



**PARENT
HANDBOOK
5771
2010-2011**

Table of Contents

Introductory Comments	2
School Calendar	3
Guidelines for Parents	4
Educational Goals of the Reconstructionist Movement	4
School Information	5
Communication	5
School Programs.....	5
Discipline Policy	9
Kehilat Shalom Religious School Prayer Curriculum	10
Contact List	11

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

A Letter From The Principal

Dear Parents,

On behalf of everyone at the synagogue, I would like welcome you to another exciting year at Congregation Kehilat Shalom Religious School. Thank you for entrusting us with your children -- the future of the Jewish people. We look forward to sharing the awesome experience of helping our students grow and develop to their fullest potential.

Together, you and our students, along with our synagogue family, will share the treasures of our heritage and plant the roots of meaningful Jewish living. Together, we will nourish those roots and help them to grow and blossom, as they learn more about themselves and the rich history of the Jewish people. We are planning special events and programs to enhance the Jewish lives of our students.

This Handbook has been put together to help make things clear and easy for you. As always, feel free to come to me with any issues or concerns.

I look forward to partnering with you throughout the year!

L'shana Tovah,

Shari Rothstein
Principal

CKS Religious School Calendar 2010-2011 5771

Important Dates to Remember

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| September
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/12 Opening Day • 9/9-10 Rosh Hashanah • 9/18 Yom Kippur • 9/23 - 9/30 Sukkot—Open | Class Shabbats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/29 Friday
6th & 7th Grade • 12/3 Friday
K-5th Grade • 2/12 Saturday
6th & 7th Grade • 3/19 Saturday
4th & 5th Grade • 4/1 Friday
K-3rd Grade • 5/20 Friday
School-wide | October
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/1 Simchat Torah • 10/10 Open School | November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11/7 NJEA Weekend—Closed • 11/29 Thanksgiving Break—Closed |
| December
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12/2-9 Chanukah—Open • 12/26 Winter Break—Closed | January
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 Winter Break—Closed • 1/20 Tu B'shevat | February
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/20 Presidents' Day Weekend - Closed | CKS Holiday Celebrations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9/24 Pizza in the Hut for Sukkot, 6pm 9/30 Simchat Torah Celebration, 7pm 12/3 Shabbat with Blazing Menorahs for Chaunkah 3/20 Purim Shpiel and Carnival 6/7 Shavout Celebration, 7pm |

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
X	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
X	29	30				

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
X	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
X	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

December						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
X	27	28	29	30	31	

May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
X	18	19	20	21	22	23
X	25	26	27	28	29	30

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

- Opening Day
- Closed
- Final Day
- Family Shabbat Services 7pm



Congregation
Kehilat Shalom
A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community
 253 Belle Mead-Griggstown Road, Belle Mead, NJ 08502
 Phone: 908-359-0420
 E-mail: principal@ksnj.org
 Website: www.ksnj.org

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Our Religious School is committed to providing a positive and meaningful Jewish learning experience for your child. However, we cannot achieve this goal by ourselves. The education your child receives at our school will be most successful if it is nurtured by you. Please be aware what your child is learning throughout the year; make sure they complete their homework and ask them to read Hebrew to you. As a Reconstructionist congregation, we are committed to the educational goals of the movement (see below).

EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST MOVEMENT

Present Torah as the ongoing, creative and sacred search for meaning in life; a record of human encounters with the divine.

Recognize that the Jewish people's experience of G-d, Torah and peoplehood has changed and grown throughout history.

Focus on Hebrew as the language uniting all Jews and provide programs that help develop language skills that allow for enriched connections with Jewish civilizations of the past, present, and future.

Recognize praying, participation in ritual and text study as expressive modes of Jewish spirituality that can shape Jewish lives.

Encourage active, egalitarian participation with a sense of responsibility for the Jewish community.

Draw students of all ages into caring, committed and knowledgeable relationships with the land and people of Israel.

Seek to understand the human spirit that lies behind the diverse Jewish understandings of G-d and encourage individuals to reflect on the meaning of godliness in their own lives.

Understand the concept of mitzvah as obligation and perpetuate Jewish values reflected in deeds of social justice and acts of loving-kindness.

