

# Bessie Hershey Religious School of B'nai Jeshurun Congregation

## Statement of Philosophy

### Our Mission

Bessie Hershey Religious School is committed to the teaching and upholding of the beliefs, ideals, practices and values of Conservative Judaism in order to help all students develop positive, lasting Jewish identities.

The Bessie Hershey Religious School operates under the auspices of B'nai Jeshurun Congregation. It is affiliated with the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland. The school recognizes the Rabbi of the congregation as the final authority of Halacha (Jewish Law) as applied in the school.

The Goals: The school bases its program on the belief that fostering Jewish continuity requires a solid Jewish education. Upon completion of their formal Jewish education, our students should be able to:

- Live ethical Jewish lives
- Perform acts of Tikkun Olam (the concept of "repair the world")
- Participate actively and competently in prayer services
- Read Hebrew prayers
- Perform *mitzvot* (act according to the commandments)
- Demonstrate a connection and love for the State of Israel
- Identify as a member of *k'lal Yisrael* (the world Jewish community)

The Curriculum: The school is committed to offering a quality program that allows students to participate in their learning, discover meaning in their studies, and more deeply understand their Jewish experiences. The school accomplishes these goals through its variety of classroom learning activities, including:

- art, music, drama and outside the classroom experiences
- instruction according to each child's developmental level
- social interaction between students and with educators
- the school's partnership with the student's home life
- family education programming

We encourage students to continue their education through Graduation and become lifelong Jewish learners.

The school fosters in students a love for the State of Israel. We teach the historical and current importance of Israel in Jewish life and encourage participation in travel and study programs in Israel.

Informal Education: We encourage students to participate in Jewish youth groups and summer camps in order to gain a sense of belonging in the local Jewish community.

## Curriculum Overview

A complete list of the goals of the Primary Department is available in the School Office.

### Pre-Kindergarten:

Students become familiar with the synagogue and the people who work here. They begin to explore Jewish prayer, holidays, and values through stories, games, art and music. Beginning Hebrew vocabulary is introduced through our Total Physical Response program.

### Kindergarten:

Our kindergartners begin to explore Bible stories and participate in a creation unit. Through the media of art and music as well as children's literature, they begin to see themselves as Jewish individuals within the synagogue. Hebrew is taught weekly via Total Physical Response. There are major units in "Shabbat" and "kashrut."

### First Grade:

The Consecration experience introduces students to their "formal" experience in Torah study. As they begin to identify themselves within a Jewish family, they also study the families of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and his family. Beginning Hebrew vocabulary continues through the oral Total Physical Response Program. Students also begin Alef-Bet letter recognition.

### Second Grade:

We begin to connect Hebrew language to the land of Israel in the second grade. Students begin to get an appreciation of the culture, geography, and people of Israel. As they begin Alef-Bet letter recognition, they also increase their Hebrew vocabulary through the Total Physical Response Program. (In January, students attend an enhanced Hebrew language and Reading Readiness program on Tuesdays from 4:15-5:45 p.m. in addition to Sunday mornings.)

Second Grade Midweek Hebrew begins in January. Foremost to the list of skills that are taught in our curriculum is Hebrew decoding and reading. It is with this goal in mind that the Education Committee of B'nai Jeshurun Congregation has instituted an enhancement to our current Second Grade program with a Tuesday afternoon. Beginning in January, the time spent from 4:15-5:45 p.m. on Tuesdays will include a continuation of conversational Hebrew language, whole word decoding and music. The additional time has already proved effective in fluency and achievement for our Second Grade students. Early in the school year, you will receive additional information regarding this exciting extension of our Second Grade studies, so that in January all Second Grade students and their parents will be excited and ready to begin this outstanding opportunity. It will help your children ease happily into their years in Bet Limmud (see next page).

## BET LIMMUD: OUR WEEKDAY PROGRAM-More than Just Hebrew School!

Bet Limmud provides an innovative curriculum implemented in the areas of Hebrew decoding, conversational Hebrew, siddur Hebrew, Jewish literacy and holidays, Bible Study and the study and appreciation of Eretz Israel. The curriculum integrates the weekday and weekend components of our educational program, third grade through seventh grade. In partnership with the curriculum department of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, we have implemented problem-based learning (PBL), which has made our curriculum more interactive, and more progressive than the “typical” afternoon program. It has been recognized nationally for its text-based, cooperative methods and innovative approach to learning.

