



BZBI YOUTH & FAMILY EDUCATION FAQs

ARE THERE ANY PROGRAMS BEYOND THE NEZINER CLASSROOMS?

There are many special Youth and Family programs throughout the year, most of which are generously sponsored by our PTA.

Back to School Day

Takes place on the first Shabbat of Hebrew School. This is an opportunity to celebrate the beginning of a new school year, meet the teachers, learn about the curriculum, and ask questions.

Shabbat Dinner

Celebrate Shabbat with other BZBI families on a Friday evening. There is usually a short Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming the Shabbat) experience, followed by z'mirot (Shabbat songs) and a delicious meal.

Havdalah Event

A special program for the whole community, taking place on a Saturday evening during the school year.

Coffee and Conversation

A great opportunity to socialize with fellow parents, engage in thought-provoking conversation with clergy, and nosh on pastries and coffee while children are downstairs learning. These take place on five Shabbat mornings throughout the year, while Hebrew School is in session.

Sleep Under / Parents Night Out

BZBI children in grades Second through Seventh are invited to spend a Saturday evening of fun at the synagogue, while parents spend some time together at a nearby restaurant or congregant's home.

Holiday Programs

Members of all ages come together to celebrate holidays with a special meal and a related program. These include the Erev Simchat Torah dinner, Community Hanukkah party, Purim Se'udah, and Yom Ha'atzmaut picnic.

Information regarding dates, timing, and location are updated regularly on the calendar on our website.



HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PROGRAM IN A NUTSHELL?

The Neziner Hebrew School provides the knowledge and experience necessary for its students to make a commitment to live a Jewish life. It seeks to develop in its students a deep and abiding faith in God, Israel, and Torah; a positive identity as Jews; an understanding of Jewish beliefs, values and ethics, and history and facts as defined in the curriculum. Our school also seeks to motivate students to continue their education after their Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to use what they have learned for the benefit of the Jewish community at large.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HAVING A SHABBAT SCHOOL?

Shabbat is a central pillar of the Jewish experience. Combining observance of Shabbat with prayer and learning allows us to experience this cornerstone of Judaism together in a meaningful way. Having all generations of BZBI members in the building at the same time, engaged in worship, and hearing words of Torah makes our mornings very special.

WHY IS THE HEBREW SCHOOL CALLED "NEZINER"? A SHORT HISTORY LESSON

Neziner was the name of the third congregation to join what we know today as BZBI. Their official name was Congregation Ahavas Achim-Anshe Nezin, which meant "Congregation of Friendly Sons of Nezin," a small town in southern Russia from which many of them arrived in the late 1800's. They joined Temple Beth Zion - Beth Israel in 1984. You can still see their original Ark and Bimah when you visit our school, both still being used during our Shabbat morning Junior Congregation service, and their chandelier is in the Kahaner Auditorium.

WHEN ARE CLASSES TAKING PLACE?

The regular schedule of the Neziner Hebrew School is as follows:

Class	Monday	Wednesday	Shabbat
Tot Shabbat (Infant through 3-years-old and their families)			11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Bonim (Pre-K) - Gan (Kindergarten)			10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Alef (1 st Grade) - Dalet (4 th Grade)	4:00 - 6:00 PM Peer Group Learning	4:00 - 6:00 PM Mixed-Age Adasha Class	10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Hay (5 th Grade) - Zayin (7 th Grade)	4:00 - 6:00 PM Mixed-Age Adasha Class	4:00 - 6:00 PM Peer Group Learning	10:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Solelim (8 th Grade) - Confirmation (10 th Grade)		5:30 - 7:30 PM Includes Light Dinner	
Jewish Day School Students			10:30 AM - 12:30 PM Ma'agalim and Junior Congregation



WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM OF THE NEZINER HEBREW SCHOOL?

In keeping with Neziner Hebrew School's mission of providing the knowledge and experience necessary for its students to make a commitment to live a Jewish life, our program focuses on the themes of *Torah*, *Avodah*, and *Gemilut Hasadim*. Each grade explores each theme through a specific lens, framed around sacred texts, traditional rituals, and real life applications. The program follows a spiral curriculum, with learning taking place within each class as well as across the grades, as students share ideas creatively. Every topic intertwines with the other, and students build their knowledge based on what they learned the year before.

A detailed description of each class' curriculum can be found on our website.