We are dedicated to intellectually honest inquiry combined with faithfulness to our tradition and commitment to the continuity of the Jewish people. We believe this happens best with challenging, caring and supportive learning environments.

From the "Reconstructionist Curriculum Resource Guide" edited by Jeffrey Schein and Leah Mundell

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Hours

Religious School is on Sunday mornings from 9am – 12pm. Please make sure your child is in their classroom at 9am. Plan to arrive a few minutes early if you would like to get your child breakfast in our CKS Bagel Café.

CKS Bagel Café

CKS has a café that is open on Sunday mornings for you to buy breakfast (bagels, juice, etc). If purchasing breakfast, please come early so your child can be in the classroom ready to learn at 9am. *Please note, food is not allowed in the sanctuary and eating in the classroom is left to the discretion of the teacher.*

Drop-off pick-up and early dismissal

While we realize that there may be times for your child to arrive late, or to leave early, please understand that this can be disruptive for the rest of the class. Whenever possible, try to make other arrangements.

If your child is leaving early, you will need to send a note telling the teacher the time that you will be picking up your child. Please come to the office first to sign your child out and then a parent volunteer will get your child.

Since attendance will be taken at the very beginning of the class, if your child arrives late, you will need to come to the office to sign them in so the lateness will not be recorded as absence.

Attendance and Missed Work

Attendance is an essential component of a successful Jewish education. If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please send an email to the teacher and be sure to check the weekly email for missed work and homework.

We cannot stress enough the importance of regular attendance to the success of your child's religious education. Since we have limited time to teach your child, consistency and continuity are essential in helping your child advance. If your child falls behind due to excessive absenteeism, the principal will contact you to discuss ways in which your child can complete their work and advance in education.

Homework

We will be assigning homework each session. Like any new skill, the learning of Hebrew requires regular practice. In order to maximize the students' religious school experience, we offer the following guidelines regarding homework:

- Parents with children in Grades K-2 should discuss religious school activities with their children and work with them on any home assignments
- Students in Grades 3-7 should spend at least 15 minutes a day on their Hebrew studies. As our Hebrew curriculum emphasizes prayer, parents can be particularly involved in working with students in their CKS Prayer Primer.
- Attendance to Friday night or Saturday morning services with your child(ren) will also go a long way in reinforcing what your child(ren) is learning, as well as put it into actual practice. (See Shabbat Minyanaires program below)

For parents with little or no Hebrew background, the Rabbi or Principal can provide support material for you. Please contact them for information. We also often offer an Adult Hebrew class.

COMMUNICATION

Parent Weekly Emails

Each week your child (ren's) teacher will send you an email. This email will include what was covered in class and the homework. Please make sure your child completes the homework each week.

Report Cards

All parents will receive Student Report Cards twice a year via email, once in January and again at the end of the school year. These progress reports are designed to let you how your child (ren) is doing in Religious School.

Emergency Closings

In the event of an emergency school closing for snow or other reasons, you will receive an email. It will also be posted on www.weatherclosings.com

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Open School/Orientation

In an effort to create a partnership between the teachers and the parents we will be holding an Open School day. During this time you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teacher. The teachers will explain the curricula, goals and will show the textbooks that the students will be using. This year, **Open School will be on October 10, 2010** during the last half hour of the morning. Students will come into the sanctuary at 11:30 and parents will go to the classrooms for 2, 15 minute sessions.

Tefillah (Prayer)

Each week we will have a Tefillah service with Rabbi Susan or Shari Rothstein in the sanctuary. K-4 will be from 9-9:15 and 5-7 will be from 11:45-12. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to join us. All students (girls and boys) must wear kippot during services. We encourage the students to bring one from home and keep it in their backpack.

Specials

Most weeks we will have specials – holiday celebrations, music, cooking and art.

6th/7th Grade Mitzvah Project Program

Beginning in the fall, our 7th graders will have the opportunity to meet for 30 minutes a few times a month with Meryl Orlando, our volunteer congregant teacher. Together they will discuss tzedakah and plan/ implement mitzvah projects for their B'nai mitzvah and as a class. Please keep in mind, we do not require the mitzvah project to be completed by your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We ask that the project be thought through and started during the 7th grade year. In addition to individual projects, the class as a whole will work on a large group mitzvah project. The 7th grade year is just the beginning of a life-long commitment to mitzvot.

