LAKESIDE RELIGIOUS HEBREW SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK
An Association of Reform Educators [ARJE] Accredited School

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MISSION STATEMENT

The educational mission at Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism is to inspire students with a positive and abiding faith in their Judaism as well as a better sense of how to apply it to their daily lives through the educational program. Lakeside will nurture this process so that there is a desire for a lifelong connection to Judaism.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- Teaching of God, Torah and Israel, including Am Israel (the people of Israel) and Eretz Israel (the land of Israel).
- Development of a sense of identity with the community of Jewish people everywhere, leading to a sense of community and self-identification with the Jewish people of the past and the present.
- Creation of interesting and inspiring experiences in the practice of Judaism in the home, the school, the synagogue and the community.
- Appreciation of Jewish culture, including art, music and literature.
- Preparation for using faith, ethical standards and the traditional insights of Judaism to answer questions and to solve personal problems.
- Commitment to teaching and participating in Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), including personal, synagogue and community-wide social action projects.
- Instilling an awareness and tolerance of other faiths.
BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY

*T'FILOT, WORSHIP SERVICES*

Besides attending the Sunday morning all-school *T'filot*, every child at Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism is expected to attend *T'filot* (worship services) during the school year. Participating in *T'filot* is an integral and enjoyable part of our Jewish education and experience—a part we share with our families and congregation. By attending *Shabbat* and *Chagim*, Holiday *T'filot*, students have a better grasp of the rituals and practices of Jewish worship at Lakeside. We believe that the best way to study and learn about Jewish liturgy and prayer is to personally experience it. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend all *T'filot* with their children.

At the end of the school year, recognition is given to those students who attend at least the following number of *Shabbat* or holiday services:

- Grades K-3................................. any 4 services
- Grades 4-Confirmation.......... any 7 services
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

WHEN DOES RELIGIOUS AND HEBREW SCHOOL MEET?

• Religious School is held on Sundays from 10:00am-12:00pm, beginning with an all-school T’filah, assembly, from 10:00am-10:30am

• Hebrew School is held on Tuesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.

LET’S TALK ATTENDANCE...

• We ask that students regularly attend class, arrive on time, and avoid leaving early. Regular attendance supports a positive learning experience and avoids disrupting the classroom experience for other students.

• *Please call the office if students will not be attending school on that day: (847) 432-7950*

DISMISSAL?

• Please send your child to Religious School or Hebrew School with a *handwritten note* or *call the office* in order to notify a teacher of any early pick-ups or if your child is going home with a friend’s parent.

IS THERE HOMEWORK?

• Hebrew school students need to practice *every week*. Please be sure to check your Hebrew Practice which will be posted on our website at:

  [www.lakesidecongregation.org/content/hebrew-school-practice](http://www.lakesidecongregation.org/content/hebrew-school-practice)

CLASS CONDUCT

• All students are expected to come to Religious and Hebrew School class prepared to participate in class activities. Disruptive conduct or behavioral issues will be discussed with parents in an attempt to find a solution that is in the best interest of all concerned.
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

REPORT CARDS

- Progress reports are sent in January and May to inform parents of the students’ achievements and progress.

SNACKS

- All students will be served challah and juice, provided by the Women of Lakeside (Sisterhood), during Religious and Hebrew School. We ask students and parents bringing snacks to school make sure they are “nut-free.”

FOOD/ALLERGY POLICY

- Lakeside Congregation makes every effort to accommodate food allergies, such as not serving nuts or peanut butter. We cannot, however, guarantee that anything we serve has not come in contact with nuts or other allergens. Therefore, if your child is allergic to nuts or other food items, we request that you inform the religious school and your child’s teacher. It is incumbent upon you and your child to ensure that he or she does not eat or drink anything that could cause a potentially harmful reaction. Please feel free to send alternative snacks for your child.

E-MAIL

- All information regarding the Religious School and Hebrew School will be e-mailed home to our families. E-mail is our method of communication. Please be sure that the Lakeside office has your current e-mail address and please be sure to check your email on a regular basis.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

- Our Hebrew School has parent-teacher conferences once a year to assess the students’ progress. These conferences are held in December, at the end of the first semester. Religious School parent-teacher conferences may be arranged on request or as needed.