School Hours for Bet Limmud: Bet Limmud is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 4:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. Third grade through sixth grade will continue their program on Shabbat mornings. Seventh grade students will have classes on Tuesdays only for Bet Limmud and continue their program on Sunday mornings. To accommodate variations in schedules, a study hall will be set-up in the Dennis Library beginning at 3:30 p.m. and will be monitored by our Librarian, Raphael Simon.

### BET LIMMUD/ SHABBAT CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Parents are encouraged to join their children as they participate in Junior Congregation services on Shabbat at 10:50 a.m. in Halpern Hall. We encourage you to honor your student(s) by sponsoring a Shabbat Kiddush. A \$50 donation will help promote these socially fulfilling traditions and help the school defray the costs. Please contact the school office.

Grades 3-7 (Alef-Hey) Bet Limmud:

The curriculum at Bet Limmud covers the areas of Hebrew Language, T’fillah (prayer), Judaic Studies, Chagim (holidays) and music. Classes are held in grades 3-6 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and grade 7 on Tuesdays. The following is a general description of the content of each area of the curriculum:

1. Hebrew Language: There is emphasis both on learning Hebrew as a language and learning to decode the Alef-Bet. Additional reading practice is given with words students know, an off-shoot of the Hebrew language work. There is special emphasis on reading Hebrew stories based on the language curriculum in Bet (grade 4) and beyond. Beginning in third grade, all teachers are asked to use as much Hebrew as possible in the classroom, especially in classroom directions.
2. T’fillah (Prayer): On the weekend, (Shabbat grades 3-6) students study prayers, learning to recite them in class as reinforcement to their prayer experience. Each grade focuses on the concepts expressed in specific prayers. Students will begin a more intensive decoding of the prayers that they have learned beginning in their Gimel (grade 5) year. Special grade-level or

all-school T'fillot (prayer services) will be scheduled at holiday times. On Shabbat, students participate at 10:50 a.m. in a junior congregation service, including the *Shacharit* service and Torah service. By the end of their Dalet year (grade 6), they have mastered all major elements of the Shabbat prayer experience.

3. Judaic Curriculum: Midweek, our Problem-Based curriculum helps us to integrate broad areas of Judaic Studies. On the weekends, students study legends from our tradition (Alef), Partners with God and Prophets and Kings (Bet), life cycle and the wisdom from the Rabbinic period (Gimel), the history and life of Israel (Dalet), and Modern Jewish Heroes and Holocaust studies (Hey).

4. Chagim (Holidays): Based on the Melton Graded Curriculum and Behrman House Spiraled Curriculum, teachers teach and review the concepts and customs of the Jewish Holidays throughout the year. A schedule of in-school celebrations take place both at Bet Limmud as well as within the congregation.

5. The Arts: The grades are combined for a 30 minute session midweek. Students may choose to be in Zamir, our junior choir or other electives.

6. National Bible Contest: A Special Educational Opportunity for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students: We are very proud of the record that our B'nai Jeshurun Bible Contest Students set each year at the National Bible Contest. **This year all 6<sup>th</sup> graders will be in this class.** It is an elective for 7<sup>th</sup> graders.

We are delighted that Mr. Koret will be returning in the fall. 7<sup>th</sup> graders enrolling in National Bible Contest should indicate this on your registration form and select the JPS Chumash on your booklist.

## TRANSPORTATION TO BET LIMMUD

CARPOOLS: A reminder that the community does not provide transportation between the public and private schools and B'nai Jeshurun. If you need assistance in formulating a car pool for the upcoming school year, please contact Wendy or Shirley in the School Office, 831-6555. They will attempt to assist you with the names of families in your area, attending either our program or a program at a nearby supplementary school. Once you have finalized car pool arrangements, please alert our school office in writing regarding adults who have permission to transport your children to and from school, or use the enclosed transportation form. Please contact us if there are any changes in your car pool schedule.

