

CONGREGATION

KOL AMI

קול עמי

Family Handbook



2022-2023/5782-5783

Welcome to

Congregation Kol Ami's Religious School Educational Team

- Director of Education
Sheri Greenblatt, M.Ed
Sgreenblatt@kolaminj.org
(856)489-0035 Ex.120
- Director of Youth Engagement & Assistant Director of the Religious School
Jill Moghadam
Jillmoghadam@kolaminj.org
(856)489-0035 Ex.115
- Director of Hebrew High School & Religious School Inclusion Coordinator
Adam Roth, MBA, M.Ed
Adamroth@kolaminj.org
(856)489-0035 Ex.152
- Religious School Weekday Administrative Assistant
Gloria Armstrong
Religiousschool@kolaminj.org
(856)489-0035 Ex. 110
- Religious School Sunday Administrative Assistant
Linda Burkett
Religiousschool@kolaminj.org
(856)489-0035 Ex. 110
- VP of Education
Stephanie Zinn
Stephaniezinn9@gmail.com

Vision Statement

We are a dynamic, inclusive and nurturing community and find holiness in being fully present for one another through life's ordinary and extraordinary moments. We seek to find bold purpose and deep connections through the creative exploration of avodah (prayer), talmud Torah (Torah learning), tikkun olam (repairing/healing the world), and acts of g'milut chasadim (loving kindness). The wisdom of our Jewish tradition empowers us to re-imagine our lives, inspiring personal growth and encouraging a deeper understanding of who we are as individuals and as a congregational family. We are truly stronger together.

Philosophy

The purpose of Congregation Kol Ami Religious School is to develop students into motivated, engaged students who are involved in hands on learning, love of being Jewish, and feel a strong sense of community.

- We want our students to develop understanding of and appreciation for their Jewish Heritage.
- We want our students to have the ability to participate actively in the Synagogue and home Jewish rituals.
- We want our students to be ethical, socially responsible members of the Jewish community.
- We believe in a comprehensive, sequential curriculum taught by devoted, caring, and committed teachers.
- We believe that a creative atmosphere infused with ruach (spirit) will stimulate students' interest and promote personal connections with learning.
- We believe in a teaching-learning process that varies and differentiates instruction to meet the needs of learners with diverse learning styles, multiple intelligence, and varying family backgrounds.
- We believe that successful accomplishments of our goals and objectives require a partnership between students, teachers, and parents. Only through collaboration can we bring all children to develop a deep personal Jewish identity, to experience pride and joy in their Jewishness, and to commit themselves to lifelong learning and growth.

School Schedule

Religious School	Sunday	9:15-11:15 AM
Hebrew School	Tuesday	4:15-6:15 PM
Hebrew High	Tuesday	6:45-8:15 PM

Pre-Kindergarten:	Meets approximately 2 times a month (See below)
Kindergarten - 2 nd Grade:	Sundays
3 rd - 6 th Grade:	Sundays and Tuesday afternoon
7 th Grade:	Tuesday evening and 1 Sunday per month for family track (See below)
8 th -12 th Grade:	Tuesday evening

Pre-K dates for 2022-23

September 18 th	January 22 nd
October 2 nd	February 5 th
October 16 th	February 26 th
October 30 th	March 5 th
November 20 th	March 19 th
December 4 th	April 2 nd
December 18 th	April 23 rd
January 8 th	May 7 th

7th Grade Family Track Dates

October 30th	November 20th	December 18th	January 22nd
February 26th	March 26th	April 30th	

Judaica Curriculum Overview

A curriculum is always a rough draft. The Religious School believes that its best to constantly revise, reflect, and evaluate our curricular process. We welcome feedback from parents and rely on feedback from faculty to continually retool our curriculum to meet the changing needs of our students, our families, and our synagogue.

The Religious School program is an exciting and spiraling curriculum which fosters a love of Judaism, embracing inclusivity, spirituality, creativity, and pride in being Jewish.

What can you expect when you walk through the hallways?

- A buzz of activities
- Students actively engaged
- Curious questions being asked
- Interactive learning
- Ruach (spirit) through the hallways
- Kindness and respect towards each other

Pre-Kindergarten: Our youngest students are introduced to Religious School with a twice a month program to help them build a sense of community and identification with Judaism. They sing songs, do holiday and Torah crafts, and listen to stories about Jewish values that are at their heart – like kindness, courage, and determination. They will have music, art, and storytelling/library to enhance their program. When you peek into the class of our Pre-K you will see smiles, hear singing, and watch as the students experience the joy of being Jewish.

