



# **Adolph Nord Religious School Parent Handbook**

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Mission Statement**

The Adolph Nord Religious School (“Religious School”) seeks to enable students to develop a solid Jewish identity within their families, within the Jewish community, and within secular society. By the culmination of their formal Religious School education, students should (1) have a strong understanding and deep appreciation for the Jewish religion and (2) be fully prepared to embrace and live according to Jewish customs and beliefs into and throughout adulthood. L’dor V’dor (From Generation to Generation).

### **B. Parents as Partners**

The education of your child is a partnership between you, your child and the Religious School. Practicing Judaism in the home and regular attendance at Religious School and synagogue services are essential elements to fulfilling the Religious School’s mission. Together, as parents and teachers, we can help our children gain a sufficient level of Jewish knowledge and identity that will guide them in making positive life choices. Parents can help by:

- Encouraging a positive attitude toward Jewish study and prayer.
- Participating in Jewish experiences at home and at synagogue.
- Continuing to study as adults to show Judaism is a life-long pursuit.
- Making Jewish ethics and spiritual growth priorities in the family.
- Communicating with school staff when you have questions, concerns or suggestions.
- Contributing to the resources of the Religious School by volunteering.

## **II. General Information**

### **A. Enrollment**

In order for a child to attend the Religious School, the child must be 4 years old or older as of September 1st and the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) must be a member(s) in good standing of Temple Adas Shalom/HJC and must be committed to following established Temple Adas Shalom/HJC and Religious School policies. In addition, the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) must be committed to formally educating the child exclusively in the Jewish faith.

Temple Adas Shalom/HJC understands that in rare circumstances families may need time to determine the appropriate religious direction for their children. In support of families in this situation, children who have not reached the third grade may be permitted to attend the Religious School for up to one year, provided the family (1) meets with the Rabbi, the Principal, and the child's prospective teacher(s) prior to enrollment or at the beginning of the academic year and at other times, as determined by the Rabbi and/or the Principal, for counseling and to develop a plan to assist those families in choosing a single religious educational path, and (2) obtains the approval of the Religious School Committee. If the parent(s) chooses a formal religious education path other than Judaism, the family shall be advised of other means of Jewish exposure through existing Temple Adas Shalom/HJC programs and activities.

Children entering the Religious School will be assigned to the chronological grade that the child attends in secular school. Exception may be made on a case-by-case basis.

Midweek Religious School enrollment is required for Grades 3 through 6. In lieu of Midweek Religious School, a tutor approved by the Principal may be hired at the family’s expense if (1) a child

has special learning needs beyond the abilities of our classroom curriculum, or (2) one-way transportation would take more than an hour.

## B. Attendance -- Religious School

Regular attendance is essential to effectively educate our students and operate the Religious School. If a student is going to be absent, we urge the parents to contact the child's teacher(s). Furthermore, due to the progressive nature of the curriculum, we expect the student to make up all missed work, as requested by the teacher(s). The student's teacher(s) will be available as a resource to ensure the proper understanding of the missed material.

## C. Attendance -- Worship Services

To maximize the Religious School experience, students are encouraged to attend services regularly. Service attendance enables students to gain familiarity with Jewish rituals and reinforces classroom lessons. Each student should attend at least one synagogue service per month during the school year. In the six months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students are expected to attend services three out of four Sabbaths per month. Additional details are provided to B'nai Mitzvah families with students in Grade 6. The following is a listing of worship service opportunities at Temple Adas Shalom/HJC. Specific information about service dates and times is contained in the Temple Adas Shalom/HJC calendar, monthly newsletters and weekly email distributions.

- **Friday Night Services:** Friday night services, typically beginning at 7:30pm, include those led by the Rabbi, members of the Religious Practices Committee, and temple youth. Special services are held during the year such as Bar/Bat Mitzvah services, those held in conjunction with holiday dinners (e.g., Sukkot), and those held to honor special groups (e.g., New Member Shabbat).
- **Tot Shabbat Services:** A child-friendly worship experience, which is geared to young children (through Grade 2), typically is offered each month on Saturday mornings throughout the academic year. The service includes stories and songs, and lasts about 40 minutes. After the service, families gather to socialize and partake in an oneg. Children have fun and develop friendships and Jewish knowledge.
- **Saturday Morning Services:** Torah services are held generally twice a month and may include a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service or a special service such as a Learning Service. On some Saturday mornings, a Torah study program may be held either in addition to or in lieu of a regular morning services.
- **Other Jewish Venues:** Students may attend services of other Jewish denominations. The Religious School considers it important for children to understand and experience different Jewish worship practices.