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE I SEE WHEN I COME TO THE OFFICE?

Abe Friedman, *Senior Rabbi*
Yosef Goldman, *Rabbi, Director of Sacred Music*
Donna S. Rosenthal, *Executive Director*
Terri Soifer, *Director of Community Engagement*
Shula Cooper, *Director of Youth and Family Education*
Risa Young, *Director of Early Childhood Education*
Phyllis Kramer, *Temple Administrator*
Denine Gorniak, *Accounting Specialist*
Tovah Rosenthal, *Communications Coordinator*



WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Visit the BZBI Youth and Family website:
<https://bzbi.org/learn/youth-and-family-education/>
Send us an email:
education@bzbi.org (Shula)
nezinerschool@bzbi.org (Youth & Family Education Assistant)
Give us a call:
(215) 735-5148
Google Voice Number:
(267) 255-7153
(during NHS hours and programs, except Shabbat/Holidays)

CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT LOGISTICS?

Of course we can! And you can also contact us to learn more! (education@bzbi.org)

Schedule

Our Hebrew School meets on Shabbat mornings and on Monday/Wednesday afternoons (see detailed schedule on the back). Shabbat is the one day on which all age groups are present, and in their Alef year (1st grade), students start arriving on weekdays as well. Alef is also the first year that children are eligible to participate in the *Adasha* class (mix-aged learning experience, read more in the "Milon" section).

Structure

On Shabbat mornings, our students spend part of the time with their peer-group discussing the week's *Parasha* (Torah portion), and part of the time with other groups in a worship experience. In their Gimel year (3rd grade), students start participating in Junior Congregation and Hebrew *Ma'agalim* (elective Hebrew learning circles, read more in the "Milon" section). In their peer-group weekday, student spend one hour studying Hebrew and one hour on Judaic studies. In their *Adasha* weekday, they engage in a mixed-age learning experience. A detailed breakdown schedule for each class can be found on the other side of this page.

How is Shabbat different?

Much like dressing up to go to shul, our Neziner Hebrew School also takes on a slightly different form on Shabbat. The air is slightly more peaceful, the activities are calmer in nature. We all show up a little dressier than usual, start the morning together with *Asefa* (gathering, read more in the "Milon" section), and then engage in learning, Kiddush, and an abridged weekly Shabbat service. Students in Gimel (3rd grade) and older participate in Junior Congregation, a slightly longer service that includes a short Torah reading and is led entirely by the students.

Calendar

Our school year typically starts the week after Labor Day and ends the week before Memorial Day. A tentative calendar-at-a-glance is included in our Enrollment Packet, and an updated one will be given to families at the beginning of the school year. A complete calendar is also available on our website, which is updated regularly (<https://bzbi.org/learn/youth-and-family-education/youth-family-calendar/>).

Food

Our schools are vegetarian and nut-free, and our kitchens adhere to *Kashrut* guidelines. Students are provided with a light Kiddush on Shabbat and a kosher snack before school on Monday/Wednesday. We ask that families avoid bringing in food, unless specifically requested to do so. **Please make sure to inform us of any allergies** so we can make accommodations when needed.

DO I HAVE TO BE A BZBI MEMBER IN ORDER TO ENROLL?

The short answer is NO, at least until your child is in 3rd grade. Many parts of our program are open to the community, so members and non-members alike are welcome to join us! A slightly more detailed response:

- You will still be expected to register your child and send us all contact and health information.
- There may be a suggested donation for certain programs that are supported by our General Fund.
- **Membership IS required** to be enrolled in Neziner Hebrew School starting in Gimel (3rd grade)
- **Membership IS required** in order to be given a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date (assigned three calendar years in advance).

We are not members of the synagogue and our child is not enrolled in Neziner, but we would like them to participate in some activities with other Jewish children. Do you offer such programs?

Your child is welcome to join one of our youth groups. They offer monthly activities that provide an opportunity to build relationships with other youth, away from Hebrew school. We have Kadima (grades 3rd-7th) and USY (grades 8th-12th) chapters, both open to children and teens who are not BZBI members or students at Neziner.

WHAT IS KAVOD?

The Hebrew word *Kavod* can be translated into honor, respect, or dignity, reminding us that we are all created in the image of God and should be regarded as such. We should honor one another, respect our surroundings, and value the importance of helping each other maintain a sense of dignity. As we and our students interact with one another inside and outside the synagogue's walls, we strive to do it in a way that lives up to the value of *Kavod*.

