

Congregation B'nai Shalom

בני שלום



PRESS RELEASE

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Congregation B'nai Shalom to Inaugurate New School Program!

Westborough - What is it we hope our children and their families will gain from 13 years of Religious School attendance? How will it influence our students, our synagogue and our community, both now and in the future? Our *Eitz Chaim* (Tree of Life) Sunday Program hopes to offer our students in grades kindergarten through six the information and skills to begin to realize Reform Jewish ideals and values in their daily lives. Our project based curriculum will enable our students' entrée into the continuing study of Jewish texts, history, holidays, life cycle, culture and values. Engaging our children and families through hands-on, experiential learning is a fundamental tenet of our *Eitz Chaim* philosophy and our learners will be involved in a curriculum which emphasizes GOD, TORAH, G'MILUT HASADIM, ISRAEL and HEBREW empowering them to lovingly embrace Judaism. Melissa, the mom of a 5th grader says, "My son really enjoys going to his Hebrew School classes and seeing his friends. He doesn't know many Jewish kids in his public school so participating in the Hebrew school classes and activities is when he really feels a part of the Jewish community."

The school year will be divided into trimesters of approximately eight weeks and each trimester will be framed by a big topic of God & Spirituality, Torah or Am Yisrael. Children will be grouped in mixed-aged classes with a team of Jewish Learning Guides (teachers) and three to four Madrichim (teen aides). Students and Parents will also participate in family education programs, Shabbat Services, off site educational programming and other special events during the year. We are committed to Jewish learning that is relevant, inspirational, and transformative. Our school aims to provide our students and their families with the tools to meaningfully participate in the Jewish community, with pride in their Jewish heritage, and with the awareness that their actions will shape the future of the Jewish people. Gary, the father of a 9th and 4th grader tells us that "This school looks nothing like the Hebrew School I went to and hated! I wish I could have gone to a school like this."

Our sixth graders take part in our Gesher (bridge) program and begin taking steps to cross the bridge from childhood to Jewish adulthood. We believe that the family bond helps ease the transition from childhood to adulthood and builds bridges that will lead children to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, and Graduation and beyond. We want our 6th Graders and their families to have engaging, relevant, and memorable learning experiences and Gesher is our way to help pave the path and set families on a learning journey together. Gesher students will attend either on Tuesdays or Wednesdays from 3:45 – 6:00 PM for Jewish Studies and Hebrew Studies. Gesher 6th Graders AND their parents will meet with our Rabbis and Educators approximately one time per month. 6th Graders, together with their parents, will complete a special family project that will be displayed at the conclusion of the year. In addition, special activities for our 6th Grade students will take place throughout the year including an overnight Shabbat experience at Eisner Camp!

We continue to offer a top notch High School program called "Chai School" for students in grades 7 – 12. "Chai School" meets the challenge of providing a meaningful Jewish education for adolescent age students by allowing them to design their own program of study! Students participate on Tuesday evenings in both core classes and elective classes. Students may also gain credit for community service, summer camp attendance and worship experiences that take place outside of school hours.

For more information about Eitz Chayim, Gesher or Chai School, contact Rabbi Joe Eiduson at educator@cbnaishalom.org or 508-366-7191 Ext. 204.