

Union Temple of Brooklyn Religious School Manual 2018-2019/ 5779
“Teach Each Child According to Their Way” – Proverbs 22:6



Union Temple of Brooklyn

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Our Mission

“Teach Each Child According to Their Way” - Proverbs 22:6

At Union Temple Religious School, all students and their families are part of a *kehillah kedoshah*, a holy community.

Our community welcomes all families, including interfaith, interracial and single-sex couples.

Our school educates our children and encourages all family members to engage in active Jewish learning.

Through classroom study, *tefillah* (prayer services) and Shabbat/holiday family programs we strive to create Jewish learning experiences that empower our students and families to live exciting and meaningful Jewish lives.

Our mission is to learn together how to live a rich and joyful Jewish life as part of a community, family and the greater Jewish world, *K'lal Yisrael*.

Curriculum

“Teach Each Child According to Their Way” – Proverbs - 22:6

Union Temple Religious School’s curriculum is designed to guide all children on their Jewish journey.

Kinder Kef (Pre-K-Kindergarten)

This program provides an exciting, interactive introduction to Judaism for children in Pre-K and Kindergarten. Teachers use music, movement and crafts to illustrate Shabbat, holidays, and Jewish rituals. The aim: to plant a love of Judaism.

Grades 2 and 3

Our seven- and eight-year-olds begin to identify, name, and read the Hebrew letters and vowels. Hebrew language instruction then continues in each grade according to individual ability. We introduce the blessings for Shabbat and holidays. Our students discover the vivid stories of Torah, beginning with the story of Creation, and moving on to the dramatic stories of our Jewish Patriarchs and Matriarchs.

Grades 4 and 5

In these grades, students continue their journey through the Torah. Teachers use an interactive approach, including biblio-drama, text study, and arts activities that bring the people, places, and events to life. Most important, by exploring the ethics taught by the prophets, children learn what it means to be a “*mensch*” — a kind and considerate person.

Grades 6 and 7

Our older students ask themselves the question: “What does it mean to be a good Jew?” They search for answers in the Torah. They discuss the Jewish values presented in the stories and how they relate to their modern day lives. In addition they study Jewish history, starting with the Biblical period and ending in the modern era. To keep this from being an overwhelming topic, we use specific items, personalities, and moments to discuss the larger movements of our people, through the world and through our past. The students continue to expand their Hebrew reading skills and learn new prayers.

For All Grades:

Israel in the Classroom

At Union Temple we have the unique opportunity to participate in the *Shinshinim* program. *Shinshinim* are Israeli high school graduates who volunteer for a year of service in communities abroad before entering the army. In collaboration with the Jewish Agency and UJA Federation, six *Shinshinim* have come to Brownstone Brooklyn this year to serve as informal educators, teaching about Israel and Israeli culture, Jewish identity and Jewish celebration. We are fortunate to have a *shinshin* teaching in our Religious School as a real “living bridge” between our community and Israel.

Cooking and Music

A cooking teacher visits monthly to enhance our connection with Jewish and Israeli foods. Our dynamic student cantor regularly brings music to each classroom. The students learn Jewish holiday songs, prayers to enhance our *tefillah*, and folk music.

Hebrew

Hebrew instruction, which begins in 2nd grade, includes activities and games to make learning fun for the entire class. Our self-paced program allows every student to advance based on his or her own ability. The focus is on reading and recognizing prayer vocabulary, both for understanding and personal meaning.

Torah

We begin the lifelong journey through Torah with the stories of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs, each year delving more deeply into the text. Teachers use an interactive approach, including biblio-drama, text study and art activities to bring the people, places and events to life, while also grappling with the ethical issues raised.

Holidays

On the Jewish holidays and festivals we celebrate in the classroom, at school-wide events, or with the whole Union Temple community.

***Tefillah*: An interactive prayer experience**

We believe *tefillah* is a time for personal spiritual searching while simultaneously creating a relationship with God. *Tefillah* is also an opportunity for community building, making meaning out of large theological concepts, and sharing personal ideas.

Prayer is a skill that must be learned and practiced. Through the Religious School *tefillah* experience and study, we will explore central Jewish concepts in the prayer services. All students at Union Temple will participate in these unique musical services for a half-hour every Sunday morning and during monthly First Friday Family Shabbat services at 6:30.

By learning the basic skills of worship (reading Hebrew prayers, understanding Hebrew words, practicing choreography, and becoming familiar with the organization of the *siddur*), students will be well-prepared for any future prayer experience. Parents are invited to join us for *tefillah*.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Yom Mishpacha (Family Education Days)

At Union Temple each grade will have a *Yom Mishpacha* (Family Education Day). On this day parents come to Religious School and learn with the students. This opportunity allows families to spend quality time together and to grow together as a family in knowledge of Jewish tradition and ritual. No prior Jewish education is needed to attend! The dates for each grade are listed below.

Annual Retreat Day

Once a year the Religious School gathers to spend the day together learning about various topics. This is an all-school program and parents are required to attend with their children. This is an opportunity to build community beyond the classroom. They retreat usually runs from 10:00AM-2:00PM.

