

July 2019
Tammuz 5778

Dear Holy Blossom Temple Youth Education Centre family,

We welcome you to Holy Blossom Temple Youth Education Centre (Y.E.C.). We are honoured to have your family share the wonders and beauty of Jewish education together. For our returning families, we thank you for your continued support and look forward to a great 2019-2020 year as we open our renewed HBT! Here is the link to our on-line application. When you use an email that we have on account, it will pre-fill the application for you with as much information as we have in our system.

Holy Blossom Temple's Y.E.C. is pleased to provide age appropriate learning opportunities from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12. Our program provides a single-day option which combines religious education and He-brew language education, or the option of working with a private tutor. If you are interested in tutoring, please contact us. We will provide you with a tutor and the curriculum. As always, we encourage and welcome your input as we make further improvements to the 2018-2019 Y.E.C. Programing

Classes for Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 will start on Sunday morning September 8, 2019 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. For students in Grades 2-5, our excellent Hebrew language program continues each Sunday morning 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. A complete calendar will be sent out in August including information about KEF – our after school program for JK-Grade 1.

For students with learning challenges in Hebrew, we offer Project Tikvah. This is a one-on-one learning experience for Hebrew language for students with a trained tutor. This program takes place for ½ hour independent of our Sunday religious studies program.

Senior School (Grades 6-7) will meet on Monday evenings, beginning on September 9th, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, a part of our Senior School and grade seven program, is for all students (Jewish day school students included) celebrating Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Holy Blossom Temple.

In September, we will be entering our fourth year of our Jewish Teen Experience Midtown (JTEM) initiative. In cooperation with Congregation Beth Tzedec. JTEM provides engaging programs for all students in Grades 8-12 from each of our congregations. Course offerings will span the spectrum – from Jewish cooking, to Israeli politics, text study and more. If you are interested in JTEM, please email Debbie Spiegel.

Throughout the school year, Holy Blossom students are given tools and experiences which are necessary for them to be comfortable in participating in worship and Torah discussion. Shabbat service (Friday evening or Shabbat day) participation is another way to bring school and synagogue together. Special Shabbat dinners will be scheduled for various grades and will be publicized in our school calendar.

We always encourage our parents' participation. Please consider joining your child during their time at school. We have targeted specific dates for Y.E.C. families to gather, either Friday evening or Shabbat morning, but any Shabbat that you can join us in Family Service is appreciated.

As a way of fostering the friendships in our classrooms, we will be compiling and distributing class contact lists. We hope that you will schedule visits with your children's friends from Temple outside of school hours. It is a great way to create and form life-long bonds. We will also be asking for assistance from "Class Parents" to help us from time to time. Please complete that section in our on-line form if you are willing to help.

We learn through experience and teach through deed and example. At Holy Blossom there are many opportunities for Temple members of all ages to be students and to be teachers. Your involvement will guide us into the next generation. We look forward to learning with you.

Shalom,

Debbie Spiegel
Director of Education

Dylan Aster
Chair, Department of Education

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please keep the following names and phone numbers available for easy access to the education office during the week and during school hours. For emergency situations during school hours, please direct your call to the School Administrator.

Debbie Spiegel	Director of Education	dspiegel@holyblossom.org	416-789-3291 x239
Lisa Isen Baumal	Director of Youth Engagement	lbaumal@holyblossom.org	416-789-3291 x242
Dalia Alalouf	Hebrew Language Supervisor/B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator	dalalouf@holyblossom.org	416-789-3291 x238
Neomi Offman	Education Department Administrator	noffman@holyblossom.org	416-789-3291 x237

VISION STATEMENT

The vision of the Youth Education Centre (Y.E.C.) is to create an atmosphere of warmth, excitement and love of Jewish learning in which students in Junior Kindergarten through grade 10 acquire:

- Commitment and love of Judaism and Israel
- Jewish values, skills and knowledge
- Values of life-long learning and service to the community

Through a combination of creative and fun learning experiences we aim to build a sense of community and belonging; to Holy Blossom Temple, to the Jewish communities within Toronto and Canada and the broader Reform movement and Israel.

The development of skills and knowledge are meant to enable Jewish young people to read Hebrew, participate comfortably and capably in worship services and master the basic skills required to study Torah, Haftarah and the Holy days.

