

Religious School Parent Handbook



Welcome to

Congregation Kol Ami's Religious School Educational Team

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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 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	9:15-11:30 AM
Hebrew School	Tuesday Afternoon	4:15-6:15 PM
Hebrew High	Tuesday Evening	6:30-8:30 PM (dinner included)

Pre-Kindergarten: Meets approximately 2 times a month (See below)

Kindergarten - 2nd Grade: Sundays

3rd - 6th Grade: Sundays and Tuesday Afternoon

7th Grade: Tuesday evening and 1 Sunday per month for Family Track (See below)

8th-12th Grade: Tuesday Evening

Pre-K dates for 2026-2027

September 27	February 7
October 11	February 21
October 25	March 7
November 1	March 21
November 22	April 4
December 6	April 18
January 10	May 2
January 24	

7th Grade Family Track Dates

(New Time: 10:15 AM -11:30 AM)

October 18	January 10
November 15	February 21
December 6	March 7

Religious School Tuition Rates

Pre-K	\$350	Seventh Grade	\$1,000
Kindergarten	\$760	*Eighth Grade	\$1,000
First Grade	\$760	*Ninth Grade	\$1,000
Second Grade	\$760	*Tenth Grade	\$1,380
Third Grade	\$1,620	Eleventh Grade	\$900
Fourth Grade	\$1,620	Twelfth Grade	\$900
Fifth Grade	\$1,620	Madrichim Team	\$36
Sixth Grade	\$1,620	Ezer Team	\$36

PLEASE NOTE: Congregation Kol Ami Membership is required to enroll in the RS.

***The Starlight Foundation:** The Starlight Foundation is a not-for-profit foundation that was established many years ago at Temple Emanuel as a permanent endowment for the primary purpose of enhancing programming for Jewish education. The Foundation is proud to be able to continue its primary mission of supporting education for Congregation Kol Ami.

The **Kol Ami Starlight Foundation** is proud to continue their Hebrew High School "Pay What You Want" program, ensuring every student can continue their Jewish education. Families may pay tuition in full, contribute a portion of the tuition, or have Starlight cover the full cost.

We hope this program will eliminate any financial constraints which may deter parents from continuing their child's Jewish education at Kol Ami and help encourage students to remain enrolled post Brit Mitzvah through confirmation and beyond. Our youth represents the future of our faith; the Starlight Foundation is honored to help support the future of our unified congregation.

NEW FOR 2026-2027: Each student enrolled in Kol Ami Kindergarten Religious School will receive a \$360 tuition grant provided by the **Kol Ami Starlight Foundation**, bringing the total cost of tuition down to \$400 per Kindergarten student.

To find out more or make a monetary contribution to support the mission of the Starlight Foundation, please contact **Andy Weiner** at andy@wbresorts.com.

Madrichim Team: For Grades 9-12 who want to take part in our Madrichim program focusing on leadership development and classroom management.

Ezer Team Program: For Grades 7-8 who want to work with children and earn community service hours. Training will be included.

Youth Group: Events will take place after Religious School on Sundays and in the evenings for our older students. Look for our offerings in 2026-27.

Judaica Curriculum Overview

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 vibrant atmosphere of activity
- Students deeply engaged in their learning
- Thought-provoking questions being asked
- Interactive and dynamic learning experiences
- Ruach (spirit) filling the hallways
- A culture of kindness and mutual respect

Pre-Kindergarten: Our youngest students join a twice-monthly program to build community and connect with Judaism. Through songs, crafts, and stories about Jewish values like kindness and courage, they experience the joy of being Jewish. Music, art, and storytelling enhance their learning, creating a classroom filled with smiles and excitement.

Kindergarten: In Kindergarten, we introduce students to the synagogue and spark excitement for Jewish learning. The curriculum focuses on holidays, mitzvot, Torah stories, and Israel, enriched with music, art, and fun activities. The highlight is Consecration, where students receive their own mini-Torah and lead the congregation in song and prayer during Simchat Torah.

First Grade: Students explore Jewish traditions through Bible stories, the synagogue, Israel, and Tzedakah, using their 5 senses, art, music, and hands-on activities. They'll also start learning the Aleph Bet and basic Hebrew phrases. The highlight is a theater experience focusing on the yearly themes at Kol Ami.

Second Grade: Students continue their journey through the Aleph Bet, including writing, pronouncing, and engaging with each letter. Students dive deeper into Bible stories, Jewish holidays, and Israel. The highlight is a theater experience focusing on the yearly themes at Kol Ami.

Third Grade: Students explore Torah stories through discussion, debate, and drama, identifying Jewish values and their relevance. They'll study Mitzvot and Middot and begin learning holiday blessings. The highlight is a dive into Jewish holidays and holiday cooking.

Fourth Grade: Students learn about Jewish life cycle events and rituals through experiential activities and special speakers. They continue exploring Bible stories, holidays, and Tikkun Olam. The highlight is receiving their personalized Siddur.

Fifth Grade: Students study Jewish history, Israel's geography, customs, and challenges, and learn about the Bible and the Ten Commandments. They focus on Tikkun Olam and a highlight of the year is a 5th Grade Shabbaton with their teachers and Clergy.

Sixth Grade: Students learn about Jewish settlement in America, Jewish heroes, and explore their family trees. They focus on incorporating Jewish values into daily life. The highlight is participating in community trips, a Yad making workshop, and mitzvah projects.

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 prayer), talmud (Torah learning), tikkun olam (repairing/healing the world), and acts of g'milut chasadim (loving kindness) in their daily lives.

Every grade will have a core class and will get an opportunity to participate in electives.

