

*Religious School  
Family Packet  
2015-2016  
5776*

בית  
אֵל

TEMPLE  
BETH-EL  
OF GREAT NECK

INSPIRE THROUGH PURPOSE  
BE KNOWN BY LOVE



In 2012 and 2013, [Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman](#) delivered three lectures at Temple Beth-El regarding the past, present and future of Judaism, with an emphasis on what will be needed to ensure a strong future for Judaism in America. Rabbi Hoffman challenged our congregants to make the most of our legacies as individuals and as an institution.

Dr. Hoffman inspired our congregation to embark on a process of self-examination that we call “Project ToBE.” The project began in March 2014. It has involved our congregants in conversation about our hopes, aspirations, and concerns. Three hundred congregants took part in conversations in members' homes. Those conversations are enabling our congregation to become the place where we experience (as Rabbi Hoffman himself puts it in his book *ReThinking Synagogues*) “curiosity about God, connection with the sacred, a sense of life’s purpose, and . . . build a life narrative alongside others who are doing the same thing.” While Temple Beth-El has always taken pride in providing a setting where our congregants can learn to search for answers to life’s most important questions, Project ToBE is ensuring that all our congregants have the opportunity to shape and be part of our sacred Jewish community.

Project ToBE also included a [census](#) of our congregation. Two hundred fifty of our congregants answered a series of questions to help us better understand the religious practices and beliefs of our community. The census, in tandem with our conversations, are helping us to see who we are; what makes us unique; and how we can best meet the needs of our members.

Rabbi Hoffman, a leading authority on synagogue transformation, guided Temple Beth-El through Phase 1 of Project ToBE. In Phase 2, our rabbis, cantor, professional and lay leadership, and our congregants themselves will work to make our synagogue the place to which we turn to help us meet life’s challenges and opportunities.

*The Project ToBE team has recently published our Congregational Shema:*

**INSPIRE THROUGH PURPOSE  
BE KNOWN BY LOVE.**

It is a statement of who we are, based in part on what we have learned in conversations and through the census. The Congregational Shema will be followed by a “V’ahavta Statement,” a list of principles to guide our congregation in the years ahead.

As part of Phase 2, various task forces are now at work in our congregation to help implement the goals we have identified in the Project ToBE process.

מְעוֹרֵר הַשְׂרָאָה, מוֹכֵר בְּאַהֲבָה

Inspire through purpose be known  
by love



## Introduction

### Welcome to the 2015-2016 Religious School year

#### HISTORY OF TEMPLE BETH-EL OF GREAT NECK

The history of an institution is essentially the story of its people. Any record of growth is the record of their service and devotion. If there is a beginning to the story of Temple Beth-El, it can be found nearly 70 years ago, when a small group of Jews decided to organize a congregation and create a synagogue for purposes of worship and the Jewish education of their children. Those dedicated men and women could not have realized the impact they would bring to bear on Great Neck and the American Jewish community.

By the autumn of 1928, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, 85 families attended the initial Beth-El services under the roof of a welcoming Protestant church. It was not long after, that their dream of erecting their own synagogue began to take shape.

Heads bowed in prayer, 135 young families of Great Neck who had united to build what would soon be one of the area's most beautiful synagogues, stood under the rafters of a half completed structure on Old Mill Road. It was the 17<sup>th</sup> of July, 1932, the day the cornerstone of Temple Beth-El of Great Neck was set.

Throughout the years, never more so than today, Temple Beth-El has been dedicated to meeting the spiritual and educational needs of our diverse membership. We are proud of our caring, innovative, democratic synagogue community.



**FACEtime** (Family and Children Engagement time) integrates classroom learning and family learning experiences. This is an alternative model designed to meet families where they are; there is flexibility in where and when learning takes place to address the challenges of families' busy schedules. FACEtime has become an integral part of our congregation.

We are thrilled to announce the expansion of our FACETIME program. Kindergarten through 3rd grade families will be invited to participate in FACETIME sessions that will take place on the first Shabbat of every month. These sessions will include dinner, Shabbat services, family art projects, and moments for adult education and relaxation. We will also be scheduling two 7th grade FACETIME sessions as well.

**HEBREWtime** is a component of FACEtime. Each month students participate in individualized learning with a Hebrew teacher one-on-one either in person or utilizing Skype to practice the Hebrew prayers they are working on in class. This individualized program is tailored to meet student needs. It is unique in nature and designed to give students confidence in their Hebrew reading.