ROOM PARENTS

- Each class has a volunteer room parent. We count on that parent to help the classroom teacher organize family nights Shabbat celebrations, class holiday parties, field trips, and to make telephone calls in case of a school closing.
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

EMERGENCY POLICIES

- Our general policy on closing school is that when Districts 112, 109 and 113 close for hazardous weather conditions we will close with the final word being at the discretion of our Director keeping in mind the welfare of our participants arriving at school.

- Climate closings due to extreme heat or cold will be at the discretion of the Director. All notice of closings will be made in a timely manner.

- Emergency closing due to building issues, including power, water, sewer etc. will be at the discretion of the Director.

FIRE DRILL PLANS

- During the year, the Lakeside Congregation Religious and Hebrew Schools conduct a fire drill. At that time, students are instructed on what to do in case of an actual fire or other emergency. In addition to practicing the procedures for fire safety and evacuation, our teachers and staff also address any other concerns and questions our students have about what to do in case of an emergency.

SECURITY

- To ensure the well-being of all our students, Lakeside Congregation has taken a proactive role in our approach to safety. Using a combination of lighting, cameras, security phones and direct link one-touch communication with fire and police, along with safety in-service training for teachers and staff, Lakeside Congregation promotes a safe educational environment for all.
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

At Lakeside Congregation we use the Union for Reform Judaism’s CHAI Curriculum. It is designed to facilitate lifelong Jewish learning within Reform Congregations. It focuses on Religious School students education, Religious School teachers, Education Committees, congregational Boards of Directors, pre-school education as well as family education. It concentrates classroom learning on Torah, Avodah and G’milut Chasadim and expands beyond these topics in other educational programs. CHAI adapts a powerful educational tool called "Understanding By Design" as a curriculum development model.

KIDZ KLUB (PRE-SCHOOL)

Kidz Klub meets four times a year for children ages 3, 4 and 5 (pre-kindergarten). The children experience Shabbat and the Jewish holidays with art projects, music, stories and dance. We have special High Holy Day T’filot for pre-school children. (All pre-school children are invited to attend child-oriented High Holy Day and Shabbat services, regardless of whether they are enrolled in Religious School.) Check the monthly Kolenu and weekly emails for dates and times.

KINDERGARTEN

At this early stage of a child’s development as a Jew, the primary objective is the formation of a positive attitude toward Judaism. The program focuses on:

- Introduction to Judaism and Jewish life
- Introduction to God and prayer
- Introduction to a Jewish/Hebrew vocabulary
- Introduction to the Holidays

GRADE ONE

We begin a more formal presentation of Judaism. The first grade program includes:

- Torah Study—From Creation to Moses and weekly Torah portions through ethical stories
- Home holiday observances
- Introduction to prayer
- Motzi and Kiddush
- Holidays and Shabbat
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM, CON’T.

GRADE TWO (CHAI CURRICULUM)
Our students are introduced to:

- Torah and the book of *Sh’mot*, Exodus
- Talking about God
- Understanding their Jewish heritage and identity
- A review of Shabbat prayers and an introduction to holiday prayers, including *Chanukah* blessings and Hebrew readiness

GRADE THREE (CHAI CURRICULUM)
Students learn about:

- Introduction to *Vayikra*, Leviticus
- Jewish ethics and values
- *Mitzvot*
- *Chanukah* blessings and the Four Questions for *Pesach*
- The first year (*Aleph*) of Hebrew instruction begins in the third grade

GRADE FOUR (CHAI CURRICULUM)
Students gain a deeper understanding of:

- Jewish life cycle
- *Am Yisrael*, (the people of Israel), *Eretz Yisrael*, (the land of Israel), and *brit*, (the covenant with God and Israel)

GRADE FIVE (CHAI CURRICULUM)
Students continue to learn about Jewish history and explore Jewish ethics and values. The program includes:

- *Nevi'im* (prophets), including Deborah, Jonah, Jeremiah and Isaiah
- Reform Judaism
- The *Amidah*
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM, CON’T.