Orange School District transportation: Because B'nai Jeshurun is housed within the Orange School District, parents can arrange for their students to arrive at Bet Limmud by Orange bus. Arrangements must be made directly with Orange transportation by calling 831-8600 ext. 7632. Please indicate arrival by bus on the enclosed transportation form. Orange Schools will not allow your children to ride the Religious School bus without your written authority.

## SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR BET LIMMUD STUDENTS

Please review the general instructions for information regarding school philosophy, responsibilities and standards.

1. **Supplies and Textbooks:** Students will be expected to bring books, pencils, kippah, and all educational materials to class each session. We recommend that these materials be kept together in the book bag supplied by the Congregation, or one of your students' own choosing. Teachers may request that books remain in the classroom if there is no homework expectation. This may assist your child in always having access to their own textbooks.
2. **Snacks:** Snacks will be available for purchase each Tuesday and Thursday from 3:55 p.m. until 4:10 p.m., and may be eaten before school or during a break set by the classroom teacher. All profits from the purchase of snacks will be donated to *Tzedaka*.

**Snacks from Home:** Students are permitted to bring their own snacks to the religious school during Bet Limmud hours, as long as they are in a sealed package and carry a bonafied label signifying the highest level of kashrut (kosher regulations). Fresh fruit, Little Debbie's snacks, Entenmann's, Austin's, and Lay's potato chips and Fritos (not Doritos) are safe choices. Symbols to look for include U encircled by the O or the K in a Kof. Please check the B'nai Jeshurun website for all approved symbols.. (Items from fast food restaurants do not provide adequate kosher certification for consumption in our synagogue. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.)

3. **DISMISSAL:** During the winter months, students will be dismissed in the dark. For your child's safety, when you bring and pick up your students to school, drive right up to the Bessie Hershey Religious School entrance at the door in the Berman-Lippa School Wing. If you are not waiting in the carpool line, please come into the building to pick up your child(ren) and walk them to the car. Students may not go to the parking lot unless accompanied by their parent.

For your child's safety, please review pick-up procedures, and be sure your child knows who to expect.

**For reasons of security, students who require an early dismissal must present a note from a parent or guardian to the teacher with dismissal instructions. Please assist us in assuring the safety of your children.**

## The Gross High School

Committed to Educating our Teens to be Knowledgeable Jews!!!

Our Gross High School Program continues to be an exciting and innovative program.

### Gross High School Schedule

9:00-9:30 a.m.	Breakfast in the Gross Atrium
9:35-10:30 a.m.	First Period
10:35-11:00 a.m.	T'filla (teen service)
11:05 a.m.-Noon	Second Period

High School Breakfast: Honor a student with a \$50 donation. Parents and grandparents are encouraged to promote these socially fulfilling traditions by making donations to the school program to help defray these costs. These donations can be made in honor of your children, and we will publish them in the Tidings on a monthly basis. Please help to support these important traditions within our school.

In order to help defray the costs of our high school breakfast, we ask students to bring in boxes of kosher cereal as follows (one box per student):

7<sup>th</sup> grade – September  
8<sup>th</sup> grade - November

9<sup>th</sup> grade - January  
10<sup>th</sup> grade - March

Kosher symbols to look for include U in a circle or a K in a kof. You can also check the B'nai Jeshurun website for all approved symbols.

### The High School Years Curriculum

#### THE SEVENTH GRADE YEAR: ELIGIBILITY FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

For boys and girls to be eligible for Bar or Bat Mitzvah at B'nai Jeshurun, students must be enrolled in and attending our Religious School Program, including Bet Limmud, or a program approved by B'nai Jeshurun (such as a Jewish Day School) for 5 years, including the year of Bar or Bat Mitzvah. It is our requirement and expectation that students will continue their religious school education beyond the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, to celebrate Confirmation and Graduation within our program.

## Curriculum Overview

Each grade will participate in various Mitzvah projects throughout the year.

**Seventh Grade:** The unthinkable past will not repeat itself because our 7<sup>th</sup> graders are educated, researching and learning about the Holocaust era and Jewish heroes. Heroes come in many different shapes, sizes and religions. This year is full of discussion, debate and lively class interaction about our history and the heroes who affect its outcome.