In addition to providing flexibility in the time and place of learning, some of the important qualities of HEBREWtime are that it is individualized (one-to-one), private, motivating and innovative. HEBREWtime reduces student frustration, enhances enrichment, allows students to progress at a faster rate, sets up students for success, fosters students' ability to practice Hebrew on their own, and builds a personal relationship between families and Jewish educators.



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RELIGIOUS SCHOOL SCHEDULE

5776

2015-2016

Kindergarten

Tuesday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Friday FACETIME

1st Grade

Tuesday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Friday FACETIME

2nd Grade

Tuesday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Friday FACETIME

3rd Grade

Tuesday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Friday FACETIME

4th Grade

Tuesday/Thursday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Tuesday/Friday FACETIME

5th Grade

Tuesday/Thursday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Tuesday/Friday FACETIME/Saturday Evening FACETIME

6th Grade

Tuesday/Thursday 4:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Tuesday/Friday FACETIME/Saturday Morning FACETIME

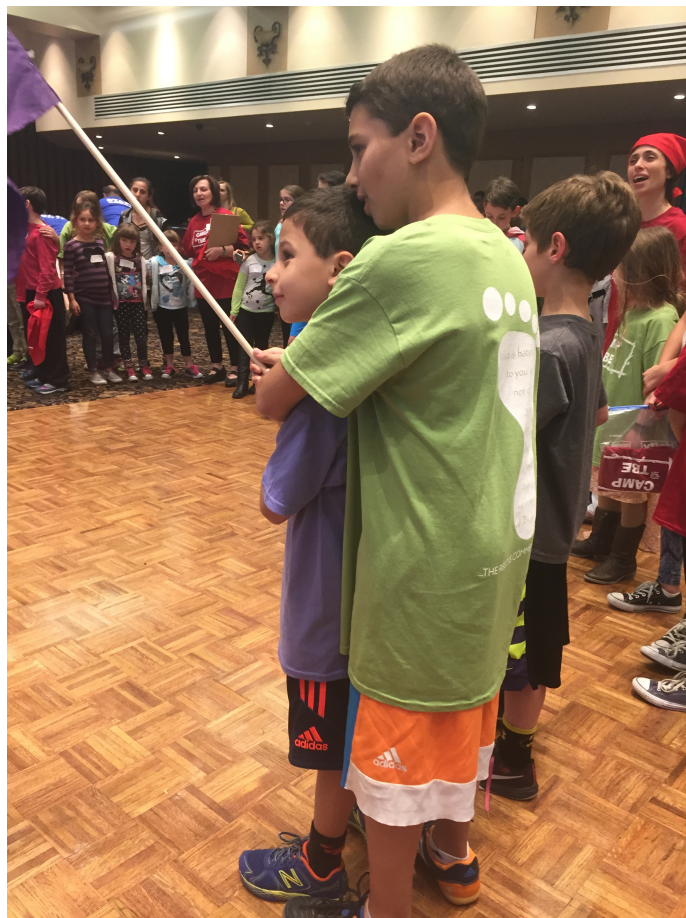
7th Grade

Tuesday Evening 6:45 – 8:30pm

Friday FACETIME

Hebrew High School 8th – 12th Grades

Tuesday Evening 6:45 pm – 8:30 pm



## EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

### **JEWISH IDENTITY**

- \* To enable our students to affirm their Jewish identity and take pride in being Reform Jews
- \* To instill a positive Jewish image\* To relate Judaism to everyday life\* To provide a climate where the importance of Jewish community & the value of individuality are both encouraged

**GOD**\* To enable our students to develop a spiritual awareness of the relationship of God with the Jewish people

- \* To enable students to affirm and act upon a personal perspective of God and spirituality

**TORAH & JEWISH TEXTS**\* To foster understanding of the Torah

- \* To enable students to identify the central themes and ethical messages within Torah and integrate them into their lives
- \* To expose students to the foundational literature of Judaism including the Prophets, Writings, *Talmud* and *Midrash*\* To learn & discuss the *parashat hashavuah* (weekly Torah portion)
- \* To encourage students to bear witness to the *brit* (the covenant between God and the Jewish people) by embracing Torah through the study and observance of *mitzvot* (commandments) as studied in the Torah and the classic Jewish literature it has

### **ETHICS & VALUES**

- \* To encourage our students to further the causes of justice, freedom, and peace by pursuing *tzedek* (righteousness), *mishpat* (justice), and *chesed* (loving deeds)
- \* To build an understanding of the important values and *mitzvot* that have guided our people throughout history, and to encourage students to make choices and decisions based on these values and ethics
- \* To encourage the doing *mitzvot* with emphasis on *Tikkun Olam*\* To encourage social concern through Jewish values
- \* To help teach strategies for conflict resolution

