

# Parent/Student Handbook

The Fannie and Joe Margolin Religious School  
Of  
Temple Kol Emeth

2004 – 2005  
5765

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## Our Philosophy and Mission

Temple Kol Emeth's Fannie and Joe Margolin Religious School is an integral part of our synagogue community. We charge ourselves with the goal of awakening our children's hearts to our Jewish heritage and religion. Our mission is:

- To encourage Judaic learning, which meets each individual's educational and spiritual needs in an enriched educational and social atmosphere.
- To provide a dynamic, creative and interactive Judaic and Hebrew learning environment which encompasses a variety of texts and materials. In short, we want the students to know who they are as Jews, to know their rituals and traditions, their beliefs and prayers and their history. Above all, we want them to like themselves as Jews and lay the foundation for a lifetime of learning.
- To nurture a sense of Jewish identity by developing a strong structure, a belief in God, Jewish ethics and values, prayer, Torah, Israel, Shabbat and holiday customs. Further, we strive to instill an appreciation of Hebrew prayer and vocabulary.
- To capture our children's hearts so they are filled with love and pride for our faith, which sets forth the highest moral principles and standards, allowing us to be an *ohr lagoyim*, a light unto all the nations.

## Our Goals and Objectives

TKE takes great pride in the religious school accreditation received in 1999 from the National Association of Temple Educators, acknowledging excellence in Jewish education. The Religious and Hebrew School curriculum is designed with the following goals in mind:

- Students gain an understanding of the customs and traditions associated with all Jewish holidays, the Jewish calendar and special days of commemoration and remembrance.
- Students gain respect and appreciation for *Eretz Yisrael* - the Land of Israel - and its importance to the Jewish people.
- Students learn the significance of *Klal Yisrael* - The Jewish Community - and Jewish institutions and agencies which contribute to our community on a local, national and global level. TKE seeks to promote a strong sense of Jewish unity and community within each classroom.
- Students develop a strong knowledge base of *Tanach* - (Torah, Prophets and Writings).
- Students understand important events in our history, the role played by our Patriarchs and Matriarchs, and heroes and heroines throughout the ages.
- Students develop an understanding and appreciation for the Hebrew language, learn decoding skills, strengthen their ability to read prayers and have exposure to modern Hebrew vocabulary.

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- Students develop a fluency in reading *Siddur* (prayerbook) and understand the structure of a Friday evening and Shabbat morning service in order to feel comfortable participating in services both at Kol Emeth and other synagogues and temples.
  - We wish to educate, motivate and enthuse our children in all the above. In addition, we wish to enrich our parent population through workshops, joint classes with their children and the distribution of available materials. In doing this, parents will develop tools for themselves and to help their children meet their spiritual needs. **We believe it is absolutely crucial that learning continue and be reinforced at home.** There is a scope of contagion that occurs when children see the values they learn at school practiced at home.

## Admission Requirements

Children whose parents are members in good standing of Temple Kol Emeth and who are at least 5 years old by September 1 of the year of admission are eligible for Religious School enrollment. Children are placed into the same grade as their public/private school grade if there is a difference in their age category.

Students must be enrolled in the Religious School in order to participate in the Hebrew School program. If a student enters the Hebrew program after third grade, the Religious School Director will evaluate the student for placement at the appropriate grade level. Private Hebrew tutoring, at the family's expense, may be necessary in order for the student to enter at the proper grade level or to master the skills necessary for successful completion of the bar or bat mitzvah and confirmation requirements.

## General Information

### School Hours

Sunday morning Religious School sessions are held for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The early session is held from 8:30-10:30 a.m.; the late session is held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For students in grades three through six, one hour is devoted to Judaic Studies and one hour is devoted to Hebrew Studies.

Mid-week Hebrew school sessions are held on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons for students in grades three through seven. The early session, available for grades three through five only, is held from 3:20-5 p.m. The late session, offered for grades three through seventh, is held from 5:20 to 7 p.m.

Seventh grade classes meet on Sunday afternoons from 4 to 6 p.m. in addition to the mid-week Hebrew school session.

Eighth, ninth and Confirmation (10<sup>th</sup>) students meet only on Sundays from 4 to 6 p.m.

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## Religious School Office Hours

The school office is open during the school year on Sundays from 8 to 1:30 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.

