

Congregation Beth Torah's Weiner Religious School 5777

Accredited by the Association of Reform Jewish Educators

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Weiner Religious School &

Sunday, Sept. 11 th Wednesday, Sept 14 th	First Day of Religious School First Night of TAG, Trimester 1
Sunday, Sept. 25 th Sunday, Oct. 2 nd Sunday, Oct. 9 th	Rosh Hashanah Rumpus JYG Program (6 th – 8 th Grades) NO SCHOOL – EREV ROSH HASHANAH 3rd-5th Grade TWYG Program
Sunday, Oct. 16 th	NO SCHOOL – EREV SUKKOT SUKKOT SWING (in afternoon)
Sunday, Oct. 23 rd Sunday, Oct. 30 th Sunday, Nov. 6 th Friday, Nov. 11 th – Sunday, Nov. 13 th	Sukkot/Simchat Torah Song Sessions SIMCHAT TORAH CELEBRATION (evening) JYG Program (6 th – 8 th Grades) Camp Fair & Scholarship Meeting <i>NFTY Fall Chavurah @ CBT 9th – 12th Grade</i>
Sunday, Nov. 13 th	3rd/4th Grade Bake Sale PreK-2nd Grade Social Activity (afternoon) JYG Program (6 th – 8 th Grades)
November 24 - 27 -	
Wednesday, Nov. 30 th	First Night of TAG, Trimester 2
Sunday, Dec. 4 th Sunday, Dec. 11 th	3rd-5th Grade TWYG Program 11-12 Consecration Rehearsal (w/ parents, confirmation) JYG Program (6 th – 8 th Grades) CONSECRATION AT FAMILY WORSHIP
December 18th - January	
Sunday, Jan. 8 th Friday, Jan. 13 th – Monday, Jan. 16 th	3rd-4th Gr. Parent Breakfast 10:15-10:45; Fam School 11-12 <i>NFTY Winter Chavurah, St. Louis 9th – 12th Grade</i>
Sunday, Jan. 22 nd Friday, Feb. 2 nd – Sunday, Feb. 5 th	3rd/4th Grade to reStart JYG Program (6 th – 8 th Grades) <i>NFTY Junior Youth Group Chavurah, B'nai Jehudah 7th – 8th</i>
Sunday, Feb. 5 th Sunday, Feb. 26 th Wednesday, Mar. 1 st Sunday, Mar. 5 th	Tu B'shevat Song Session during Worship 2nd Grade Parent Breakfast 10:15-10:45; Fam. School 11-12 Pre-K Parent Breakfast 10:15-10:45; Fam School 11-12 First Night of TAG, Trimester 3 Purim Carnival
March 12th - 19th -	
Sunday, Mar. 26 th Sunday, April 2 nd Sunday, April 9 th Sunday, April 16 th Friday, April 21 – Sunday, April 23	K-1 st Gr Parent Breakfast 10:15-10:45; Fam School 11-12 5 th Gr Parent Breakfast 10:15-10:45; Fam School 11-12 JYG Program (6 th – 8 th Grades) Pesach Song Sessions Religious School Round-Up Sunday: Pre-K – 2 nd Grade Social <i>NFTY Spring Chavurah Denver (Fri – Sun), 9th – 12th Gr</i>
Sunday, May 7 th Wednesday, May 10 th Sunday, May 14 th Sunday, May 27 th	LAST DAY OF RELIGIOUS SCHOOL ANNUAL MEETING 10-11:30 LAST NIGHT OF TAG LAG B'OMER PROGRAM (in evening) Confirmation

Stay tuned for exciting programs for children and families throughout the year!

Who's Who in the Weiner Religious School?

