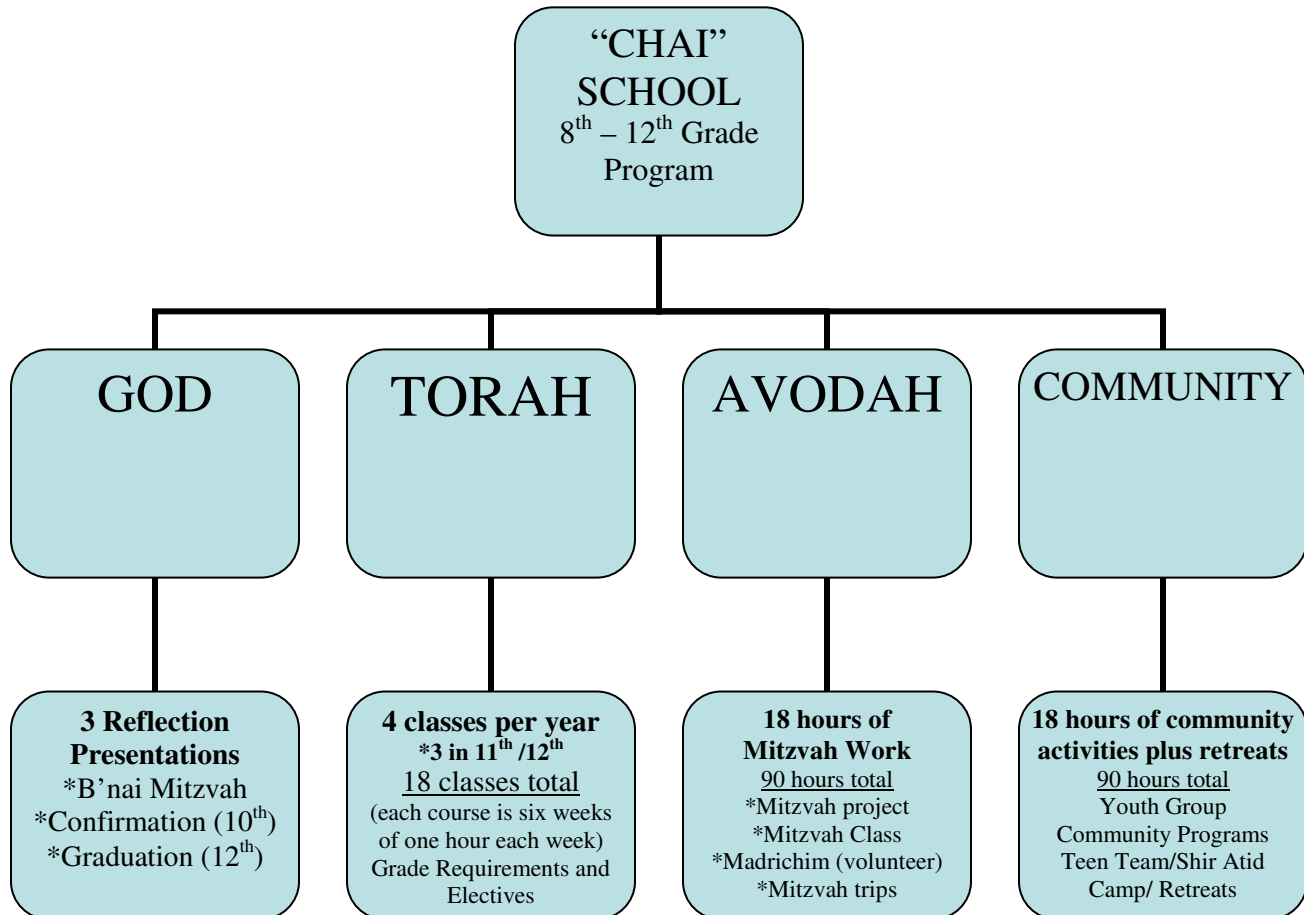


8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> GRADE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
 “CHAI” SCHOOL  
 Beginning Fall 2011



**Goal:** To provide an enhanced program of education for post-b'nai mitzvah students which strives to strengthen the knowledge, character, Jewish identity, and connection to United Hebrew and the greater Jewish community, while responding to the hectic schedule of our teens with flexibility.