### **HOLIDAYS**

- \* To encourage an understanding and appreciation of the Jewish calendar by studying and observing Shabbat, Holy Days and Festivals
- \* To familiarize students with the rituals, customs, origins and practices associated with the holidays and Shabbat
- \* To encourage participation in Shabbat services, holiday celebrations and High Holiday services\* To encourage the observation of the Jewish ceremonies marking the significant occasions in their lives
- \* To teach the meanings of ritual symbols and ritual objects





## Rules and Regulations

### GENERAL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Participation as a member of the Temple Beth-El Religious School community is a vital component of our school program. Being a Jew demands first and foremost, a commitment to the community. The success of our school relies heavily upon the commitment made by the parents and children to the school community. **Therefore adequate attendance is essential.** The social aspects of learning in the classroom are as important as the material that is being learned. We also require students to attend Shabbat & holiday services with their family.

The Temple Board of Education has established the following provisions:

1. Attendance for a minimum of **80% of all class sessions is required** in order to progress into the next grade. For the 2 day program this means no more than 12 absences per year. For grades K-3 and 7-10, this means no more than 6 absences per year.
2. Parents will receive a phone call either from the teacher or the Director when a student is absent for more than 2 consecutive class sessions.
3. In case of prolonged absence due to illness or extenuating circumstances, which may threaten regular attendance and achievement standards, please notify the school office as soon as possible.
4. Students with frequent absences will have to complete an additional assignment developed by the Director in order to progress into the next grade.

### STUDENT BRIT (CONTRACT)

1. It is the student's and parent's responsibility to respect all teachers, fellow students, and adults with whom they come in contact. Students are expected to follow the teacher's directions and to maintain an acceptable voice level in hallways and classes. No profanity from students, families or staff will be tolerated.
2. It is the teacher's responsibility to respect the student and student's family.
3. The student is expected to show proper respect for his/her books, school materials, and all synagogue property.
4. The student is expected to come prepared for class each day with those supplies requested by her/his teacher
5. The student is encouraged to discuss any situation or problem with the teacher or the Director before or after school.

Aggressive behavior or bullying is not acceptable in our school. Any verbal abuse, attempt to intimidate or threaten violence against a fellow student or staff member will result in immediate suspension and possible expulsion from the school.



### Early Dismissal

**Please do not attempt to pick up your child early from *T'fillah* (prayer),** as doing so would be disruptive to the learning environment. Families who plan to participate in our *T'fillah* experience may do so but students must still wait to be dismissed by class. If for some reason a student needs to be picked up early, please call or send a note with your child to the school office indicating the time of an early dismissal.

The note must be signed by a parent or guardian. When you come to pick up your child, the parent or guardian must come to the Religious School office to sign out your child. Our designated office attendant will then bring your child to the Religious School office for early dismissal. Teachers are instructed to not release a child for early dismissal.

### Family Education

We offer families the on-going opportunity to learn together through a wide variety of programming.

- **4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade FACetime program-** This is an innovative model of family education at Temple Beth-El. Some families with students in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade will come together for 8-10 Shabbat experiences. The spirituality of Shabbat, the lessons of Torah, and the sanctity of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) are woven together in our FACetime program.
- **6<sup>th</sup> grade Family Retreat** at the Glen Cove Mansion in Glen Cove, New York. The annual retreat will focus on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process at Temple Beth-El and will include a program at the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center.
- ***Mi' Lev Le'Yad*** A group of volunteers from the various committees and arms of the temple, led by our Religious School Co-chair Nancy Lowenkron and Shelia Beeferman, are working on our temple's commitment to *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. We offer the congregation various opportunities during the year to participate in mitzvah projects which will support local not for profit organizations on Long Island. Service to others has always been a strong tradition at Temple Beth-El. It is part of our outstanding heritage and will continue to be part of our vibrant future. Please see attached calendar for upcoming *Mi' Lev Le'Yad* events.



### Faculty

Our professional, enthusiastic faculty combines Judaic and general teaching backgrounds and serve as Jewish role models for our children. They regularly attend professional development, educational workshops, staff meetings and curriculum implementation sessions. In order to assure the highest level of teaching possible, supervision and feedback are an important part of our commitment to the professional growth of our staff.