Rabbi Javier Cattapan	<i>Along with teaching the Confirmation class, Rabbi Cattapan looks forward to spending lots of time in the classrooms!</i>	jcattapan@beth-Torah.org (o) 913-498-2212
Marcia Rittmaster Director of Education	<i>Marcia is returning for her victory lap - one more year as Director of Education!</i>	mriddmaster@beth-Torah.org (o) 913-498-2212 (c) 913-649-9524
Elaine Tobias Madrichim Coord./Library	<i>Elaine will help keep the books (and teens) in line!</i>	cbttzipporah@gmail.com (h) 913-549-3524
Rachel Bolter TAG Administrator	<i>Rachel will supervise on-site Wednesday night programming. TAG questions? She's the one to call!</i>	rbolter@gmail.com (c) 913-744-7691 (o) 913-498-2212 (Wed. Nights Only)
Becky Toniazzo Pre-Kindergarten	<i>Brand new to our staff, Becky brings her beautiful family into the fold of WRS!</i>	beckyt324@yahoo.com
Stephanie Kolb Kindergarten/1 st Grade	<i>Stephanie brings experience, energy, and creativity to a lively classroom setting.</i>	smaker@kc.rr.com (c) 913-206-1796
Diana Hurst 2 nd Grade	<i>Diana's a longtime favorite in the school, and she's eager to return to the second grade classroom.</i>	dihurst@sbcglobal.net (h) 913-897-6870
Morgan Fasbinder 3 rd /4 th Grade	<i>Morgan returns to WRS, and brings sparkling experience both as a WRS grad and an educator!</i>	morganfasbinder@yahoo.com (c) 913-574-8854
Denise Ellenberg 5 th Grade & TAG	<i>Hardly a single student who graduates from WRS does so without having Denise as a teacher at least once!</i>	deniseellenberg@gmail.com (c) 913-645-9332
Norine Rosenblum Art Specialist	<i>Miss Norine is hard to miss, and as the 2015-16 Marcia Rittmaster Teacher of the Year, we're lucky to have her back!</i>	wontgrowupnbr@kc.rr.com (c) 816-591-2065
Emily Tummons Music Director	<i>Emily and her music team bring sound and joy into our halls. Stay tuned for opportunities for kids and adults to join the chorus of voices!</i>	Emily@beth-Torah.org (o) 913-498-2212
Henri Goettel Hebrew Resource Specialist	<i>Henri joins our faculty to introduce the Aleph Bet and more Hebrew into the classroom.</i>	hgoettel@publicnetworking.org (h) 816-795-8361, (c) 816-405-2226
Lindsey Lipsky Sasone Inclusion Specialist	<i>Lindsay is happy to use her years of experience in special education to make the WRS accessible to all students</i>	Lindsey.lipsky@gmail.com

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TAG Information

Welcome to Congregation Beth Torah's Weiner Religious School!

Congregation Beth Torah's ARJE (Association of Reform Jewish Educators) Accredited Weiner Religious School is a supplementary Jewish school for students pre-Kindergarten through High School, including a complete *B'nai Mitzvah* program. "Supplementary" means that we support and expand upon the Jewish education our students receive at home. Our purpose is to help each student in LEARNING and LIVING as a Jew.

LEARNING includes the study of prayer, theology, *Torah*, Hebrew, holidays, Jewish thought, history, Jewish values and contemporary issues facing the Jewish community and our community at large.

LIVING includes participation in field trips, social justice projects, holiday celebrations, worship, hands-on classroom activities and a variety of other programs and events. We also emphasize the importance of life cycle events within our tradition.

Each student at Congregation Beth Torah's Weiner Religious School is offered the opportunity to grow as a Jew. Studies have revealed that the more quality Jewish education one receives, the better able the individual is to make critical Jewish life decisions and the better chance there is that the person will remain an active member of the Jewish community. Involvement helps foster a feeling of pride in being Jewish. We hope to set up a pattern of LEARNING and LIVING that will continue throughout the life of the student and his or her family.

If after reading this handbook you have any questions, please contact Marcia Rittmaster in the Beth Torah office at (913)498-2212 or mriddmaster@beth-torah.org.

Philosophy & Long Range Goals

During the 2014-2015 school year The School Vision Committee, (Brandi Fischer, Henri Goettel, Miki Herman, Elizabeth Lenz, Jennifer Levinson, and Stuart Waldman) worked on updating the goals and objectives of the Weiner Religious School. The committee offered several opportunities to the community to share their feedback. What follows is a final draft of a vision statement and goals.

By the end of their education in the Weiner Religious School, students will be able to:

- Cite specific experience that have helped them form their Jewish identity
- Apply aspects of Jewish knowledge in their own lives
- Synthesize their own personal religious values, rooted in Judaism
- Find their own Jewish direction

Our long-range goals, developed through a process of curriculum review and values clarification of what it means to be an involved, educated Jew, all have lasting value beyond the classroom and are important for the students' lives and the development of their place in an active Jewish community. These goals point to what we consider critical to the future of our People. Because the fulfillment of these goals is not immediately obvious, it is the role of the teacher to help the students uncover their value and gain a deep, integrated knowledge of Judaism. The foundations for the goals are taught in the Religious School, but the learning is intended to last a lifetime. Individual grades have specific curricula which will be distributed on the first day of classes.

How Do I Register?