How do we make sure that *Kavod* is reflected in everything we do?

Kindness - We treat each other, adults and children, with kindness and courtesy. This includes students, parents, teachers, BZBI staff, and other community members.

Awareness - We take care of our space by having awareness of our surroundings and keeping them clean and undamaged.

Appearance - We wear appropriate clothing, especially on Shabbat and holidays. Both male and female students are expected to wear a *Kippah* (or other head covering) when they come to Hebrew School.

Fair Play - We avoid being physical and make sure we don't hurt, bully, or exclude anyone.



HOW DOES THE HEBREW SCHOOL COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES?

We strongly believe that ongoing communication with families is crucial for the success of our program. At the start of the school year families receive information on how to get in touch with their teacher, and throughout the year they will hear from the school regularly.

The Director of Youth and Family Education sends a newsletter called *Kol Kehilah* (Voice of the Community). The newsletter offers a glimpse into our programs, including Kadima and USY youth groups, family events, and Neziner Hebrew School (NHS). It includes program highlights, upcoming events, birthdays, and some topics to talk about at home.

The teacher of each NHS class sends a monthly class email to their families, typically on the last Thursday of the month. This email includes more specific information on the learning that takes place in their class, and any messages that are relevant to them.

How do I let the school know if my child will be out?

The best way to get in touch is to email the child's teacher, and copy the School Office (nezinerschool@bzbi.org) and the Director (education@bzbi.org).

What if I need to get in touch with the school during school hours?

Please call our Google Voice number (267) 255-7153. This number is forwarded to the cell phone of whoever is in charge during school hours and other programs (except on Shabbat/Holidays).

How do I find out about school closings?

Any scheduling information is posted on our website and regularly updated, including a complete school calendar (also included in the Enrollment Packet). If there is an unscheduled cancellation we will send an email to all families, send a text notification, and update the homepage of our website (www.bzbi.org).

In the event of inclement weather on a weekday, the Neziner Hebrew School follows the decisions made by the School District of Philadelphia. With regard to Shabbat mornings, we have decided that if there are 4 inches of snow on the ground, then the Neziner Hebrew School will officially be closed. Typically if school is cancelled on a Shabbat morning, the synagogue will still be open, and you are always welcome to join us for services.

LIFE AFTER BAR/BAT MITZVAH? TEEN UNIVERSE AT BZBI

In keeping with our mission of motivating students to make a commitment to live a Jewish life, we offer various opportunities for our teens to engage with each other and the community at large. Some are described below, others are shared throughout the year.

Learning

Classes are available by peer group as part of Neziner Hebrew High (see detailed schedule on the back). In addition, we have a monthly Shabbat morning class called "Teaching Torah to Teens" (TTT), that utilizes local figures and organizations to examine Jewish text through a Social Action lens.

Socializing

USY (United Synagogue Youth) offers BZBI teens an autonomous space to explore their Judaism in a meaningful way in a modern urban setting. BZBI USY programs include social, religious, educational, and service based initiatives, as well as participation with the greater USY Hagesher Region events. BZBI USY provides a variety of peer-led programs that enable each of our teens to find a comfortable affiliation point to USY, and to develop their own identity as community leaders.

Leadership

Teens have an opportunity to volunteer in various capacities in synagogue life, from guiding younger age groups to helping with administrative tasks, giving them hands on involvement in the community. They are also offered roles in our different programs and special events, such as the Sleep-Under and the Purim Carnival.

What if my teen did not undergo a Bar/Bat Mitzvah process, or became Bar/Bat Mitzvah at another synagogue? Can they still participate?

Whether or not your teen was called to the Torah and/or had a ceremonial celebration, they are considered a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the eyes of the Jewish law. That means they are responsible and accountable for their own Jewish identity and actions. So, not only are they *allowed* to participate in our programs, they are encouraged to.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS THAT WE CAN GET INVOLVED?

As a parent, we consider you a part of our community and offer various ways for you to be engaged. You can do so by being a Parent Ambassador, joining the PTA, attending Coffee & Conversation or getting involved in the Education Committee.

What is a Parent Ambassador?

A Parent Ambassador helps connect the Youth and Family office with the parents of their child's class. Over the course of the year, we offer several social events, holiday programs, and special school days, and our Parent Ambassadors help the Youth and Family office get the word out. You can indicate if you want to be one on the registration form.