This year Mrs. Orlando will also be meeting with the 6th graders in the Spring to assist them in planning and implementing their mitzvah projects.

Family Workshops

Your participation enriches your child's religious school experience and is a reward for you as well. This year we will be adding a Family Workshop for each grade. These programs will take place during Religious School hours and are designed as an opportunity for our students and parents to learn together and for the class families to get to know one another. Dates and times will be announced – please check your email.

Grade	Program Name
K-2	Sh'ma Pajama Party
3	What's in a Name
4	Saying Goodbye to Shabbat
5	It's A Blessing
6	Torah, Torah, Torah
7	15 Steps to Freedom

Tzedakah

Our synagogue emphasizes the importance of Tzedakah and Mitzvot. Tzedakah is the **weekly** collection of charity money that we regard as an important Jewish obligation to the community. We encourage each child and their family to contribute to the school's tzedakah fund through their own motivation and resources. Students will help to determine which worthwhile charities receive the proceeds over the course of the Religious School year. Through your encouragement of giving tzedakah each week, your child will learn to understand his or her Jewish responsibility.

Madrichim

We are fortunate to have high school students helping in the Religious School. These Madrich (boys) and Madricha (girls) are 9th -12th grade students who serve as mentors, leading our students through their religious education while also following their own path as they gain many important skills. These students are assigned to the classrooms and also can be available to work one-on-one with students that need extra help with Hebrew.

5th and 6th Grade Regional Retreat

There will be an optional Shabbaton program for students in Grades 5 & 6 that will take place **Fri., May 13 - Sun., May 15**, at Camp JRF in the Poconos. This will be a weekend retreat, where the children will have the opportunity to celebrate Shabbat in a fun, experimental learning environment, with children from other Reconstructionist synagogues.

Class Shabbat Programs

All students will have the opportunity to celebrate Shabbat with their class and their family as a community. All of these programs are part of the curriculum, and children are expected to attend. Besides the learning component, it is a chance for families to meet each other, and to connect with the CKS community.

Friday 10/29/10	6th & 7th Grade
Friday 12/3/10	K-5th Grade
Saturday 2/12/11	6th & 7th Grade
Saturday 3/19/11	4th & 5th Grade
Saturday 4/2/11	K-3rd Grade
Friday 5/20/11	School-wide

All Friday night services start with a pot luck dinner at 6pm, service to follow at 7pm. Saturday services will begin at 9am, Kiddush to follow after service.

Shabbat Minyanaires Program

As part of our Religious Education program, students have been expected to attend Shabbat worship services either on a Friday night or a Saturday morning. This year we have created a special Shabbat Minyanaires Program. Attending services helps to reinforce the prayer curriculum in our school by allowing the children to practice what they are learning, as well as to join in as part of the Jewish community. We want our students to be comfortable in services and increase their appreciation for worship. Additionally, throughout the year various grades will be leading Shabbat services.

The minimum Shabbat Attendance Expectation is as follows:

Grade	# of Shabbat Services	Additional Notes
K – 3 rd	4	Friday night or Saturday morning
4 th	5	Friday night or Saturday morning
5 th	7	Friday night or Saturday morning Must include at least 2 Saturday morning services
6 th	8	Friday night or Saturday morning Must include at least 2 Saturday morning services
7 th	8	Friday night or Saturday morning Must include at least 4 Saturday morning services

All students must sign in when attending services to receive credit for being there. At the end of the school year, we will recognize all the students that have fulfilled their requirement.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

In order for our Religious School to run smoothly and for all of our students to have a chance to study and grow in an environment conducive to learning, we will encourage and reward their good behavior while limiting their inappropriate behavior. We expect our students to remember that they are in a school as well as a synagogue, and that they should extend to the same courtesy and cooperation that we give them.

A **Brit (covenant) contract** was included with your registration packet for 3rd – 7th Graders. It is the parents' responsibility to review the behavioral guidelines with their children, sign the contract and return it before school begins, or no later than the first day of school. Students will be made aware of what is expected of them on the first day of school.