Kindergarten: We use this year to introduce our students to the school and to make them comfortable in the synagogue and excited about Jewish learning. The curriculum emphasizes Jewish holidays and mitzvot, introduction to Torah stories, and Israel. The program is enhanced with music, songs, art projects, and fun activities. The highlight of this year is Consecration in which students receive their own mini-Torah and lead the congregation in song and Prayer during the Simchat Torah service.

First Grade: This curriculum is based on the theme of discovering our wonderful Jewish traditions. They will explore Bible stories, the synagogue, Israel, and the concept of Tzedakah. They will explore each of these topics using their 5 senses as well as art, music, and hands on activities. Students will also get an introduction to the Aleph Bet and learn some basic Hebrew phrases. The highlight of this year is their “trip” to Israel, without ever leaving their classroom!

Second Grade: During second grade, they will go more in depth learning with the Aleph Bet, do hands-on activities to engage with each letter; and practice writing and pronouncing the letters. In addition, students will continue to learn the stories from the Bible, go deeper into the Jewish holidays, and continue to build a connection to Israel. The highlight of this grade is they will have the chance to work in person with teenagers from Israel.

Third Grade: This curriculum the students will delve into Torah stories from many perspectives through discussion, debate, and drama. They will analyze the major characters from these stories and identify the Jewish Values and how they relate to each story as well as their own life. They will use games, art, and collaborative learning as they explore all the different Mitzvot and Middot. Students will continue to celebrate and learn the blessings for each holiday. The highlight of this year is that the third graders oversee our front desk Lego Board that they will change throughout the year to go along with different holidays and themes.

Fourth Grade: Fourth grade students will delve into the Jewish life cycle events, learning the meaning and ritual of the different important events in a Jew's life. They will experience this through experiential learning, hands on activities, and special speakers. They will continue with the stories of the Bible as well as delve deeper into the holidays, and Tikkun Olam. The highlight of fourth grade is when the students are presented with their very own personalized Siddur.

Fifth Grade: Students will learn about Jewish history and important people from the past. They will gain a better understanding of present- day Israel by studying its geography, social customs, challenges, and successes. Students will continue to explore the stories of the Bible including the Ten Commandments as well as focus on Tikkun Olam, repairing our world. The highlight of fifth grade is taking part in making their own Tallit and the Wrap with the Clergy Program.

Sixth Grade: This curriculum the students will understand the settling of the Jews in America and how they became a vital part of American Society. They will also get the opportunity to explore their own family tree. The 6th grade will explore Jewish heroes that embody Jewish values and explore ways they can incorporate that into their daily lives. The highlight of sixth grade is that they will have an opportunity to take part in a variety of trips and mitzvah projects in the community.



Hebrew Curriculum Overview

The integrated Hebrew curriculum is designed to help students learn to decode Hebrew text with accuracy and learn to use every day Hebrew words. Emphasis will be placed on the study of the Siddur and the meaning behind the Prayers. Our program will include a weekly T'filah where our students become active participants in our worship service.

Each student in grades 3rd-6th will complete a Hebrew assessment the first week of Hebrew School and then be assigned their class by the next session.

GOAL: By grouping students with similar capability into the same classroom, we will:

- Enable faculty to design focused, more effective lessons targeted to meet student needs.
- Support all students to experience greater success, and higher self-esteem
- Facilitate a less-intimidating pathway for students that are new to Religious School.
- Allow some students to accelerate/enrich their learning beyond minimum expectations.

Hebrew High Curriculum Overview

The Hebrew HS program is designed to allow Jewish teenagers to explore their religion, gain a deeper connection to their faith and synagogue family, and to ultimately embody our congregational values; of *avodah* (exploration of pray), *talmud Torah* (Torah learning), *tikkun olam* (repairing/healing the world), and acts of *g'milut chasadim* (loving kindness), in their daily lives.

Seventh Grade: This curriculum has been crafted to guide our youngest learners through their Brit Mitzvah. Dynamic educators and clergy members will each spend several weeks exploring history, examining culture, reviewing prayer practice, introducing new ways of thinking as we apply what it means to be called to the Torah. Coupled with the Family Track program, led by Rabbi Frenkel, which meets once a month on Sunday mornings.

