty-four hour period of Shabbat. *Shamor et Yom ha-Shabbat le-Kodsho* is the commandment to observe the Sabbath day to make it holy. Sanctifying Shabbat is a cooperative effort among the Holy Blessed One, the individual and family and the sacred community of the synagogue.

Our Shabbat: A monthly Gathering of Many Children

A continuously growing understanding and commitment to prayer is essential for the spiritual development of the Jewish individual. The Religious School believes that Jewish communal worship is important for the spiritual growth and Jewish identity of our children. In addition, by attending services, children and parents become familiar with the prayers, are called up to the Torah, chant the Brachot for the Torah and Haftarah, and become acquainted with the content of the particular portion of the Torah read on the given Sabbath. One Friday evening service as well as at least monthly Shabbat morning services, are designated "Musical Mishkan Shabbats". Attendance at these services are essential requisites for the achievement of our school's educational and religious mandate. *Only by regular attendance at Shabbat services can the ideas, skills and knowledge that students learn in the school's prayer curriculum be realized in actual practice. CMT avails our congregants of:*

- At least two Shabbat services per month in the chapel designed especially for children with Erin Gubert and musician Josh Schreiber. These services begin at 11 am.
- Babysitting for pre-schoolers is held from 10:00-11:45 am in the Gross Motor Room, classroom 10.
- Tot Shabbat, in the Feinberg Library, is an opportunity for parents of pre-schoolers through grade 1 to celebrate Shabbat morning together through movement, song, dance and story telling. Children younger than K and 1 must attend this program with their parents.
- The liturgical schedule in the main Sanctuary is approximately as follows:
 - 9:30 am: Preliminary service and *Shaharit* (morning) service in the Sanctuary.
 - 10:00 am: Babysitting for ages 2.9-4 years old if desired.
 - 10:05 am: Torah service
 - 11:30 am: Musical Musaph prayers.
 - 11:45 am: *Students* return to their families in the main sanctuary and ascend the Bimah when called.
 - 11:55- 12 noon: Concluding prayers

All students attending at least 10 Shabbat services will be recognized at the end of the school year. Any Friday evening, Shabbat morning, afternoon or Saturday evening Maariv and Havdalah service will fulfill the requirement. Students reporting attendance at 10-15 services will receive "bronze" awards, those attending 16-24 will receive "silver" awards and those attending 25 or more will receive "gold" awards at a ceremony at the end of the school year.

Although youth programming is available as described above, we encourage families to pray together in the main sanctuary on Shabbatot throughout the year, and to quietly engage the children in discussions and clarifications of the service at various junctures throughout the morning as much as possible. A variety of Shabbat appropriate study books and Shabbat appropriate activity cards are available on a cart outside the sanctuary for young children's pleasure. All arms of the synagogue are seeking to transform the sanctuary service into a worship environment for everyone.

Weekday Prayer

Jewish law obligates us to recite formal prayers three times every day: Shacharit, Mincha and Maariv. On Sabbaths and festivals, the Musaf service is added. At the end of Yom Kippur, the Neilah service is added as well. Parents are the primary teachers of their children in terms of learning that the world is created and sustained by our Creator. It is up to the parents to serve as role models and teachers to recite the *modeh ani* and *Shema* with their children in the morning, and at least the *Shema* and its first paragraph in the evenings.

Depending on the time of year, students in grades Bet through Zayin gather in the Mishkan Tefila Chapel most Tuesdays at 5:30 or 5:45 for mincha (afternoon) or maariv (evening) prayers. Students thereby learn the skills of the prayer leader as well as fulfill the mitzvah to pray in the afternoon. Interspersed throughout the prayer service are explanations or discussions on the meanings of the prayers, and how they can influence us to become kinder, more compassionate human beings, as well as to help develop the awareness of being in the presence of G-d. Following the prayer service there is an assembly. This often includes a brief "musar shmooze" where we discuss events of the day, events in the news, and ideas of importance to young Jews. Rabbi Haber will meet with the school on some of these occasions. This is an inspirational period that helps unify the students; identities as members of our synagogue and school. The program is conducted by Dr. Simons and Dr. Wolok, with the assistance of students wishing to lead the services.

