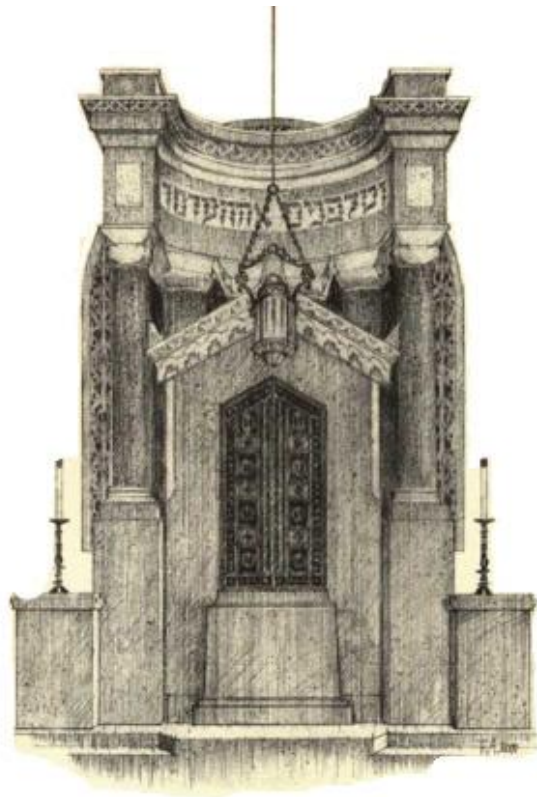


# Congregation Temple Sinai Religious School Handbook



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**CONGREGATION TEMPLE SINAI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
2011-2012**

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**As a New Jewish Year Arrives!**  
**A Message from Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn**

Dear Parents,

As do they all, the summer has zoomed by and we anticipate that magic Sunday morning when, once again, the voices of youth fill our hallways and classrooms for another year of Torah study and Jewish discovery.

The mitzvah of study is ranked among the highest of our Judaism – In the Shema, parents are instructed:

*And you shall teach (the Torah) to your children,  
and you shall speak of it, when you sit in your house,  
when you walk on the road, when you lie down  
and when you rise up.*

Truth is, in every circumstance of life – every time of day and in every posture or position – there is a Jewish ethical lesson to be learned about living “the good life”. Rabbi Hillel said it best: “*An ignorant person cannot be a righteous person.*” Not, by the way, because the unlearned have no desire to **do** good, but rather because righteous actions and selflessness require knowledge of the proper way to behave.

In a world often awash in worship of celebrity, materialism and ambivalence for the welfare of the “other”, it is all the more crucial that we at Temple Sinai Religious School stand with you as your privileged partners in relaying both the joys and the rich insights of our Jewish tradition. Call on us night or day whenever we can be of help.

Our heartfelt best wishes and prayers for a Shanah Tovah, a good and blessed New Year 5772 for you and yours, and for our Jewish people worldwide.

Faithfully yours,



**Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn**

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**A Welcome Back From Religious School Director Janine Jankovitz**

Dear Temple Sinai Family,

Fall is my favorite season. Fall is the beginning of a new school year and the beginning of a new Jewish year. For me, the High Holidays and back-to-school symbolize the same measurement of time; a new year filled with promise and expectation.

It is with this feeling that I welcome you and your family back to a new year of Religious School at Congregation Temple Sinai. This year Sinai is bursting with school programs, family activities, creative worship opportunities, and much more. We have new teachers who will bring education experience and creativity to our already talented staff. We will be continuing the B'yachad program with the Greater New Orleans Jewish community for our seventh, eighth, and ninth graders. We are adding a new ninth grade year dedicated to Jewish culture. Candles, Kids, and Kiddush will be in full swing beginning with Rosh Hashanah and continuing throughout the year with unique Shabbat programs such as challah baking and Shabbat at the movies.

And we didn't forget about the adults. Starting October 16<sup>th</sup> I will be teaching an Adult Beginning Hebrew class. The Adult Beginning Hebrew class will meet once a week to study the Hebrew Alef Bet. I will also be offering a second level class that will cover the Hebrew prayers and the meaning of key words in the Reform liturgy. Please contact me at the office or at [jjankovitz@templesinaino.org](mailto:jjankovitz@templesinaino.org) if you are interested in either class.