To attain these goals, we rely on an integrated curriculum and experiential/creative teaching models. Success depends upon dynamic, enthusiastic and learned teachers in Judaism, home/family support and commitment and appropriate, responsible allocation of resources.

Youth Education Centre Policies

Accommodations for Learning

If your child has any special learning needs, please inform us. There are a variety of services available to assist your child with special learning requirements. Please contact the Director of Education for more specific information. In addition to providing aides in the classroom we also provide an excellent one-on-one Hebrew program, Project *Tikvah*, for children who have been assessed by their secular school as having special learning needs. See information below.

The Y.E.C. prides itself on serving our students and families with a variety of learning styles and options. Some students have greater needs and some have greater abilities. Some families like to explore options for greater participation and others choose not to. We make every attempt to meet all ends of the spectrum and those in the middle as well.

Project *Tikvah* is our specialty Hebrew program for students in Grades 3-6 with identified learning challenges at various points on the spectrum. Students have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a teacher in order to gain greater proficiency in Hebrew language skills.

Attendance

In order to benefit from the Jewish educational opportunities offered by the Youth Education Centre (Y.E.C.) it is essential that students attend regularly. Holy Blossom Temple places great emphasis on the value of attendance to fully gain from our program. If your child will be absent for an extended period of time, please inform the teacher and the office in advance. We will arrange for him/her to catch up on missed work.

Behaviour Expectations

Holy Blossom Temple's Youth Education Centre (Y.E.C.) is committed to the integrity and fair play in dealings with students and parents. It is important that all members of our community uphold a high standard of integrity at all times and ensure their conduct is respectful.

Cell Phone and Other Distractions

Cell phones, and other personal electronic devices are not to be used during class. Teachers will collect all cell phones at the beginning of class and keep them in a bin. Phones will be returned at break time, and the end of class. Students are also discouraged from any item that becomes a distraction to the classroom environment will be removed and returned after class. The Y.E.C. is not responsible for students' possessions and we strongly recommend that students not bring unnecessary valuables to class.

Communication

Highlights of activities, from the Youth Education Centre on Sundays and Mondays are available through weekly newsletters distributed by email every Tuesday. These newsletters provide parents with information about what is happening on a day-to-day basis in their child's classroom. Parents are provided with the information necessary to continue discussions and learning in their home environment. In addition, the newsletter provides information on upcoming events, and other family programming. Please help us by keeping your e-mail address information up-to-date.

A written student progress report is sent to families. If parents are interested in more information and updates, please contact the Director of Education.

Early Dismissal

Sundays: We take the safety of your children very seriously. Students must have written permission, either by a note or by email. In an emergency, please contact the office.

Mondays: Our expectation is that all students remain in the building during school hours, however if a student chooses to leave without written permission from a parent, Holy Blossom Temple cannot take responsibility for that student.

Family Education

Each grade invites parents to one or two Parent programs each year. These programs are a wonderful way for parents to meet with other parents in their child's grade as well as have the opportunity for parents to learn with their children, our Rabbis, and our educators in a fun and informal way. Children love to learn together with their parents and this is the perfect opportunity. We welcome you to join with us anytime, but especially for our Parent programs. Please check the Y.E.C. calendar for the date of your child's grade level program. You will be reminded of these programs by email in advance of the program as well.

Field Trips

Not all learning takes place in the classroom. Holy Blossom understands the benefit of seeing and experiencing things in other settings. From visits to the matzah factory to traveling to other congregations, there may be various school field trips scheduled during the school year. On other occasions special visitors will be brought into the school.

For all off-site travel that takes place during school hours, parents will be asked to sign a Blanket Consent Form. For any trip that occurs outside of school hours, parents will be asked to complete a trip-specific Excursion Consent Form before their child will be permitted to participate. Parents will receive an Excursion Information Form outlining all the necessary information prior to any type of excursion. Travel arrangements will vary depending on the location of the trip and the age of the students. Some additional fees may be required for some trips.

Guests

In order to create community and consistency in the classroom we ask that you do not bring friends to class. In exceptional circumstances, if there are no other options, please contact the school prior to the guest attending.

Hebrew Language @ HBT

We provide books and technology in the classrooms to enhance our studies. As with learning any language, learning to read Hebrew requires practice. Students are provided with the necessary materials to enable you to assist your child with this practice – even if you are not able to read Hebrew. If you require additional support to assist your child, please contact us. We encourage your child to practice the Hebrew reading learned in class at home during the week to maintain reading fluency.