C. Yom Hug: Monthly Enrichment Days

One Sunday per month from 12-1:30 is devoted to informal educational programs. Participants will usually be able to choose from the following programs:

- Krau Maga Israeli Karate
- Newspaper Club
- Israeli Cooking
- Klezmer band with Misha Grandel
- Judaic Arts projects

These scheduled Sunday programs are held 12-1:30 and include a light lunch.

D. Student Placement

The Religious School staff determines the placement of students in groupings most suitable to the individual's and the class' learning needs. As it is our intention to expand bonds among students, we change class groupings from year to year or within a year. Where it is feasible to facilitate a request, we will consider parental suggestions regarding keeping children with at least one close friend, particularly if he or she only sees that friend at the Religious School. Please indicate such requests on your application forms. Early submission is recommended. There are ample opportunities during the daily class sessions when all sections of a given grade are together, so no one is ever cut off from grade-mates.

E. Procedures for Opening Day of Classes, Sunday, September 13

In lieu of mailing class assignments, we are streamlining the process as follows:

All Gan students (grade K in secular school) will report to the Nursery School Classroom #4 with Mrs. Elah Grandel.

All Aleph students (grade 1 in secular school) will report to the Nursery School Classroom #1 with Mrs. Judy Szathmary.

All Bet students (grade 2 in secular school) will report to Religious School room 14 with Mrs. Erin Gubert

All Gimel students (grade 3) will report to Religious School room 8
All Dalet/Hey students (grades 4 & 5) will report to Religious School room 7
All Vav (grade 6) students will report to Religious School room 6
All Zayin (grade 7) students will report to Religious School room 5

F. Parking Lot Safety & Pick-up Procedure

For the safety of our children, please observe the traffic pattern when dropping off and picking up children. Enter the Synagogue lot in the direction of the arrows. Drive along sidewalk, **single file only**, remaining in cars. Students are to step directly into cars from the sidewalk. If your car is filled before the cars preceding you, you may proceed cautiously away from the sidewalk line and proceed around the parking area, joining the exit line when safe to do so. When cars in front of you have moved up, please follow to avoid back-ups near Hammond Pond Parkway. Students are encouraged to walk down the sidewalk toward the main entrance to the Synagogue so that cars may be filled up promptly and without delay.

- Please do not “jump ahead” via the exit lane.
- Please do not ask your children to leave the sidewalk to walk unaccompanied to your parked car.
- Escort your charges across the marked crosswalk to your parked car. **CAUTION! DO NOT INSTRUCT CHILDREN TO MEET CARS BETWEEN THE MAIN ENTRANCE AND HAMMOND POND PARKWAY.**
- Parents wishing to park their cars are to do so in the indicated parking areas only. **Entrance to the circular school courtyard is limited to “HP” cars only.**
- Parents of Gan children are to park in the central parking area and come into the school to drop off and pick up students. *Gan children must be brought to their classroom and be met at the end of the day by a parent or other authorized adult. If an adult other than the child's parent or guardian will be meeting the student, teachers must be informed **in writing** well in advance of dismissal time.*
- **Early Dismissal.** Please note that since parking lot supervision takes place only at the normal dismissal times, students are to wait for their parents **in the school office** if early dismissal is required. Students **will not be permitted to wait outside unsupervised** before the normal dismissal time. **Parents must provide a note** if their child is going to be picked up prior to regular dismissal time. Please indicate the name of the person that will be coming for your child. Students are not permitted to meet their ride outside of the school building; this is a safety rule. **Please meet your child in the lobby in front of the school office.**

Following these instructions is everyone's responsibility for the safe transit of our children. Thank you for your cooperation

G. Work Habits, Attendance, Promotion and Discipline

1. Work Habits

All students are expected to arrive at school on time, with homework completed, and with all necessary books and materials (kippah, pencils, etc.) to start the day. **Parents of students in grades 3 through 7 are to provide a notebook binder with lined paper, dividers and a pencil case.** Bet students receive a Hebrew writing book called a machberet. All papers are to be kept neatly in the binder. Students who do not complete assignments due to repeated absences or poor work habits fall behind their classmates. Please be sure that your child comes to school regularly and prepared to learn. If students lose their books, parents will be billed for replacement texts provided by the school.