**Schedule:** The school year has been divided into quarters. Each quarter, a variety of classes will be offered. Classes will be held during the regular time on Sundays from 11:15-1:15 p.m. One session will run from 11:15-12:10 and the next from 12:20-1:15 p.m. Depending on course offerings (which will be available in August before the school year begins), students may fulfill their 4 classes per year requirement by attending one session (one hour) for the entire year or even by attending two sessions for two quarters or another configuration. This system may be helpful to those who participate in a sport, activity, or program that has typically prevented attendance at religious school during a specific time of year.

**Registration:** Parents should register students in May and June, as usual, with religious school registration. Course selection for the year will occur in August when we have accurate numbers for enrollment.

## Areas of Concentration:

**GOD:** At three important stages, B'nai Mitzvah, Confirmation, and Graduation, students will be asked to reflect on their Jewish identity and relationship to/feelings about God. Students may complete this through a paper or other medium (some may choose music, artwork, a power point presentation, or other). Students, depending on their mode of presentation, will meet with one of the rabbis or cantor to discuss their process and the final product.

**TORAH:** Students are required to take 4 one-hour classes in each year 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> and 3 one-hour classes in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. We will offer classes over four quarters for six weeks each. The plan resembles the format of general education requirements for university study. In 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students will have 2 required courses to take in each particular year and 2 electives. Over the time of 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students must take one elective from each of the 6 sub-category of study. In 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, there are 3 courses that are required and 3 electives from any category. (If students wish to take more than the 4 classes per year, they will be more than welcome to do so, however, they may only reduce the course load each year to 3 courses through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, they may use those courses taken earlier to count toward their total, except for taking the required courses in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>). Because the courses are so short (one hour for 6 weeks), a student is required to be in attendance for at least 5 of the 6 classes. Make-up work will be required for attending only 4 sessions, and attendance at 3 or fewer will not be counted for a course credit. (\*Special situations should be discussed with Rabbi Shapiro).

Required grade level courses:

8<sup>th</sup> – Comparative Judaism I and II (for this year only, topic of study moving to 7<sup>th</sup>)  
and RETREAT

9<sup>th</sup> – Comparative Religions and J.I.T.A. (Journey from Intolerance to Tolerance to Acceptance)

10<sup>th</sup> – Confirmation I and II (Ten Commandments) and RETREAT

11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> – Packing for College, Dinner with Clergy

Elective Categories: Jewish Texts, Israel, Jewish Community, Living Jewishly, Ethics/Middot, and Social Justice & Community (many different classes fall into each of these categories)

**AVODAH:** *Avodah*, which is translated in Modern Hebrew as “work”, in Rabbinic Hebrew referred to Temple “service/duty”. We have chosen this to be our heading for the sacred work which occurs when students perform mitzvah projects. Students are required to complete 18 hours of mitzvah work each year for a total of 90 hours for completion through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (one cannot carry-over hours from one year to the next). This work can be fulfilled in a variety of ways – from the continuance of one’s mitzvah project from becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah*, to volunteering as a *madrich/a* in the school, to doing other mitzvah projects, to participating on a mitzvah trip (like the alternative spring break trip to New Orleans), or by taking a class that is offered that brings students together to do mitzvah projects. Summer mitzvah work can be included.

**COMMUNITY:** Within this area, students are asked to involve themselves within the United Hebrew community and the greater Jewish community. A total of 18 hours will be required each year for a total of 90 hours for completion through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (each year 18 hours is required, students cannot “carry-over” hours). Students can fulfill this through a variety of options – youth group activities, participating in Shir Atid or the Teen Team, going to Jewish camp, and other creative options such as being in the United Hebrew show. Grade level retreats are required and do not count toward the 18 hours of required hours. \*Community Hours must be gathered from at least 3 different places/programs, even if the hours exceed the required amount.

OVERVIEW OF SCHEDULE  
2011-2012

Classes will be held on Sundays      Session 1: 11:15 - 12:10 p.m.  
Session 2: 12:20 - 1:15 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter: September 11, 18, 25, October 2, 16, and 23

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter: October 30, November 6, 13, December 4, 11, and 18

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter: January 8, 22, 29, February 5, 12, and 26

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter: March 11, April 1, 15, 22, 29, and May 6

November 20<sup>th</sup> is *Yom Limmud* (A community event for teens)  
Credit will be given for attendance under “Community”

SAMPLE COURSE OFFERING FOR CHAI SCHOOL

	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter
11:15 – 12:10	Comparative Judaism I	Comparative Judaism II	Comparative Judaism I	Comparative Judaism II
	Comparative Religions I	J.I.T.A.	Comparative Religions I	J.I.T.A.
	Confirmation I	God-Cast	Confirmation II	Jewish Cooking
	Jews on College – the Search and the Find	Jewish Cooking	Packing for College	Comparative Religions II- Heaven, Hell, and Afterlife
12:20 – 1:15	Israel Connections	Blood and Lust in the Bible	God-Cast	Jewish Lens
	Jews in the News	Jews in Sports	Israel Connections	Jews Wear/Do What?
	Shake Your Lulav – and other Fall Holiday practices	Spiritual Dance	Matzah Munch – and other Spring Holiday practices	Who was Jesus to the Jews? (and how that matters today)
		Would You or Wouldn't You? – Ethical Dilemas		
	Money Matters – Ethics of Business	Speaking Hebrew	Sacred Choices	Jews in Comedy – Good or Bad for the Jews?
			Jewish Cooking	

\* 11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> grade dinners with the clergy held at various times (6 sessions = 1 class credit)

## F.A.Q.s

### **Why are we making this change? Isn't it fine as it is?**

Our goal is to engage our students in Jewish living and learning. Currently, although it is happening for some of our teens, it is not happening for the majority. We consistently tell our *b'nai mitzvah* candidates that they will be considered as "Jewish adults" once they become a *bar/bat mitzvah*, yet, in reality, they are still treated almost exactly the same. We want to establish a program that meets the needs of today's Jewish teens, while still giving them the Jewish education they need at this stage of their life. This new program provides flexibility in scheduling and also shows our students that Jewish life doesn't just take place for two hours every Sunday in a religious school classroom.

One Eighth grade student asked, "Why can't you just keep it like it is?" I responded to the class, "Do you enjoy it like it is?" The answer from almost all was, "No?" I inquired further, "So why not change it?" The answer, "Because this is how its been. It's easy". We do not want it to be easy and, yet, un-engaging. We want it to be flexible and stimulating! We believe this program provides both and more.

### **Given that this is new, it all seems so complicated. How will I follow what the requirements are?**

Thinking of this in a university General Education requirement format may make it familiar to you. Every child and parent will receive an easy chart to keep track of it all. In addition, United Hebrew will have a "Chai" School Advisor (Counselor) to help each student work his/her way through the program. He/She will keep students updated on their progress, letting them know where they are on the completion of the program, and there to assist with any questions, concerns, or to provide helpful suggestions for classes, mitzvah work, and community activities.

### **My child will be in 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> grade, what do these requirements mean for them?**

Since this program will begin with students starting in the "middle", they will need to take the required courses for their grade and electives from the different categories (of their choice). Thus as 10<sup>th</sup> grade student will take the two Confirmation courses and two electives of their choice – each from different categories of the 6 categories (2 of the 6). A 9<sup>th</sup> grade student will take their 9<sup>th</sup> grade required courses and then 10<sup>th</sup> grade courses, and needs four electives of their choice – each from different categories of the 6 (4 of the 6). The hours of mitzvah work and community involvement will be the same for each year (18 hours for each).

