



JQuest B'Yachad Family Handbook 2020-2021

*Rabbi Shoshanah Tornberg, Director
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215-887-8704

www.kenesethisrael.org/education-overview
<https://www.oyrtbetham.org/mensch-lab/>

• CONTACT INFORMATION

JQuest B'Yachad Contacts

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The JQuest B'Yachad office is open:

Monday	9:00am-5:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00am-8:00pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9:00am-5:00 pm
Friday	9:00am-4:00 pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	8:30am-12:15 pm when JQuest B'Yachad is in session.

JQuest B'Yachad staff does not check email on Shabbat.

• Hours

- ***Sundays: Kindergarten through 6th grade***
 - 9:15 am - 12:00 pm @ KI
 - 9:30 am - 12:00 pm @ Beth Am
 - 9:15 am - 12:15 pm @ AJ/BSC
- ***Tuesdays: 2nd through 6th Grade***
 - Students from all congregations 4:30-6:00 PM @ KI
 - (Early drop off at 4:00)

• All About JQuest B'Yachad

Dear JQuest B'Yachad Families,

Our program focuses on individual meaning, is based on creativity and movement, and seeks to engage every child in exploring what the Jewish tradition is all about. Envisioned as a journey of guided learning and personal exploration, JQuest B'Yachad is rooted in three areas, which together plant the seeds for Jewish life:

Judaic Study: Students will work together, create learning experiences that generate individual meaning, explore their creative passions, and have experiential opportunities in the community to achieve grade-level curriculum goals with guidance from clergy and teachers.

Prayer and Holiday Study: Students will explore the foundations of regular Jewish life through regular participation in T'fillot (prayer) exploring both the fixed nature and the spiritual expression, as well as the foundations of holiday rituals in the home and synagogue.

Hebrew Study: Students will be introduced to the Hebrew language and Hebrew decoding (sounding out letters to form word sounds) based on age and stage of learning. They will focus on learning Hebrew from Sound to Print - gaining a strong aural basis, and then working in small groups to decode the Hebrew prayers.

We are committed to ensuring a positive experience for your family and encourage you to be in touch with teachers and our directors with feedback, ideas and suggestions as to how to make JQuest work best for our community.

Thank you for being our partner and for journeying alongside us as we work with your children to bring Jewish learning to life!

Warmly,
Rabbi Shoshanah Tornberg

- **Mission**

JQuest B'Yachad engages students in meaningful and intentional Jewish learning while putting student voice and choice at the center.

- **Vision**

Our Quest is for our learners to become Jewish adults with:

- A joyful and loving connection to our Jewish community and history
- Competence and confidence in decoding Hebrew and participating in synagogue worship
- An ability to find inspiration and meaning in the study of Torah and the Jewish tradition
- A dedication to Jewish actions (*mitzvot*) and a connection to Jewish rituals
- An understanding of modern and cultural Hebrew words
- A strong Jewish identity
- A passion for *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedek* (justice), both in and beyond the Jewish community
- A relationship with God: noting God in their world, being thankful for blessings, and reaching out in times of need
- A familiarity with Jewish arts and an ability to join in the songs and culture of our people
- A commitment to *Am Yisrael* (People of Israel), *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), and *Medinat Yisrael* (State of Israel)

- **Who we serve and statement of inclusivity**

JQuest B'Yachad is the elementary education program for families of Adath Jeshurun, Beth Sholom Congregation, Old York Road Temple - Beth Am, and Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel. The combined portion of the program meets on Tuesdays, from 4:30-6:00 pm., when we are able to meet in person.

JQuest B'Yachad is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all families, respecting and welcoming equally all learning styles, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, family structures, and religious backgrounds. *We strive to meet the needs of all learners.* If at any time you feel that your family

has not been warmly welcomed or we are not meeting your child's needs, please contact the appropriate director, so we can address your concerns.

• **JQuest B'Yachad Student Conduct**

Students are expected to behave in a way that allows others to learn and feel safe in order to be in the JQuest program. All JQuest students and families are expected to handle themselves according to Jewish values and a spirit of inclusiveness. Families will be asked to follow the *Brit* (behavior contract)

Be *Talmidim Tovim* (active learners)

Treat everyone with *Hesed* (Kindness)

Help build our *Kehillah Kedoshah* (Holy community)

Should an issue arise with regard to class conduct the following steps will be taken:

Initial discussion: The first referral from a teacher will be handled by the director. The director will often contact the child's parents/guardians to seek guidance on what may be impacting the child's ability to participate positively in JQuest.