2. Policies & Criteria for Promotion & Graduation: Bet thru Zayin

a. Homework

Reading and/or writing homework is assigned every day. Students cannot participate fully in class if they are behind in their homework. This holds for both reading and written assignments. In the case of unavoidable absence, students are to call a classmate for questions regarding the specific homework assignments. Teachers will provide long range assignments where

appropriate. Because homework assignments are integrally related to classroom discussions, students do not benefit by working ahead of the scheduled assignments. Homework assignments are **listed on the board** in each classroom as well as **e-mailed by students' teachers to parents** within the day following classes. Students requiring or desiring enrichment work will be provided with material specially developed for that purpose.

b. Hebrew Reading

The mastery of Hebrew reading requires frequent exposure and practice. The fundamentals of "decoding" are taught in grades Aleph and reviewed in grade Bet. Students experiencing difficulty in Hebrew reading beyond these efforts will be assigned individualized home reading programs. Any students who still experience difficulties following one month of the individualized study will be required to receive weekly tutoring outside of the Religious School classes, at the family's expense, until the stumbling blocks to fluent reading are overcome. Where learning disabilities are involved, please make this fact known to our special needs coordinator, Ms. Rene Magier.

c. Attendance

Regular attendance is mandatory for successful and meaningful participation in our program. Students returning from an occasional absence are responsible for work assigned to facilitate a comfortable return to the classroom.

Excessive absences (15% or more of the total class sessions) will necessitate a conference between the school and family. Assignments or projects may be required in addition to the regular homework assignments. Students absent from Religious School on a regular basis due to private school scheduling will require weekly tutoring under the direction of the Educational Director. Tutorial costs are the responsibility of the families. Students must attend one tutorial session per Tuesday that classes are held.

d. Conduct

Appropriate conduct at Religious School includes the following behaviors among others:

- Attending class with assigned work completed, with all books, pencils and other materials as needed.
- Bringing glasses to class and wearing them as needed.
- Raising one's hand and waiting to be called upon to respond to teacher's questions and to constructively contribute to class discussions except when instructed otherwise.
- Showing respect for others by not interrupting teachers, guest speakers or classmates.
- Taking care of personal needs before class or at designated breaks.
- Entering and leaving the classroom on all occasions with quiet dignity and without calling attention to oneself verbally or by gesture.
- Quietly completing individual study tasks as assigned and working co-operatively in small group situations when class instruction designates such.
- Refraining from antagonizing classmates or others either verbally or physically. Bullying is not tolerated.
- Use of appropriate language.
- Treating one another with dignity and respect.
- Modest dress

Infractions are addressed by teachers. Repeat misconduct results in a meeting with the Director of Education. Parents are called for a conference in the case of third infractions, at which time a **contract** setting terms for continued full participation at Religious School is made among teachers, parents, Director of Education or acting principal and the student.

Terms of the Contract: Privileges & Consequences

- Daily - *Adherence* to appropriate conduct each day entitles students to attend class the following day. *First infraction* on any day requires the student, at the teacher's instruction, to go to the Educational Director's office to quietly work on his or her own for the remainder of the period. *Second infraction* leads to parental call and meeting. *Third infraction* results in suspension.
- Periodic - Complete adherence to this contract entitles students to attend special assemblies, field trips and class trips.

- Ultimate - Adherence to the contract entitles the student to fully participate in Bar/Bat Mitzvah and graduation ceremonies and celebrations; to be invited to serve as a classroom aide following graduation, and while attending the Prozdor; and to be assured that his/her parents be appraised of excellence in participation.