Congregation Kehilat Shalom Religious School **A Brit for 3rd – 7th grades**

Brit is the Hebrew word for "covenant". A covenant is a promise or a pledge. Our Jewish tradition teaches that the covenant God made with Abraham and Moses includes us as well. By fulfilling the covenant we become a people in partnership with God, and with our community.

Your religious school education is a covenant between the students, parents and teachers.

THE STUDENT'S BRIT:

I will be the best student I can be.

I will do the homework my teachers ask of me.

I will come to class on time, prepared with my homework and necessary materials.

I will treat my teachers, madrichim (teen teaching assistant) and classmates with honor, dignity, worth and respect.

I will attend religious school, missing as few days as possible.

I will participate in religious school activities, including attending Shabbat services.

I will respect the building and customs of our synagogue.

THE PARENT'S BRIT:

I will make the commitment that my child attends religious school.

I understand that if my child misses too many religious school sessions I may need to hire a private tutor.

I will make the commitment that my child attends all aspects of the religious school educational program, including attending Shabbat services.

I will check for homework assignments and encourage their completion.

I will encourage my child to read Hebrew at home on a regular basis.

THE TEACHER'S BRIT:

I will be the best teacher I can be.

I will be enthusiastic about what I am teaching.

I will be a role model who treats others with honor, dignity, worth and respect.

I will be prepared for my lessons.

I will help my students learn and understand the values Judaism.

KEHILAT SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PRAYER CURRICULUM

K – 2

Sh'ma - 1st line (page 65)
Hamotzi
Bracha over Candles
Bracha over Wine
Bracha for Chanukah Candles
Adon Olam - chorus
L'cha Dodi - chorus
Shabbat Shalom
Etz Chayim Hi- 1st line (page 441)

3rd Grade

Barchu (page 247)
Havdallah Brachot (page 525)
Four Questions
plus all K-2 prayers

4th Grade

Oseh Shalom (page 323)
Ma Tovu (1st line, page 14)
Mi Chamocha – Ma'ariv (page 79)
Shma Echad Gadlu 3 lines (page 393)
Avot v'Emot (page 295)
Shalom Aleychem (page 13)
plus all K-3 prayers

5th Grade

Mi Chamocha - Shaharit (page 291)
Gevurot (page 299)
V'ahavtah (page 85)
Aleinu (page 121 1st paragraph & page 123 1st verse)
plus all K-4 prayers

6th Grade

Aleinu (page 121 1st paragraph & page 123)
Kedusha (page 303-305)
V'shamru (page 85)
V'yehe Bensoah –(1) (page 385)
Y'halluh (page 433)
Adon Olam (page 459)
Blessing over Tallis (page 143)
plus all K-5 prayers

7th Grade

Torah Blessings (page 399)
Haftarah Blessings (page 409-411)
Full Friday night Kiddush (page 119)
plus all K-6 prayers

Please note, all students are responsible for the prayers learned in all grades up to their current grade.

The page numbers in parentheses represent the page it can be found in Kol Haneshamah – The Reconstructionist Siddur.

TEACHER AND CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Grade	Teacher	Room
K-2	Tracey Weingarten	Room 1
3 rd	Karen Fridkis	Room 3
4 th	Laura Leibowitz	Alcove
5 th & 6 th Hebrew	Sharon Diamondstein	Board Room
5 th & 6 th Jewish Studies	Robynn Mann	Room 2
7 th	Abby Sorrell	The Loft

STAFF CONTACT LIST

Grade	Teacher	Email
K-2	Tracey Weingarten	traceymarc@comcast.net
3 rd	Karen Fridkis	kfridkis@comcast.net
4 th	Laura Leibowitz	lauraleibowitz@gmail.com
5 th & 6 th Hebrew		
5 th & 6 th Jewish Studies	Robynn Mann	themannbunch@hotmail.com
7 th	Abby Sorrell	abbomatic@comcast.net
6 th / 7 th Mitzvah Project	Meryl Orlando	meryl@merlan.com
Rabbi	Susan Falk	rabbi@ksnj.org
Principal	Shari Rothstein	principal@ksnj.org
Music Teacher	Jodi Jackson	jodiseth@comcast.net