During the week, the office is open Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The school office is closed on Mondays and Shabbat.

## Inclement Weather/School Closings

Religious and Hebrew Schools do not always follow the lead of the Cobb County school system regarding school closings. In case of threatening weather conditions, check with the Temple office or the following local media outlets for news of TKE school closings:

Z93  
Star 94  
Peach 94.9  
TV Channel 46 (CBS)  
Religious School Voice Mail (770) 973-9205

## P.E.P. (Parent/Child Class, Parent Education Plan)

A parent/child class is offered for third grade students and their parents only, during the early Sunday session. Parents and children study Hebrew and Judaic topics together.

## Computer Hebrew Lab (for individualized needs and reinforcement)

Students in grades three through seven, whose learning style requires individualized attention, now have at their disposal a full time Education Specialist (Jaime Davies) through a joint program between Temple Kol Emeth and Center for Jewish Education & Experience, CJEE. The program is called *Yad-Be-Yad*, meaning hand-in-hand. If parents feel their child would benefit from special computer work, please contact Dr. Andron at the school office. Full classes are also scheduled for lab sessions (see below).

## Computer Lab

The Computer Lab is available to students in grades two through seven, and is scheduled by the classroom teacher with computer specialist, Mike Shapiro. Its purpose is to enhance and enrich Judaic and Hebrew learning and provide a means for individualized remediation or acceleration in Hebrew. Computer software is also available to help *B'nai Mitzvah* students learn to read their Torah portions.

## Books and Supplies

Textbooks and most supplies are included in school registration fees. Students in grades three and above should come to class with paper, pencils, notebooks and/or folders. Individual teachers may specify a supply list at the beginning of the school year. Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents may be assigned to a snack roster.

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## Teen Jewish Studies Program

Students in grades seven through twelve are encouraged to continue their Judaic studies on Sunday evenings from 4 to 6 p.m. Students select from a variety of specialized courses that are changed every eight weeks. The program includes electives from which to choose. There will be a break for socializing and soda and pizza can be purchased between sessions.

## Curriculum

Age appropriate lessons and activities are conducted within each grade level to build upon prior knowledge and meet the desired objectives. We recognize that parents play an integral part in education and serve as role models in the development of their children's Jewish identity. Therefore, we conduct grade level Erev Shabbat family dinners prior to Friday evening services throughout the school year. In addition, there are special grade level activities during Religious School that require parental participation. These tend to be life cycle and holiday oriented.

## Music

A 15-minute music session is conducted every Sunday morning in the kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. The Religious School music teachers introduce a variety of melodies relating to the curriculum and Jewish holidays.

## Responsibilities

TKE believes optimum growth for your children can only be accomplished if students, parents and teachers work closely together in full cooperation.

### Student Responsibilities

- Students are expected to attend all school sessions unless injury or sickness occurs.
- Students should come to class on time with all appropriate supplies.
- Students are expected to complete all assigned work.
- Eating, drinking or chewing gum is not permitted during class time except on break.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that shows proper respect for Temple Kol Emeth, TKE staff, teachers and their peers.
- Any form of defacement or destruction of Temple property is forbidden.

### Parent Responsibilities

- Make every effort to be on time. Lateness is very costly to your child. It also sends a message to your child that "*this* isn't important; therefore it's okay to be late."
- Avoid scheduling extra-curricular activities for your child when it overlaps with school hours.
- Check given assignments to make certain they are done with care and attention.
- Bring your child to services on a regular basis. They have a scheduled number of services they must attend each year.
- Take part in our school-wide and grade-wide activities. These indicate a sense of importance to your child, simply by your presence.

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- Become a volunteer at school. Your show of support indicates to your child the importance of the program.

## School Responsibilities

- Providing a loving and challenging environment for your child to learn and grow *Jewishly*.
- Maintaining regular contact with parents via letters, e-mail and memos informing parents about what's going on in the classroom and school.
- Allowing for parent-teacher conferences to enable parents to keep up with their child's progress.
- Sending home report cards that assess the student's progress and performance.