H. Parental Responsibilities

1. Food in School

Students should not arrive at Religious School hungry. Please be sure that your children receive a wholesome, satisfying snack before coming to school. There are students in our school **who have a life-threatening allergy to nuts. Absolutely no nuts or food products containing nuts, are ever to be brought into the building.** When class celebrations take place, only certified Kosher products are permitted. **Snacks will occasionally be provided to students in grades Bet through Zayin and weekly to Gan and Aleph.**

2. Notices to Parents

One section in the looseleaf binder distributed to our students is reserved for notices and information handed out in class. Most information will also be sent to parents by email. Please keep the school and synagogue informed of any us dates in addresses or phone numbers. Please refer to this section daily so that you may be informed as to upcoming programs, schedule changes and community events. Please instruct your children to remove notices from the binder once you have read them.

3. Messages

In the event that a message has to be relayed to a child when classes are already in session, kindly notify the school secretary of the message to be sent in order to avoid classroom disruption. Parents wishing to meet with teachers are requested to schedule an appointment before the start of classes. When class is in session, the teacher's full attention is paid to his/her students.

4. Field Trips

During the course of the year, we will plan appropriate field trips to institutions and cultural events relevant to our educational program. At times, field trips will be held in coordination with the Congregation's youth department. Participation in these field trips is an integral part of our Religious School program and all students are required to attend. A minimal charge may be levied for some trips to subsidize extra costs. Informational letters with permission slips and release of liability forms are sent home prior to the trip. These forms can also be found on CMT's website.

5. Absences

Students returning from absences are required to present an absence note written by the parent or guardian.

6. Guests in School

In order to avoid possible disruption, students MAY NOT bring friends or visitors to school.

I. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

a. Students whose families are members of Congregation Mishkan Tefila and who fulfill the requirements outlined in the "Guidelines For Bar/Bat Mitzvah Parents" are eligible to celebrate their Simcha in the Synagogue on Shabbat. Students must have completed at least four years of Religious School by the time of date assignment, and continue their studies at least through graduation. Jewish families not yet affiliated are urged to join the Congregation so that they may be entitled to the various privileges of Congregational membership. *Families who have lived in the greater Boston area, must have been members of the Congregation for at least 2 ½ years prior to the date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah in order to celebrate the Simcha at Shabbat morning services.*

b. It is recommended that pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah families attend Shabbat morning services for several weeks prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to familiarize themselves with the "choreography" of family participation.

c. Parents are required to provide their children with a Talit and a new set of kosher Tefilin in grade Vav. These sacred items may be purchased at the Israel Book Shop. In grade Hey, there is a yearly family Talit-making workshop. Many of our students wear the beautiful products of this

activity at their Bar or Bat Mitzvah observance. There will be a monthly talit and tefillin service and breakfast for grades Vav and Zayin and their families, sponsored by the Brotherhood.

J. Parent/Teacher Issues

Parents with question or issues relating to individual classes are to set up a meeting directly with the teacher or teachers. Teachers will likewise contact parents for meetings as needed. If issues still remain; the Director of Education will meet parents, teachers and students as appropriate. If the issues are not resolved on these levels, the educational director and parents will set up a meeting with one of the School Committee chairmen. **The Director of Education is happy to meet with you to discuss your children's progress as well as general school issues.** Please call the school secretary to request an appointment. Since Sundays are particularly busy, meetings will be scheduled for a weekday.

K. School Cancellation Due to Weather

When the weather looks threatening, we will cancel school at the earliest possible moment. While we run the risk that the weather could change for the better at the last minute, early cancellation is the best course of action for the safety of our children. In case of inclement weather, please listen to or watch:

Radio: WBZ-1030am (Sundays only)

TV: WBZ-TV4
WCVB-TV5
WRKO-TV7

Or go to WBUR's web page at www.wbur.org (available 24 hours a day). Religious School classes are automatically cancelled when the Newton Public Schools are cancelled due to snow. We cannot be responsible for radio or TV station's failure to post cancellations once we have contacted them. The rule of thumb is: if you do not feel safe driving due to weather conditions, please stay at home.

