

Cheder prospectus

September 2017



Scottish Charity Number SC035678

Introduction

Our Cheder is an important and integral part of our community. Attendance is free to members' children. We normally take children who have started regular school and go up to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We aim to work together with parents to promote the values of Liberal Judaism. We have regular parent-staff meetings to ensure clear communication and to encourage parents to take an active part in the Jewish education of their children and in helping make decisions in the running of the Cheder.

Class Organisation and Staffing

There are currently five classes and membership of class groups is determined both by the age of the children and the standard reached. We are fortunate in having a highly enthusiastic and capable team of teachers who are very experienced in working with children. We have also in several instances been assisted by volunteer parents in giving individual lessons to children who have started Cheder late and need to catch up with their peer group. In general we try to take account of individual children's needs in our teaching.

Curriculum

Teaching time is from 2.45 pm to 5.00 pm normally once a fortnight on a Saturday afternoon. There is a fifteen minute break in the middle, when the children have a snack produced by parents on a rota.

The first half till break is devoted to Hebrew.

- **KITA ECHAD:** The youngest children are taught by **Rebecca Wober and Katy Bromberg** who teach Alef Bet in all sorts of fun ways. This year they will be aiming to work with the class often grouped into smaller units to cater for individual levels of Hebrew. Second half activities are an exciting mix of art, crafts, singing and lots more!
- **KITA SHAYIM:** The second class will be taught by **Lorraine Hershon**. With Lorraine the children will learn to read Hebrew syllables. She will be using a Hebrew Primer: *Kadimah: Get Ready for Hebrew!* By Orna Lenchner
- **KITA SHALOSH** The third class is taught by Yonatan and Melissa Eisenberg. I am very excited that this class will be taught by a native Hebrew speaker which I think will bring genuine enthusiasm to the children's Hebrew learning. Their text book will be: *Z'Man Likro: Time To Read Hebrew Vol. 1* by Orna Ariel Lenchner, which is by the same author as Kita Shtayim's Primer book and is intended by the publishers to follow on directly from the Primer. It reinforces Hebrew writing and reading, while introducing prayer-book Hebrew. The more confident and experienced children in this class may be given material from Vol 2 of this course as well.
- **KITA ARBAH:** **Adam Budd** teaches the fourth class, using *Hineni-The New Hebrew Through Prayer* - a book that looks at whole prayers from the liturgy, with more concentration on details of the meaning than in the earlier classes and some introduction to the structure of Hebrew as a language. He will also be encouraging children to learn parts of our Liberal Shabbat liturgy in a fun and enjoyable way, and will make use of our own Liberal Prayer books so that the children become familiar and confident with the synagogue service.

- **KITA CHAMESH:** Dan Hershon teaches the pre-Bar/Bar Mitzvah class, using the same kind of material as Adam, but moving on to a more advanced level preparatory to the student learning their Bar/Bat Mitzvah pieces and leading the congregation in prayer. He will begin the year with the book *Journeys Through The Siddur- Shabbat Morning*. In the second half of the lessons he will be using a variety of different materials to explore Jewish tradition, practice, Festivals, Torah and other forms of Jewish learning, with the aim of increasing the children's knowledge of their own religious traditions, and encouraging them to be enquiring in how they approach their study of Judaism. Nearly all the books we use come from North America as the Jewish population in the UK is not big enough to support the production of our own materials. The books are widely used in Chedarim and Jewish Day Schools throughout North America and the UK. Our emphasis is to go beyond simple decoding and deal with the meaning and values expressed in the reading material.

After the break, content of the lessons and arrangement of classes is more fluid. We teach the Festivals, Jewish life, ceremonies and ethics. History is taught, with all but the oldest children mainly by stories from the Bible and elsewhere. The emphasis is always on a Liberal perspective. Teaching style in the second half can be more relaxed. The lower classes do art and craft work where appropriate, as well as some singing and dancing. We occasionally have guest teachers to take a particular session. Sometimes all the children come together for these activities.

Throughout Cheder we are keenly aware that different families have different practices and we are careful always not to be prescriptive, and where appropriate to explain the differences in practice between the different traditions in Judaism.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

It is the policy of the Rabbi and Synagogue Council that children should normally attend Cheder and services for a period of at least two years before the ceremony. Parents discuss Bar/Bat Mitzvah arrangements with the Rabbi.

Communications

You can also keep up to date with cheder schedule and locations on the ELJC website (www.eljc.org). Click on the "Cradle to Grave" menu item and follow the link to the Cheder Page. *Once children have been enrolled parents will normally be informed of dates times and locations of cheder sessions etc, via the cheder email list (cheder@eljc.org).* **We have just set up a new e-mailing list through Google Groups: all parents must be signed up for this list. If you are not already a member you should contact the Head of Cheder Dan Hershon who will arrange for you to be added to the List.**

We are happy to speak to parents about their children on any Cheder day. Please avoid speaking to teachers during lessons, or entering a class during teaching time but any time before or after, and during break, is fine.

This year we are intending to attempt setting regular homework as young children very easily forget what they have learned with two weeks or more between lessons.. The hope is that parents will encourage and help their children with the homework. We are aware of the many calls on the time of children and parents these days and would appreciate any comments.

We appreciate that some parents have to travel a considerable distance and things happen that are beyond our control, but we would ask wherever possible that children are brought punctually in order to maximise use of the limited time available and minimise disruption.

With warmest good wishes,

Dan Hershon, **Head of Cheder**

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(Document revised Sept 2017 from that written previously by Norman Crane)