



CONGREGATION
KOL AMI

WOODINVILLE, WA

קול עמי

Religious School Family Handbook

2014-2015

5774-5775

Congregation Kol Ami
16530 Avondale Road NE
Woodinville, WA 98072
425-844-1604

www.kolaminw.org

Email: admin@kolaminw.org

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Dear Religious School Families,



Bruchim Habaim-Blessed are all of you who come to join us in community! We welcome you to the new school year with blessings. Our Director of Education, Rita Izhaky, and our wonderful faculty are excited for a year of learning, building community and celebration.

As a parent myself, I know that enrolling in religious school is a big commitment. It is a commitment of time, energy and resources. We know that your family has many priorities - school, sports, theatre, dance...today's families are busier than ever before. Our commitment to your family is to provide the highest quality Jewish education possible while working diligently to help your family build Jewish community with other families and help your child build life-long Jewish memories and connections. We view religious school and all aspects of our community life as a collaboration - a partnership with all of our families.

As your family begins your engagement with our educational programs this year, allow me the prerogative as your rabbi to offer a few pieces of advice on how to make this the best year possible for your family and especially for your child:

1. Show up (prepared) regularly: Hands down, the number one thing you can do to help ensure this is a positive and worthwhile experience for your child is to make the commitment, as a family, to attend every week with materials in hand. Just like with soccer or drama, religious school is only effective and only becomes a comfortable and happy place for children when they come to every session (with a few exceptions for illness or important family events). Any soccer coach or play director knows...you can't get the work done and you can't build a team when the participants show up erratically and unprepared. We are always happy to work with your family to brainstorm how to make consistent participation in our programs as seamless and comfortable as possible.
2. Bring it home: Jewish education is not a process of pouring information into the minds of children. Jewish education is a process of identity building and children's identities begin at home. Judaism is something that needs to permeate their lives. Consider how you, as their first teacher, can bring Judaism into your home life in a way that feels authentic for your family. We are here to help with this. Please use Rita, the faculty and myself as resources and guides for how to incorporate aspects of our curriculum into your home life. We will be send suggestions throughout the year.
3. Practice what you preach: If it is important that your children build strong Jewish connections and learn more about their heritage, then why not you, too? I have seen students become inspired when they see their parents learning and actively engaged in the life of the community. Take a class. Read a book. Volunteer. Hang out with other RS families. Show your child that you take your commitment to Jewish life seriously-on a personal level. Again, our faculty is here for you all along the way to provide guidance and support.

As partners, please know we are always open to your feedback—both constructive and positive. Never hesitate to let us know how you and your child are experiencing our programs. A healthy and consistent feedback loop is one of the best ways we can ensure that our educational programs are meeting their goals. My door, Rita's door and the doors of our congregational leadership are always open to you - our partners.

May each of you be blessed with a year of discovery, connection, joy, growth, friendship and Torah-the wisdom of our people passed from generation to generation down to YOU and your family. I am excited to get to know each of you and to partner with your family.

B'shalom/In Peace,

Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg

rabbikinberg@gmail.com

Cell: 360-280-5372

From the Director of Education

Dear Parents,

Shalom and welcome to a new Religious School year! I am looking forward to starting this year with our fantastic students, enthusiastic teachers, and dedicated families.

New to the 2014-2015 school year:
Sunday session will be 2:45pm-5:00pm and
Midweek sessions will be on Thursdays 5:30pm-6:30pm
Please mark these changes to your home calendars

Kol Ami has a reputation as a strong community expressed in the level of family involvement in our Religious School. My philosophy of education is “It takes a village to raise a child” or in our case, it takes a synagogue community. I ask all of you to get to know our teachers and work closely and consistently with them.

All of us are dedicated to help provide your children with an enriched program of Jewish learning. I hope you will make a point to establish a relationship with the teachers early on for your children to learn and grow throughout this new academic year. Please know that I am available to any parent that would like to meet me prior or during Sunday School hours, or I would be equally happy to set up a meeting on a weekday.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of attending Shabbat services with your children. Along with serving as role models for your children, you help to transform a service of sanctity into a community event that then becomes a staple in the life of our congregation.

If I could encapsulate my hopes for you and our school, I would list:

- Volunteer in your child’s classroom.
- Attend a class occasionally with your child; this sends your child the message that you think that this is an important and worthwhile use of their time.
- Ask me, “How do I join the Education Committee?”
- Attend prayer services with your children.
- Participate in adult education.
- Make your children’s Religious School homework part of your school routine.
- Set aside time to review weekly learning with your children.
- Encourage your children to share their knowledge by integrating it into your Jewish life.
- Meet with your child’s teacher to discuss concerns or progress.

I invite you to come to me with any questions or concerns that you may have throughout the year.