L. Class Lists and Car Pool Assistance

Once the school year has started, class lists will be mailed to parents for purposes of car pooling, telephone squad, Bar/Bat Mitzvah invitations, etc. Sheila, our school secretary, will be happy to let you know which children attend your child's school for car pool purposes.

M. Youth Programs

CMT offers a wide variety of youth activities for children in grades 2 through 12, both at the synagogue and around New England as well as through our affiliation with USY and The Prozdor. Families will receive information about youth programming via slow mail and/or e-mail. If you would like more information, please contact: Youth Educator, Jodie Zalk at 781-608-6938 or jodiezalk@yhoo.com; youtheducator@mishkantefila.org or Brenda Edelman at 617-981-0685 or win85bear@yahoo.com in the fall.

N. Congregation Mishkan Tefila PTA

The PTA at Congregation Mishkan Tefila needs your help. Each year, the PTA provides many services to the Religious School and to family life at the Synagogue. There are innumerable opportunities to get involved. If you have a little time or a lot, your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Please take a moment to check off your areas of interest:

- Co-Room Parent Coordinator (Enlist room parents, coordinate involvement of class parents, coordinate e-mail list, assist phone chain callers)
- Board Member (4-6 board meetings per year, assist during school activities, chaperone field trips)
- Room Parent (Phone chain caller, assists students with class events)
- Host Family (Be a "buddy" to a new family at CMT, help with introductions to new families, and provide general assistance.)

The PTA seeks parental involvement with the following activities:

- Back-to-school Barbecue (Sept)
- Sukkah Decorating with students

- o Chanukkah Celebration (Dec)
- o Chanukkah Candle Fundraiser
- o Family Activities
- o Telephone Squad
- o Mailings
- o Purim Carnival Raffles
- o Purim Carnival Booths
- o Purim Carnival – General
- o Yom Hugin General Assistance
- o Area-wide Hebrew School PTA conference (November)
- o Model Seder (April)
- o Lag B'Omer Sports Day (May)

Please contact PTA co-chairmen Melissa Donovan at 617-969-5261 and Jan Fleischman at 617-277-1849

O. Professional Staff

One Sunday each month, the CMT Brotherhood sponsors Tallit and Tefillin Club for students in grades Vav and Zayin (6 and 7) and their parents. Adults and students are to buy kosher Tefillin and a Taslit for each family participant to each session. Sessions are followed by Brotherhood sponsored breakfasts. The program is held from 9 – 10 am. All other Sundays parents and students will study with Rabbi Haber from 9 – 10 am.

Dr. Davin Wolok alternates teaching Haftorah Blessings and Trop with Torah Blessing and Trop on Sundays; he co-leads Mincha/Maariv with Dr. Simons most Tuesdays at 5:30 pm.

Mrs. Susan Wilcon teaches students Jewish, Israeli and liturgical songs on Sundays.

Mrs. Elah Grandel teaches our Gan – grade K – children.

Mrs. Judy Szathmary teaches our Aleph – grade 1 – children.

Mrs. Erin Gubert teaches our Bet – grade 2 – children.

Mrs. Sheryl L. Schwartz and Mrs. Tsvia Kochavy teach our Gimel – grade 3 – children.

Mrs. Karen Gavish and Rabbi Yosef Resnick teach our Dalet/Hey – grades 4 & 5 – children.

Mrs. Cindy Yanofsky and Mrs. Pnina Laster teach our Vav/Zayin – grades 6 & 7 – children.

Ms. Rene Magier teaches our Zayin – grade 7 – children.

Mrs. Barbara Mende is the Temple and Religious School Librarian.