Remember to keep a look out for flyers sent in the mail, to refer to the bulletin calendar each month, and check us out on Facebook to make sure you don't miss a thing.

From all the staff at Congregation Temple Sinai, have a sweet and blessed New Year and may you learn something new every single day!

B'Shalom,

**Janine Julia Jankovitz**

**CONGREGATION TEMPLE SINAI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
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**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Religious school will be held at Temple Sinai for students Pre-K through 10th grade on Sunday from 9:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

**AUGUST**

8/28/11 First Day of Religious School

**SEPTEMBER**

9/4/11 No Religious School  
9/11/11 Religious School  
9/18/11 Religious School  
9/25/11 Religious School

**OCTOBER**

10/2/11 Religious School  
10/9/11 No Religious School  
10/16/11 Religious School  
10/23/11 Religious School  
10/30/11 Religious School

**NOVEMBER**

11/6/11 Religious School  
11/13/11 Religious School  
11/20/11 Religious School  
11/27/11 No Religious School

**DECEMBER**

12/4/11 Religious School  
12/11/11 Religious School  
12/18/11 No Religious School  
12/25/11 No Religious School

**JANUARY**

1/1/12 No Religious School  
1/8/12 Religious School  
1/15/12 No Religious School  
1/22/12 Religious School  
1/29/12 Religious School

**FEBRUARY**

2/5/12 Religious School  
2/12/12 Religious School  
2/19/12 No Religious School  
2/26/12 No Religious School

**MARCH**

3/4/12 Religious School  
3/11/12 Religious School  
3/18/12 Religious School  
3/25/12 Religious School

**APRIL**

4/1/12 Religious School  
4/8/12 No Religious School  
4/15/12 No Religious School  
4/22/12 Religious School  
4/29/12 Religious School

**MAY**

5/6/12 Religious School  
5/13/12 Last Day of Religious School

**CONGREGATION TEMPLE SINAI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
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**MIDWEEK HEBREW CALENDAR**

Midweek Hebrew will be held at Temple Sinai for students in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade on Wednesday from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

**SEPTEMBER**

9/7/11	First Day of Hebrew
9/14/11	Hebrew
9/21/11	Hebrew
9/28/11	No Hebrew

**OCTOBER**

10/5/11	Hebrew
10/12/11	Hebrew
10/19/11	Hebrew
10/26/11	Hebrew

**NOVEMBER**

11/2/11	Hebrew
11/9/11	Hebrew
11/16/11	Hebrew
11/23/11	No Hebrew
11/30/11	Hebrew

**DECEMBER**

12/7/11	Hebrew
12/14/11	Hebrew
12/21/11	No Hebrew
12/28/11	No Hebrew

**JANUARY**

1/4/12	Hebrew
1/11/12	Hebrew
1/18/12	Hebrew
1/25/12	Hebrew

**FEBRUARY**

2/1/12	Hebrew
2/8/11	Hebrew
2/15/12	No Hebrew
2/22/12	No Hebrew
2/29/12	Hebrew

**MARCH**

3/7/12	Hebrew
3/14/12	Hebrew
3/21/12	Hebrew
3/28/12	Hebrew

**APRIL**

4/4/12	Hebrew
4/11/12	No Hebrew
4/18/12	Hebrew
4/25/12	Hebrew

**MAY**

5/2/12	Hebrew
5/9/12	Last Day of Hebrew



**CONGREGATION TEMPLE SINAI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
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**CANDLES KIDS AND KIDDUSH**

Candles, Kids, and Kiddush is a unique program dedicated to Temple Sinai's families of young children from infancy to third grade. These events are free and designed to help form a young child's Jewish identity with programs involving the entire family.