Inclement Weather

When the decision is made to cancel classes due to severe weather, we will make every effort to notify all families by email.

***Madrichim*: Student Teachers**

Many of our student teachers are home grown. As part of their Confirmation (Grade 10 students) year, students volunteer in our classrooms, gaining hands on experience. Post-confirmation students (Grades 11-12) return to continue working in the Y.E.C. They help out in the classrooms giving one-on-one attention to students and supporting the classroom teacher.

Non-Member Approach

We welcome families who are not-yet members of Holy Blossom Temple in Grades JK through Grade 3. We offer a very affordable member option, *Terumah*, for young families. Please contact Tema Smith, tsmith@holyblossom.org for more information. Families who have been members of Holy Blossom in the past may not choose the non-member status for the Youth Education Centre program.

Nut-Sensitive Policy

For the protection and care of our students, the Y.E.C. must be advised of all ongoing medical conditions. Any new conditions should be reported in writing to the office. If a student is required to carry an Epi-pen or an inhaler it must remain on the student at all times in the student's bag or coat pocket is not sufficient as students move throughout the building. We encourage parents to speak directly with their child's teachers in regards to their child's health. Holy Blossom Temple is a **nut-sensitive environment**. We ask that no nut products are brought into our building. Nut products are not used at any school-wide programs or in individual classrooms where the Y.E.C. is responsible for the refreshments.

School Calendar

A comprehensive school calendar, including schedules for specific programs, is available digitally. A link will be provided before classes begin. If you would like a paper copy of the calendar, please contact the Education office.

Social Justice & Tzedakah

There are many aspects to social justice and we try to encourage every child to understand the importance of helping others in need and those less fortunate than ourselves. Depending on your child's grade, we arrange volunteer opportunities, visits to a food bank, a chance to pack and send gifts, and most importantly our weekly *Tzedakah* collection for a variety of charities. Please send your child each week with a few coins so they can fulfill this Mitzvah.

Snack

We understand that our students need snack during the course of the day. We ask that parents with students JK-Grade 1 provide a small healthy snack for their children. Students in Grades 2-5, and 6 & 7 have the option of purchasing a snack. All proceeds of purchased snack go to The Y.E.C. *Tzedakah* fund.

Tefillot

Prayers are an integral part of our program. Praying together fosters spirituality and brings the presence of God into our lives. All JK-Grade 5 students are involved in a school-wide weekly prayer service. We use child friendly melodies and explanations. One of our goals in teaching prayers is to enable our students to go anywhere in the world and feel at home in other synagogues. *Tefillah* is also an opportunity to develop leadership within our community. Our older students participate in *Tefillah* monthly during the Monday evening program.

Temple Security & Locked Door Policy

Holy Blossom Temple maintains a locked door policy at all times. Security guards monitor and allow access into the building at the Ava Road entrance whenever the Temple is open. Please respect and adhere to all signage indicating entry to and exiting from the building.

Tuition

We appreciate all fees be submitted by December 31 of the school year. Arrangements can be made for alternate payment. All fees are tax deductible.

Youth Activities & Summer Camp

The social connections made through HBT programs continue outside of the classroom. To encourage these budding friendships we offer Youth Activities for all Temple members, grades 3-12, whether they attend a Public School, Private School or Jewish Day School. Participating in the right youth activities for their age will provide your child with a fantastic opportunity to socialize with others from the Temple, engage in fun learning opportunities, and develop skills and opportunity for leadership. They can also help make a difference through various *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) community service activities.

YEAH (Youth Excitement at Holy Blossom): Open to all students in Grades 3 to 5, YEAH gives you a chance to participate in fun, exciting activities with your friends and classmates from the Temple. Bowling, roller-skating, movies, celebrating Festivals, crafts and more — you can do it all! It's a fun way to get involved at Holy Blossom, and a great introduction to the world of our youth programing.

JVC (Jewish Volunteer Corps): If you are in Grade 6 and 7, come to JVC. We offer JVC HOME (Hands-On Mitzvah Projects) and JVC HOST (Hang-Out Social Time) on Mondays prior to Senior School. It's a great way to have fun with your Holy Blossom friends, and have a taste of volunteering and community service projects. This gives our younger teens a chance to get involved in life at the Temple.