FAMILY EDUCATION DATES

October 28, 2018 6th/7th Grade

November 11, 2018 3rd/4th Grade

December 9, 2018 5th Grade

January 27, 2019 2nd Grade

March 31, 2019 Pre-K/Kindergarten/1st Grade

May 5, 2019 Yom Yisrael (All School)

Parent Programs

Parent modeling of Jewish learning is a critical component of Jewish education. Throughout the school year we offer parent programs that take place during the Religious School hours. During this time parents gather over bagels and coffee and learn with Rabbi Mark Sameth.

Tzedakah

Tzedakah (righteous giving) in the form of small change is collected during each Sunday. Students pick an organization at the end of the year to donate the *tzedakah* collected.

The School Day

SCHEDULE

All Students: Sunday from 9:30AM-12:30PM.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE:

9:30 Arrival

9:30-10:00 *Tefillah* for 2nd-7th grade

10:00-10:20 *Tefillah* for kinder kef and 1st grade

10:15-11:00 Classroom time

11:00-11:15 Snack and community time

11:15-12:30 Classroom time

12:30 Dismissal from the 4th floor

Union Temple Religious School Policies

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Drop-off/Pick-up

School begins promptly at **9:30AM**. Please consult the weekly email for drop-off locations. On days we have *Tefillah* parents are encouraged to stay. School ends at **12:30PM**. Parents must pick up their children personally from the Religious School on the 4th floor unless special arrangements are made in advance. You may give your permission in writing for your child to walk home by themselves. If your child must leave early, or with someone other than yourself, please send in a note with your child.

Early Dismissal

If your child must be dismissed early, please make a request in writing and have your student give it to his or her teacher or to the Director of Youth and Family Engagement. **A parent must come into the building and pick their child up from their classroom. Students will not be permitted to leave by themselves or meet a parent out in the street.** If someone other than a family member is picking up your child, please make sure to include the person's name on the note. The Religious School does not release students to minors.

LATE PICK-UP POLICY

It is important that you pick up your child on time. Dismissal for Religious School is 12:30PM and for Junior Choir practice is 1:30PM. If you are running late, please either email Mindy at educator@uniontemple.org or call 718-638-7600 ext 4. **If you are consistently late picking up your child, you will be charged a late fee of \$25 per child.**

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all sessions of Religious School. We value your child's presence and participation, and regular attendance helps create a cohesive educational community. All students and parents are expected to attend the monthly First Friday Family Shabbat service, starting at 6:30PM. A potluck dinner will follow services. **There will be other special programs throughout the year that families will be expected to attend.**

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In case of inclement weather, check your email or call the temple office: **718-638-7600**.

THE CALENDAR

Please consult the Religious School calendar for important dates. The Religious School calendar is also on the Union Temple website: <https://uniontemple.org/children-families/religious-school/family-involvement/>.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The Union Temple Religious School is committed to serving all of our children. We strive to help each child learn and feel comfortable at Union Temple. If there is something that we should be aware of about your child, please contact Mindy Sherry, Director of Youth and Family Engagement.

TEMPLE MEMBERSHIP

Temple membership is required for families of students beginning in 4th grade.

Rabbi Mark Sameth and your family, in joy and in sadness. . . .

An important part of temple membership is a relationship with the rabbi. Of course this includes the entire process of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. But also, if there is another *simcha* in your family: a marriage, a new baby, a significant anniversary, and so on; or a sad event: a death, serious illness, or similar crisis; Rabbi Mark Sameth will be there to help you through the process and conduct the appropriate ceremony in keeping with standard Reform Jewish practice. **Please call him at 718-638-7600 ext. 2 and leave a message. If it is urgent, please follow the voicemail prompts and your call will be returned shortly. You may also email him at rabbi.mark@uniontemple.org.**

Temple members are entitled to Rabbi Mark Sameth's services for life-cycle events without extra remuneration. If you would like to make a strictly voluntary donation to Union Temple for such an event, Rabbi Mark Sameth asks that you make out a check to "Union Temple" and mark in the note "Rabbi's Discretionary Fund." The rabbi uses this fund for *tzedakah*: scholarships for kids at youth group retreats, participation for congregants at adult retreats, and contributions to charitable institutions. You also may accomplish this online. All donations, of course, are deeply appreciated, and will be acknowledged in the Temple Bulletin.

Religious School families who are not members of the congregation are also encouraged to contact Rabbi Mark Sameth, who welcomes the opportunity to share your family's special events. Please call or email the Rabbi directly to discuss any arrangements or honorarium.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH PREPARATION

It is recommended that your child begin Religious School as early as possible to develop a strong foundation, but a minimum of two years of Religious School enrollment is required prior to your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah year. Preparation for the service is arranged individually with Rabbi Mark Sameth and Student Cantor Ben Harris. On occasion additional tutoring may be recommended.