### Parent Network

As our families serve as integral partners in our path of Jewish learning, we welcome your input and involvement as well as your help and support through our Parent Network. The purpose of the Parent Network is to provide avenues for participation in our Religious School community. Through the Parent Network, there are opportunities to help out at special events, in classroom activities and by informing parents of upcoming events. We want you to be involved in the Parent Network using your own skills, talents, and interests, while forming connections with other parents in the Religious School community.

### Snow/Emergency Closures

School closings will be announced on News 12 and can be found on the News 12 website. In addition parents will receive a text message in case of a closure and updates can always be found on our facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/TBEGreatNeckReligiousSchool>.

[http://closings.news12.com/school\\_closings.jsp?region=LI](http://closings.news12.com/school_closings.jsp?region=LI)

Our policy follows the Great Neck Public School; if they are closed, we are closed. If all Great Neck area schools call for an early dismissal our Religious School and Hebrew High school will be closed.

### Student Descriptive Reviews

Student Descriptive Reviews will be mailed home at the end of April. Each teacher has specific guidelines in evaluating her/his students.

### Tzedakah/Gemilut Hasadim

Caring for others is an important part of Jewish life. It is a *mitzvah* of the highest order. One way we show we care about others is by giving *tzedakah*. Students will be asked to contribute *tzedakah* money on a regular basis at the beginning of each class. We encourage the children to give of their own earnings, in order that their *tzedakah* be truly their contribution. Acts of loving kindness (*Gemilut Hasadim*) are highly encouraged both in the school and community. There will be ongoing opportunities for students to demonstrate this *mitzvah* in related Jewish values projects throughout the year.



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### Grades Kindergarten-12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Curriculum development is an on-going, ever evolving process. We have implemented a spiral curriculum so that many of the same topics, including Jewish values, siddur-based Hebrew, holidays/ Shabbat, Bible and Israel, are taught throughout the school on age-appropriate levels. Learning activities are geared towards the cognitive and developmental level of the students at any given age. Kindergarten through sixth grades will have a rotation of music, art, prayer service and library visits to enhance their learning experiences.

The following is a curricular outline for each grade level, to be used by families, teachers and students as a guide for learning goals. While our emphasis is primarily on formal and informal classroom learning, we promote home and synagogue opportunities to provide positive Jewish experiences and wonderful Jewish memories. Families are encouraged to participate in sharing the educational experiences of their children!

**Hebrew Immersion:** We have been working hard to revision and restructure our Hebrew curriculum. Using the model of Hebrew Through Movement we will be incorporating a Hebrew immersion program into each classroom. Our Hebrew Immersion Program will consist of various strands that help connect all the different forms of Hebrew being used throughout the school (classroom, Tfillah (prayer), Krav Maga, art). We are hoping to create a love and passion for Hebrew language.

*Our Vision: By shifting the Hebrew language education to begin in our younger grades, we are laying the groundwork for our students to develop a love and feel passionate about Hebrew Language. We are helping to build a language foundation by exposing students to vocabulary and action words which arms them with the proper tools to one day choose to continue to learn more whether on a High School, College level or beyond or increase their desire and comfort with the Hebrew language.*

### **Gan (Kindergarten)**

The goal of the kindergarten program is to make each child feel excited about and comfortable with her/his Judaism. Our students build positive Jewish identities as they participate in hands-on creative activities associated with conversational Hebrew, holidays, prayer, the synagogue and the association between God and the wonders of the world. Holidays and traditions are enhanced by stories, songs, crafts and drama.

### **Alef (First Grade)**

The goal of the first grade is to gain the basic vocabulary and practices of each holiday, with a focus on symbols, observances, and customs of the home. Children continue working on conversational Hebrew, working with the Hebrew letters as graphic elements, connecting them to sounds. They are introduced to early Bible stories, and to the concept of *mitzvot* as they study basic Jewish ethical precepts.

### **Bet (Second Grade)**

The Jewish sages teach us that “the world stand on three things: Torah, Avodah, and G’milut Chasadim” (Avot 1:2). These pursuits – study, worship, and deeds of loving kindness – provide the framework within which Jews build their relationships with God, with one another, and with the world. Accordingly, Torah, Avodah, and G’milut Chasadim serve as the core of the CHAI: Learning for Jewish Life curriculum, providing students with the foundation for a lifetime of Jewish learning. During the course of the school year, students will explore their relationship with the Jewish community and with God through the important lenses of Torah, Avodah, and G’milut Chasadim. The Torah strand draws upon the lessons in the Book of Sh’mot (Exodus) that describe the transformation of the Israelites from slaves into a people eternally connected to each other and to God. The Avodah strand addresses fundamental questions about our relationship with God and finding connections to God in Jewish ways. In the G’milut Chasadim strand, the students will learn about the Jewish concept of g’milut chasadim and how performing personal acts of loving-kindness connect us to our community.