Are there any opportunities for parents to learn and socialize with other adults?

Absolutely! Adults can engage with each other during our PTA Coffee & Conversation and Parents Night Out (see descriptions on the back of this document), as well as some of our special events and holiday programs. Of course, you are always welcome to participate in any of the adult classes offered by BZBI and keep an eye open for updates on additional opportunities that are specific to Youth and Family.

My child attends a Jewish Day School. Can s/he attend any of your programs?

We consider BZBI children who attend Jewish Day School to be part of our family, and welcome you to participate in any and all parts of our programs. In the Neziner Hebrew School, you have the option of registering for Shabbat mornings only, with a suggested donation to help us offset our cost. Beyond Neziner, you can sign up for one our Youth Groups and/or join us for holiday programs and special events.

Where can my child sign up for a Youth Group?

That's easy, just indicate it on your registration form! You can find it on the bottom of each child's page in *Part 2: Child(ren) Information*.

DOES THE SCHOOL PLAY A PART IN OUR FAMILY'S SIMCHA?

We love to share everyone's *Simcha* (celebration) with our Youth and Family community! This includes birthdays, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, new additions to the family, and other big events in your family.

Are birthdays celebrated in Hebrew School?

We list all upcoming birthdays in *Kol Kehilah*, our Youth and Family newsletter (see "Communications" section). On Shabbat mornings, we celebrate with students who have a birthday that week during Kiddush, by singing Happy Birthday in English and Hebrew, and giving them the honor of leading one of the blessings. We ask that families do not send birthday treats to class, to keep with our food guidelines (see "Logistics" section).

How does the school participate in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat service?

One of the benefits of having a Shabbat school is having the ability for all our children to witness this significant rite of passage and have a small role in it. On Shabbatot when we have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, Neziner students in Alef and older join the sanctuary for the rabbi's blessing and Haftarah reading. We toss candy at the Bimah, listen to our fellow student read Haftarah, and go back downstairs to have our own Kiddush and prayer.

While we're on the subject, when is my child assigned a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date?

Children of BZBI members are assigned their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date three (3) calendar years in advance. Families are notified with a letter from the Director of Youth and Family education.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR SIMCHA, so we can share it with the community, by emailing Shula at education@bzbi.org.

MILON - GET FAMILIAR WITH OUR LINGO

Adasha means "lens" in Hebrew, and it is what we call our multi-age learning experience, available to students Alef-Dalet (Wednesday) and Hay-Zayin (Monday). The name captures the essence of this class being an active learning experience of exploring ideas from multiple perspectives, i.e. through different lenses.

Asefa means "gathering" in Hebrew, and it's how we start every Shabbat morning. At 10:00 AM, students of all age groups, with their parents and teachers, come together for 10-15 minutes to say a morning blessing, sing a couple of songs and sometimes play a short Hebrew game. It is a very special experience that brings our community together.

Bonim means "builders" in Hebrew, and at Neziner it refers to our Shabbat morning Pre-K class. Students 4-years and older begin to explore Hebrew, Jewish Values, and Holidays through play, stories, art, and music. They also engage in an abridged weekly Shabbat service partnered with our Gan (Kindergarten) class.

Kol Kehilah means "voice of the community" in Hebrew, and it is the name of our Youth and Family Education newsletter. The newsletter offers a glimpse into our programs, including Kadima and USY youth groups, family events, and Neziner Hebrew School (NHS). It includes program highlights, upcoming events, birthdays, and some topics to talk about at home.

Ma'agalim means "circles" in Hebrew, and it is an essential part of the Hebrew curriculum in our program. Students in Gimel (3rd grade) and older are grouped based on their skill level and personal interest, and challenge themselves by working directly with Hebrew texts. The students in each *Ma'agal* (circle) are exposed to a different type of Hebrew text (*Mishnah*, prayer, poetry, etc.), work together on translating it, and use it as a trigger for discussing history, culture, and tradition.

Sole'lim means "paving the way" in Hebrew, and is often used to describe those who are in the process of laying a foundation. It is the name of our 8th grade class, a crucial bridge year that lays the foundation for post B'nai Mitzvah students for what will become a more mature relationship with the synagogue as teens. *Sole'lim* is designed to guide them through this process, and help them understand and redefine their new role in the community, focusing on leadership and engagement.