P. Curriculum

Please visit the school office to download a hard copy of the school curriculum. You will receive your child's curricular outline in the fall together with a letter from your child's teachers.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM: GOALS 2009-2010

DIVISION OF THE CURRICULUM

The general areas of our program are:

- I. Hebrew Language
- II. Siddur & Prayer
- III. Bible
- IV. Social Studies
- V. Israel
- VI. Jewish Living: Holidays & Mitzvot
- VII. Family Education
- VIII. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation
- IX. Yom Hugin: Thursday Enrichment
- X. Shabbat

OBJECTIVES

I. HEBREW LANGUAGE

Language provides us with the tools for shaping and expressing our emotions; it is our means to spirituality. It is the Hebrew language that is the Jewish vehicle toward spirituality. Our religious school intends to encourage students to express their notions of God and Godliness. This is no easy task. Providing students with the alef bet with which to talk to and about God is an arduous task. The rewards, however, are great.

Our conception of an educated Jew is one who, among other things, is at home in the classical language and literature of his people.

The Hebrew language is the sacred conduit of our spiritual expression. Hebrew provides a common bond between Jews. It links Jews throughout the world and throughout time. It connects us with the contemporary Jewish life in Israel. It provides us with a tangible sense of community, of belonging to a unique group called into existence by the Creator; according to Biblical tradition, it is the language with which G-d created the world.

Hebrew is the holy language. A knowledge of Hebrew gives us access to our sacred texts and allows us to study them in the original language. Hebrew is the language of prayer and the prayerbook. It enables Jews to participate in prayer services in any synagogue in the world.

Hebrew is woven through the Jewish tradition. All Jewish life-cycle events involve Hebrew, and all Jewish holidays involve prayer. With a knowledge of Hebrew, students can participate with confidence in these events during their school years and throughout their lives.

Jewish values are embedded and expressed in Hebrew concepts. Many words in Hebrew cannot simply be translated; they have their own set of associations. TSeDaKa is not just "charity"; its meaning encompasses far more than a single English word. It comes from the root TSeDeK , which means "justice", or "the right thing to do". The second part of the word BeYT HaKNeSeT, "synagogue" or "house of gathering" comes from the root KNS, meaning "gather", "enter", "bring in." The same root is found in the Hebrew phrase for "hospitality" (HaKhNaSaT 'oRKhYM). Hebrew words such as these provide us with a Jewish cultural vocabulary that extends well beyond their literal translation. They provide a window through which the Jewish people view the world.

The vocabulary of Judaism consists of words and concepts which have transmitted the essence of Jewish identity through the ages, words which are steeped in history and tradition and layers of meaning. Knowledge of these terms are acquired in our school first of all through an interdisciplinary approach. It is introduced in the context of studying Hebrew Language, Bible, History, Holidays, Mitzvot and Prayer.

Our specific objectives for the study of the Hebrew Language are as follows:

- a. The student shall read accurately for participation in synagogue worship and home ceremonies.
 - b. The student shall be able to evoke the vocabulary of the Jewish tradition pertaining to Shabbat and festivals, mitzvot, life cycle, moral and ethical values, family and community.
 - c. Access to the original text of the Bible, the Siddur and Maimonides with the help of supplementary vocabulary and aids.
 - d. Knowledge of basic contemporary vocabulary and grammatical forms for access to the classical texts and poetry and for selective classroom usage.
- In grade Vav, an Ulpan (Hebrew Immersion) format will be utilized.

II. SIDTUR & PRAYER

Our objectives for the study of Jewish prayer and liturgy are as follows:

- a. The students shall learn the *Matbea shel Tefila* according to the proper *Shabbat nusach*. These are the minimal prayers that form the structure of the daily, Shabbat and festival services. Our intention is that over time, this repertoire will grow, and each student that wishes will be able to lead these essential prayers at any service.
- b. The student shall read with various levels of comprehension the major prayers of the daily Shabbat and Holiday services for appreciation of our spiritual and meditative heritage
- c. The student shall be able to participate in home observances such as Kiddush, Havdalah and Passover Sedarim.
- d. The student shall incorporate Judaism's prayers, blessings and religious observances into daily life with the support and cooperation of the family. The student shall be able to translate selected prayers.
- e. The student shall be familiar with the geography of the Siddur and the cycles of holiday prayers and observances.