<b>Thursday, September 29</b>	Rosh Hashanah Zoo Mobile	2:00 p.m.
<b>Saturday, October 8</b>	Yom Kippur Children's Service	2:00 p.m.
<b>Friday, October 14</b>	Consecration and Family Dinner	6:15 p.m.
<b>Sunday, October 16</b>	Simchat Torah Celebration and Dancing with the Torah	10:00 a.m.
<b>Friday, November 11</b>	Shabbat at the Movies	5:30 p.m.
<b>Friday, December 9</b>	Chanukah	5:30 p.m.
<b>Friday, January 6</b>	Challah Baking	5:30 p.m.
<b>Saturday, February 11</b>	Ten Commandments led by 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	10:15 a.m.
<b>Friday, March 2</b>	Purim Hamantashen Making	5:30 p.m.
<b>Friday, April 20</b>	Shabbat Celebration	5:30 p.m.
<b>Friday, May 11</b>	Honoring Parents and Special Friends	5:30 p.m.

**B'YACHAD**

This year Temple Sinai will collaborate with Gates of Prayer, Touro Synagogue and Shir Chadash for four special programs with our seventh, eighth and ninth graders. More information will follow.

**NFTY NOLA YOUTH GROUP**

Temple Sinai, Gates of Prayer, and Touro have joined youth groups to form JEWCY/NFTY NOLA. Our 9th-12th grades have the opportunity to participate in the fulfilling youth group and NFTY Southern Region experiences. NFTY Southern is the Regional Federation of Temple Youth and the southern region encompassing the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Western Tennessee. Youth Group activities include creative worship experiences, social action participation, and peer interaction for our Jewish Youth. Members may attend conclaves, kallahs, Torah Corps, and Mitzvah Corps on weekends throughout the year. All eligible Religious School students are encouraged to join the Youth Group where they will participate in memorable experiences and develop lifelong friendships.

**CONGREGATION TEMPLE SINAI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
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**OUR CURRICULUM**

**THE GOLDRING/WOLDENBERG INSTITUTE OF SOUTHERN JEWISH LIFE**

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life curriculum begins in Early Childhood and continues through to the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grade. The ISJL curriculum is designed with every child in mind, teaching with an emphasis on different learning styles: visual learners, auditory learners, a kinesthetic learner, and all of the above. The curriculum uses the following content areas:

**Community**

By being part of the religious school experience, students will feel a particular pride for their heritage as southern Jews, identify with the larger American and global Jewish communities.

**Culture and Symbols**

The ISJL curriculum provides students with the opportunity to experience the colorful culture of Judaism and the symbols that are representative of the culture. The students will develop a deeper understanding of Jewish culture as their religious school education builds.

**God**

Religious school is a place where students can openly discuss their thoughts and feelings about God. Students will learn that throughout history, Jews have had an important relationship with God.

**Hebrew and Prayer**

During religious school, students will have the ability to participate in synagogue prayer services and find personal meaning in them, recognizing Jewish worship as an essential facet of Jewish life and as an opportunity for self-discovery, self-assessment, and self-development.

**Israel**

Throughout the curriculum, students learn to identify with Israel as the Jewish homeland, understanding its history and recognizing our obligation to visit and support the State of Israel, and consider participating in an educational program there.

**Jewish History**

Students will develop a meaningful identification with Jews past and present through the study of Jewish history, culture, Hebrew language, liturgy, music, literature, arts, and texts.

**Jewish Holidays**

Whether it is with the entire religious school at an All-School Program or in each grade, students will familiarize themselves with the many rituals and traditions that are celebrated during Jewish holidays.

**Jewish Lifecycle Events**

The spiraled curriculum allows students to mark the passages of time and seasons through Jewish lifecycle ceremonies using the symbols, rituals, prayers and traditions of their Jewish heritage.

# CONGREGATION TEMPLE SINAI RELIGIOUS SCHOOL 2011-2012

## **Mitzvot and Jewish Values**

The ISJL curriculum provides students with a chance to view mitzvot—both ritual and ethical—as opportunities to build a relationship with God.

## **Tanak (Torah, Prophets, and Writings)**

Through the religious school experience, students will recognize that Jewish education is a lifelong endeavor, one that involves a critical and inquiring approach whereby the process of questioning is as valued and important as the quest for answers.