Registration forms for all students enrolled during the previous school year should have been completed during spring enrollment and are available for online completion through our website at www.beth-torah.org. Please note we require a separate form for each student. Students enrolling in 6th grade and above should see the TAG section of this handbook for more information on Wednesday night programming and alternatives.

Parents of students new to the Weiner Religious School are invited to meet privately with the Director of Education. During this brief but important meeting, parents will be oriented to the culture and expectations of our religious school, as well as given specific information regarding the grade(s) their child(ren) will enter. This meeting is a significant opportunity for to establish strong communication and a great partnership for helping to create Jewish identity. If your family is new to the Weiner Religious School, please call the Beth Torah Office to schedule your 20 minute meeting.

Fees

We know our members want to live a Jewish life, and that can be expensive. Therefore, as of the 2015-2016 school year, tuition is included in membership fees. This is a tangible commitment of congregational leadership and the entire community to help our children gain a great Jewish education. In July 2015, the Board also voted unanimously to extend this commitment beyond our membership. For the first time, families do not need to be members to send their children to the Weiner Religious School. Enrollment is now open to the community from age 3 to 10th grade, for a fee available for the first two years enrolled at WRS. *B'nai Mitzvah* remains reserved for members and fees remain in place. All other fees (Aleph Bet, tutoring, etc.) remain the same. Beth Torah welcomes all children of Jewish families that have not had CBT membership for 24 months to attend the Weiner Religious School at the Community Rate.

	CBT Members	Community
Enrollment Fee	<i>Included</i>	\$210
Materials Fee	\$50	\$50
Per Child Cost of Sunday and TAG Religious School Programs	\$50	\$260
Confirmation Fee (includes trip, travel, and all ceremony expenses)	1175	<i>Member Families Only</i>
Materials Fee	\$50	-
Per Child Cost of Confirmation Program	\$1225	-

Leadership Roles

The professional staff of the Weiner Religious School consists of Director of Education Marcia Rittmaster and Rabbi Javier Cattapan. Working in partnership with CBT's Weiner Religious School teachers and the Youth Activities and Education Committee (YAEC), they seek to create a vibrant community of students and families dedicated to Jewish learning and tradition.

The day-to-day administration of Pre-Kindergarten through high school programming is the responsibility of Marcia Rittmaster. She is present at all Sunday sessions and is the appropriate person for all parents, teachers, and students to turn to for needs and concerns. Rachel Bolter will serve as the Wednesday evening TAG Administrator and to provide on-site support. Students with special needs and their families will work directly with Marcia Rittmaster and *Sasone* Inclusion Specialist Lindsey Lipsky to make sure a Jewish education is accessible and meaningful. To learn more about the services provided by *Sasone*, please visit the website of the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City: www.jewishkansascity.org

Weiner Religious School teachers come with diverse views of Judaism and Jewish life. Teachers are prepared for the task of educating our students and are concerned with their growth as individuals. Each of our teachers has a deep personal commitment to Jewish life and Jewish learning. They attend regular meetings and enrichment sessions offered by the School.

How Can Parents & Families Get Involved?

Family support and involvement are the backbone of CBT's Weiner Religious School. Throughout the year, parents are invited to attend family education programs to share learning experiences with their children and our classroom teachers. See the "Family School" section of this Handbook for more information.

There are many other opportunities for parents to learn. We offer lifelong learning courses on various days of the week all throughout the year. The latest issue of the *Tekiah* or the Beth Torah website (www.beth-torah.org) can keep you informed. You can also contact Marcia Rittmaster to discuss how CBT can bolster your Jewish learning and lifestyle.

Our school is also dependent upon the support of parent volunteers for many activities during the year. A Parent Volunteer Sign-up Form is available through SignUpGenius.com and can found at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4daea72babf94-parent> Parents are encouraged to become active and involved in through the Youth Activities and Education Committee (YAEC). You are invited to join monthly YAEC meetings throughout the year and to contact our YAEC Chairperson, Elizabeth Lenz (TheLenzes@hotmail.com) for more information.

Youth Activities and Education Committee (YAEC)

Congregation Beth Torah's Youth Activities and Education Committee (YAEC) is devoted to meeting the needs of our school-age congregants. In addition, the YAEC plans special grade-level family programs for religious growth and approves policy for youth involvement in our congregation. They seek to foster a caring community, celebrate Jewish life, and build for the next generation of Jews. The YAEC is the communication lifeline between the parent, staff and faculty. The committee additionally serves as a support system for Marcia Rittmaster and the faculty. All Congregation Beth Torah members are invited to join the YAEC and assist in accomplishing its goals. The chairperson of the YAEC is Elizabeth Lenz (thelenzes@hotmail.com).