- Current events
- Weekend retreat at OSRUI* on Becoming a Jewish Mensch or What’s a Mitzvah?
  - *Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute Camp (OSRUI) is sponsored by the Union of Reform Judaism. The retreat will take place in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

GRADE SIX (CHAI CURRICULUM)
Students learn about:
- Comparative Judaism and how it formed the Jewish community in America
- Current events discussion centering on Israel and Judaism
- Contributions of Jewish organizations: An introduction to the agencies that do mitzvot within the local, national and international Jewish community
- Grade six students also participate in a weekend retreat at OSRUI camp in Wisconsin

GRADE SEVEN AND EIGHT (CHAI CURRICULUM)
Torah and Ethics form the core curriculum. Students study:
- The Torah and Parshat HaShavuah, (weekly Torah portion). Our students examine weekly Torah portions and one mitzvah that is connected to each portion

PRE-CONFIRMATION: GRADE NINE AND GRADE TEN
Students meet with the Rabbi as well as their class teacher. Curriculum includes:
- Spirituality, current events, and a seminar course on Jewish history.
- Students take a special trip to New York City with adult supervision and visit Jewish New York, as well as see a Broadway play. On the other year, they participate in L’Takan to lobby in Washington, D.C.
- Special projects, speakers, dinners, and field trips are part of the confirmation curriculum. Our Confirmation service takes place on Shavuot, usually during May or June.
HEBREW SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Hebrew School is an integral part of religious education at Lakeside Congregation, and many students look forward to enrolling in this recommended program. The main goal is to prepare our children for active participation in Jewish prayer. Therefore, we provide students with the skills necessary for basic reading and writing of prayer book Hebrew, as well as some conversational Hebrew.

In order to truly master the skills of a new language our Hebrew School program is predicated on the assumption that students will practice on a regular basis. Students must be enrolled in our Religious School in order to be a part of the Hebrew program, and must be enrolled in both programs to be a candidate for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

ALEPH

Hebrew School normally begins in third grade. In the first year of Hebrew School our students learn the Aleph–Bet (alphabet) and all the vowels.

- Students learn the entire Hebrew alphabet and Hebrew vowels
- By the end of the year students should be able to read short Hebrew blessings

BET

During the second year of Hebrew School, students review the Aleph–Bet and begin to learn some conversational Hebrew.

- Longer prayers are introduced and students continue to build their Hebrew reading fluency
- Students begin learning holiday brachot (blessings)
- Students learn to read and write the script Aleph-Bet
HEBREW SCHOOL CURRICULUM, CON’T.

GIMMEL

During the third year students begin to learn the prayers essential to lead a service. They:

- Continue to increase their conversational Hebrew knowledge
- Practice their reading fluency and learn new Holiday brachot
- Begin to learn skills needed to lead T’filot (services)

DALET

In the final year of weekly Hebrew school, students are expected to complete their fluency with a number of prayers.

- Conversational Hebrew continues
- Different brachot for the holidays are taught
- Chanting and preparing to lead T’filot (services), including Torah and Haftarah Blessings
COURSE CONTENT THROUGH THE YEARS

The Religious School program includes 2 hours per week of classroom learning for approximately 28 Sundays from September to May. The following activities are included:

- **Current Events** are developed at each grade level to give our students a basic awareness of the world around them from a Jewish perspective.

- **Music** is an integral part of Jewish life and is included weekly in the classroom. The curriculum covers songs necessary to participate fully in worship services and holidays.

- **Chai Curriculum** is developed by the Union for Reform Judaism and will be used in our school.

- **Family Education** is an integral part of our curriculum. At various times during the school year, parents are encouraged to attend and study a specific subject such as Israel or the meaning of their Hebrew name. Different grades also invite their parents to participate and study with them on a particular curriculum topic.

- **Field trips** are offered for some grade levels to enhance the curricular objectives. Parental participation is encouraged.

- **History** is presented as an overview of our past to give our students a sense of Jewish identity from a historical perspective, with an emphasis on the uniqueness of Jewish survival.

- **Holidays** are reviewed in the context of the Jewish calendar to teach our students a positive appreciation of these important days. Lakeside Congregation enhances most holidays with special **T'filot**, dinners and holiday celebrations involving the whole congregation.

- **Jewish Culture** includes art, drama, dance, and our library collection. Students are exposed to Judaism through attending plays, musical performances and bringing artists to Lakeside Congregation.

- **Library** is a part of the curriculum for all students. Grades K-4 visit the library regularly. Students are encouraged to check out books and tapes from our extensive selection. Our librarian is available for consultation with any member during school hours or by appointment.

- **Mitzvah Day** is a Lakeside tradition that supports the commandment **Tikkun Olam** (repairing the world). Students and their families volunteer to spend the day making the world a better place by helping those in need. **Mitzvah Day** takes the place of regularly scheduled religious school classes. This is a family education day: all students and their families are expected to participate.
ENRICHMENT, CON’T.

