

Mission Statement

The Religious School of Congregation Beth Yeshurun serves the Jewish educational needs of the children of Congregation Beth Yeshurun in Kindergarten through seventh grade. The aim of our Religious School is to provide the child with a firm Jewish foundation encompassing moral and ethical values coupled with spiritual growth which can be built upon throughout the elementary and high school years and later into college

Religious School Theme for the Year

This year, our Religious School theme will be
“A Year of Sharing God’s Miracles”

We will spend the year sharing stories with our students about how to find God in their everyday lives.

Our goal is to encourage our students to see God in their Lives now, to truly feel God’s presence, so this “gift” will be with them throughout their lives.

Rabbi Strauss

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I. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Kindergarten through Second Grade corresponding to Gan, Alef & Bet meet on Sunday morning - 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Gimel (3RD), Dalet (4TH), Hey (5TH), Vav (6TH) and Zayin (7TH) grade classes meet on Sunday morning 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and Wednesday – 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

In addition, attendance at Junior Congregation is expected at least nine times during the school year.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

Students need to enroll in Religious School when in third (3rd) grade. Those students attending a Jewish Day school are not required to attend. Grades K-2, while not mandatory, provides a solid foundation for the Religious School years; enrollment in these grades and is strongly encouraged. You must be a synagogue member in good standing in order for your child/ren to attend.

DRESS CODE

We abide by HISD dress code.

We expect all students to be dressed respectfully when attending Religious School classes. The type of clothing one wears influences behavior. When students come to the synagogue for class dressed inappropriately, their behavior reflects that informality and their ability to study their religious and sacred texts is compromised. We ask that every student come dressed in a manner which will facilitate their learning in a positive manner. For safety reasons Flip Flops are absolutely not allowed.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Every day of instruction is important. Absence from school prevents attainment of high academic standards, hinders growth and understanding and interferes with classroom activities.

We require **regular and punctual** attendance at Religious School. Your child's success in our program depends on your commitment to having him/her here. Students should not miss any classes or leave early

except for illness, family celebration and/or a family emergency. No excused absences will be given for vacations, sports and/or extracurricular activities.

Our experience has shown there is a direct correlation between Religious School attendance in conjunction with Junior Congregation and your child's ability to confidently lead the congregation in prayer at his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Beth Yeshurun Religious School has guidelines that are followed which relate to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. There are four levels of prayers a child may lead at his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah, depending on ability. Hazzan Propis will evaluate your child prior to tutoring.

JUNIOR CONGREGATION

Students in Gimel (3rd) through Hey (5th) classes must attend Junior Congregation a minimum of 1 time a month during the school year. Junior Congregation will meet from 9:30 – 10:30 Saturday morning in Mandel Weiner beginning September 12.

Attendance at the Main Sanctuary Service only at Beth Yeshurun may also be part of the count. Attendance will be taken at Junior Congregation with a card system. Each student must pull their card and give it to Rabbi Morgen at the conclusion of the service. Rabbi Morgen conducts our service with the able assistance of Cantor Diane Dorf. This is a fun and relaxed service where our children are provided with the background to feel comfortable and knowledgeable about the Shabbat morning service. Cantor Diane Dorf is our Junior Congregation Coordinator and works with the children who are the Rabbis of the Week and the Torah readers. She is with us every Wednesday and provides a CD of their part. If you would like your child to be the Rabbi of the Week and/or read from the Torah, please contact Cantor Dorf at ddorf@bethyeshurun.org or 713 666-1884. We strongly urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to help your child grow and become more confident by leading a part of the service.

We encourage parents to attend Junior Congregation with their children. This is a wonderful opportunity to become reacquainted with the service in a comfortable atmosphere. Synagogue attendance is not just preparation for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but is a celebration of Shabbat with family and friends and connects us with God. **All the children who attend the minimum nine times will be recognized.**

MINI MINYAN

Students in Kindergarten – 2nd Grade are invited to attend a special service created just for them. Leading the service will be Eve Zehavi with Rabbi Strauss coming to tell stories and share teachings with the children. This is a bridge service between Tot Shabbat and Junior Congregation. Our young ones will learn different Shabbat morning prayers, study the Torah portion, and discover the unique meaning and joy of Shabbat. Grape juice and challah will be served at the conclusion of each service. We will be meeting once a month in the music room. Students must attend at least two of the services during the year. The dates for these services are: **September 12, October 17, December 5, January 9, February 13, March 13 and April 17.** Join us for what promises to be an exciting service created just for your child.