Behavior and Attendance Guidelines

Regular attendance is necessary for a quality learning experience. Each class is carefully planned and teachers use their classroom time to the fullest extent. When students miss a class, there is a break in the continuity of their learning. Regular attendance maintains this continuity and promotes healthy social interaction. In addition, learning is a communal experience and everyone benefits from classroom participation by all who are present.

Excessive student absences and tardiness are disruptive to the flow, continuity, and dynamics of the classroom. Students with less than 70% attendance do not meet our requirements for regular attendance and do not have the classroom opportunity to adequately learn our curriculum. Students with less than 70% attendance will not be permitted to begin or continue with their *B'nai Mitzvah* training until make-up work is completed. Students in any grade with less than 70% attendance will not be allowed to progress to the next grade level without completing make-up work and/or special consideration by Marcia Rittmaster and/or Rabbi Javier Cattapan. Therefore, after four absences per semester students may be required to do a make-up assignment created by the teacher in consultation Marcia Rittmaster and/or Rabbi Javier Cattapan. A student with less than 70% attendance and his/her parent may also be required to meet with Marcia Rittmaster and/or Rabbi Javier Cattapan before continuing in the Weiner Religious School.

You can expect:

- *A meaningful and lasting Jewish education* that complements and supports a Jewish lifestyle at home.
- *A strong partnership* between teacher and parent to create a foundation for your child's Jewish identity.
- *Teachers* who are prepared for class each week.
- *Teachers and Administrators* who are always available to parents and students.
- *An environment* that is warm, friendly, emotionally, and physically safe for your child.
- *A hands-on, active approach* to Jewish education.

We expect:

- *Students* to attend school regularly, to arrive on time, and to stay with their class until it ends.
- *Students* to behave with decorum befitting a synagogue and an institution of learning.
- *Students* to honor the requests of their teachers and other staff members.
- *Parents* to work for their children's regular, punctual attendance and to avoid disruptive early departures.
- *Parents* to encourage their children to behave respectfully and appropriately toward all community members.
- *Parents* to cooperate with our school in upholding the expectations of behavior among all students.
- *Parents* to notify the Religious School of early dismissal in writing. For security, Student(s) must be picked up from the classroom and a parent must sign that they have taken their child early from class. Parent(s) must indicate in writing if someone other than a custodial parent will pick up their child.

Respect for self, as well as the persons and property of others, is a keystone of Jewish teaching. Fighting, name-calling, property destruction, entrance into private areas, and disregard for safety and security will not be permitted. Toys, games, cell phones, and other electronic devices etc. should not be brought to class.

Students and parents will sign the YAEC Committee's *Derech Eretz* agreement on the first day of classes (Sundays and Wednesdays). *Derech Eretz* is a Hebrew term referring to civil and proper behavior. New students and parents, as well as incoming 4th and 7th graders will be asked to sign this before class can be attended.

Attendance at Family Worship on Sunday mornings is part of the Weiner Religious School curriculum. Community worship and singing starts our Sunday mornings with joy and excitement. This prayer experience is a hallmark of CBT's Weiner Religious School and parents are asked to accompany their children for Family Worship. In doing so, parents demonstrate the importance of living the values we teach in the home and at Weiner Religious School.

Cell Phone Policy

Students and *madrichim* who carry cell phones are expected to have them turned off during school hours and worship. Students may be asked to place their cell phone in a basket on the teacher's desk during class to encourage full engagement in the classroom environment. If students need to make a phone call during school hours, they may do so from the telephone in the School Office. If you need to reach your child during Sunday school hours, please contact Marcia at 913-645-2085 and during TAG (Wednesday evening) hours, contact Rachel Bolter at 913-744-7691.

Homework

Sometimes, homework is necessary to really hit the point home and help students internalize a lesson's meaning. Homework may be assigned by any teacher who believes it is meaningful for his or her students.

Evaluations

Evaluations of student participation are issued twice per year. These consist of a brief narrative describing the course of study and a report on the student's progress. Please feel free to contact Marcia Rittmaster or your child's teacher with any questions or concerns you have about your child's progress. Students with less than 70% attendance will receive marks of "Unable to Assess," as our teachers cannot sufficiently evaluate students with excessive absences. Make-up work may be assigned.

Sader/Shimkin Library

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful collection of children and adult books available for check-out from the Sader/Shimkin Library. Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade classes will visit the library as scheduled by teachers. Families are invited to visit the Sader/Shimkin Library at any time. Our librarian and a cadre of parent volunteers read stories to classes in the library or the classroom, and will be available to assist children in checking out appropriate books.

