

TERS Message

October 2020

Shana Tova Umetukah!

Virtual religious school is off to a great start! Our teachers, faculty assistants and students navigated to their Sunday and Wednesday Zoom classrooms. It has been a learning curve for some, but we were able to troubleshoot through a few technical and scheduling issues. We have completed our first several lessons and we look forward to the rest of the school year going smoothly.

We thank our teachers who made sure to include many interactive elements to their class, especially for our youngest students, who received care packages so that they could still enjoy a teacher-led arts and craft activity as part of their lesson. Special thanks to Rachel O'Brien, who donated art supplies for our students in Kitah Gan, Kitah Alef-Bet A, and Kitah Alef-Bet B. The Shalom Learning curriculum has our youngest learners exploring Jewish values and holidays through the senses. These students will experience the sights, sounds, tastes and feels that connect us to Jewish tradition and learning throughout the year.

The Jewish values theme of our Kitah Gimmel through Kitah Zayin Shalom Learning curriculum, from September through October, focuses on Teshuvah: taking responsibility for your actions. Each grade is approaching lesson material through age-appropriate context: Kitah Gimmel (Family), Dalet (Self), Hay (Peers), Vav (Community) and Zayin (World). Students are exposed to a variety of Judaic text sources, stories, videos and songs which invite vibrant discussion, creative exercises and activities.

During these first weeks back-to-school, our students are reviewing Hebrew prayers and being assessed on their knowledge of the Alef Bet and their Hebrew reading skills so that teachers will be able to address each child's learning needs during the course of the year. Once all Kitah Gimmel through Kitah Zayin students have received their individual Shalom Learning portal logins, teachers may assign students extra reading practice which they can access independently in between class time. This is particularly valuable for those times when students miss class; they will be able to keep up. For more information about Shalom Learning, go to www.shalomlearning.org. If you have questions about how our school is implementing the program please contact us at religiouschool@tewaterford.org.

Zoom Class Reminders

With our new year and new curriculum, our teachers are very excited to teach, and with our compressed class time, we want to make sure your children get the most out of their experience. Please help your child come to class ready for successful learning. Here's what they'll need:

- sound (volume on high) and camera set up and 'on'

- a chair to sit in, preferably set up at a desk or table so they can be ready to focus, discuss, write, and draw
- a quiet spot with minimal distractions (please, no pets, food, or other things that will divert attention from the class)

Friday, Oct 2 at 6:00-7:00 - Sukkot Family Activity led by Religious School - We will lead the children in designing and building a mini-sukkah (for them to host stuffed animals or dolls/toy figure friends) using materials found in their homes/yard. Everyone will continue to work on them after the gathering. Over the next several days, families can share photographs of their finished sukkah to religiousschool@tewaterford.org. We will then post their sukkot images in a virtual sukkah on the religious school part of the Temple website so they can see all the sukkot their religious school friends built. Over time we will see the virtual sukkah become decorated with the submissions. Maybe we can share a link in the following week's weekly email announcement so our congregants can see the finished virtual sukkah.

Friday, Oct 16 at 6:00-7:30 - Fun Family Socials led by Religious School - Every month, usually on the third Friday evening, we will host a fun family night so the kids have a reason to socialize with their religious school friends. It will be an evening to play games and activities that will help the kids/families get to know each other better. Or during a month when we are hosting Havdalah on a Saturday night, it would be the third Sat instead of the third Friday night.

Friday, Nov 6 at 6:45-7:30 - First Friday Tot Shabbat & Tefillah Time with Rabbi Marc and Hazzan Sherry - Every month, on the first Friday evening, kids 6th grade and younger would be encouraged to attend. The first 20 minutes will be a Tot Shabbat story time and activity (Kitah Gan, Alef and Bet) followed by the the next 25 minutes of Tefillah Time for older grades (Kitah Gimmel through Vav) abridged service where Rabbi and Sherry discuss different aspects of the Shabbat service each month, like the prayer practice the kids normally did in assembly at religious school.

We wish your family a joyous Sukkot and Simchat Torah this month. Please plan to join us as we celebrate with Temple Emanu-El during Erev Sukkot on Friday, October 2 at 7:00 p.m. and with the wider Jewish Community for Erev Simchat Torah on Friday, October 9 at 7:00 p.m. Please see the weekly Temple email news for zoom invite links.

Chag sameach,
Armi and Jennifer

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