Eighth and Nineth Grade: Pre-Confirmation curriculum is designed with the goal of embracing one's Jewish identity through innovative, experiential, and compelling educational programming focused on engaging students through memorable experiences.

Tenth Grade: Our Confirmation program focuses on major issues and topics in Jewish tradition and contemporary Jewish life. Under the leadership of Rabbi Frenkel, along with master teachers, the curriculum is divided among Prayer study, Reform Judaism and the Ten Commandments.

Eleventh and Twelfth Grade: Post-Confirmation curriculum is intended to equip students with the knowledge and skill sets necessary to navigate their world away from home as confident Jewish adults. By engaging students in challenging conversations and in-depth discussions of relevant topics of study students will gain the ability to reason and challenge others in peaceful discourse with Jewish ethics and values.

Youth Group Programming

- Youth Engagement is a top priority for our unified congregation. We are committed to providing students of all ages with high quality youth programming, complete with opportunities to socialize and deepen their understanding of what it means to be part of a Jewish community. We will be celebrating the holidays together, exploring our Jewish identities in creative ways, and mostly importantly... having fun! Our calendar will be filled with fun and engaging events for the following age groups:
 - K'ton Club Tots (ages 2-5)
 - KAFTY Kids (Kindergarten-5th grade)
 - KAFTY Jr. (6th - 8th grade)
 - KAFTY (9th-12th grade)
- We encourage everyone to join our youth groups by becoming a dues-paying member. Dues are an optional yearly contribution that helps support youth programming and provides you with a discounted price for events. Dues range from \$18/year for our K'ton Club (ages 2-5) and \$36/year for students in Kindergarten-12th grade.



Inclusion

Our goal is to make Judaism accessible to all, regardless of ability or disability. We pride ourselves on being a “house of prayer for *all* people” (Isaiah 56:5).

- **Madrichim Team** – This program provides an introduction to the educational world and strategies that are most effective with diverse learners. Aspects of the program are embedded into the 7/8/9th grade curriculum. Students in grades 10 thru 12 can be full members of the Madrichim Team!
- **Enrichment teachers** - These teachers will be part of our Hebrew School to provide individual or small group instruction for those students who need it as well as support for our teachers.

Important School Notes

Private Tutoring: Should your child require tutoring to maintain grade-level placement or if your child has missed many classes, we offer private tutoring for an extra fee. These tutoring sessions are not related to the Brit Mitzvah tutoring. Contact the Religious School office if you are interested.

Teachers: We are blessed to have such passionate teachers. Some of our teachers have many years of teaching experience while some are newer to teaching, but each are enthusiastic about our new Religious School. Every teacher actively works to make the learning experience of the children here at Congregation Kol Ami rewarding, fun, and meaningful.

Homework: We understand that students have demanding schedules in their daily lives. Homework will only be given when it serves a clear, educational purpose. We suggest students practice 5-10 minutes a day at home. Our goal is to provide our students with every available outlet for success and confidence and we believe practice is the key to this outcome.

Tzedakah: Caring for others is an important part of Jewish life. It is a Mitzvah of the highest order. One way we show we care for others is by giving Tzedakah. Contributions which will be collected at the start of class on Sundays. We encourage children to give their own earnings in order that their Tzedakah can be truly their contribution. At the end of the school year, the class will decide where they would like to donate their accumulated funds.

Overview of Specials

T'filah (prayer): In preparation for a lifetime of active participation in the synagogue, students in all elementary grades will come together to practice grade-appropriate prayers in the Sanctuary with the Clergy. On Sunday mornings we will have Shira U' T'filah (song and Prayer) and on Tuesday afternoon we will have a more formal T'filah where the students will have the opportunity to lead the congregation with what they have been learning in class.

Family Education Day: This program offers families the opportunity to engage in Jewish learning and celebration with the Kol Ami Clergy as well as the teachers. Programs will take place during our regular Sunday School time.

Build-Your Own Shabbat: Once a month a grade level will be honored during Shabbat. They will have the opportunity to "choose" what they would like to lead during the service.

Other Amazing Specials: Art, Music, Library/Storytelling, Mitzvah projects, Yad Workshops, Trips, Twinning program, No Place for Hate Initiative, and so much! We are excited to offer new and innovative programming.

General Information

Attendance: Prompt and regular attendance and participation are key components for getting the full benefit of Religious School. If your child will be absent, please call the Religious School office and we will inform the appropriate teacher. If there is going to be a long-term absence, please contact the Director of Education so we can figure out the best way to proceed.