**Eighth Grade:** The outstanding 8<sup>th</sup> grade Shtetl Study "Going Back in Time" is an experience our students will always look at fondly. Students in the eighth grade will be learning about their history. They will also be studying about the lives of Jews who lived in a European shtetl around the late 1800's. This year of study culminates in the re-creation of an actual working shtetl.

**Ninth Grade:** This year will be filled with discussions and experiential learning opportunities. There is much to learn about Israel, our homeland, and we will be using many resources to teach this curriculum. There of course will be our famous Eat Your Way through Jewish Cleveland along with studying about Cleveland and what it takes to build a community.

**Confirmation** is held on the first day of Shavuot. Confirmation is a year filled with many exciting opportunities. There is a great deal of current events discussed in the form of Teenage Issues. Students learn more about Conservative Judaism and they touch upon Comparative Religion. There is a class retreat and an opportunity to work with an artist-in-residence.

Please be advised that there may be Confirmation rehearsals during the school year on Wednesday evenings from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., starting in May. Parents and students will be notified during the second semester of a final rehearsal schedule. Confirmands are required to attend TEN (10) Friday night Shabbat services, Saturday services, minyans, or holiday services as part of their responsibility.

**Chai School:** The coffee house Chai School format is an educational partnership for the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students come each week for coffee, tea, cocoa and learning. This is an interactive year of study that includes current events, Beit Midrash (house of study format of learning) and the Jewish Civics Initiative (JCI) which is based on *Jewish Civics: A Tikkun Olam/World Repair Manual* published by Panim el Panim. This class will meet on Sunday mornings, 9:30-11:45 in order to accommodate students who have jobs beginning at noon.

**Akiva High School:** Akiva High School is available for students from grades 8-12, meeting in the Siegal College of Judaic Studies building. It is made up of three tracts: Hebrew Explorers, Jewish Explorers, and Build Your Own Akiva Experience. This program is an outstanding way for teens to build advanced skills in Hebrew language and text. The program meets on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00-7:50 p.m. In the past, B'nai Jeshurun has reimbursed a portion of the tuition at the end of the school year for all Akiva students who have attended 75% of the class time. Registration should be made directly with Akiva by calling 216-464-4050. Please let us know in writing if your child will be attending Akiva High School.

## POLICIES of THE BESSIE HERSHEY RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Parents can best prepare their children by sharing in the religious school experience. Throughout the school year, you will be apprised of services, programs, and activities which all parents are encouraged to attend along with your children. We hope that you will accept these invitations as often as you can. Your eager participation is your child's best model of the importance of religious school to the entire family.

In addition, your compliance to the following policies will assist us in getting your child started in the right direction:

1. All financial obligations must be met before the first day of school. If you need any assistance, please contact Paula Botkin in the financial office.
2. Books should be purchased before the first class as they will be used on the first day of school. If you are providing texts from prior years, please send them with your children on the first day.
3. Students will report to school with all necessary supplies including *kippot* (*yarmulkes*), books and permission forms. High school students should come equipped with notepads and pencils.
4. The Weekend School begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at Noon. Bet Limmud begins at 4:15 p.m. and ends at 5:45 p.m. Students who are to be dismissed early for any reason must present a note from a parent or guardian to the teacher. If carpool arrangements are to change, a note must similarly be presented. We encourage your family to enjoy the once-a-month Sunday Men's Club breakfast, but please arrive one-half hour before school begins so that your child can be in the classroom on time.
5. Students arriving more than 15 minutes late should report to the office for an admission pass so that your attendance for the day can be accurately reported.
6. Our Primary teachers ask that, for your child's safety, a designated adult or older sibling come to the class for dismissal.

### EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

*Sundays and Weekdays: 831-6555, ext. 123*

*Shabbat: 831-6555*

*On Shabbat, messages will be delivered to the Education Director.*

## STANDARDS

In order to make the educational experience a pleasant one for students, teachers, and parents, the following standards have been adopted by the B'nai Jeshurun Education Committee.

Attitude: Students are expected to exhibit respect for the rights and dignity of fellow students, teachers and administrators, and the synagogue building. Teachers will return this respect in kind, to their students.