Parent Conference: The second referral from a teacher will require the parents/guardians to schedule a meeting with the director to work together to develop a plan of action to help support a more positive behavior.

• **When/If We Are Able to Have Regular, In-Person Classes:**

When to Come, What to Bring, and What to Leave at Home...

CALENDAR

- To access the JQuest calendar, go to the KI website, go to Education and then school calendar.

-OR-

- Go the Beth Am website, go to Education and look under Mensch Lab/JQuest B'Yachad.

AT KI Facility:

- **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

Students in grades K-3 should be escorted into the building and picked up from their classrooms each Sunday. Children in grades 4-6 will be dismissed from their learning spaces. Families should arrange a meeting location. The director or assistant director will stand at the main door whenever possible to supervise dismissal. On Tuesdays, students will be dismissed from the Mural entrance.

- **Weather Related JQuest B'Yachad Closing Information**

If we are closed due to weather, our school closing number will be announced on KYW-Radio (1060 AM). Our closing number is **324**. On Tuesday, if the Abington and/or Cheltenham schools are closed or close early, we will automatically be closed. You may check the JQuest B'Yachad page on the KI website for school closings, sign up with KYW for a text to be sent, or look for an email.

AT BETH AM (IN OUR MENSCH LAB FACILITY):

- **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

Students in grades K-2 should be escorted into the building and picked up from their classrooms each Sunday. Children in grades 3-6 will be dismissed from their learning spaces. Parents may agree to allow their child to meet them at a previously agreed upon location, or the adult picking up the child can wait for the student in the carpool line that picks up around the back of the building. The director will stand at the back door whenever possible to supervise dismissal.

- **Weather Related Mensch Lab Closing Information (Sundays at Beth Am)**

If we are closed due to weather, our school closing number will be announced on KYW-Radio (1060 AM). Our closing number is **???**. On Tuesday, if the Abington and/or Cheltenham schools are closed or close early, we will automatically be closed. You may check the JQuest B'Yachad page on the Beth Am Website for school closings, sign up with KYW for a text to be sent, or look for an email.

AT ADATH JESHURUN AND BETH SHALOM (SUNDAY ETGAR PROGRAM):

- Please see the Etgar Handbook for details.
- **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**
- **Weather Related Etgar Closing Information (Sundays at AJ/BSC)**

FOR ALL STUDENTS:

EARLY AND LATE PICK UP

- If you need to pick your child up early, a note is requested for the teacher to have your child meet you at the office.
- If, in an emergency, you are going to be late picking up your child, please notify the facility office so that someone can be there until you arrive. Rabbi Tornberg can be reached on her cell phone **(347-216-1547)** after hours for pick-up related issues.

DRESS

- Students are asked to dress in a way that is conducive to learning and reflects the fact that they will be entering synagogue chapels and sanctuaries for Tefillah. Students wearing clothing with obscene language or other inappropriate content, or clothing that does not reflect modesty will be given a JQuest t-shirt to wear. If a student is dressed inappropriately for an on-line session, they will be asked to change.

All students are encouraged (but not required) to wear head coverings, such as a kippah for their time engaged in sacred learning.

TZEDAKAH

- All students will be asked to bring in tzedakah (money for those that have less) to each class session. They should contribute each time they come to learn – the amount does not matter. When we are not able to be in class in person, families are encouraged to collect funds on Shabbat and periodically decide on a recipient of these funds.
- If you have occasion to stop by your synagogue, please bring by some canned goods for those in our community struggling with food insecurity.

ELECTRONICS

- When meeting in person, students in grades K-4 should refrain from bringing electronics to class unless specifically asked. All electronics should remain off and in bags.
- Fifth and Sixth graders can bring devices to access the internet which may be used, at times, during class sessions for educational purposes. Electronics should remain off and in student bags until they are invited to use their electronics.

- At no time is JQuest B'Yachad or any of its participating synagogues responsible for any electronic devices that students bring; any electronic devices brought to JQuest B'Yachad—whether on Sunday or Tuesdays—is at the students' own risk. Should a student be using electronics when not given permission, the teacher will store the device and a parent will be notified.
- Students will have access to electronics during JQuest (computers and iPads). Students will be expected to follow the *brit* (covenant of behavior), treating them with care and using the electronic devices for the learning purposes intended.