Seventh Grade: This curriculum is designed to guide our youngest learners through their Brit Mitzvah. Dynamic educators and clergy will spend several weeks exploring history, culture, prayer practice, and the meaning of being called to the Torah. Tuesday evenings are paired with the Family Track program, led by our clergy, which meets once a month on Sunday mornings.

Eighth and Ninth 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: The Post-Confirmation curriculum equips students with the knowledge and skills to navigate the world as confident Jewish adults. Through challenging discussions on relevant topics, students will learn to engage in peaceful discourse guided by Jewish ethics and values.

Continuing for 2026-27: Kol Ami Without Walls Program: The "School Without Walls" program offers outdoor trips, teen summits, and community exploration, all viewed through a Jewish lens, providing unique opportunities for hands-on learning and growth.



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 other Kol Ami Families as well as the teachers and students. Programs will take place during our regular Sunday School time.

The "Shabbat Experience": Once a month a grade level will be honored during Shabbat. They will have the opportunity to enjoy a Shabbat dinner with family and friends and take part in their very own Shabbat service.

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



Shabbat Attendance: Our students are expected to attend a minimum number of Shabbat services each school year so they may master the words and the meaning of the prayers and experience the joy of celebrating Shabbat as part of a community. Families are encouraged to attend both Shabbat Mishpacha and Congregational Friday evening services. **As Shabbat is more special than the rest of the week, please dress in Shabbat appropriate attire. Please refrain from wearing T-shirts, hoodies, shorts, or gym clothes.**

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

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 most importantly... having fun! Our calendar will be filled with fun and engaging events for the following age groups:

- Club K'ton 1 (K – 2nd)
- Club Noar 2 (3rd – 5th Grade)
- KAFTY Junior (6th – 8th Grade)

We encourage everyone to join our youth groups at events that take place after Religious School on Sundays for our younger students. Programs for middle schoolers will take place in the evenings or weekend afternoons.



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 introduces the educational strategies that are most effective with diverse learners.
- **Tutors** - These teachers will be part of our Hebrew School to provide individual or small group instruction for those students who need extra support beyond the regular classroom.
- **Private Tutoring** – Private tutoring is available for a nominal fee if you feel your child would benefit from additional attention.
- **Inclusion Coordinator** - Adam Roth, Inclusion Coordinator, works with the teachers to ensure they have the tools needed to make each child successful in the classroom.

Policies

Attendance: Regular attendance and participation are essential for getting the most out of Religious School. If your child will be absent, please contact the office (856-489-0035 ext. 110, religiousschool@kolaminj.org) to inform the teacher. Your child is responsible for making up missed assignments. For long-term absences, contact the Director of Education to discuss the best course of action.

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 a staff member will retrieve your child from the classroom.

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 have it in your child's school 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 a cold or other illness (such as fever, headache, nausea, etc.)

Phones/Electronics: We understand the need for cell phones, especially in today's world. However, the use of cell phones in class is **PROHIBITED**, unless needed for a class project. If there is an emergency, call the office at 856-489-0035 ext. 110. Should a student not adhere to this policy, the device will be handed to the teacher or the Director until dismissal.

Dress Requirements: Students entering the building must be dressed in a respectful and acceptable manner befitting a religious environment.

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.

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 outlet available 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.

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

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Snacks: Each student is allowed to bring their own water bottle to keep in class with them. Philly soft pretzels will be sold during dismissal on Sundays and before school on Tuesday afternoons.

Progress Reports: Twice a year you will receive a detailed summary of what has been taking place in the classrooms as well as the progress of your child. To discuss your child's progress please contact their individual teacher.

Security and Safety: Congregation Kol Ami prioritizes safety with an armed security guard during school hours, teacher security training, and student drills. We will also conduct fire/evacuation drills and post evacuation maps in each classroom.

Communication: School/Family 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.

Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures

Drop Off: As you enter the parking lot follow the signs labeled *Student Drop Off*. Pull the 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 to their classrooms.

Pick Up for Sunday and Tuesday Afternoon: Park your car by the Sanctuary doors and wait outside under the Rotunda for the teacher to excuse your child to their parents or guardians. Please take 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.

Code of Conduct

To help foster a positive educational climate in our school, we have developed a discipline plan that affords each student the opportunity to accept responsibility for his/her own behavior. Everyone in the school community must play a role in contributing to a positive educational environment.

Discipline Procedures: Please keep an open line of communication between you, your child, and the teacher. Do not hesitate to call should any problems arise.

First Time: Student is warned by teacher for inappropriate behavior.

Second Time: Student loses class privileges and meets with the teacher or Director of Education after class.

Third Time: Parent is notified by the teacher.

If the problem persists: Parents will be notified by the Director of Education and a conference with all parties present will be called.

Severe Incident Clause: A student who engages in fighting, defies a teacher, is disrespectful, destroys school property, or leaves the school grounds without permission will be sent to the Director of Education immediately and not return to class until a conference with their parent or guardian takes place.

Anti-Bullying Policy – Zero Tolerance

Congregation Kol Ami's Religious School prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying against any pupil on school property or at any school sponsored activity.

Examples of bullying and harassment may include:

- Verbal abuse, including name calling, teasing, racist remarks, etc.
- Physical attacks, including pushing, hitting, punching, hair pulling, scratching, etc.
- Social exclusion, including ostracism, ignoring, alienating, etc.
- Psychological abuse, including actions that insult or demean individuals or groups in a manner that causes distress, reluctance to attend school, a decline in performance, or the emergence of problematic behaviors.

Bullying incidents will be treated accordingly:

All reports of bullying will be brought to the attention of the teacher and Director of Education immediately.

After a period of verification, the Director of Education and Rabbi will meet with parents of offender to discuss appropriate consequences.

Depending on the circumstances, consequences may include a period of suspension and/or expulsion from school.

Family and bullied child will meet with the Senior Rabbi for counseling.