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

### **COMBINED PRE-K/K**

Pre-K/K is a two year program that uses the Kindergarten curriculum.

The Kindergarten curriculum focuses primarily on Jewish holidays and stories from the Torah. Using those two content areas as a backdrop, other areas like mitzvot and Jewish values are introduced, as they pertain to holidays and the Torah. For the first time, students are exposed not only to what Jews do, but also the principles that guide them. Students will be expected to demonstrate understanding of the selected holidays and stories.

#### **Content Areas:**

Community, Jewish Holidays, *Mitzvot* and Jewish Values, *Tanach: Torah*

#### **Big Ideas:**

- Celebrating Jewish holidays is an essential aspect of Jewish identity.
- The *Torah* contains stories that teach us how to live our lives.
- Hebrew is the language of the Jewish people.

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**FIRST GRADE**

As the students continue to grow, they continue their understanding of Judaism. In this year, the students will be learning about mitzvot and how it can impact their everyday lives. They will begin their exploration of God through a variety of activities and experiences. Their continued study of Jewish holidays will be oriented around certain mitzvot associated with each one.

**Content Areas:**

God, Hebrew & Prayers, Jewish Holidays, *Mitzvot* & Jewish Values

**Big Ideas:**

- Mitzvot are commandments that can be applied to our everyday lives.
- God is a central part of Judaism and we all explore God in our own way.
- Judaism is filled with many celebrations.
- Hebrew is made up of letters that make different sounds.

**SECOND GRADE**

As students mature, they will delve deeper into their exploration of Jewish life, gaining greater skills and knowledge of the rubrics of Jewish life. This year the students will explore the Jewish community and their role in it. They will be exposed to a variety of activities that demonstrate the community in the synagogue through holiday celebrations, life cycle events and symbols that identify Jewish people and places. The students will begin their exploration of Israel as the Jewish homeland.

**Content Areas:**

Community, Culture and Symbols, Hebrew and Prayer, Israel, Jewish Holidays, Jewish Lifecycle Events

**Big Ideas:**

- The role of the Jewish community can be seen in the synagogue as part of Jewish holidays, life cycle events, and through symbols.
- The Jewish homeland is Israel, which is part of the larger Jewish community.
- Hebrew will be able to be deciphered by using Hebrew decoding skills.

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**THIRD GRADE**

The reading skills of third graders have progressed to the point where they are able to gain insights into the values and messages of the *Torah*. Students' spirituality will deepen as they develop Jewish God-concepts and contemplate their relationship with God. Students continue to increase their appreciation and understanding of Jewish holidays.

**Content Areas:**

God, Hebrew and Prayer, Jewish Holidays, *Mitzvot* and Jewish Values, *Tanach*: Torah

**Big Ideas:**

- There are lessons and values that we learn when we read the *Torah*.
- Jewish holidays are joyously celebrated.
- Jewish values and Jewish concepts of God can be explored through a personal journey of spirituality.
- Hebrew words can be decoded by using vowels and final letters.

**FOURTH GRADE**

In the fourth grade, students will continue their exploration of Jewish spirituality, gaining insights into the meanings of the stories in Prophets and Writings and developing an understanding of what it means to be a partner with God. Jewish holidays will be explored with increasing sophistications as students learn the history of the different Jewish holidays and the values they express.

**Content Areas:**

God, Hebrew and Prayer, Jewish Holidays, *Tanach*: Prophets and Writings

**Big Ideas:**

- The stories of the Prophets and the Writings from the *Tanach* have messages that are valued by the Jewish people.
- Through the Brit (sacred covenant, partnership) between the Jewish people and God, Jews learn to actualize teachings that partnership in our dealings with our communities and with the world.
- The origin and history of Jewish holidays explain the values associated with them.
- Prayers in Hebrew can be decoded and studied to find the meaning in English.

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**FIFTH GRADE**

In the fifth grade, we see a clear maturation of the students. They are ready and able to explore concepts of an intellectual and emotional nature. The curriculum meets their abilities and developmental stage with discussions and activities related to living as Jews with milestone events and celebrations. They also continue to build a relationship with Israel and to recognize that there are Jewish values and experiences that link all Jews.