FOOD

- On Sundays, when we are able to meet in person, JQuest B'Yachad families will be asked to bring in challah on a rotating basis to KI or to Beth Am's Mensch Lab. (See Etgar Handbook for Sunday food policies of AJ and Beth Sholom). On Tuesday there will be pretzels, cheese sticks, and apple chips for sale at JQuest B'Yachad before class begins. Due to allergy considerations, we ask that you do not bring food to JQuest B'Yachad, including on birthdays and special occasions.

Communication, Family Participation, Feedback

Website

- Information about JQuest B'Yachad can be found on the KI website: <https://kenesethisrael.org/education-overview> and then click on *Learn more about JQuest B'Yachad here*. You can also find this information on Beth Am's website <https://www.oyrtbetham.org/mensch-lab/>. On these sites you can find information about curriculum for each grade, links to prayer and Hebrew study, and contact information.

Home Communication

- Weekly Updates: Teachers of grade-level Quests will send weekly updates so that families will know what their students are doing in JQuest B'Yachad. There will also be a weekly email sent about family and JQuest B'Yachad events. Families can stay informed and see the work and experience of their children. If you do not receive these weekly communications, "News You Can Use" email, or an email from your

teacher on Sunday afternoon (K-1) or Tuesday evening (2nd-6th) please contact the JQuest office.

- Social Media: You can follow both Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Old York Road Temple - Beth Am, and JQuest on Facebook.
- Progress Reports: At the end of each semester, teachers will share student progress reports containing reflections of the students' learning.

Homework

- Students in grades 4, 5 and 6 will be asked to review their Hebrew assignments through an online review weekly. This homework is essential to student success and should be completed weekly. The link is on the JQuest section on the KI website.

Family learning and programs

- Several times a year JQuest will plan family events and parent learning opportunities. We encourage all JQuest parents to attend these events to meet other parents and connect with our clergy. If you have ideas for new events please contact Rabbi Tornberg.

When Meeting Virtually (During COVID-19 Pandemic):

- In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to Jewish learning and community. Our JQuest program continues on-line, starting Sunday, Oct. 18, 2020 until further notice. We will reevaluate in December. For more information on what to expect from our on-line learning program, please see below. Here is the way our on-line learning will work:

For KI and Beth Am students in grades K-6

	Sundays - Week Aleph	Sundays Week Bet	
9:45-9:55a.m.	K Music	1st and 2nd Music	
10:00-10:30a.m.	30 minutes Zoom class with A groups K-6	30 minutes Zoom class with A groups K-6	We will split classes into A and B groups if our numbers warrant it in each of the Sunday programs (Beth Am and KI)
10:35-10:50a.m.	15 minutes Tefillah on Zoom for K-6	15 minutes Tefillah on Zoom for K-6	

10:55-11:25a.m.	30 minutes Zoom class with B groups K-6	30 minutes Zoom class with B groups K-6	
11:30-11:40a.m.	Hebrew Through Movement on Zoom for grades 3-4	Hebrew Through Movement on Zoom for grades 3-4	
	Hebrew Through Movement on Zoom for grades 1-2	Hebrew Through Movement on Zoom for grades 1-2	

	Tuesdays - Weekly	
4:00-4:30	AJ/BSC 3 rd -6 th graders Hebrew on Zoom	
4:45-5:15p.m.	2nd-6th Zoom class with C groups	We will split classes into C and D groupings if our numbers warrant it in our cohort of Tuesday students from AJ, BSC, KI and Beth Am
5:30-6:00p.m.	2nd-6th Zoom class with D groups	

- As students will be in Zoom classes for limited periods of time (one can only Zoom so much!), it is essential that students also engage in asynchronous learning at home to augment what would be an in-person experience in absence of a pandemic. **These learning pieces are NOT HOMEWORK, but a piece of "class time" upon which the Zoom sessions depend for success.**

	Additional Scheduling
Asynchronous	Outside assignments and material engagement should take no more than 30 minutes per week and are an expected part of the learning. Refraining from doing so is like being absent from class.
Additional Support	Hebrew teachers or madrichim will connect virtually with students 1:1, 2:1 or 3:1--depending on student needs--for at least 15 minutes/week in grades 3 and up; this could involve decoding or reciting prayers together, reviewing Jewish Life Vocabulary or Hebrew

	Through Movement commands. These sessions will be at a set time, but do not necessarily have to be on the same day as class Zoom sessions.
	K-2 teachers will connect virtually with students 1:1 for at least 15 minutes 1-2x/month/student to check in and engage with students around Jewish curricular content.