Library Birthday Books:

For a donation of just \$18, a child may pick a new children's book and be the first to check it out. An inscription is placed in the book noting the donor and occasion. Fill out the form received with this packet or pick one up in the Sader/Shimkin Library. When it's your child's birthday, he or she will be brought to the library to select a new book.

Chugim (Specials/Clubs)

Last year we began a new format for doing "specials." This format was so popular we are excited to continue it this year. Every 8-9 weeks, children will choose between four different *Chugim*, or clubs, that allow them to experience Judaism through different activities and interests. This may include, but is not limited to: Drama, Israeli Sports & Games, *Teva* & Nature Challenges, Cooking, Youth Choir, and more. In 2016-2017, *Chugim* will be led by *madrichim*, allowing students to form a closer bond with our congregation's teen role models.

Hebrew Instruction

After two fun years with a focus on the program *Hebrew through Movement*, teachers, parents and school leadership agree that students require a more rigorous, small-group Hebrew curriculum. Congregant and Hebrew teacher Henri Goettel joins the WRS this year as Hebrew Resource Specialist. Henri and classroom teachers are working closely to maximize each teacher's actual use of Hebrew words and phrases, reintroduce letter recognition lessons, and otherwise assist teachers in becoming comfortable with his/her initial word and phrase usage. The goal of this refreshed Hebrew program is to acclimate WRS students to the sound and look of Hebrew by increasing its presence in the classroom.

Aleph Bet Hebrew Program

Aleph Bet Hebrew instruction program is a partnership of CBT's Weiner Religious School and the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy (HBHA). *Aleph Bet* is a 36-session, one-on-one tutoring program in Hebrew literacy. Students begin *Aleph Bet* between twenty-one and eighteen months before the *bar* or *bat mitzvah*. After 36 sessions of *Aleph Bet*, students continue with nine months of one-on-one *B'nai Mitzvah* training with an approved Congregation Beth Torah tutor. At the appropriate time, parents will be contacted by the *Aleph Bet* Director, Shira Zigler (shiramichele@yahoo.com) to schedule an evaluation and tutor assignment. Should you have any questions regarding the *Aleph Bet* program before you have been contacted by Shira, please feel free to reach out to Marcia Rittmaster. Note that, as a program contracted with the HBHA, fees are *not* included in typical WRS fees. Parents of 5th graders are asked to attend an important informational meeting about *Aleph Bet* with Shira and Marcia Rittmaster on the morning of Sept. 18.

Aleph Bet provides:

- One-to-one teaching. Our students will be paired with a dedicated HBHA teaching professional.
- The tutors and families will decide when and where to meet to maximize flexibility for all.
- Improved Hebrew literacy. In *Aleph Bet*, students never miss a session because the sessions are scheduled exclusively for them. In *Aleph Bet*, tutors provide personal attention and adapt to student needs. For these reasons and more, we expect *Aleph Bet* to lead to better Hebrew retention and higher rates of success with Hebrew literacy. Upon *Aleph Bet* graduation students will be prepared to read *t'filot* from *Mishkan T'filah* and begin their nine months of *B'nai Mitzvah* training.
- Digital Education. *Aleph Bet* utilizes an innovative online program called "Let's Learn Hebrew Side-by-Side" for Hebrew learning, along with hands-on review exercises and reading practice. This can be used during and between sessions.

All School Family Programs

Religious education is most effective when there is a solid relationship between the school and the family. We encourage parents to share in Jewish learning with their children in order to enhance every aspect of Jewish identity. Religious School still begins at 9:30 a.m. on Family School days, with parents joining the class later in the morning. Reminders will be sent for each individual event. Parent Breakfasts, which will be held the same day as that grade's Family School, give you the opportunity to meet and greet other families with students in your child's class. Dates for Family School & Parent Breakfasts can be found on the religious school calendar.

Sunday Morning Family Breakfasts

Bagels, cream cheese, juice and coffee are available prior to religious school each Sunday from 9:00 a.m. - 9:25 a.m.

Sponsorship - Families may want to sponsor a breakfast in honor of a birthday, *Bar/bat Mitzvah*, or other special occasion. To sponsor a breakfast, follow this link and sign up today: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4daea72babf94-weiner1>. You will be billed for your sponsorship on the first of the month that you are sponsoring.