Warmly,
Rita Izhaky
Director of Education
425-823-5092
rizhaky@gmail.com

School Policies

Attendance

Regular attendance is required for all programs. When attendance falls below 75 percent or your child misses two consecutive classes, you will be notified by your child's instructor. Any exception to the attendance requirement must be approved by the Director of Education. Parents should notify their child's teacher by phone or email if they are aware of problems in advance. Appropriate make up work may be required.

School Drop Off & Pickup

Sunday school drop off is at 2:30 – 2:45; pick up is at 5:00

Thursday school drop off is at 5:15 – 5:30; pick up is at 6:30

Please do not drop your children off early at Sunday school and leave them unsupervised. Please pick up your children promptly at the end of class. Students may not be left unsupervised. This is a liability issue for Kol Ami. Please be respectful of our staff; teachers are busy preparing to teach and are unable to supervise your children prior to class and may not be available to wait for late arriving parents.

Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to demonstrate respect for themselves, their classmates, their teacher and the synagogue in accordance with the Jewish value of *Derech Eretz* (Proper Conduct). Our teachers are responsible for instilling this value in every student by deed and action. Students will receive simple, achievable and understandable classroom rules at the beginning of the year.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are always welcome in the classroom to help out with special projects. If a parent has a particular skill or knowledge they would like to share, please talk with the Director about how you can get involved.

Health & Safety

If a child should suffer a minor injury while at school, minor first aid will be administered. Please note that while we can apply topical treatment, we cannot offer children aspirin or any other medication. If your child becomes ill at school, we will call you to come pick him or her up. If there is no fever, we will take what measures we can to comfort the child and have him or her return to class. Kol Ami has emergency procedures in place for earthquakes or other disasters. We insist that all staff and regular volunteers undergo a criminal background check to ensure student safety.

Snow/Emergency Closures

If weather conditions or lack of power create hazards for students and families, we will cancel Religious School. Watch and listen for announcements via email, Facebook, or telephone.

Donations

Donations to the Religious School are a much appreciated way of saying thank you for a teacher's efforts throughout the year, whether for preparing our youth for their B'nai Mitzvah or for teaching them a rich Judaic and Hebrew curriculum. Donations can be made in any amount, and all monies raised in this fashion are used to help fund field trips, curriculum materials, and special events. Donations can also be made to the Judy Simon Scholarship Fund, which provides financial assistance to families requiring tuition assistance for their children in Religious School. All donations to the school are tax-deductible.

Curriculum

Religious School

Our Sunday classes include both Judaic and Hebrew Studies. The CHAI Curriculum, developed by the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ), forms the core of our Judaica program. It focuses classroom learning on [Torah, Avodah \(worship\) and G'milut Chasadim](#) (acts of kindness) and expands beyond these topics in other educational programs such as family programs. CHAI lessons are based on the "[Understanding by Design](#)" curriculum development model, which is widely used in the field of general education.

Hebrew studies begin in the early grades with letter recognition and word comprehension using age-appropriate activities such as songs and games. Using age appropriate texts and materials, students will learn Hebrew letter recognition and decoding skills, and progress through the study of a series of blessings, prayers and ritual observance all while learning to embrace Hebrew as a sacred Jewish language.

Students in Grades 5 through 7 also attend classes on Thursday afternoons. Grades 5 and 6 (Kita Hey & Vav) focus on Modern Hebrew language. Grade 7 (Kita Zion), the pre-B'nai Mitzvah students, meet with the Rabbi on Thursday to study ethical issues and current events from a Jewish perspective.

Gan (PreK & Kindergarten) – (Meets Sundays) - Children explore an introduction to Torah and other stories, Mitzvot, Holidays and Aleph Bet. We explore our topics using age appropriate games, felt board/dramatic play, songs, crafts and fine and gross motor activities. We start with centers, circle time, craft, snack, motor games and closing circle.

Kita Aleph /Bet (Grade 1 & 2) – (Meets Sundays) - Aleph /Bet introduces students to basic prayers and the importance of G'milut Chasadim (acts of kindness). We study Torah stories and holidays. In Hebrew, children continue with basic letter identification, decoding vowels, combined letters, and comprehension of basic words using handouts and *Derech Binah*, a Hebrew primer. The classes use a "hands on" learning experience with the incorporation of games, projects and group discussions.

Kita Gimel (Grade 3) – (Meets Sundays) - Gimel classes use the Hebrew Textbook *Shalom U'veracha* to further their studies, learning complex words and developing confidence in their comprehension. Using the CHAI curriculum for Judaic studies, students study the book of *Vayikra*, (Leviticus), discuss Ways We Experience God and learn about taking responsibility for *G'milut Chasadim*.