Feedback

- If you have a suggestion, idea, concern, or question, do not hesitate to send an email or make a phone call. Rabbi Tornberg is fully committed to ensure a positive experience for every child and to continually reflect on how our program can best fit your family's needs.

JQuest B'Yachad Lay Leadership

Beth Am Education Committee:

- You can become part of the team that builds the Mensch Lab and Jquest B'Yachad toward its mission. This parent body provides enrichment programming for students, support to teachers and input on school policy and philosophy.
- If you are interested in becoming involved, contact Jamie Lincow, Beth Am's Vice-President of Education at JamieLincow@gmail.com.
- If you have concerns, please contact the JQuest Office.

KI Education Committee:

- The mission of the KI Education Committee is to support the continuous improvement of the JQuest program, and its curriculum, instruction, assessment, standards, and outcomes. The committee will:
 - Provide advice to the Director
 - Report activity, findings, and recommendations to the JQuest B'Yachad Leadership Committee
 - Identify issues that require attention and provide recommendations to address them
 - Observe classrooms/learning environments and provide feedback to the JQuest Director
- Members of this Committee include representatives from KI both with and without students enrolled in the program. They represent congregational stakeholders and members with a background in Education.

- If you have concerns, please contact the JQuest Office.

AJ/BSC Education Committee:

- Contact Julie Atchick for more information about how to get involved.

- **JQuest B'Yachad Leadership Team:**

The JQuest B'Yachad program is overseen by a leadership team made up of the Rabbis, select lay leaders, and education directors of the synagogues. Brian Rissinger, KI Executive Director, serves as the business manager. The leadership team is responsible for visionary and structural work of JQuest B'Yachad.

The Roberta z"l and Dr. Herb Kronstadt Scholarship Fund

- We are excited to share with you two scholarship opportunities for students in our community each year. First, a scholarship is available for a student with special needs whose family requires assistance in paying for their religious education and b. mitzvah training. The second is for a student with special needs who would like to become b. mitzvah, but whose more severe needs prevent them from participating in a religious school program. Please let Rabbi Tornberg know if you know of a family (whether or not they are synagogue members) who are interested in learning more.



Additional Information for Beth Am Mensch Lab families:

Amanda Sham Resource Center for Special Needs

- Beth Am is committed to excellence in education and a belief that all Jewish children are entitled to learn about their heritage. We are proud to offer support through the Amanda Sham Resource Room for Children with Special Needs. We understand that children utilize different modalities to learn and progress at various speeds. The Resource Center, staffed by experienced special education professionals, will utilize progressive and innovative teaching techniques with a diverse scope for our entire school population. This program will service students in kindergarten through grade 7. For further information, contact Rabbi Tornberg.

Shabbat Service Attendance

- Students in grades 3 through 7 are *required* to attend a minimum of four (4) services, all of which must be Shabbat services. Two services must be at Beth Am and two may be elsewhere with a note from the parent with date of the service and the name of the synagogue. One year prior to b. mitzvah, students must attend eight (8) services (depending on b. mitzvah date – see B. Mitzvah Manual). When Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah take place on Shabbat, these Shabbat services will not count towards the service requirement.
- Our Shabbat service attendance policy aims for children, along with their parents, to have the opportunity to practice the rituals and traditions taught in our Mensch Lab. This type of enriching experience permits our children to better understand what it is to be Jewish, and, also helps our children

develop a connection to our worship services. You are strongly encouraged to attend with your children.

- **Policy:** Students will attend at least two services before receiving their b. mitzvah date and student(s) will have attended four services prior to beginning b. mitzvah training. All students will complete the remaining service requirement by the end of the Mensch Lab year.

Family Services

The first Friday evening of each month we celebrate Shabbat with (H)Our Shabbat—a hour-long family service during which students lead portions of our music and worship, which begins at 6:45p.m. There will also be a small dinner served for these families at 5:30p.m. when we are able to meet in person. (H)Our Shabbat is geared towards our school-age children and their families to enjoy a relaxed, music-filled Shabbat evening service with the Rabbis, Cantor and Junior Choir. We will also usually celebrate the month's birthdays together on this evening. (H)Our Shabbat services can be used to fulfill Shabbat service attendance requirements. Please check our website, Temple Topics and the calendar as occasionally service times may change.

Judy and Julian Weinstein Family Education Programs

- There will be times through the year when we have family programs. We request your presence with your child. As we respect your contribution of time, these programs are designed for social and educational benefit of your family.