### **Are you moving Confirmation? My child just wants to be Confirmed.**

Confirmation will remain at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade. For many years we have been offering a post-Confirmation program that has been quite successful. We are now fitting that program into this one, and hoping that more students will see that their Jewish education doesn't have to end in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. There are fewer classes to take in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and the successful "Dinner with the rabbi" will be continued, but with a slightly different schedule and will include all the clergy. We hope that many more students will choose to continue on in their Jewish education because they enjoy the course offerings, because they are relevant to their life at this stage, and because they are interested in living Jewishly.

### **What if my child doesn't complete the requirements as outlined?**

Students will have the opportunity to make-up classes and hours through their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. If these are not made up by 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students will not be eligible to be confirmed that year. Our "Chai" school advisor will be in touch with these students and parents long before the lack of fulfillment of requirements becomes a big issue.

### **How do you know about what hours my child fulfills?**

We will keep track of all the courses the students take, but students (and parents) are responsible for submitting mitzvah and community hours using forms we provide. Students will turn these into the school office or email them to the "Chai" School advisor.

**\*\*\*Questions on the “Torah” section:**

**There are only 6 classes per quarter, what if they miss a class?**

Given the flexibility of the schedule, we hope students will select courses and quarters in which they know they can be in attendance. While attendance at all sessions is strongly requested, we will accept one absence per quarter. If a student misses 2 sessions, make-up work must be completed. If a student misses 3 or more session (which is half the class), the course will not be counted as completed. (\*If there are special circumstances, these should be discussed with Rabbi Shapiro).

**I see there are still retreats for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Does my child have to attend?**

These retreats are not optional for students. They are essential to the sense of community and to the curriculum. If a student has a scheduling conflict, make-up work will be required or attendance at the same retreat the following year.

**\*\*\*Questions on the “Avodah”/ Mitzvah Work section:**

**My child is doing community service this summer for over 100 hours. Can he/she count them all?**

Our goal is to stress that community service/mitzvah work should be a regular part of the child’s life. Thus, the 18 hours are required each year. We are proud of those students who complete more work, but do hope that they will continue it every year. We will allow students to count community service that they do for school requirements as well, although we would prefer that they consider not “double-counting” the hours.

**My child is a “madrich/a”/teen assistant for religious school. Can he/she count those hours?**

Your child may count those hours as long as they do not receive pay for the requested volunteer hours. These hours will only count for “mitzvah work”, because the goal of the “community” hours is for them to be a participant among peers and the greater UH community.

**What if we don’t really know where to start with “mitzvah work”?**

In some cases, students will continue with the project they worked on for becoming a bar/bat mitzvah. In other cases, students have found new interests. For those searching, our “Chai” School Advisor will be able to offer suggestions. In some quarters, there may also be a class offered that a student can take to fulfill their “Avodah/mitzvah work” hours, but may count either towards “Avodah” hours or count towards the “Torah” class total, but may not be counted for both. United Hebrew’s Youth Groups also complete mitzvah projects so students, whether members or not, may attend those to fulfill hours.

**\*\*\*Questions on the “Community” section:**

**My child is going to a Jewish summer camp. Doesn’t that count for all the hours of Jewish community?**

We are thrilled that your family has chosen Jewish camp for your child. Studies have shown that attending a Jewish camp has one of the strongest impacts on a child’s Jewish identity and indicator of future involvement as an adult. Recognizing this strength, we will count a majority of the hours per year for camp, but we do also wish them to be involved in activities here locally, with the hope that camp isn’t the only place they feel a part of the Jewish community. Thus, they will still need to get at least 2 hours more from two different programs (1 hour each).

**Wouldn’t one youth group weekend retreat count for all the hours?**

We recognize the impact of a single event, but our goal is to extend community involvement past one event. Thus, at least 2 hours more are required from two different programs (1 hour each).