Celebrate a family *simcha* or other special occasion by sharing it with your religious school community! Sponsoring a Sunday morning breakfast is a great way to spread joy and good news. Please contact the Beth Torah Office to set up your sponsorship today! You can also always add a sponsorship during the year by contacting Janet at the number listed above. Please consider sponsoring with the following options:

One (1) 18 inch Ultimate Fruit Tray	\$65.00
Three (3) dozen cinnamon rolls	\$35.00
Three (3) dozen muffins	\$35.00
Three (3) Flavored creamers	\$ 10.00
Three (3) Flavored cream cheese	\$ 10.00

Adult Learning Opportunities

Support Your Own Hebrew and Adult Jewish Learning! Consider exploring the following resources on your own: Navigating the Bible - <http://bible.ort.org>. Click on "Torah" and you can choose any *Torah* portion to read with or without vowels as the voice on the computer chants the verses. Another excellent website for Jewish study is www.myjewishlearning.com. And you can use www.beth-torah.org as a launching site for all types of learning, including finding out about the latest opportunities at Beth Torah. Reform issues and news can be found at <http://www.rj.org/>. Keep an eye out for the Adult Ed calendar on the Beth Torah website (www.beth-torah.org) or in the *Tekiah*.

School Socials, TWYG, JYG, and BTTY

Pre-K - 6th grade students and their families have the opportunity to come together for special *Shabbat* worship opportunities that will be scheduled throughout the year. These mornings are a chance to meet your child's Religious School friends and their parents, celebrate *Shabbat* together, and extend your family's connections within our community. Younger and older siblings, grandparents, and other special people in your child's life are always welcome!

Regular programs are available through Family Socials for Pre K-2nd grade students and parents, TWYG (Tween Youth Group) for 3rd - 5th grade students, and JYG (Junior Youth Group) for 6th - 8th grade students. These social groups get together for pizza parties, ice skating, movie nights, and in the case of JYG, a whole weekend meeting Jewish kids from all over the Midwest! Beth Torah Temple Youth Group (affiliated with NFTY) is our group for 9th - 12th grade students. This group is run by its own Board and Alexa Kitt is the BTTY Advisor.

Lifecycle Events in Jewish Education

CBT's Weiner Religious School provides our students with a continuum of learning, starting formally in kindergarten and progressing through High School. This learning continuum is marked with three joyous life cycle family events:

Consecration, celebrated when a child begins Kindergarten religious school, ritualizes the beginning of a child's formal Jewish education and involvement in the religious community. Consecration (for Kindergarten students as well as 1st and 2nd grade students new to the WRS) will take place during Family Worship on Sunday, December 11th.

Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks the beginning of the change from childhood to young adulthood when the student turns thirteen, and signifies that s/he is now considered old enough to understand and take responsibility for fulfilling the “*mitzvot*,” or Commandments. The student demonstrates his/her ability to join the adult religious community by publicly reading from the *Torah* for the first time. Only member families are able to begin and complete the *b’nai mitzvah* process.

Confirmation, which may be celebrated when a student is ready in 10th grade or above, marks the beginning of the student's more mature understanding of mitzvot and *Torah*. As the Confirmands study to create and lead the Confirmation ceremony, this class sets the necessary groundwork for continued learning and doing as actively informed Jewish adults. For more information about Confirmation see the T.A.G. Handbook or contact Rabbi Javier Cattapan.

Tzedakah

Tzedakah (Hebrew, meaning righteousness, fairness, or justice) refers to actions that are taken to help those in need. The most common form of *tzedakah* involves giving money to the poor and to other worthwhile causes. From the first day of school, we introduce our students to the importance of giving money as one way to help create justice in the world. *Tzedakah* money is collected each class session and students are encouraged to contribute what they can. Sunday school classes will make their own decisions about where to donate their *tzedakah* after studying a variety of social service and charitable agencies. We view *tzedakah* as vital to a child's Jewish education, and at the end of the year, we hold a "*Tzedakah* Assembly" to announce the recipients of our *tzedakah* and share some of what the classes have learned about the organizations to which *tzedakah* is given.

Summer Camp

Jewish summer camp provides children the unique opportunity to experience life in a totally Jewish community. Lifelong friendships are made and campers come home with a brand new with a sense of belonging. We strongly encourage attendance at a Jewish summer camp, as it deepens cultural and religious meaning commitment, develops leadership skills, and a vital sense of independence. It is not too early to begin making plans for a life-changing summer! Ask us about the CBT scholarship program and don't miss our Camp Fair! For additional information on any Jewish summer camp opportunities, contact Marcia Rittmaster.