## D. Religious School Guests

While guests are welcome to general congregational events, only enrolled students may attend Religious School classes. Upon arrival, non-Religious School students will be escorted to the Religious School Office where a parent or guardian will be contacted for pick-up.

## E. Arrival

Sunday Religious School begins promptly at 9:00am. Midweek Religious School begins promptly at 4:30pm.

Students should arrive on time for all classes. It is imperative that the classes not be disrupted by students filtering in after the lessons have commenced. Because learning time is limited, the Religious School would like to make the most of every minute.

## F. Dismissal

Sunday Religious School students are dismissed at 12:00 noon. Midweek Religious School students are dismissed at 5:45pm. To minimize disruption, we ask that you refrain from entering the Religious School hallways until dismissal (the ringing of the bell).

Any student who must depart Religious School prior to dismissal must provide the teacher with written or verbal notice from a parent/guardian upon arrival to school. At the specified time, the parent (or the adult picking up the student) must go directly to the classroom to meet the student. The child will not be released to leave unless met by a parent. Students will be responsible for making up any missed assignments.

## G. Inclement Weather

Religious School will be cancelled if Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) is closed or closes early (on Wednesdays) or cancels activities (on Sundays). If HCPS is not closed, or has not cancelled all Sunday activities, and weather or building conditions are of a concern, the Religious School Committee (RSC) Chair and Principal will consult with RSC members to determine if conditions warrant Religious School closure.

School delays and closings will be communicated as follows:

- Answering Machine: A message will be left on Temple Adas Shalom/HJC's answering machine by 7:30am on Sunday and 3:30pm on Wednesday at (410) 939-3170 ext. 15.
- Radio: Announcements will be made on WBAL radio (1090AM).
- Website: [www.harfordjewishcenter.org](http://www.harfordjewishcenter.org) will be updated to reflect any cancellation by 7:30am Sunday and by 3:30pm Wednesday.
- Email: By 7:30am Sunday morning and by 3:30pm Wednesday an email notification will be sent.

If you necessitate a personal phone call in the event of a school closure, please contact the Religious School principal. Regardless of the school determination, if weather conditions in your neighborhood are dangerous, please remain at home

## H. Snacks

On Sundays, snack works as follows:

All: Snacks must be compliant with the Temple Adas Shalom/HJC "Guidelines for Kashrut" (see Appendix) and should be relatively healthy and nut/peanut-free (because of food allergy concerns). Students may bring one or more of the following: fruit, vegetables and/or pre-packaged snacks (e.g., pretzels, graham crackers, etc.).

Pre-K/K through Grade 7: Students bring their own snack to Religious School on Sundays for consumption during snack time. However, on special occasions (e.g., particular Jewish holidays and/or Family Education Programs), snacks may be provided by the Religious School or through the Room Parent program. The Room Parents will coordinate the special snack schedule and parents will be notified via email. Sharing of snacks is prohibited due to food allergies. Food allergy parents are notified when special snacks are provided.

Grades 8-10: Religious School families will provide breakfast on Sunday mornings on a rotating basis. The Room Parents will coordinate the breakfast schedule.

Snack time is not allotted during Midweek Religious School.

## I. Student Materials

Your child is expected to bring his/her Religious School supplies to every class. Some materials will be provided by the school, others will be provided by the families. A list of school supplies is emailed to each family prior to the start of the school year.

All lost or damaged materials will have to be replaced at the student's or parent's expense. Students who consistently arrive without the required materials will be obligated to purchase a set of materials, which will be kept at school. All non-consumable materials will remain the property of the Religious School.

Respect should be shown toward any and all learning materials.

## J. Tzedakah

The Religious School considers the teaching of tzedakah to be an important aspect of the education program. Each child is requested to bring a contribution (no matter how small) for the classroom's tzedakah fund each Sunday. It is especially meaningful when students contribute nominal money from their own savings. Early in the school year, each classroom decides how its funds are to be allocated.

## K. Homework

Homework will be assigned as needed to reinforce the curriculum taught during class. Homework also provides a wonderful opportunity for children and parents to engage in Jewish learning together.

Parents are requested to support the Religious School by encouraging their children to take their homework responsibilities seriously. If children understand that parents are interested in their Religious School work, the values which the Religious School is teaching will be reinforced.

Students will be asked to make up missed homework assignments in a timely fashion.

## L. Behavior

The Religious School seeks to provide a positive learning environment, which actively engages its students. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that (1) is conducive to a proper learning environment, and (2) respects the personal and property rights of all members of our school community.

For this reason, the Religious School requires each student and his/her parent/guardian to read and sign a "Covenant of Conduct" at the beginning of the school year.