**Gimmel (Third Grade)**

Shalom Learning products use a guided, experiential learning model. The educational content is adaptable to modern life, and resilient in the face of change. Students are afforded the opportunity to achieve their own learning paths, increasing engagement and promoting a lifelong desire to learn.

- **Teshuvah.** Taking responsibility for your actions.
- **B'Tzelem Elohim.** Honoring the image of God in ourselves and others.
- **Gevurah.** Using one's inner strength to do what's right.
- **Achrayut.** Doing what you can to make the world a better place.
- **HaKarat HaTov.** Seeking joy and being grateful.
- **Koach HaDibbur.** Understanding the power of words.
- **Shalom.** Helping to create a calmer, more peaceful world.

**Daled (Fourth Grade)**

Students continue their study of Bible stories with lessons include readings of the *parashat hashavuah* (Torah portion). Biblical personalities presented will be connected to the children's own lives. They will also be introduced to a comprehensive exploration of Jewish concepts of God and of the characteristics of a Jewish relationship with God. As students begin to attend twice per week, students who have not studied Hebrew or need the extra practice will use the Hebrew primer, *Shalom Uvrachah*. Online Hebrew supplements will be made available for families participating in our 4th grade pilot program. When this book is completed, these students will join the others in the grade learning the prayers found in the Shabbat services.

**Hay (Fifth Grade)**

Fifth graders will continue the cycle of Torah study and begin to learn about our prophets. Fifth graders will review ancient and medieval Jewish history, focusing on the experiences of both Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jewry. The fifth grade program includes a survey of Jewish sacred texts, such as the *TaNakh*, which is an acronym that stands for Torah, Nevi'im (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings). Students learn to identify each work's main features and the relationship among these texts. Students will increase their Hebrew vocabulary and reading proficiency through the use of siddur based Hebrew texts. Prayers from the Friday night service will be mastered in this grade.

**Vav (Sixth Grade)**

Throughout the year the sixth grade students will be exploring the theme of being a *gibor* (hero). Their studies will culminate with an examination of the Holocaust from life in pre-World War II Germany, through the Nazi rise to power, to Jewish survival and resistance in the ghettos and concentration camps. The students will then study about the creation of State of Israel, focusing on Israeli history, culture, geography, current politics of peace and learn about historical *giborim* (heroes) found throughout Israeli history. The Hebrew/T'fillah goal of sixth grade is to hone Hebrew reading skills and comprehension of the Shabbat morning prayers, in preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

**Zayin (Seventh Grade)**

Seventh grade is focused on topical, relevant Jewish studies to teens. They will study the meaning of being a reform Jew and focus on the Jewish community and their place in it. These studies will include: Jewish identity, becoming an adult, denominations in the American Jewish community, social action, and *tikkun olam*. They will study Jewish ethics, values, *Mitzvot*, current events, and personal decision making.

## Youth Activities

### JTC 5774 Senior Youth Group 8 - 12 Grades

We're back for another fantastic year. If you have never experienced a JTC event or meeting, what have you been waiting for?! We will be using the same national NFTY -NAR (North American Federation of Temple Youth - New York Area Region) program that runs very much like a High School Student Government by your very own elected representatives.

We will be working as a group to plan field trips for local activities and NFTY ran events in the tri-state area. This year we will launch and develop new and exciting social action programs, a shul in (sleepover) and other events with Temples in our area while bringing back old favorites like HUC Soup Kitchen, dinner & a movie and our holiday celebrations! Join with your friends, and make new ones!

### j-BEAT (Junior Beth-El Almost Teens)

j-BEAT (Junior Beth-El Almost Teens) is a safe and welcoming environment where any child in 6th and 7th grade can participate in social and stimulating programs. Let j-BEAT be a place where your tween can escape from the craziness of B'nai Mitzvah prep & Middle School while engaging in fun programs with their Jewish classmates and fellow congregants!

### CLUB 54

Club 54 is our temple youth group for grades 4th & 5th. Youth group is more than just eating pizza and hanging out. Club 54 is where friendships are made for the rest of one's life. Join with your old friends and make new ones as we look forward to year filled with exciting and innovative programming.