To encourage EVERY Beth Torah child to have the opportunity to attend a Reform Jewish camp, Beth Torah has made extensive scholarship funds available to Beth Torah members. CBT is also fortunate to have been provided with a First Time Camper Grant to pay approximately half of a session at a URJ Summer Camp for any student in the 4th or 5th grade who has not previously attended a URJ summer camp. Come to an informational meeting at on Sunday, November 6th at 10:30 a.m. to learn more about this program in detail. Additional materials are also available.

B'nai Mitzvah Program

B'nai Mitzvah Policy:

The ongoing study of our heritage is essential for future generations to develop the ability to make informed choices. Upon celebrating a *bar mitzvah* (for a boy) or a *bat mitzvah* (for a girl), individuals acknowledge their "obligation to the commandments" and publicly demonstrate their intention to live a Jewish life. One of our primary goals is to provide students with the background needed to make adult decisions about Jewish practice and observance, and to equip them with the skills and information to be active members of the Jewish community. Only with continued Jewish education can a person begin to gain an understanding of the concepts, history, and philosophy of our tradition. For this reason, all *B'nai Mitzvah* students are expected to continuously participate in the full Hebrew and Religious Education Programs of the Congregation through high school. ("*B'nai Mitzvah*" is the Hebrew for "*Bar and Bat Mitzvahs*".)

In order to engage in the full *b'nai mitzvah* process at Congregation Beth Torah, students must have been enrolled in an approved Jewish religious school during the two years leading up to the scheduled *bar/bat mitzvah* date. New members not previously affiliated with a Jewish congregation must be members of the Congregation Beth Torah for two years before celebrating a *bar/bat mitzvah*. Under extraordinary circumstances, however, the Pulpit Rabbi can make exceptions to this policy. Regular attendance and participation in CBT's Weiner Religious School program cannot be made up elsewhere (with the exception of current enrollment in the Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy).

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL – Great opportunity, read closely!

Nothing matches the impact made by a Jew's first visit to our homeland in Israel. The Passport to Israel program is a savings incentive plan designed to assist families with their children's high school Israel experience. Families generally enroll their children in this program during the third grade year; however, a child may be enrolled as early as birth. The Florence Harris Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Foundation of Kansas City will match a \$200 contribution by the family with a \$100 contribution per year for six years beginning in 3rd grade. The family must contribute a minimum of \$200 annually from the 3rd grade through 8th grade to qualify for matching funds. As an incentive to enroll your child(ren) in this program, Congregation Beth Torah will match the family's initial payment of \$100 (half of the first year's contribution). The Central Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE) administers this community-wide program. The students who began saving in 3rd grade and are withdrawing their funds to participate in an Israel experience this year are receiving between \$2,800 and \$3,900 toward the cost of the program.

SPECIAL EDUCATION/SPECIAL NEEDS

Thanks to a grant from the Jewish Heritage Foundation, CBT's Weiner Religious School is fortunate to have Sasone Inclusion Specialist Lindsey Lipsky on our staff. Please contact Marcia Rittmaster to take advantage of these services. If your child has been identified as eligible to receive special education services in secular school, please notify us. We can better accommodate your child's needs if we have this information. All information is kept confidential among the Inclusion Specialist, the Rabbi, and the Director of Education. Information will be shared with teachers only as deemed necessary by parents and the Inclusion Specialist

PARKING LOT RULES

We need everyone's help in ensuring the safety of all. Thanks for your cooperation! No parking or standing in the circle drive area. Your car needs to be in a parking space in the lot when students are dismissed at the end of school. Pre-Kindergarten - 2nd grade students wait in their classrooms for pickup. Older children should be met by parents inside the building. No parking in the driveway parallel to 127th Street. Cars parked in this area impede the flow of traffic and are a safety hazard.

PARENT SAFETY AND SECURITY VOLUNTEERS

To help insure the safety and security of all of our congregants and at the recommendation of our Security Advisor, Congregation Beth Torah has a locked door policy. Parents are needed each Sunday morning to make sure everyone who should be allowed admittance has a way into the building. Please make sure to pick up your family's key fob from the Beth Torah office for easier building access.

SNOW EMERGENCY INFORMATION

In the event of inclement weather or other conditions requiring the cancellation of classes, please check the Beth Torah website www.beth-torah.org or call the Congregation Beth Torah main office (913-498-2212). The outgoing message and the website will reflect any closings. *Do not call the Emergency number to check on school closures.* We will notify the following radio and television stations: KUDL FM 98, WHB AM 71, KCMO FM 95, WDAF 4 FOX, and KMBZ 9. Radio and television stations reserve the right to refuse broadcast of this information if lists are too long, so please don't rely on this manner of notification.