Should a student's behavior not follow the "Covenant of Conduct," the teacher will attempt to redirect the student to the task at hand. If the teacher is unable to engage the student in the classroom activity or if the disruptive behavior continues, the student will be sent to the Religious School Office and the Principal will notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If the disruptive behavior continues, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher, and the Principal shall meet to develop a plan to better meet the child's needs at the Religious School, while ensuring that the child's behavior does not prevent other students from learning.

If necessary, the Principal may suspend any student who is found to be continually disruptive. In rare cases, the Religious School may determine that a student cannot meet minimal behavioral expectations

and parents may be asked to withdraw the student from the Religious School. The Religious School reserves the right to expel any student at any time if his/her behavior is found to be routinely disruptive or at all destructive, or otherwise undermines the Religious School's mission of providing a positive learning environment. Violent behavior or the possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons will not be tolerated at the Religious School or Religious School sponsored events, and will result in immediate suspension.

#### M. Cell Phones and Other Wireless Devices

Student cell phones and other wireless devices must be off and out of sight at Temple Adas Shalom/HJC during Religious School hours of operation. Should a student violate this policy, the staff may take possession of the cell phone or other wireless device until dismissal.

#### N. Attire

Religious School: Proper clothing conducive to learning is expected to be worn during Religious School hours.

Worship Services: Serving as a shaliach tzibbur, prayer leader, for the congregation is a great honor. All those who ascend the bimah to lead a part of the worship service should dress in appropriate attire. Please refrain from wearing t-shirts, sweatshirts, tank tops, jeans, flip flops and other similar articles of clothing. Clothing should cover shoulders and midribs. Please direct any questions to the Rabbi.

#### O. Class Progress Reports

Class Progress Report will be issued twice a year to inform parents of class content and performance. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the child's teacher or with the Principal if they have questions or concerns about their child's individual performance.

#### P. Parent Involvement

Your involvement in the Religious School will enhance your child's education. We request that you perform the mitzvah of volunteering at the Religious School by participating in holiday celebrations and/or serving as a room parent, teacher (no formal education experience required; training and support provided), substitute teacher, and/or on the Religious School Committee.

### **III. Family Activities and Special Programs**

#### A. Grade-Specific Shabbat (Pre-K/K – Grade 6)

Once during the school year, each grade, Pre-K/K – Grade 5, will participate in a special Shabbat dinner and service. Grade 6 will lead a Saturday morning service followed by an oneg sponsored by the class. These services are specifically tailored to each grade's ability level. They are a terrific experience for the whole family and help to facilitate class socialization and bonding.

All Religious School families are encouraged to attend any and all of these family friendly services. Older children will have an opportunity for service leadership during Bar/Bat Mitzvah and/or as part of the Adas Shalom Temple Youth ("ASTY").

#### B. Consecration (Grade 1)

Consecration represents the formal dedication of children to the study of Torah and its teachings. The ceremony includes Grade 1 students as well as older students new to Temple Adas Shalom/HJC who have not previously been consecrated.

Families of consecrants participate in the ceremony when the children are called to the Bimah and presented with a small Torah. If a child does not have a Hebrew name, this is an ideal opportunity to select one and have it officially recognized. The Rabbi is available for assistance in the selection of a Hebrew name.

### C. B'nai Mitzvah

According to Jewish custom, when Jewish children reach the age of maturity (generally 12 years for girls and 13 years for boys), they become responsible for their actions. At this point a boy is said to become Bar Mitzvah ("son of the commandment") and a girl is said to become Bat Mitzvah ("daughter of the commandment").

Before this age, a child's responsibility for following Jewish customs and laws lies with the parents. After this age, the child is expected to participate in all areas of Jewish community life and bear his/ her own responsibility for Jewish ritual, law, traditions, and ethics.

In order to be considered for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students must attend a Jewish Religious School for a minimum of four consecutive years leading up to and through Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students who meet this criterion will actively prepare for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah in Grades 6 and 7.

As part of the Religious School curriculum, students are taught the Friday evening and Saturday morning services and how to read Torah and Haftarah trope. During Grade 7, in lieu of Midweek, B'nai Mitzvah students engage in Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring. Families are responsible for arranging preparation tutoring for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

In addition to their service preparation, students learn what it means to become responsible Jewish young adults by choosing to fulfill the requirements of our "Tri-Mitzvah-Lon" program, which consists of: (1) service to the congregation, (2) service to the community, and (3) service to Clal Yisrael (Jewish community around the world).

Project ideas are contained in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide. In addition, students and their families meet at least three times with the Rabbi to generate ideas for the Tri-Mitzvah-Lon, plan for family participation, and discuss the B'nai Mitzvah speech.

At the start of their child's Grade 6 year, parents meet with a member of the Religious Practices Committee to receive tentative B'nai Mitzvah dates and additional Bar/Bat Mitzvah information, including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide. Parents also are urged to participate in the RPC's B'nai Mitzvah Grade 6 Parent Class.

The B'nai Mitzvah Parent Class seeks to: (1) bring families together from different backgrounds and with varying knowledge bases for a shared educational experience, (2) help parents to organize their thoughts and ideas for the preparation of their child's up-coming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and (3) promote an understanding of the various parts of the service and their meaning.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a source of pride and a milestone on the way to Confirmation and into Jewish adulthood. Those who have become B'nai Mitzvah are called upon for leadership honors in our religious services and have enhanced privileges and tasks in our congregational community.

### D. Confirmation

In order to be considered for Confirmation, students must attend Religious School following Bar/Bat Mitzvah up to and through Confirmation. This ceremony takes place in the spring during the Shavuot Shabbat Service at the end of the Grade 10 year.

In order to be confirmed, a student must attend a minimum of 50% of the classroom days for confirmation prep, comparative religion, and Torah ethics and both field trips (or field trip make up sessions.) Credit for attendance will continue to be given for NFTY weekends. All confirmation specific requirements (mastering their parsha as approved by the Rabbi, writing and having approved a speech and a kavanah, and completing their class projects as approved by the Social Action committee) must be completed per the deadline schedule distributed at the first Parent/Student Confirmation meeting near the beginning of the school year. All final determinations will be made by the Confirmation teachers, the Principal and Rabbi. Any adjudication will be made by the religious school committee. Any student who fails to meet these requirements will be permitted to retake the 10<sup>th</sup> grade class in a following year.

## E. Madrichim Corps

Religious education does not end at Confirmation. We encourage all of our confirmands to participate in the many continuing religious educational opportunities at Temple Adas Shalom/HJC and consider serving as madrichim (teacher assistants) in the Religious School. Madrichim not only help the Religious School function optimally, they serve as role models to our younger students by staying active at Temple Adas Shalom/HJC and the Religious School.

Candidates for these paid positions must be available to work consistently each week during the school year. Sunday Religious School madrichim are asked to arrive at school by 8:45am and remain in the classroom until 12:15pm to assist with clean-up. Midweek Religious School madrichim are asked to arrive at school by 4:15pm. Madrichim are trained prior to the start of the school year and at various times throughout the year. Attendance at after-school meetings may be necessary.

## F. Family Education Program

Periodically, in lieu of classes, our students and their families participate together in a morning-long Family Education Program. These programs typically involve a shared holiday experience (e.g., Sukkot). The particular dates and themes each year are released during late summer in the Religious School calendar and the August email. In addition, parents also are invited to attend assemblies.

## G. Family Retreat

Based on the level of community interest, Religious School families may be invited to attend a family retreat held at a local retreat and conference center. Should a retreat be organized, information will be provided early in the year.

The family retreat is designed to: (1) provide participants with an enhanced understanding and appreciation of Shabbat, (2) engage in a shared spiritual Shabbat experience, (3) enable the development of special bonds among participating families (including grandparents), and (4) develop a deeper appreciation for our environment.

## H. Beit Cafe/Parent Program

Throughout the academic year, the parents of each Religious School grade will sponsor a Congregational Beit Café (“coffee house”), which is open to the adult members of the congregation. The sponsoring class parents of the Beit Café are requested to participate in a parent program that is scheduled for the duration of the morning. The parent program includes time to meet with the teacher and staff, and engage in a shared parent-student activity.

Based on previous experience, it means a great deal to the children to have a family representative in attendance. If you are unable to participate, we highly recommend you ask another family member to participate in your stead.

### I. Adult Education Opportunities

All parents are encouraged to attend Adult Education programs sponsored by the Temple Adas Shalom/HJC Adult Education Trustees. Offerings may include guest speakers, Torah study, Hebrew study and more. Details will be provided in the Temple Adas Shalom/HJC Calendar and monthly newsletters.

## IV. EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

In order to fully experience and benefit from Jewish learning, students and their families are encouraged to celebrate Judaism in their homes and, as age appropriate, with the Temple Adas Shalom/HJC youth groups

### A. Judaism in the Home

Experiencing Judaism at home reinforces Religious School teachings and enables Judaism to be integral in the students' lives. Through Jewish learning in the home, students can share and "teach" what they have learned with their parents, siblings, extended families, and even their non-Jewish friends, thus, instilling a sense of pride and accomplishment.