## Enrichment Activities

### For our Children

- *Arts and Crafts Projects*: Children learn a great deal about their heritage through artistic expression (e.g. *tallit*, *siddur*, pillow case *Shema*, *Pesach Seder*, etc.).
- *Music*: Music is a meaningful part of our curriculum. Our students become familiar with the songs and prayers of our people through music.
- *Tefillah (prayer)*: A *tefillah* service is a part of all weekday class sessions. These sessions help familiarize the students with both the structure and content of weekly and holiday services.
- *The Computer Lab*: The lab is critical to positive educational reinforcement, fun and games and for those who need extra work and/or visual learning tools.
- *Guests*: From time-to-time, special guests will come to TKE and address the students on topics of interest and of relevance to the subjects they are studying.

## School-wide Celebrations and Grade level Dinners

TKE places great emphasis on building bridges of learning between school and home. For this purpose, school-wide celebrations have been designed to provide a joyous and joint experience for children and their parents. These include *Sukkot*, *Chanukah*, *Purim* and *Pesach*. Look for others during the course of the year.

Grade level *Shabbat* dinners prior to Friday night services afford an opportunity to share in the joy of *Shabbat*, and for the children to demonstrate their knowledge for their parents. It is essential that families come together for these activities to hear the prayers the children have prepared and of which they are rightly proud. It is also an opportunity for students to sign off on service attendance should they attend congregational services after.

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## Behavioral Expectations

### Code of Conduct

At the beginning of the year, students and teachers discuss specific behavior expectations for each classroom, which must be followed. To assure the safety and optimum-learning environment for all Kol Emeth students, the following behavior is expected:

- Proper respect is to be shown by students for teachers, administrators, clergy, fellow students and their belongings.
- Students will arrive on time for class, with all necessary materials and prepared to learn.
- Students will not leave the classroom without teacher permission.
- Any forms of physical or verbal harassment or abuse are prohibited.
- Off color language is prohibited.
- Physical activity such as fighting, pushing, shoving, hitting and spitting is not tolerated. Less overt bullying such as taunting and teasing is not tolerated.
- Possession of alcohol, tobacco, drugs or weapons are prohibited.
- Students will respect the physical environment within the Religious School, Temple facility and sanctuary.
- Food, gum and drink are not permitted in the sanctuary.
- Teachers are responsible for treating all students fairly and with impartiality.

Our Temple is a House of God. Good taste and proper respect should be displayed in the clothes we wear. Inappropriate dress does not show proper deference to our Temple. It also sets a poor model and disruptive influence for our younger students.

### Consequences

At the beginning of the year, students and teachers will discuss consequences within each classroom. If a student continues to exhibit disruptive behavior, s/he will be sent to the Religious School Director. The Director and/or the teacher will contact the parents.

- Chronic disruptive behavior, despite two or more warnings from the Religious School Director, may result in suspension.
- Behaviors that result in immediate suspension from school include:
  - Physical violence
  - Extreme verbal harassment
  - Possession of alcohol, tobacco, drugs or any form of weapon
- If a student is removed from class, suspended or expelled from school, there is no tuition adjustment.
- The student is responsible for any and all class work missed. It is not the responsibility of the school to provide additional instruction.
- The Religious School Director determines if removal from class will affect grade placement and/or assignment of a *bar/bat mitzvah* date.
- Repair to vandalized or damaged TKE property is the financial responsibility of the student's family.

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## **Policies and Procedures**

### **Attendance**

- Regular attendance is vital to maintaining pace with the rest of the class and helping each student derive the maximum educational, spiritual and social benefits from the Religious School program.
- Teachers will contact parents if a student is absent for two consecutive sessions.
- Parents and students are encouraged to contact teachers in order to make up the work that has been covered in class during an absence.

### **Late Arrival**

Students arriving more than ten minutes after the start of class must sign in at the Religious School office before reporting to class.

### **Early Dismissal**

Students leaving early inevitably disrupt a class in progress. Should this be unavoidable, the parent is required to:

- Come to the Religious School office. Do not go to the child's classroom. Students will be called to the office.
- Send a note to their child's teacher in advance advising that the student will be leaving class early.
- Sign their child out at the school office.
- Assure that your child has their assignments for the next class.

### **Carpool**

Carpool procedures are designed to assure the safety of each child. Drop-off begins 20 minutes prior to the start of school in the front of the building only.

### **Pick Up Locations**

#### **Sundays**

- Pick up for students in grades kindergarten through second is at the back of the Temple in the preschool area. Parents should enter the pick up area by turning onto Briarcliff Road from Old Canton Road and then turning left onto Briarcliff Place. If older students are part of a carpool with younger children, the older student(s) need to come to the back door for pick up.
- Students in grades three through seven are picked up at the front entrance of the Temple. Parents enter the carpool line at the Temple entrance along Old Canton Road. Students are asked not to interfere with carpool lanes by crossing between cars. In case of inclement weather, students may wait in the Temple lobby.

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## Mid-Week

Security guards and teachers near the front entrance of the Temple direct pick up for all students.

## Homework

- Homework assignments vary depending upon grade level and area of study.
- Mastering Hebrew prayers requires practice and repetition between classroom sessions, as does any foreign language. Other than Hebrew, homework is normally kept to a minimum.
- As partners in your child's Jewish education, parents should be involved in and encourage completion of homework assignments when given.

## Student Evaluation

Progress report cards are completed in December and at the end of the school year. In general, students are evaluated on academic achievement, academic progress, classroom behavior, attendance and participation. Interim assessments are made under extenuating circumstances. Parents should return a signed copy of report cards one week following distribution.

## Visitors/Friends in Class

Due to liability issues, students may not bring friends to class. Parents will be called to pick up any friends brought to class. Extenuating circumstances require an advance call to the school office.

## B'nai Mitzvah Program

- A student who becomes a *bar/bat mitzvah* at Temple Kol Emeth must be registered, paid and is required to attend Religious and Hebrew School on a regular basis from third grade through his/her *bar/bat mitzvah* year, and then to continue through Confirmation and graduation.
- The *bar/bat mitzvah* leads Saturday Shabbat morning services, reads a portion from the Torah and delivers a *D'Var Torah* – or interpretation of the meanings of the Torah portion. During the speech, the *bar/bat mitzvah* also relates his/her feelings about the milestone event and describes one's Mitzvah Project.
- Putting God on the Guest List, by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin is an excellent reference to help guide parents and children through the process. The Kol Emeth clergy and religious school staff are available to help families' add greater spiritual meaning to the *bar/bat mitzvah* celebration. The book is available in the Temple gift shop.
- *Bar/bat mitzvah* dates are assigned during a student's fifth-grade year. Families will receive a letter requesting three preferred dates occurring after the child's thirteenth birthday; the Temple staff then assigns dates.
- At the beginning of the sixth-grade year, *bar/bat mitzvah* families receive a handbook that provides information regarding the Oneg Shabbat, reservation of facilities and other details concerning the celebration.
- *Bar/bat mitzvah* tutoring begins approximately six months prior to one's scheduled date. Group and individual tutoring sessions are conducted at the Temple. Cantor provides each student with an audiotape of one's *Torah and Haftarah* portion. Individual sessions with each *bar/bat mitzvah* candidate are scheduled five weeks prior to the date.

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## Madrichim Program

High school students are selected and assigned to specific teachers on Sunday mornings and during mid-week Hebrew sessions. The *madrichim* (guides or assistants) work with students individually, in small groups or assist their assigned teacher. The Youth Director will be responsible for training new *madrichim*. *Madrichim* will teach two selected classes during the school year.

## Parental Involvement

### Participation

Parents are encouraged to participate in their child's religious education either through involvement in the classroom or in school-wide volunteer activities. These may include but are not limited to:

- Serving as room parent, to assist the teacher as necessary.
- Participating in special projects, making phone calls or providing snacks.
- Assisting in the computer lab.
- Coordinating the school quarterly newsletter, "The Sunday Paper."
- Assisting with Entertainment Book and Passover candy sale fundraisers.
- Providing coverage in the front office during school hours.
- Helping to organize the opening of school, including registration mailings and sorting of books and materials.
- Volunteering in the library.
- Clerical assistance in the front office.

### Education Committee/Parent Group

The Education Committee is headed by the Director of Education, who is a volunteer board liaison. The Director meets regularly with the Religious School's Director and Administrative Director to help guide Religious School programming and policy, and to support the administration and staff.

In addition, the Director of Education spearheads the Religious School Parent Group comprised of two co-chairs, room parents from all grade levels and all parent volunteers. This group meets monthly to organize school fundraising, assist with family programming and holiday celebrations, and works closely with the Religious School Administrative Director.

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## **Contacts**

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