HBTeens: Open to all Temple members in Grades 8 to 12. HBTeens an opportunity for our teens to get involved in Jewish life at Holy Blossom. We run programs that are educational and entertaining, and include community service projects as well as light-hearted social events. All programs are by teens, for teens.

NFTY-NEL (North American Federation of Temple Youth - North East Lakes), is our teen region within the URJ. NFTY-NEL holds weekend events throughout the year in different camps and cities throughout the region. These weekends are planned and led by teens for teens, and focus on Jewish Identity, Social Justice and Social Action, Israel and more. NFTY-NEL is a great way to network with other teens from different cities, develop leadership skills, and participate in camp-style weekends throughout the year.

URJ Camp George: Camp George is one of the residential summer camps owned and operated by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ). Since its inaugural season in 1999, Camp George has been providing an ideal setting for children completing grades 2-10 to grow and develop as members of our Jewish community. URJ camping is an integral part of what Jewish living is all about. Located just 2 hours north of Toronto in beautiful Parry Sound, Ontario, Camp George provides campers with an environment that blends the best of Ontario camping with the best of Reform Jewish camping. The Holy Blossom community is an active member of this camp sending campers each year. Many Temple members work at camp each summer on staff including our educators who all spend time at Camp George as part of the camp faculty.

Life Cycle Events at Holy Blossom Temple

Consecration

Consecration is a beautiful and meaningful life-cycle event for our member children marking the beginning of a child's formal Jewish education at Grade 1. At Holy Blossom Temple we begin our Consecration celebration with an interactive Family program in the weeks preceding the ceremony. Our Consecration students each receive a small Torah and a blessing by the Rabbi and their parents in a private ceremony prior to the Simchat Torah Congregational celebration. All participants join with the congregation to celebrate Simchat Torah. Our Consecration ceremony emphasizes the value we place on Jewish learning and on the study of Torah.

B'nei Mitzvah

B'nei Mitzvah marks the transition of a Jewish child to adulthood; a time when he/she assumes responsibilities and rewards for one's own religious practice and learning. Throughout the process of becoming B'nei Mitzvah, our children come to understand their place within the Holy Blossom Temple congregation and the Jewish People.

At the age of 13, one becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah - a Jewish adult – regardless of ceremony. Traditionally, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to the Torah for the honour of an aliyah (reciting the blessings on the Torah) to mark this occasion. We invite our families who choose to celebrate in Israel to our bimah for the honour of an aliyah. All students enrolled in the Y.E.C. receive training to enable them to lead the congregation in worship and chant Torah and Haftarah on behalf of the congregation. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be called to the Torah at any of our congregational services where Torah is read. B'nei Mitzvah tutors are employees of Holy Blossom Temple under the supervision of the Department of Education. B'nei Mitzvah students will be assigned to a tutor for all Torah and haftarah lessons. All arrangements for instruction will be arranged through Dalia Alalouf.

Confirmation

Confirmation is unique to Reform Judaism and has been observed at Holy Blossom for more than 80 years. This celebration marks the graduation of our students at Grade 10. We celebrate on the Shabbat closest to Shavuot, the festival in which we mark the giving of the Torah.

Donations which benefit the Education Department

The Dow and Fredzia Marmur Program for Educational Excellence: Inaugurated in 2000 on the occasion of Rabbi Dow Marmur's retirement as Holy Blossom Temple's Senior Rabbi, this fund strengthens the links between the Y.E.C. and Temple; builds a faculty committed to our vision; and develops an educational ethos that has Jewish learning as Judaism's highest value. Initiatives have included professional development for teachers and special programming in our school.

Youth Awards: The School experience is enhanced through camp scholarships, enabling young Temple members to attend Camp George and Israel scholarships for Reform based programs.

Lorraine Sandler Tribute Endowment: Established as a tribute to Lorraine Sandler on her retirement as principal of our Pre-School, this fund provides additional support, teacher training and special equipment for Pre-School children with special needs.

Project Tikvah: This fund supports Temple educational programs for Religious School students with special learning needs. Programs include one-on-one tutors and specialized learning materials and related equipment.

Please see the Holy Blossom Temple web site www.holyblossom.org for the complete Temple Foundation and Tribute Fund listing.