One way families can experience Judaism in the home is to observe the Sabbath regularly. Each family may have its own customs. If performed on a regular basis, children and parents alike can grow to appreciate the rituals. Temple Adas Shalom/HJC has a sample home service you may borrow to aid you in this process. In addition to the celebration of Shabbat, families can celebrate major and minor Jewish holidays, including expanding each family's traditional observance of those holidays (e.g., building a sukkah), reading contemporary Jewish books together, making Jewish art, reciting Jewish evening prayers, and partaking in any number of other joyous activities. As needed, the Rabbi, RPC, Principal, and teachers are happy to work with you to identify ways to bring Judaism into your home. They can be of assistance in developing activities that are comfortable and meaningful.

### B. Youth Groups

Temple Adas Shalom/HJC invites middle school and high school students to be members of the junior and senior youth groups. The youth groups are open to all Jewish youth in the surrounding area, regardless of whether the family is a member of Temple Adas Shalom/HJC or if the child is enrolled in the Religious School. For more information, please refer to the Religious School Directory for this year's current volunteer advisor or contact the Temple Adas Shalom/HJC office at (410) 939-3170.

- **Junior Youth Group:** The Junior Youth Group, Junior Adas Shalom Temple Youth ("J/ASTY"), is for children in Grades 6-8. Activities have included: Shul-Ins, Friday Night Services the "NFTY" way (with multiple song leaders), rock and bowl parties, dances, pool parties, rock climbing and much more.
- **Senior Youth Group:** ASTY, the Senior Youth Group, is for Jewish teens in Grades 9-12. Activities include social action opportunities and projects, religious and cultural leadership and participation, and social events. Youth group members participate in regional North American Federation of Temple Youth ("NFTY") events, which are gatherings of Reform Jewish teens from the entire mid-Atlantic region, and Union for Reform Judaism ("URJ") camps.

### C. URJ Camps

Temple Adas Shalom/HJC is a member of the URJ and is located in the URJ Mid-Atlantic Region. Camp Harlam, our regional camp, is located in northeastern Pennsylvania. It offers camping experiences each summer beginning with age 8. For information contact the URJ. The web address is <http://urj.org>.

Additional Reform Jewish camping experiences are available for teens at the URJ Kutz Camp in Warwick, NY, and through the NFTY Israel program office.

## APPENDIX: GUIDELINES FOR KASHRUT

### Kashrut Policy for Temple Adas Shalom (Rev. August 28, 2012)

Temple Adas Shalom follows a Kosher-style policy to honor the dietary laws from the Torah as a sign of holiness and mindfulness.

1. There is to be **NO** mixing of meat and dairy (cheese, milk, sour cream, etc.) products either in the preparation or serving of foods.
2. If store baked goods are purchased, please check for the kosher certification on the package (see box below) OR carefully check ingredients to be sure that NO animal products have been used (e.g., lard which is very popular in bakery pies).
3. Eggs, vegetables, fruit, or permitted fish (see chart) may be eaten with dairy or meat. This neutral category is called parve.
4. For meat meals:
  - a. Only kosher style allowed meats may be served. (see chart)
  - b. A substantial and healthy vegetarian alternative must be offered.
  - c. Dessert must be parve (No dairy products). This policy is waived if there is a significant time frame between the meal and dessert (e.g., meal, service, dessert /Oneg).
  - d. Meat utensils must be used and are stored separately.
5. Please contact Anita Weintraub at 410.272.2140:
  - a. For meat meals/utensils
  - b. If you have questions about a product
6. During Passover, only kosher meat, food, and wine labeled KOSHER FOR PASSOVER may be brought into the building. Vegetables and fruits are permitted, but NO BREAD PRODUCTS. We also have separate utensils or disposables for Passover that must be used. If you are hiring for an event, these policies must be shared with the caterer.

Kosher-Style Permitted Foods	Prohibited Foods (Traif)
Vegetables and fruits-at any meal	
Only mammals that have both a split hoof AND chew their cud are permitted. Cow, bison, deer, goat, sheep, and lamb are permitted.	Tenderloin, sirloin, and filet mignon are prohibited.

<p>Fish with fins and scales are permitted. This includes salmon, tilapia, flounder, cod, tuna, red snapper, etc. These fish are parve.</p>	<p>No Shellfish. No crabs, lobster, clams, mussels, shrimp, scallops, prawn, crayfish, oysters. No catfish, squid, octopus, calamari, eel, or frogs legs.</p>
<p>Chicken, turkey and duck are permitted.</p>	<p>Pig (pork) products. No bacon, ham, spare ribs, sausage, pepperoni, pork rinds, head cheese, lard. No rabbit and game birds.</p>