III. BIBLE

The study of our Biblical tradition is presented on two levels. We introduce our children to the Bible in grades Gan, Aleph, Bet and Gimel based on the Melton Research Center's recommendations for the teaching of Bible. In these grades, students encounter the narrative wonder of the classic Bible tales, learning to distinguish between history on the one hand and poetic myth on the other, and to respect them both as sources of Jewish wisdom. The stories, presented in English, are grouped into "concept areas" that relate the happenings of ancient times to the concerns and realities of a child's life today. Among these concepts are: the Gift of Wonder, the Gift of a Homeland, the Gift of Jewish Peoplehood, the gift of the Covenantal Life, the Gift of Faith, the Gift of Growing Up, the Gift of Torah. The weekly Torah portion is taught in grades Aleph and Bet as well.

In grades Dalet through Vav, our students study specific parshiot from the Hebrew text. Linguistic skills developed through the Hebrew Program are applied to the text so that the student comes to unravel the "p'shat" or plain meaning of the text on his/her own under the direction of the teacher. Selected *perushim* and *midrashim*, reflecting three thousand years of Jewish encounters and interpretations of the text are then introduced to the student who incorporates Jewish world views and personal insights into his own developing understanding of life's issues and the role of tradition.

Our objectives for the study of Bible include:

- a. The student shall understand that the Bible is the statement of our people's covenantal relationship with the Almighty; is the primary record of our nation's ancient beginnings; is the source of the mitzvot, the directives which shaped our nation's spiritual, moral, cultural direction as well as our stance in relationship to the rest of the world.
- b. The student shall know the divisions of our Tanakh (Bible) into Torah (Pentateuch) Neviim (Prophets) and K'tuvim (Writings) and recognize the names and themes of the books included in each division.
- c. The student shall know key words and phrases which convey ideas and values central to the Jewish heritage.
- d. The student shall learn selected narratives, events and codes of the Torah and

prophets in the original text and with the aid of supplementary material.

- e. The students shall know the narratives and the key teachings of the megillot of Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes and the book of Jonah. The students shall be able to identify with which holiday each book is associated and why.
- f. The student shall learn the Torah and Haftarah cantillations and be able to follow the reading of the Torah in the Synagogue service.

IV. SOCIAL STUDIES

Our objectives for the Social Studies elements in our curriculum are as follows:

- a. The student shall come to perceive the convenantal relationship between the Almighty and the Jewish People in the unfolding of Jewish history.
- b. The student shall identify with the great personalities and events which were involved in the shaping of the religious, national and cultural destiny of our people.
- c. The student shall develop a growing sense of pride in our heritage, with a resultant feeling of confidence and satisfaction in being a Jew.
- d. The student shall understand Jewish history in the context of general history.
- e. The student shall have a general understanding and appreciation of the major Jewish communities throughout our history and today.
- f. The student shall be knowledgeable about selected issues of The Holocaust, including aspects of the political developments leading to The Holocaust, the fate of the Jews of Europe, Jewish and world response to Nazism and The Holocaust and its significance to subsequent generations of Jews.

V. ISRAEL

Our curriculum is concerned with developing an appreciation of Kedushat Erets Yisrael (the sanctity of the Land of Israel) through text study, worship, and motivational presentations and activities; and acquiring knowledge of the history of Jewish settlement in the Land; of the Zionist movement and its precursors; and the history and identification of the modern State of Israel and its people. The inextricable bond between the people of Israel and the Land of Israel is a recurrent theme throughout our curriculum in Bible and Prayer. The centrality of Israel to our religious ideas and practices is presented from various aspects in our Holidays and Mitzvot curriculum. Aspects of the geography, history, politics and society of the modern State of Israel are taught as individual units throughout the elementary school program and in the context of our upper grade history program. Israeli current events are reviewed in the classroom and at assemblies.

Our objectives for the study of Israel include:

- a. The child shall know the terms Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael, Elohey Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael.
- b. The child shall be able to identify sources for the Jewish people's heritage of Israel in selected Biblical and liturgical texts.