VISITORS

Guests are always welcome at CBT's Weiner Religious School! Please allow for ample preparation by notifying Marcia Rittmaster at the earliest possibility. Written permission from the Director of Education will be required for guests to be admitted into the classroom. This will enable the classroom teacher to prepare for an additional student. Please have your child and their guest check in with the school office before going to class. All visitors are expected to follow the CBT Weiner Religious School Guidelines in this handbook.

Wednesday Night TAG Classes

Tzedakah, Avodah, Gemilut chasadim

TAG classes have a long tradition of being creative and interactive, meeting the needs of our tweens and teens. It has always given our students an opportunity to connect with each other in a Jewish setting - and with some amazing teachers!

WHAT'S THE SAME FROM YEARS PAST?

1. TAG will still be divided into trimesters, allowing for several different class and social options throughout the year.
2. TAG hours of operation are the same:
6:30 p.m. Snack Sales – TAG students and others in the building can purchase drinks and snacks. Proceeds go to Beth Torah Temple Youth. Non-TAG participants can purchase pizza. Why not TAG students? Read on!
7:00 p.m. Class begins
8:45 p.m. Class dismissal (ice cream will be available when we have a sponsor – click here to sponsor Wednesday night ice cream: www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4daea72babf94-tagice)
3. Alternative course options include the following. Please note these options are only available in place of 1st and 2nd Trimester credit for 6th – 9th graders and, 10th graders can only opt for alternative credit during 1st Trimester. Please contact Marcia Rittmaster if your student is interested in taking an alternative course option.
 - a. Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing! 7th & 8th Grade girls meet one Sunday afternoon a month all year to receive credit for one trimester. Separate enrollment is required – contact the office.
 - b. Under Construction: Building Towards Mensch-hood – 6th, 7th, 8th Grade boys meet one Sunday afternoon a month all year to receive credit for one trimester. Minimum enrollment is 5 students.
 - c. *Shabbat Torah* Study with a Parent – 6th – 10th graders participate in 7 *Shabbat Torah* study sessions to receive credit for one trimester. A parent must attend with the student; a feedback form must be completed for each session attended. There are 2 opportunities for *Shabbat Torah* Study each week. You may attend either “Discussions on the Writings of the Torah” from 9-10:15 a.m. or “*Shabbat Lunch and Learn*” from 12:15 – 1:00 p.m.
 - d. BTTY Option – 9th & 10th Graders contact Marcia Rittmaster for a list of requirements.
 - e. Jewish Book Club: 6th – 8th Graders meet four times throughout the year to discuss Jewish books of the group's choosing.
 - f. Independent Study Option: 6th – 10th Graders with approval from Director of Education. Contact Marcia Rittmaster for more information.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

1. 6:30 P.M. Snack Sales now include FREE PIZZA for all TAG students! Enjoy 30 minutes of social time!
2. 6th Graders are now part of TAG. 1st & 3rd trimesters will have 6th & 7th graders combined, and during 2nd trimester, they will be able to choose from a rotation of electives.
3. There will be many opportunities – different from those offered before – to engage in learning.
 - a. 1st Trimester
 - a.i. 6th & 7th Graders will participate in “The *Bima* Breakdown.” This will be an opportunity to explore the *b'nai mitzvah* tradition and Saturday morning liturgy in preparation for *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, and become comfortable using microphones and speaking in front of a “congregation.” When you finish this trimester, we guarantee you'll feel prepared for your BIG moment!
 - a.ii. 8th – 10th Graders will dive into the issues surrounding the 2016 Election, and explore what Judaism tells us about politics and our responsibility to society. We'll begin each evening with an interactive presentation on each issue and continue with small group discussions.
 - b. 2nd Trimester
 - b.i. Confirmation Students will meet with Rabbi Cattapan (Confirmation I).
 - b.ii. 6th – 9th Graders Weeks 1 & 2: ISRAEL IS FOR REAL – Students will learn from experts about some of the modern issues facing the State of Israel.
 - b.iii. 6th – 9th Graders Weeks 3-8: Students will have the opportunity to engage in some creative classes tailored to your interests. Students who participated in our online survey in June chose the topics. There will be two rotations of three weeks.
 - b.iv. Week 9: All-School Parent & Student Program with Susie Hurst, Jewish Family & Children Services.
 - c. 3rd Trimester

6 th & 7 th Graders	<i>Shoreshim</i> (Family heritage, Jewish lifecycle)
8 th Graders	Reform Judaism
9 th Graders	Comparative Judaism
10 th Grade	Confirmation Class II