PARTICIPATION AT SERVICES

The Religious School students will participate in monthly First Family Friday Shabbat services at 6.30PM. **Student participation in these services is required.**

HOLY DAYS AND FESTIVALS

Family participation in temple celebrations, including family dinners and luncheons, services, and special programs, is encouraged. Participation reinforces awareness of the regular cycle of Jewish life, and increases the joy of Jewish life for your children and your entire family.

TUITION REFUND POLICY

Those who withdraw a student prior to November 15 will receive a full refund less the \$100 non-refundable deposit and \$250 non-refundable security fee. After February 1 no refunds will be given. If a student withdraws between November 15 and February 1, the refund will be prorated based on

the number of days the child was in school. Documented extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

If you have more than one child currently in the Religious School we are offering a 10% discount on the tuition of each additional sibling.

SECURITY FEE POLICY

Union Temple is charging all families a security fee. This fee helps cover the cost of maintaining a security presence at Union Temple. If you are a Union Temple member, you will be assessed this fee with your membership. If you are a Religious School family and not a member of Union Temple, you are required to pay a \$250 non-refundable security fee.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

The Union for Reform Judaism has passed a resolution urging Reform Movement congregations and institutions to adopt policies that require mandatory vaccinations with medical exemptions in programs that serve children and youth. As a member of the URJ, Union Temple Religious School has adopted the following policy: All Religious School children must provide a copy of their immunization records. If the child has a medical exemption, then a doctor's note must be provided to the Religious School office.

ELEVATOR POLICY

For safety purposes students in the Religious School (all grades) are not permitted to ride in the elevator without an adult during Religious School hours. This includes during drop off and dismissal. If your child needs an accommodation, please contact Mindy Sherry.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

How we act

All students are entitled to a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning and developing a love of Judaism. While we hope that students will behave in a respectful manner while at Religious School, we understand that occasionally discipline problems arise.

We expect the following from our students and families at Union Temple:

- Exhibit respectful behavior that contributes to maintaining a positive learning environment
- Demonstrate courtesy
- Behave in a responsible manner
- Attend classes regularly and arrive on time
- Obey all class rules
- Respect the rights and privileges of all students, teachers, advisors, administrators, and parents
- Dress appropriately for study and worship
- Remain in designated supervised areas

- Respect the property of others, including Union Temple property and its facilities

DISCIPLINARY STEPS:

We have developed the following steps toward maintaining a desirable and safe learning environment when negative behavior is displayed. Inappropriate behavior will be discussed between the student and the teacher. At the discretion of the teacher, the student will be sent to an administrator. Parents will be called if the child cannot return to class without causing disruption. The student may be asked to write an explanation and have it signed by the parent and returned to school.

If negative behavior persists, parents may be asked to monitor the student's classes and assist in teaching acceptable classroom practices. Serious actions may be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Cell phones and other electronics

Religious School is a place for the business of learning. Our students deserve and require a learning environment that is conducive to learning. **Except in situations where they are being used as part of a class lesson,** cell phones and other electronics (e.g., iPods, DS Systems) are to remain in their owners' pockets or bags during class and break. Teachers who feel students are being distracted by phones or other gadgets will confiscate the item until the end of the school day.

Guests in classroom

Students are permitted to bring guests to Religious School if prior arrangements are made with the classroom teacher and the Director of Youth and Family Engagement.

2018-2019 Religious School Calendar

September

16 First Day, Assembly
23 Cooking, Sukkot Decorating
30 Tefillah, JR Choir

October

7 No Religious School- Columbus Day
14 Cooking Parent Volunteer Meeting,
3rd/4th Grade Ask the Rabbi
21 Tefillah, JR Choir, Camp Presentation
28 Tefillah, 6th & 7th Grade Yom Mishpacha

November

4 Tefillah Bnai Mitzvah Parent Meeting, 5th
grade Ask the Rabbi
11 Tefillah, JR Choir, 3rd/4th Grade Yom
Mishpacha
18 Cooking
25 No Religious School- Thanksgiving

December

2 Tefillah, JR Choir, 6th & 7th Grade ask the
Rabbi
9 Tefillah, 5th Grade Yom Mishpacha
16 Cooking
23 & 30 No Religious School

January

6 Cooking
13 Cooking, Tu Bi'Shevat
20 No Religious School
27 Tefillah, JR Choir, 2nd Grade Yom
Mishpacha

February

3 Cooking, 2nd Grade ask the Rabbi
10 Cooking
17 & 24 No Religious School

March

3 Tefillah, JR Choir
10 Tefillah
17 Cooking
24 Tefillah, Purimfest after School
31 Tefillah, JR Choir, Pre-K-1st Grade Yom
Mishpacha

April

7 Tefillah, JR Choir, Pre-K-1st Ask the Rabbi
14 Chocolate Seder
21 & 28 No Religious School

May

5 Yom Yisrael
12 Tefillah
19 Last Day

First Friday Family Shabbat

September 7, open house
October 5, Consecration
November 2
December 7, Chanukah Dinner
January 4
February 1
March 1
April 5
May 3
June 7

Color Key

Tefillah
JR Choir Practice
Yom Mishpacha
Ask the Rabbi
Holiday Celebration
Parent Meeting