- c. The child shall be able to site major events leading up to the establishment of the modern State of Israel.
- d. The child shall be able to discuss the 1948 War of Independence, the 1956 conflict, the 1967 Six Day War; the Yom Kippur War, the Intifadas, unilateral separation and the quest for peace.
- e. The child shall be able to describe the current borders of the State of Israel.
- f. The child shall be able to identify the major cities of Israel and their distinctions.
- g. The child shall be able to identify major events in the history of modern Israel, including the founding of the State; the major immigrations; the role of the Kibbutz and Moshav; the Reunification of Jerusalem; the Ethiopian and Russian immigrations, the peace with Egypt and Jordan and the current co-existence.
- h. The child and his or her family shall be encouraged to consider family trips to Israel and to plan for teen-age trips to Israel through participation in the Passport to Israel program.

VI. JEWISH LIVING: HOLIDAYS & MITZVOT

Our teaching of the Holidays and Mitzvot is based on the Melton approach, associated with the Jewish Theological Seminary and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Our intention is that the students develop a mature and intelligent understanding of the central ideas and observances of the Jewish tradition. The curriculum is structured around Jewish thought - the value of concepts and intellectual framework of our tradition. It explores the central ideas that underlie Jewish observance and traditional texts. Both skills and concepts are emphasized as the students study various ideas associated with the Holidays, while also learning such basic skills as lighting the Chanukah candles, waving the Lulav and Etrog, and reciting the four questions at the Pesach Seder. The various aspects of Tzedakah ("right action" "seeking Justice" "Providing financial help") and Chesed (lovingkindness) are central to our activities and teachings.

The curriculum is also a *graded* curriculum. Students progress from year to year, deepening their knowledge and practical skills. Each grade follows a rational progression based on the intrinsic demands of the material and the intellectual capacities of that age group.

Some material progresses from year to year in a *spiral* fashion: Ideas introduced in the early grades re-emerge in later years, but lessons for the older children do not merely repeat the earlier work. The curriculum broadens and expands the earlier material in accord with the greater knowledge and maturity of the students.

Other material progresses in a *vertical* fashion: New ideas are introduced in each subsequent grade.

Our curriculum is structured so that it is graded from year to year, and our students benefit from a fresh approach as they progress in our school. The specific objectives for each grade are detailed in the descriptions by grade.

VII. FAMILY EDUCATION

Our Congregation offers a comprehensive program of family education utilizing the professional skills of our Director of Education, Nursery School Director, Youth Educator, Rabbi and Cantors, as well as outside professionals from the fields of medicine, law, psychology, social work and education. Programs include: adult courses, parallel child/parent courses, family prayer services,

ritual crafts, holiday celebrations and sacred meals.

VIII. THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH PREPARATION

Sections of the service common to all B'nei Mitzvah are taught as part of the grades Hey and Vav prayer curriculum. Students begin to investigate their individual parshiot and haftarot in grade Hey. At the same time, they begin to study the musical trop of the Haftarah. Preparation for a life of mitzvot takes place throughout the elementary program, with a programmatic emphasis on life cycle and social action mitzvot in grade Vav. Individual B'nei Mitzvah tutorials are supervised and implemented by our Cantor and Ritual Director.

IX. Enrichment

Our school offers numerous opportunities for Jewish enrichment to complement the basic classroom work. Aside from Jewish singing, communal prayer and assemblies, which take place on Sundays or Tuesdays, one Sunday each month is designated as Yom Hugi. This includes the Cantor's Choir, the Klezmer Band, the Newspaper Club, Field Trips, Art projects with the staff of the JCC, and other activities. Many activities are undertaken in cooperation with the Youth Department and are led by our advisors. Special presentations and programs are held throughout the year. In the recent past these have included:

ADL	Cradles to Crayons	Prozdor Prospective Student Day
Sofer	Israel Fair	Matzah Bake
Mezuzot Project	World Wide Wrap	Israel Connection
Cemetery Tour	Zimriyah	Israel Guide Dog
Lag B'Omer Sports Day	Greater Boston Jewish Food Pantry	
Israel Connections adopt Israeli Troops Program		