**Content Areas:**

Hebrew and Prayer, Israel, Jewish Lifecycles, *Mitzvot* and Jewish Values

**Big Ideas:**

- The Shabbat morning service contains the reading of the *Torah*.
- Modern Hebrew is still used as a living language.
- Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people and has rich and unique history.
- The Jewish life cycle is filled with the special moments that happen in a Jew's life from birth to death.
- There are many Jewish heroes that we can turn to as role models.
- Judaism has many values (*midot*) that teach us how to live a life we can be proud of.

**SIXTH GRADE**

As students continue to develop intellectually and spiritually and prepare for their bar and bat mitzvah celebration, they will delve deeply into Jewish sources and critically examine three core areas of Judaism: *Torah*, God and *mitzvot*. Students will study the weekly *Torah* portion, using a sophisticated and multi-faceted approach, exploring traditional and modern commentaries on each weekly *Torah* portion and probing the text for its multiple layers of meaning. Students will also explore the concept of *mitzvah*-divine commandment or obligation-and the relevance of particular *mitzvot* in their everyday lives.

**Content Areas:**

God, *Mitzvot* and Jewish values, *Tanach (Torah)*

**Big Ideas:**

- The *Torah* is a sacred text that can speak to us in modern times.
- We study rabbinic commentary (what the ancient rabbis wrote) to learn about our Jewish history and beliefs.
- We interpret Jewish texts to look for meaning in our modern lives.
- Exploration of God is a central part of Judaism.
- *Mitzvot* are commandments.
- We study Hebrew as a way to understand more about the prayers we say.

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**SEVENTH GRADE**

With the children's increasing maturity comes an ability to understand abstract concepts and to learn through a process of inquiry and discovery. The seventh grade curriculum responds to this intellectual development, delving deeper into Jewish topics in a critical fashion while still respecting the active learning styles of many seventh graders. Role-play, debates, drama, art and other interactive and fun activities make up the core learning experienced. In their study of Jewish holidays, students grapple with the theology inherent in them, the different meanings ascribed to the holidays throughout the ages, and the variety of ways Jewish holidays are celebrated in the world today. Students examine and probe the texts of the Prophets and the Writings for their multiple layers of meaning. They continue to develop their Hebrew reading skills and vocabulary, and learn to read and recite the *Torah* service and concluding prayers.

**Content Areas:**

Hebrew and Prayer, Jewish Holidays, *Tanach*: Prophets and Writings.

**Big Ideas**

- The Prophets and Writings are important Jewish texts that supplement the *Torah*.
- During Jewish holidays, we read particular Jewish *Torah* portions.
- Jewish people can add to the traditional customs of Jewish holidays to make them unique to their own families and communities.

**EIGHTH GRADE**

The eighth grade Religious School year is taught by Cantor Colman. The year is dedicated to the study of how Judaism is portrayed in the media. The class will cover edited portions of television programs that range from *Have Gun Will Travel*, *The Goldbergs*, *Mash*, *Friends*, *Family Guy*, *The Twilight Zone*, *X-Files*, *the Outer Limits* and much more.

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**NINTH GRADE**

In the ninth and tenth grades, students look at the modern state of Judaism. They explore cultural elements such as Jewish film, music, art, humor, and food, as well as look at current events in the Jewish world. They also have the opportunity to expose themselves to the other major faiths in the world, and analyze the similarities and differences between those faiths and Judaism.

**Content Areas:**

Community, Culture and Symbols, Israel

**Big Ideas**

- Jewish culture, including film, art, music, humor and cooking, is an essential aspect of Jewish identity.
- Being aware of current events in the Jewish world is the responsibility of every Jew.
- Understanding other faiths is essential to understanding one's own Judaism.

**CONFIRMATION**

The Confirmation year represents a proud and unforgettable attainment for our Religious School students. Each year the curriculum is reviewed and redesigned by Rabbi Cohn to examine and probe issues of Jewish identity and human predicament.