Kita Dalet (Grade 4) – (Meets Sundays) - Continuing with the CHAI curriculum, Dalet studies the books of *B'midbar* and *D'varim*; (Numbers and Deuteronomy), Students see a direct relationship between being a member of a community and our behaviors, through study of the significance and structure of communal prayer, and acts of *G'milut Chasadim* affecting relationships.. Hebrew study is using the text, *Heneni*, a text based upon using the prayers in t'fillah to develop their understanding of the language. Students learn by active participation, using games and manipulatives, role-playing, projects, and group discussion.

Kita Hey (Grade 5) - (Meets both Sundays and Thursdays) - Torah studies focus on *N'vi'im* (Prophets) and Prophecy. Students learn how the Reform Movement has dealt with the prayers in the siddur while mastering the prayers themselves. Students also learn about the origins of Israel. In Hebrew, students continue *Heneni* text and begin their Thursday studies of Modern Hebrew.

Kita Vav (Grade 6) - (Meets both Sundays and Thursdays) - Vav continues the Hebrew curriculum with *Heneni 2*, as well as *Let's Talk Hebrew* (Thursdays) to improve their knowledge of the meaning of Hebrew words and continue their study of Modern Hebrew. Torah studies focus on *N'vi'im* (Prophets), while studies of *G'milut Chasadim* include global issues and social action. Students will also learn additional material about the origins of Israel, Jews in Europe, and the Holocaust.

Kita Zayin (Grade 7, Pre-B'nai Mitzvah),

Sunday Afternoon: Kita Zayin continues mastery of the Shabbat Prayer services in preparation for their B'nai Mitzvah, with a goal of fluent reading and understanding of the prayers. Zayin studies ideas expressed in Midrash, Talmud and Mishnah and interpretations by great Jewish thinkers. Students also explore Jewish ethics in relation to everyday life and current events.

Thursday Afternoon: Designed for students preparing for B'nai Mitzvah. The Rabbi focuses on three areas of Jewish study to enhance our understanding of who we are as Jews: (1) Hot Jewish topics of our day: looking at the values and ethics behind issues such as bio-ethics, death penalty, school violence, the ethics of war, sexual ethics, and business ethics; (2) American Jews: who are and have been some of the most prominent American Jews and how have they contributed to and shaped American history and Jewish history; (3) Current events: What is happening in Israel and other Jewish communities around the globe?

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Requirements

Congregation Kol Ami aims to prepare students to become lifelong, active members of the Jewish community. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony is a milestone on that path. To learn more about scheduling, prerequisites, and the B'nai Mitzvah process at Kol Ami, please check our website (www.kolaminw.org) or the CKA office (admin@kolaminw.org) for the B'nai Mitzvah Guidelines and other related materials.

Special Programming – Enrichment

Family Afternoons

Family Afternoon events are periodically held throughout the year to provide opportunities for children and adults to explore Jewish traditions together. We engage in crafts, songs and hands-on learning. Past programs have included an Israeli Shuk, Charoset Fair, TuB'Shevat Seder, and holiday festivals. Please check the Religious School calendar for specific dates for your child. Teachers are expected to hold at least one in-class family education program.

Advanced Hebrew Class will be offered based upon the level of interest / request for the program. Please contact Michal at (425) 463-6998 or michalcom@hotmail.com

Other Educational and Related Opportunities

For Teens:

NFTY Youth Group:

Congregation Kol Ami is a member of NFTY (National Federation of Temple Youth). "KATY", our local youth group, offers 9th-12th grade students extra-curricular programming, including service projects, special events, daytrips, and weekend overnights. The group has had social events planned

within our own congregation, as well as with NFTY Northwest. Contact Youth Director, Sarabeth Levine, through the Temple office at admin@kolaminw.org or happygirl425@hotmail.com

Junior Chai

Geared towards the needs of 6th through 8th graders, this program provides social activities and leadership development with Jewish content. Contact Sarabeth Levine, Youth Director, for more information.

For Adults:

Adult Education: The Adult Education Program will begin in September. Separate information will be made available once the program is finalized with Rabbi Kinberg. Guest speakers, Torah study, discussion groups, and classes have been offered in the past. Let us know if there are particular topics that you would like covered. Contact Kirk Gagnon to volunteer with this important Committee.

Introduction to Judaism with Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg: Separate information will be available once the program is finalized. This course has been very popular in the past. For information, please email CKA at admin@kolaminw.org.

*Our goal at the Kol Ami Religious School is to
provide a nurturing learning environment for your child,
and a strong Jewish curriculum, in order to
forge a Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish people*

A Final Word:

Get involved! Your child will value their Jewish education if *you* take it seriously: Volunteer, join the Education Committee, attend adult education, and come to Services!

*Please join us at our next
Education Committee Meeting
and help make our educational offerings even better!*

Contact Gail Kaufman or Jane Levite for more Committee information.
Gail can be reached at gkaufman@gmail.com