MITZVAH PROJECTS AND FIELD TRIPS

All grade levels will be participating in a mitzvah project especially designed for them. During the year if an opportunity arises for us to participate in a special project, we look for ways to make it happen. We also take field trips during the course of the year which enhance what we do in class. In order for your child to go on the field trip, the completed yellow field trip authorization form must be filled out and on file in the Religious School office.

- K-2 Decorating Shabbat bags for Jewish patients at MD Anderson.
- Grade 2 Visit the Houston Arboretum Sunday, January 31st.
- Grade 3 Visit to 7 Acres to play bingo with the residents on Sunday, Dec. 13th.
- Grade 4 Visit the SPCA Wednesday, May 5th.
- Grade 5 Houston Jewish Historical trip which culminates with a Visit to the Beth Yeshurun Cemetery to bury old prayer books and bibles on Sunday, May 2nd.
- Grade 6 Decorate Shema pillowcases for patients at the hospital
- Grade 7 Visit the Holocaust Museum on Sunday, February 7th.
- Grades 1-2 Go to the JCC on Sunday, November 8th for the JCC Book Fair Family Day.
- Grades 3-7 Go to the JCC Book Fair on November 4th.

We will continue to have in house field trips with visits from the Living Legacy program which include, Shofar making, olive press, Mezuzah, Tefillin, Tallit, Havdallah, Matza baking and the Torah Factory.

TZEDAKAH

Last year, the Tzedakah money collected during the course of the year was contributed to: providing Israeli soldiers with Mishloach Manot for Purim, JFS for Passover assistance, Magen David Adom, and to Camp Simcha, a camp dedicated to providing a camping experience to those children undergoing cancer treatments.

We encourage all students to bring money for tzedakah. The goal is to teach the students active participation in philanthropy by bringing tzedakah to class. There is no set amount and this is something you can discuss with your child.

Shabbatons

NEW THIS YEAR

Religious School Shabbaton

Saturdays - Nov. 21 and March 27 - 9:30 - 12:30 [PLEASE NOTE - These Saturdays will take the place of Religious School classes on Sunday, Nov. 22 and Sunday, March 28.]

The entire family is encouraged to attend as we celebrate Shabbat with family connections, learning, and Ruach (spirit). Join your teachers, rabbis, and Hazzan for a beautiful Shabbat morning. On Saturday, Nov. 21 we will emphasize the upcoming holiday of Hanukkah in our learning. On Saturday, March 27 we will emphasize the upcoming holiday of Passover in our learning. We will conclude both Saturdays with Shabbat lunch at noon.

Wednesday Evening's Coffee Talk

Join Rabbi Strauss for "Wednesday Evening's Coffee Talk". Come a few minutes early right before carpool

All Religious School parents are invited to join Rabbi Strauss every Wednesday evening from 6:00 - 6:30 pm at the school right before carpool to discuss and study what our children are learning from Rabbi Strauss and our teachers.

Now when your children get in the car, you can tell them that you know some of the things they learned that week and discuss it with them! In the process, you may learn a little bit more about Judaism yourself!

CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Our code of student behavior, which is based on Jewish tenets, directs our interaction with each other. The following behavior is expected of all students in Religious School:

- ❖ Respect each other and accept individual differences.
“Who deserves respect? Someone who respects others.”
(Ethics of our Fathers 4:1)
- ❖ Behave honestly.
“Stay away from dishonesty.” (Exodus: 23:7)
- ❖ Show thoughtfulness, consideration and appreciation.
“Greet every person cheerfully.” (Ethics of our Fathers 1:15)
- ❖ Listen respectfully to others.
“Who is wise? Someone who learns from every person.”
(Ethics of our Fathers 4:1)
- ❖ Take responsibility for the safety of yourself and others.
“All Jews are responsible for each other.” (Talmud, Shavuot 39a)
- ❖ Use respectful language.
“Death and life can depend upon the tongue.” (Proverbs 18:21)
- ❖ Resolve differences in an appropriate way.
“Seek peace and pursue it.” (Psalms 34:15)
- ❖ Make amends if you hurt others.
“The wrongdoer must make peace with the injured person and ask that person’s pardon.” (Mishna Torah, Repentance 2:9)
- ❖ Respect each other’s and school property.
“The property of others should be as precious to you as your own.” (Ethics of our Fathers 2:17)
- ❖ Share in each other’s joys and support each other in times of need.
“You shall love your fellow person as yourself.” (Leviticus 9:18)
- ❖ You are an important part of our community! You do make a difference!

“Do not keep yourself apart from the community.” (Ethics of our Fathers 2:5)

DISCIPLINE POLICY

“Without Torah there is no Derech Eretz (respect), without Derech Eretz there is no Torah.” Ethics of our Fathers 3:21

The purpose of discipline should not be punitive, but be instructive. Our goal in the Religious School is to work together to treat each other with Derech Eretz. Respect for G-d, Torah, and mitzvot are our guiding principles. We expect all members of the Religious School community, both adults and students, to abide by these principles.

1. When an incident first occurs, the teacher will counsel the student in the classroom in a professional manner.
2. At the time of the second incident, or the first incident if it is extremely serious in nature, the student will be sent to the principal or school office. A discipline report will be filled out by the teacher and given to the principal to be placed in the student’s file. The principal will contact the parents and explain the discipline report.
3. The third time a student causes a significant class disturbance, the student will again be sent to the principal. The principal will have the student telephone his/her parents. The child will be suspended and the parents will be required to come into the school to discuss the situation with the principal, the teacher, and the child. No child will be readmitted to class prior to this meeting with the principal and the teacher.
4. After two suspensions from the Religious School, the student may be subject to suspension for the remainder of the semester, with the parents providing the tutoring necessary to keep the child at class level. The principal must approve the tutor, and testing may be required before re-entry into classrooms.
5. Incidents of misbehavior may include but are not limited to the following:
 - ◆ Disrespect to faculty and or peers.
 - ◆ Defacing school or synagogue property.
 - ◆ Theft of property.
 - ◆ Persistent refusal to comply with the school rules resulting in major classroom or school disruption.
 - ◆ Insubordinate behavior despite teacher direction.
 - ◆ Abusive language or action (including physical violence.)

CELL PHONES

Students are not allowed to use the telephone during school hours except in case of emergency. Students may not use cell phones during the school day.

SNACKS

Kindergarten – Second Grade: Snacks will be provided. Our snack is animal crackers or graham crackers. If your child has a dairy allergy, please alert us as soon as possible.

Third – Seventh Grades: We encourage you to send a healthy, dairy or parve snack with your child to school. Please be respectful of the synagogue rules and only send kosher foods. Snacks may be purchased in the Mandel Weiner auditorium prior to classes. Suggested snacks: fruit, crackers and cheese, vegetables, popcorn, granola bars, chips, etc. French fries from fast food establishments are not allowed. **Because we have children with severe allergies to all nuts, we ask that you not send any nuts or peanut butter.**

6TH GRADE SPECIAL EVENTS

Because the 6th grade is such a preparatory year for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we have instituted special programming which includes the Beth Yeshurun children who attend Emery Weiner. All the children should have the opportunity to get to know one another.

December 6 is our **Annual Dinner** for the families to get to know one another and a short program dealing with the meaning of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Etiquette class is being held to help our children to feel comfortable in a formal setting, learn the ins and outs of table manners, greetings, “thank you’s” and other social matters. It is being held on Sunday, February 21.

Sacred Choices class where the children will discuss the issues of self image, hooking up and other issues on January 24.

Yad project – the children will create a sacred object through the Gary Rosenthal Hidden Mitzvah collection as a family heirloom.

SCHWARTZ TEFILLIN PROJECT

All students in the Vav (6th) and Zayin (7th) classes are eligible to earn a pair of Tefillin (phylacteries) at the end of the school year.

Students will have the opportunity on Sunday morning at services to put on Tefillin provided by the school. Teachers will be available to assist the students in putting them on correctly. Those students who have put on

Tefillin a majority of the time will be given a pair of Tefillin at the last service of the year. Even though participation in the program is optional, we encourage all of our students to participate in this worthwhile program.

SPECIAL NEEDS/TUTORING

We will be continuing our individualized tutoring sessions this year, in which tutorial aides assist children with special needs in order to strengthen their Hebrew skills. Freda Wadler will continue to be our resource teacher helping our students.

It is crucial that you inform us of any special needs that may affect your child's behavior or performance at Religious School by filling out the enclosed information sheet. Whether it is a food allergy or a learning difference, it is imperative that we have this information in order to meet the special needs of your child. As stated in the opening paragraph of the information sheet, this information will remain strictly confidential.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWSLETTER AND CORRESPONDENCE

All of our correspondence is now handled through email. Please be sure we have your correct email address to ensure you are kept up to date with information. The school calendar of events is listed in the directory and more information can be found through the synagogue website www.bethyeshurun.org.

WEEKLY E-MAILS

Please make sure that your e-mail address is current. Every week, Rabbi Strauss will be sending out e-mails outlining some of the things that the students are learning at school. In addition, Avril will also be sending out important e-mails with school information that you need to know about. Finally, parents should expect constant communications from their teachers. This way, you will know what your child is learning and what is happening in his or her classroom.

EMERGENCY OR INCLEMENT WEATHER SCHOOL CLOSING

Please listen to KTRH radio (740 AM), KPRC radio (950 AM) or watch KPRC (Channel 2) to find out about school closings. If possible we will send out an email. If HISD is closed, so are we. If Religious School has not been cancelled, but the weather in your area is a cause for concern, please use your judgment in attempting to make it to Religious School.

CARPOOL DISMISSAL PROCEDURES



SUNDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS

Religious School students will be dismissed from Mandel Weiner.

CARPOOL SAFETY RULES

**The safety of your child is our number one concern.
Your adherence to carpool rules will help us in safeguarding your child.**

Teachers will be on duty during carpool dismissal.
Please be courteous and respectful.

- ❖ Enter the parking lot at a reduced speed.
- ❖ All children will wait in Mandel Weiner and will be called to the car by our staff.
- ❖ Drive along the curb to pick up your carpool.
- ❖ No child will be permitted to walk into the parking lot to meet a parent.
- ❖ Before driving off, be sure all doors are properly closed.
- ❖ DO NOT DOUBLE PARK.
- ❖ Please respect reserved parking spots, and do not park in them at any time.
- ❖ Do not park in handicapped spaces.
- ❖ Kindergarten parents may pick up their child from the classroom.
- ❖ Do not use your cell phone while in the parking lot as it poses a danger to the children

If you are picking up your child early, your child **MUST** bring a note. They may not wait for you outside; you will need to come in to pick them up.

II. CURRICULUM

Gan—Bet (Kindergarten—2nd)

Our Sunday School department consists of grades Kindergarten through second grade. The goal of our lower grades is to introduce the students to the study of Hebrew and the beauty of our Jewish heritage through the use of exciting texts that present Hebrew, Bible study, Israel, Tzedakah and Jewish holidays in an age-appropriate format.

The students begin learning Hebrew in Kindergarten. Each year we build on the foundation of the Hebrew letter and vowel recognition. By second grade, the students are introduced to phonetic reading of basic words that are included in a primary noun vocabulary of at least 50 Hebrew words.

Bible and Jewish holidays are presented in fully illustrated texts that include many exercises and activities to reinforce the subject matter.

Students in kindergarten through second grade will be introduced to Israeli dancing on a weekly basis and are exposed to music through a variety of Hebrew English songs throughout the year. Library, a component of our program, will enable our students to be introduced to “Jewish books”.

HEBREW DEPARTMENT

Our goal is to provide our students with a basic course of Hebrew instruction, with an emphasis on reading Hebrew with fluency and accuracy. An integral component of the Hebrew curriculum is the reading and comprehension of the Friday evening and Shabbat morning prayers. Due to the time allotted for Hebrew School instruction, it is not within our capacity to have the students become fluent in Hebrew conversation.

Our Hebrew Department consists of grades 3 through 5, corresponding to the Hebrew letters Gimel through Hey. When the students enter Hebrew School, they begin the study of the *New Hebrew and Heritage Siddur Program*.

The goal of the *New Siddur Program* is prayer literacy -- fluent reading with comprehension. This is achieved through the reading and translation of stories based on Jewish life, along with the presentation of prayers in the Shabbat morning service, selections from the Friday evening service, and important home rituals. The Gimel, Dalet and Hey

classes emphasize this area of the curriculum. In addition the program offers a unique combination of meaningful Hebrew stories, prayer material, and activities which provide a strong foundation for *Siddur* study.

PRAYER

Through the use of our Hebrew texts, the students will become familiar with and will be able to recite the prayers of the various services, specifically the *Shacharit* (morning) service and the *Shabbat* service, as well as holiday prayers. Students in the older grades will become familiar with and will understand the content and meaning of the prayers. Our goal in this subject is to provide the students with a positive attitude towards religious services and rituals. There are two services on Sunday morning – one for Gimel, Dalet, and Hey and one for Vav and Zayin. The Vav (6th) and Zayin (7th) service is from 10:30 -11:15. Cantor Francyne Davis Jacobs, our Hillel principal will be leading our 6th & 7th grade service once a month. Gimel, Dalet & Hey service is from 11:45 a.m.-12:25 p.m. Both School services are led by the students. Parents are invited to join their child for the service.

3rd GRADE

In the 3rd grade the children will be focusing on their Hebrew reading. In addition they continue to learn more about the holidays. Another area is the study of the early prophets. The children are exposed to Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Goliath and Jonathan. This gives the children an opportunity to learn that once we entered the land of Israel, we needed different kinds of leaders to help us become the nation of Israel.

4th GRADE

The 4th grade is a wonderful year where the children are now old enough to really discuss the Torah portion of the week and the lessons we derive from them. “A Kid’s Mensch Handbook” is a step by step guide to a lifetime of Jewish values and is a wonderful book for our students. This book deals with making good choices and how to evaluate situations in order to make good choices. Our 4th grade Siddur service, which will be held on Sunday, March 7, is a wonderful event where the children demonstrate their knowledge of the service and the prayers.

5th GRADE

The 5th grade year is an exciting one. Our curriculum has several different components. On March 20, from 6:30 -7:00, the children will participate in a Havdallah service. This service which concludes Shabbat is a beautiful and moving service. Israel and Zionism are an important element they learn about the modern Jewish state as well as the importance of the State of Israel in today’s world. The students begin to

develop closeness with this ancient land. The text, *Welcome to Israel*, is a new textbook designed for 5th graders. The book takes the students on an exciting tour of Israel, learning about Israel's history, geography, political and cultural life. The book includes full color photos, maps and whimsical illustration and provides a clear eyed view of the land and is bursting with wonder, humor and pizzazz. To round out this full program, we also discuss the Jewish lifecycle from birth to death. As a culminating event, we will have a Jewish Historical tour of Houston which will end at the Beth Yeshurun cemetery where we will bury old prayer books and bibles. This gives the students an opportunity to learn about our customs and practices concerning death and cemetery etiquette.

PLEASE REMEMBER--ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN OUR SHABBAT JUNIOR CONGREGATION PROGRAM IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR STUDENT'S B'NAI MITZVAH PREPARATION!

VAV and ZAYIN
(Grades 6 and 7)

Our Vav (6th) and Zayin (7th) classes are divided into two semesters, thus providing the students an opportunity to experience a variety of Judaic curricula and learning experiences. We are very fortunate to have Rabbi Morgen involved in our program as one of our teachers. Not only is his knowledge available to us, but also the interaction the students have with him provides a special bonding with our clergy. The course of studies for the Vav year includes:

- Topics in the Bible
- Shema is for Real
- Ethics and Values
- Babaganewz magazine
- Special projects

The course of studies for the Zayin year includes:

- Holocaust with a trip to the Holocaust Museum
- Prayer and its meaning
- Jewish History
- Why being Jewish matters
- Jewish Life
 - Kashrut
 - Shabbat
 - Tallit
 - Tefillin
 - Mikvah

We are offering two very important workshops for our middle school students. One is a session with Susan Shaw of the ADL on bullying. We all know of the problem many children face in school being different. Susan will be addressing those issues with your child on Sunday, November 15.

Another very important program will be on sexuality and self esteem. Dr. Manizeh Gruber, a renowned expert in the field, will be joining us on Sunday, January 24. She will first address the parents and then meet with your children.

Library Program

We are pleased to be continuing an exciting complement to our program. All students in K—7 will be meeting with our librarian, Monica Woolf, to explore the vast rich world of Jewish books. K—2 will be listening to children’s literature. Grades 3—7 will have the opportunity to discover the resources available to them and learn about Jewish writing for the past 3,000 years. We culminate this study with **Young Authors’ Day on April 14** where our students will have the privilege of hearing a Jewish author speak.

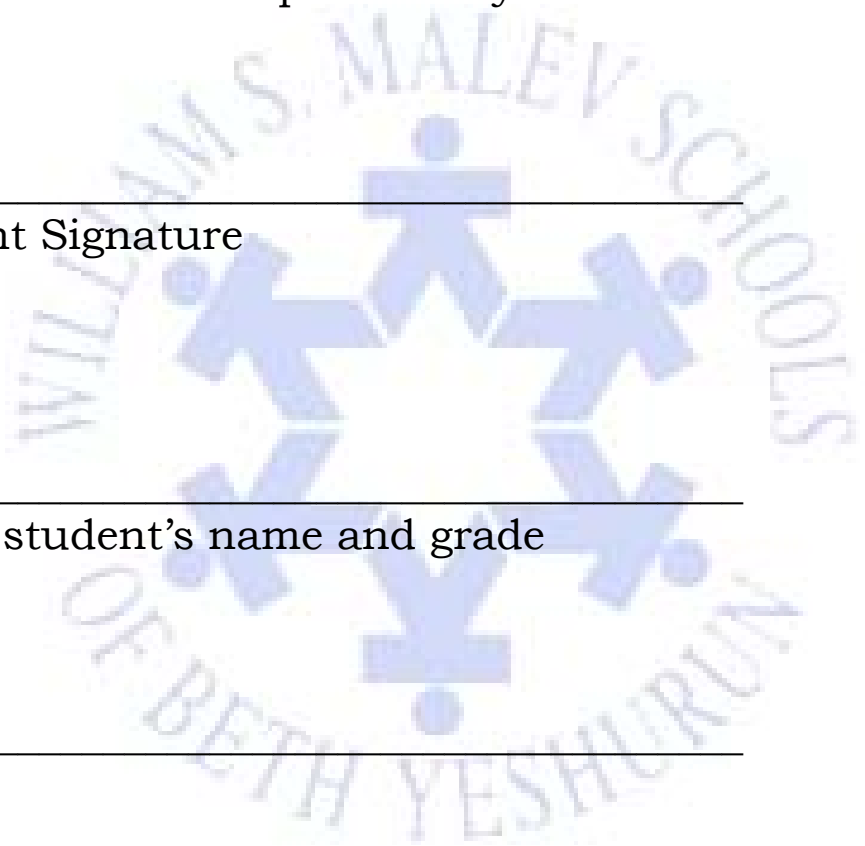
Code of Student Behavior Contract 1 (pink)

I have read and discussed with my child the Code of Conduct and Discipline Policy.

Parent Signature

Your student's name and grade

Date



Special Needs Form:

2 (blue)

Dear Parents,

If you have a child with special needs, please provide us with the following information to help make his/her religious school experience a successful one. This information is **strictly confidential** and accessible only to those involved in his/her education at the synagogue.

Child's name _____ Grade _____

Address _____ Phone _____

In school, my child is in a (please circle):

Regular classroom with modifications

Self-contained class with mainstreaming

Resource room

Self contained class

In school, my child receives the following modifications (please circle):

Changes in the pace of instruction

Extended time for assignment completion

Reduced pencil/paper tasks

Behavioral management systems

Social supports (buddy system, Sensitization of classmates)

Taped texts

Seating

Other: _____

On the back, please include a descriptive summary about your child including strengths and weaknesses, past Religious School experience and suggestions of what academic, social, emotional and or physical modifications would be beneficial to your child for the next school year.

Would you like to have a conference with your child's teacher?

Do we have permission to contact your child's school?

If yes, please provide:

Teacher's name _____

School name _____

Phone number _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian _____ Date _____

VOLUNTEER SLIP

3 (green)

We need the help of our parents in a variety of ways. If you would like to volunteer, please fill out this form and return it to the school office.

NAME OF PARENT _____

NAME OF STUDENT _____ **GRADE** _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL _____

I would like to:

_____ Help with Holiday treats

_____ Serve as Chair of the Model Seder

_____ Help with the Model Seder

_____ Help with Young Author's Day

THANK YOU!!!

Field Trip Authorization Form

4 (yellow)

Grade _____

You have my permission to take my child _____
on all field trips throughout the year. I release Beth Yeshurun
and its personnel of any responsibility while in transit.

Parent's Signature _____

Parent's name (printed) _____

Contact 1 _____ Contact 2 _____

Home Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Photograph Permission Slip

5 (lilac)

Throughout the year we take pictures of our students engaged in a variety of activities.

These pictures are used in our school or used for publicity announcements in periodicals (e.g. The Jewish Herald Voice or the Houston Chronicle or The Message) or on the Beth Yeshurun Website. Please fill out the information below authorizing the use of your child's photograph.

Student's name: _____

Grade: _____

Check one:

I give consent for my child's photograph to be published in the Jewish Herald Voice, the Chronicle and/or The Message.

I do not give consent for my child's photograph to be published in The Jewish Herald Voice, the Chronicle and/or The Message.

Check one:

I give consent for my child's photograph to be published on the Website.

I do not give consent for my child's photograph to be published on the Website.

Parent's signature: _____

Parent's name (printed): _____ Date: _____