- Social Action -- Every grade is encouraged to participate in a special social action curriculum project, which involves Tikkun Olam, (repairing the world).

- T’Filot (Worship and Prayer) is developed through the curriculum in each grade level, with different prayers emphasized. We also encourage students to attend all family and holiday services.

- Tzedakah (Charitable Giving) is collected in each grade. From its most basic foundation to the most complex situations, both in everyday life and in terms of the ethical and moral approaches to life, tzedakah is discussed in each class. Students are encouraged to bring money each week to donate to their class tzedakah. At the end of the year, each class will decide which charitable organization they wish to support.

- S.K.I.P.
  - “Send a Kid to Israel Partnership” (SKIP) unites families, congregations, and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago to help make an Israel experience with other students an integral part of the Jewish education of Chicago youngsters. SKIP is a special kind of savings plan. The SKIP partners (family, congregation and Federation) contribute matching funds each year. Students who participate in the program for the full seven years (grades 3-9) will have approximately $2,000, including interest, to help meet the cost of a trip to Israel during high school or college. Third, fourth, and fifth grade children are eligible to enter and participate in the SKIP program through Lakeside Congregation.
B’NAI MITZVAH

QUALIFICATIONS

The family must be a member of the Congregation for three years and the student must be enrolled in the Religious School. Students should have completed at least three years of Hebrew School or its equivalent. The Rabbi and Educational Director will determine competency through oral and/or written testing in all cases.

- A Bar/Bat Mitzvah date will be assigned only if a family is and remains in good financial standing with the Congregation (see Dates below).

EXPECTATIONS

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a beginning of the students’ spiritual life, not an end. Students are encouraged to continue in Lakeside Congregation’s Religious School until completion of Confirmation.
- Students should attend and participate in 7 worship services during the year prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Students should attend all tutoring and classes as arranged for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student should participate in and support the preparation process. In this way the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony will be a spiritually meaningful and significant life cycle event for the entire family.
- Families will be expected to attend our annual Bar/Bat Mitzvah family Kallah study sessions.
- Students will be expected to participate in the Bemitzvotav program (mitzvah project) under the direction of the Rabbi and the Educational Director.
- Still photography is prohibited in the sanctuary during all worship services.

DATES

- Dates will be assigned to all B’nai Mitzvah in 4th grade by the end of May.
- The date chosen will be a date on or after the 13th birthday of the B’nai Mitzvah student.
- Lakeside Congregation does not regularly perform joint Bar/Bat Mitzvah: each child is given an individual ceremony. Our staff will attempt to adapt each ceremony as appropriate.
- Shabbat morning T’filot will begin at 10:30 a.m. and Havdallah services begin at 4:30 p.m., unless the end of Shabbat dictates otherwise.
CONFIRMATION

QUALIFICATIONS

The Confirmation ceremony is a pinnacle of the Reform Jewish educational process. To qualify as a Confirmand at Lakeside Congregation, the family must be a member of the Congregation for three years, and the student must have completed at least three years in the Religious School.

EXPECTATIONS

- Confirmands are making a commitment to Jewish life. At Lakeside Congregation we ask Confirmands to participate in our Congregation in an active and involved way. This may include participation in *T’filot*, assistance with a project of a synagogue committee, or in other meaningful activities. Parents of Confirmands are also expected to participate in and support the preparation process. We expect regular attendance and participation in all Confirmation Class sessions. In addition, the following is required of prospective Confirmands:
  - Participation in all special Confirmation class events.
  - *T’filot* attendance as specified on page 4 of this handbook.

CEREMONY

Confirmation is held on *Shavuot*. Students create and lead this *T’filah*. It is followed by a reception hosted by the Confirmation families for the Congregation and their friends and family.
WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT

OUR WEBSITE:

- https://www.lakesidecongregation.org/

OUR OWN YOUTUBE CHANNEL:

- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMYuwjyTxYdZ2ZX3mQPsbw

OUR EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR’S [VANESSA M. EHRLICH, RJE] BLOG:

- http://inoneehrlich.blogspot.com/

UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM AND AFFILIATES:

- URJ: http://www.urj.org/
- OSRUI: www.osrui.urjcamps.org
- ARZA: http://www.arza.org/

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH US ON: