

Congregation Ner Tamid

Religious School

Handbook



“The world is sustained by three things:
Torah, worship and loving deeds.”

*“Keep hold of instruction; do not let go;
guard her, for she is your life.”*

(Proverbs 4:13)

This past year has been one of observation, developing new friendships, learning from many others, and knowing that I am where I should be.....with you and your children at Congregation Ner Tamid. Being part of this incredible school and synagogue has answered my prayers – working to make a difference in each of our student’s lives.

The goal of our program has always been and continues to be giving our students the tools to live Jewishly and develop personal connections beyond the classroom. Our newly developed curriculum will give each student the chance to participate in a hands-on, exciting way. They will learn by “doing.” They will learn by developing relationships. They will learn by questioning and experimenting. Religious School will be the place they can form opinions about Judaism that will remain with them for their entire lives.

This promises to be a wonderful year. I am always open to suggestions and new ideas, so feel free to stop in, call, or e-mail me. Together we will work to make this school year a successful one!

To a great year!!!!

Lonnie

Welcome to Congregation Ner Tamid's Religious School

Curriculum Philosophy & Goals

We seek to nurture all students at all levels so that this journey with CNT Religious School is truly a memorable and fulfilling one.

You will find that we approach Jewish education as a sacred endeavor through an active and inclusive learning environment, warm and inspiring teachers, and partnership with parents.

The CNT Religious School is committed to teaching our students to “be Jewish.” Our curriculum will help students learn and grow and is based on the most important concepts and values of Jewish life and helping students mature into committed and thoughtful Jewish adults.

We root our students' Jewish identities at CNT, providing them with a foundation for connecting to the Jewish community and the world at large.

We will begin our lifelong journey of learning as early as Pre-Kindergarten. Each year we will build on what we have learned and continue to challenge students to think creatively and lovingly about what it means to be part of a Jewish community.

Jewish identity and Jewish practice do not form in a vacuum or only through study. Judaism must be lived and felt. Therefore, throughout the year there will be a wide variety of programs that will bring our school community together, along with individual class family programs. Students will engage in experiential learning focusing on Jewish holidays and ritual traditions.

Key to the success of your child's Religious School experience is the reinforcement of Jewish values in the home. Active participation in the synagogue, attendance at Shabbat services, sending your child to a Jewish summer camp, or participating in one of our youth groups are just some of the ways to reinforce the values that we teach our students.

OUR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Our curriculum covers three enduring understandings – Torah, Avodah (the work we do), and G'milut Chasadim (acts of kindness). These three areas are introduced and taught through projects, activities, music, movement, and reading. A parent component is included with each grade level, so sharpen your pencils....we'll need your input!

Gan Yeladim/Pre-K

This program is designed to be a bridge between our Kantor Early Childhood Education Center and the CNT Religious School. It is also for Pre-K children who have not recently attended a Jewish preschool. Our goal is to help families develop a sense of community. Gan Yeladim is a joyful introduction to the Jewish holiday, Shabbat, Torah and familiarity with our synagogue with crafts, singing, story telling and prayer.

Kindergarten – Jewish Holidays & Symbols, My Synagogue

Kindergarten is the year of formally beginning one's Religious School education. Concentration is on Jewish holidays, the Jewish home, and our synagogue taught through the senses. Experiences are presented through music, art, dance, drama, literature and prayer. The Consecration service is a major highlight of this year. Hebrew vocabulary is also introduced.

First Grade – Jewish Holidays & Jewish Identity

Jewish holidays will be reviewed and celebrated through the senses. Children will become aware of his or her Jewish identity learning about Jewish objects and symbols. The Alef-Bet will be introduced through games and art.

Second Grade – The Book of Genesis

Children will delve into the fascinating stories in the Book of Genesis. Beginning with the story of Creation to Noah's Ark, The Tower of Babel, Abraham's journey, and more, children will begin to connect what they are learning with our most precious gift, the Torah. In Hebrew, the children will be learning to identify Hebrew letters with their sounds and read simple vocabulary words.

Third Grade – Bible Stories & Mitzvot

Students will hear and learn about various stories in the Torah beyond the book of Genesis. The Crossing of the Red Sea, The Giving of the Ten Commandments, The Golden Calf and David & Goliath are just a few they will explore. Students will also gain a greater understanding and participate in Mitzvot (good deeds we are commanded to do from God). Prayer book Hebrew will be formally introduced.

Fourth Grade – God & Eretz Yisrael

The concept of God is a difficult one for children. They will begin connecting their personal relationship to God and how it affects his or her own spirituality. The students will delve into the creation and importance of Israel. Why is this land so important to the Jewish people? How were they able to turn the desert into lush, productive fields? Students will learn about Israel's history, lifestyle and people. Tuesday Hebrew school begins this year.

Fifth Grade – Jewish Life Cycle

Growing up to be a Jewish adult is a journey. From birth on there are milestones that each Jew marks along the way. Students will learn to understand, appreciate, and know why and how each Jewish Life Cycle event is significant. The Life Cycle events covered are *Brit Milah*, baby naming, *Bar and Bat Mitzvah*, Confirmation, marriage (yes...they will be planning and attending a real wedding!) and aging, death, and dying. Students will also learn more between the *b'rit* (covenant) between God and man and *g'milut chasadim* (personal acts of loving kindness). Hebrew School continues on Tuesdays where students will be learning the prayers needed for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Sixth Grade – Jewish Ethics, Comparative Judaism, Reform Judaism, Holocaust

Jewish ethics will be discussed as they relate to the student's everyday experiences. Students will also learn what makes Reform Judaism different from other sects of Judaism. What makes us special? How did Reform Judaism come about? How is it different from Orthodox and Conservative Judaism? The Holocaust will also be introduced. How did this tragedy happen? How was Judaism able to survive? Students will also begin preparing for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Seventh Grade - Judaism & the Real World

This religious school year will delve into the topic, "Judaism & the Real World." Issues such as anti-semitism, bullying, Jews in the News, Tikkun Olam, and reflecting oneself as a Jew in today's world will be addressed. Students will be actively participating in a variety of activities and discussions. Tuesday Hebrew school is REQUIRED for all B'nai Mitzvah students.

THE TRIBE- Grades 8-12

Sundays - twice a month: 12:20-1:45 p.m.

Eighth Grade - Community & Mitzvot

Meeting twice a month on Sundays, 8th graders will enjoy a light lunch followed by a hands-on, experiential, educational and fun curriculum taught by Cantor Hutchings. Eighth graders will be experiencing Judaism by "doing!" Eighth graders are also eligible to participate in the Madrachim program.

9th & 10th Grades - Social Justice

Taught by Rabbi Akselrad, 9th & 10th graders will meet twice a month. The first class each month will be on a Sunday from 12:20-1:45 p.m. and will include a light lunch. The second class of each month may meet on a Sunday, but due to the subject matter, may meet on a different day of the week. This Social Justice curriculum will cover various Jewish values and will include monthly hands-on experiences. There will be a class trip near the end of the school year. Both 9th & 10th graders are eligible to participate in the Madrachim program.

10th Graders will also be Confirmed this year. As Consecration is the beginning of formal Jewish learning, Confirmation is the "end" of formal Jewish learning. Our 10th graders lead an entire service confirming their Judaism and receive a special blessing from our Rabbi and Cantor.

11th & 12th Grades - Comparative Judaism & Jews in Nevada

Students will enjoy a light lunch. This is a two-year curriculum. One year will have the students explore various types of Judaism and its relationships with other faith traditions. The second year focuses on the role of Jews in American government and the history of the Jews in Nevada. This year culminates in a trip to Carson City & Reno.

*“Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember;
involve me and I’ll understand.”
(Chinese Proverb)*

MADRACHIM:

8th through 12th graders have the opportunity to be *Madrichim* (teacher aides) in the Kindergarten through 8th grade classrooms on Sundays and/or Tuesdays Hebrew School. They will also participate in a leadership development class designed specifically for them. Prerequisite for students interested in the *Madrichim* Program: Must be enrolled in the Tribe program.