Shabbat Attendance: Our students are expected to attend a minimum number of Shabbat services each school year so they may master the words and meaning of the prayers and experience the joy of celebrating Shabbat as part of a community. Parents are always welcome to join our Shabbat Mishpacha Family Services where they can learn and pray alongside their child. Although we highly encourage attendance at Congregation Kol Ami, we also count attendance at another Synagogue.

3rd Grade: 1 Family Service, 2 Friday Night Shabbat Services

4th Grade: 1 Family Service, 3 Friday Night Shabbat Services

5th Grade: 1 Family Service, 4 Friday Night Shabbat Services

6th Grade: See The Kol Ami Brit Mitzvah Program Packet for requirements

Early Dismissal: For security reasons the parent or guardian MUST come to the Religious School office to sign out your child. Once you sign them out an, administrative assistant will retrieve your child from the classroom.

Discipline Procedure: In the rare event that a student is unable to adhere to our expectations, the following steps will be taken:

1. The teacher will create an opportunity to speak quietly and privately to the student and record the inappropriate behavior.
2. If the problem reoccurs, the student will be escorted to the school office where the Director will speak to the student, focusing on what the appropriate behavior would be.
3. We would hope that steps 1 and 2 will prevent any further incidents from occurring, however, should issues persist, the Director or the teacher will contact the child's parents to discuss the inappropriate behavior and any further action.
4. If the offense involves physical or emotional harm or injury to persons or property, parents will be called immediately to pick up their child and schedule a conference.

Illness/Injury: Should a child become ill during school hours, the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the child. A first aid kit is available in the school office. If your child carries an Epi-Pen, please send that to school in a Ziploc bag along with clearly written instructions including your child's name. In fairness to all, please keep your child at home if they have signs of cold or other illness (such as fever, headache, nausea, etc.)

Phones/Electronics: Cell phones and other electronic devices **MUST** be turned off during class time. They may only be used for emergency purposes unless otherwise instructed by a teacher or the Director. Should a student not adhere to this policy, the device will be handed to the teacher or the Director until dismissal.

Communication: School/Parents communication is a cornerstone of the learning experience. We strongly encourage you to communicate with the school and the faculty so that we can better serve our students. We use the following means to communicate with our families:

- Weekly newsletter sent out via email every Friday from the Education Team
- Our Kol Ami Religious School Family Facebook page. Please contact the Religious School office if you would like to be added to this private page.
- Flyers and handouts about school programming and youth group events may be given to your child at dismissal.
- Evaluations detailing your child's progress will be handed out mid-year and end of the year.
- Remind text message alert system. See below for how to sign up:
<https://www.remind.com/join/kolaminjrs>

Inclement Weather: In case of inclement weather, it may be necessary to cancel school. Cancellations will be communicated via email, Remind text message system, and our Facebook page.

Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures:

- **Drop Off:** As you enter parking lot follow the signs labeled *Student Drop off*. Pull car up to the car drop off area, have your child quickly exit the car and enter the side door of the Religious School. The teachers and Directors will be in the hallway guiding the students where to go.
- **Pick Up for Sunday and Tuesday Afternoon:** Please park your car by the Sanctuary doors and wait outside under the Rotunda for the teacher to sign out and excuse your child to their parents or guardian. Each door will be labeled with your child's grade level so you will know where they will exit from. Please use extra caution when walking back to your car.
- **Pick up for Hebrew High Only:** Park your car in the lot by the Religious School doors. Students will come out to you once excused from class by their teacher. Please remind your child to use extra caution when exiting the building.

Security and Safety: Congregation Kol Ami is always concerned about the safety of our congregants and our students. There will be an armed security guard while school is in session. Additionally, teachers will be trained in shelter-in-place procedures and students will have the opportunity to practice this throughout the year. Our school will periodically have fire/evacuation drills in the unlikely event of a fire or the need to leave the premises. Additionally, all classrooms have a posted evacuation map near the classroom door.

Behavior Expectation: Our School is a **No Place for Hate**. Our students pledge to be respectful, kind, inclusive, and fair and we will not tolerate bullying. We strive to create an environment in which positive behaviors are encouraged and reinforced.

Snacks: Each student is allowed to bring their own water bottle to keep in class with them.

Masks: At this time will be optional for all individuals both indoors and outdoors The Religious School reserves the right to require masks for large gatherings and events or at any time deemed necessary by the Religious School Director.