Attendance: Prompt and regular attendance of a minimum of 75% of class time is required for promotion. Students who fall short of this standard will be required to make up work over the summer before promotion into the next grade. Students who miss class due to a religious obligation in another synagogue, youth activities, or mitzvah activities will be granted an excused absence when a note of explanation is provided by a parent or guardian, and not to exceed six sessions.

Effort: Because education can only be successful with an adequate amount of effort, participation in class activities and completion of all assignments are expected of each student. The teachers or administrators will meet with parents and students who fail to conform to the standards of effort and achievement in order to assist each child in meeting this requirement.

Dress: Boys will wear a kippah (yarmulke) whenever they are in the synagogue, and are encouraged to bring their own. Shabbat school students are required to come dressed for services. Boys: dress shirt and tie with either a suit jacket or sweater. Girls: dress, jumper, or skirt. No jeans, shorts or athletic shoes, please. On weekdays and Sundays, students may attend in school clothes and play clothes that are neat and clean. No outrageous slogans, please!

### EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

Should inclement weather necessitate cancellation of classes, closings will be announced on the television. In the event of a closing, staff, aided by room parents, will try to alert you by telephone. You can also call our cancellation line at 216-831-6556.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES FOR CAMP AND ISRAEL

### CAMP/ISRAEL FINANCIAL AID GUIDELINES

Financial Aid is available to Congregants due to the generosity of many of our synagogue families. Priority will be given to families based on demonstrated need. Deadlines for winter camp and winter Israel program scholarship application are November 2. Deadlines for summer camp and summer Israel experiences are February 27. To apply for camp or Israel financial assistance, please contact the school office for an application form.

#### *CRITERIA FOR CAMP FINANCIAL AID*

The following criteria were adopted by the Education Committee regarding camp financial assistance:

1. Campers eligible for assistance are defined as children of members in good standing who are enrolled in B'nai Jeshurun's Weekend School program and/or another approved educational program. Assistance is available to students in grades 3 through 12 for residential camps.
2. Residential camps will receive priority funding over day camps due to limited available funding and a larger financial obligation for parents.
3. Appropriate camps eligible for assistance are defined as camps that maintain a level of Jewish observance and include Jewish content in their programming. Summer programs must run for a minimum of 3 weeks within the Conservative, Orthodox or Reform movements. Camps that meet the guidelines set by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland will also meet B'nai Jeshurun's guidelines. Other camping experiences will be considered on an individual basis.
4. If funding is limited financial need may be the main factor in granting B'nai Jeshurun assistance.
5. Due to the generosity of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, students, students attending approved Jewish overnight camps for the FIRST TIME can apply for incentive funding by calling the School Office.
6. Families must be current in their financial obligations to B'nai Jeshurun and maintain membership.
7. Thanks to a generous donor in the community, first and second time campers to a Jewish camp can apply to B'nai Jeshurun for funding that will be matched by the community. Please call the school for a list of approved camps and for the appropriate request form.

## CRITERIA FOR ISRAEL FINANCIAL AID

Students and parents accepting Israel assistance will sign a contract agreeing to these eligibility requirements. Financial need will be a consideration in the decision to grant financial aid.

1. Families must be current in their financial obligations to B'nai Jeshurun and maintain membership.
2. Assistance is available to students in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Eighth graders going to Israel for a class trip in a Jewish Day School are also eligible.
3. The student must be a participant in an approved Israel student program. The program must be a minimum of a fourteen day stay in Israel. Length of the Israel program will be a factor in determining the amount of financial assistance.
4. The student must accept as an obligation to assist in promoting the Israel experience within the synagogue and community when requested.
5. In order to be eligible, application forms for a summer program must be submitted by the February 27 deadline. Forms for mid-year programs are due November 2. Forms are available in the School Office.

## POLICY FOR AKIVA HIGH SCHOOL REIMBURSEMENT

B'nai Jeshurun will grant a reimbursement to students who attend 75% or more of their Akiva classes during the year. A percentage of the Akiva fee will be refunded in June at the close of school after the verification of attendance. The percentage is determined each year based on the funding provided and the number of B'nai Jeshurun students enrolled at Akiva.