YOUTH CHOIR (Kochavim): Open to all students in Grades 2-8. Youth Choir meets on Sundays. Cantor Hutchings and Lori Frankl will be directing. Performances are held several times during the year. For more information contact Cantor Hutchings at cantor@lvnertamid.org.

YOUTH GROUPS:

A fun and rewarding opportunity for your child is to be part of a group of students in his/her age range. Children develop a strong bond with their peers as they progress through the year.

ITTY BTTY NTTY/IBN: For students in Grades 3, 4 & 5! This group meets once a month after Religious School (lunch will be served). Dues were included with your Religious School fee. Some additional fees may apply depending on events. For more information email Beth Davis at bdavis@lvnertamid.org.

TEENS OF NER TAMID/TNT: For students in Grades 6, 7 & 8. This group meets once a month on Sundays. Dues were included with your Religious School fee. Some additional fees may apply depending on events. For more information email Beth Davis at bdavis@lvnertamid.org.

NER TAMID TEMPLE YOUTH/NTTY: Grades 9-12 will meet as a division of NTTY-National Federation of Temple Youth. NTTY has their own board, where in conjunction with their advisor create their own calendar of events to support their programs and activities. NTTY members are CNT role models. Alana Gross is the NTTY advisor and can be reached at Alanagross@ymail.com.

FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAMS & OPPORTUNITIES

Family education programs allow parents to discover what their children are learning in Religious School, and offer opportunities to pray and celebrate together and with the Congregation Ner Tamid community.

You and your family are invited to the following programs (this is just a sampling):

- **TOT SHABBAT.** Usually the 1st Friday of the month from 6:15-7:15 p.m., families with young children participate in an interactive Shabbat service geared just for them, and then meet for an art project and a special Shabbat snack.
- **HIGH HOLY DAY SERVICES.** A number of services are offered for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. There is a Tot Service, NTTY Teen Service and a Family Service offered for each holy day. Refer to the temple bulletin or temple web page for dates and times.
- **SHABBAT SERVICES.** Shabbat services are held every Friday evening. Shir Shabbat is a special Religious School Shabbat service. Refer to the temple bulletin or temple web page for dates and times.
- **CONSECRATION.** All our Kindergarten students participate in this special life cycle event. Consecration means dedicating oneself to an ideal, in this case, to the ideal of study, and recognizes the beginning of one's formal Jewish education. Each child receives a Torah, learns and sings the *Shema*, and receives a special blessing from our Rabbi and Cantor welcoming them to our school and the beginning of their Jewish educational journey.
- **RELIGIOUS SCHOOL FAMILY DAYS.** Students in Grades Kindergarten through 6th invite their families to a Sunday morning Religious School program. Students and their families will learn and create together in an interactive way, focusing on a specific theme relating to their Religious School curriculum. An adult education component between our Rabbi or Cantor and parents is included. Please refer to our school calendar or temple web page for dates.
- **ALL FAMILY PROGRAMS.** Three programs during the school year will be held for all the students and their families. These programs will be interactive, creative, educational and fun. The first and last days of Religious School are two of the programs. The third will be announced as the school year progresses. Be sure to mark your calendar. You don't want to miss these!
- **FAMILY CONNECTION.** This is our parents' way of being involved with fundraising, policy making, Religious School support, and just socializing. Family Connection usually meets the 1st Sunday of the month.
- **CONGREGATION NER TAMID HOLIDAY PROGRAMS.** Sukkot, Chanukah and Purim are just three of the programs offered by CNT for families. Check the temple bulletin or temple web page for more information.
- **ADULT EDUCATION.** A wide range of programs are offered to enhance your knowledge about Judaism, Hebrew, Israel, etc. For more information, refer to Congregation Ner Tamid's Adult Education brochure or CNT's web page. You may also contact Neil Popish at (702) 733-6292, ext. 205.

B'NAI MITZVAH STUDIES, PREPARATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Most training in Hebrew prayer reading and Torah and Haftarah reading skills is accomplished during the 3 or 4 year midweek and Sunday Hebrew program which begins in 4th Grade. *B'nai Mitzvah* dates are selected through a process involving families and Rabbi Akselrad and Cantor Hutching's offices. Dates are typically selected approximately 1 to 2 years prior to the child's 13th birthday year. Families will receive information on this process well in advance. Weekly private tutoring will take place in the 6 months immediately preceding the child's *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* (and is coordinated through the Cantor's office). In addition, each student is required to participate in a *mitzvah*/social action activity preceding the *B'nai Mitzvah*. More information will be given to families as the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* date approaches. If you have any questions about our *B'nai Mitzvah* program, contact Lynette Solomon at Lsolomon@lvnertamid.org.

POST B'NAI MITZVAH STUDIES

Students are expected and encouraged to continue their Jewish education through Confirmation, and hopefully 12th Grade. Confirmation is designed to provide students with the education and inspiration necessary to confirm their Jewish faith. 11th and 12th Graders are encouraged to continue attending through our Tribe program. Sessions are designed around students' interests, dilemmas facing teens today, preparing for college, etc

POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is very important! It maintains continuity and develops meaningful social interaction. Families will be contacted by phone either by the teacher or school office in cases of recurrent absences.

COMMUNICATION: All school communications will be handled via e-mail and Constant Contact and be sent weekly. Be sure to keep the school office updated with any e-mail address changes.

APPROPRIATE DRESS: Students are expected to dress in a manner that does not disrupt our educational environment. Therefore, please do not wear:

- Tank tops or shirts that show bare midriff
- Clothing that promotes drugs, alcohol, violence or disrespect to others
- Clothing that features sexually suggestive or explicit language

ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Cell phones, iPods, iPads and other portable digital devices are a significant part of our lives and will occasionally be used in the classroom. When not in use for academic purposes, students are expected to turn off any portable digital devices before entering the classroom.

DISCIPLINE: Good behavior is expected throughout our school. Teachers will establish specific guidelines that are reviewed with the students at the beginning of the year. There will be meaningful consequences for repeated disruptive behavior. If the negative behavior persists, the student will be escorted to the Director's office. If the offense continues, parents will be asked to meet with the Director and teacher to find a solution to remedy the situation.

SOCIAL MEDIA: CNT is a caring community. We will not tolerate cyber bullying or *lashon hora* (gossiping) on social media.

TZEDAKAH: *Tzedakah* is collected each week, and students are encouraged to contribute what they can. Our contributions are sent to Jewish local, national, and international organizations.

PICK-UP/DISMISSAL: Religious School ends at 12:15 p.m. The parking lot will be full as students are exiting the building. Parents of Gan Yeladim, Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd Graders are asked to park their vehicle, enter the school, and pick their child up from his or her classroom.

EARLY DISMISSAL: If you need to pick up your child before regular dismissal time, a parent **MUST** notify the school office either by phone call or note. No student will be allowed to leave class without parental permission.

DONATIONS: There are a few funds that support our Religious School. Jewish summer camps, and our youth groups. Please contact Linda Rosen at Lrosen@lvnertamid.org for more specific information.

VERY IMPORTANT! PLEASE READ!!!!

We know we send home a lot of information. There are times you may feel bombarded by e-mails, texts, flyers, mailings, phone calls, etc. Things are always happening here. Changes occur by the minute. Everything we do impacts your family and school. It is important that you read the information we send. Whether it is a change in programming, something special your child will be doing, or an invitation to your child's performance, we can only reach you through the ways mentioned. If you don't read it, you won't know about it. Please help us stay in touch with you! Also, if you get a new cell phone number or e-mail address, it is imperative that you let us know. This way you will always be in the know! Thank you!

*“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when
he is old he will not depart from it.”*

(Proverbs 22:6)

CNT SCHOOL OFFICE INFO



HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Tuesday: 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Saturday: CLOSED

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