



HaMercaz Family Handbook

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! We are so happy that your children will be joining us this year. We have heard your feedback and have been busy updating our curriculum and policies to ensure a quality learning experience for all involved.

This Family Handbook is personalized for YOU! It includes a year-length schedule of what will be taught in all of your children's classes so you know what to expect every week. In addition, we have included the text of the Chanukah songs and Shabbat prayers that we will be learning this year so you can practice with your children at home.

Contact Information

Staff

Rabbi
Education Director
Classroom Facilitator

Rabbi Jamie Arnold rabbiarnold@bethevergreen.org
Elizabeth Moore elizabeth@bethevergreen.org
Darcey Leach darcey.kramer@gmail.com

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Teachers

	K-1	Cody Jackson	codyhbrennan@gmail.com
		My name is Cody Jackson and I'm going to be teaching in Cita Bet this year! I grew up just outside of Washington, DC where I went to Hebrew School from age 6-18, helped my mom teach 2nd grade religious school for about 3 years, and have so enjoyed spending time with kiddos and re-learning such important Jewish teachings as an adult! My daughter, Eloise (6) is also attending Hamercaz- as a family we enjoy hiking, camping, skiing, traveling, the Colorado Avalanche, our 2 dogs Stella and Sage, and spending time with friends and family.	
	2-3	Dora Pisula-Litoff	dpisulalitoff@gmail.com
		My name is Dora Pisula-Litoff, and I will be taking over for Josh. I am eager to get to know you all! I graduated from Georgetown University with a degree in Biology and a minor in Jewish Civilizations. During that time I worked as a TA for the intro Biology class and as an academic assistant at the Center for Jewish Civilizations. Additionally, I have over two years of experience as an assistant at the Evergreen Country Day lower school. As a graduate of Hamercaz I can attest to the value of a Jewish education. I am excited to help facilitate their learning of Jewish values and history. I plan on continuing using the Chai curriculum and supplementing with more physical activities.	
	4-5	Russell Weisfield	rweisfield@gmail.com
		Russell Weisfield (Morah Reuven) will be teaching Cita Gimel. He and his family have been members of Beth Evergreen for a few years having previously been members at Congregation B'nai Torah in Westminster. He is a federal employee and lives near the Federal Center. His hobbies include medieval re-creation, board games, hiking, and various sports.	
	6-7	Heidi Wunsch	heidagem@yahoo.com
		I lived in Israel for 3 years and I'm excited to share my love for Israeli and Jewish culture with your kids! I enjoy working with kids as they begin to discover their passions and form their own opinions.	

HaMercaz Mission

Congregation Beth Evergreen offers quality, joyful, learning opportunities for families seeking meaningful Jewish communal experience. We bring expertise, love and literacy, motivation and creativity, and fabulous, family-focused community events to share throughout the year.

HaMercaz Goals

- Nurturing a Sense of Belonging by fostering friendships, inter-familial and inter-generational communal connections, in a safe, stimulating, Jewish learning environment.
- Providing a foundation of Jewish Literacy for children and families, enabling us to access and enhance the depth, beauty, wisdom, and joy of Jewish civilization in Colorado, Israel and around the world.
- Celebrate the 'whole-child,' made in the image of G-d, with an innate yearning to grow physically, socially-and-emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually, and embody lovingkindness, living with open mind, open heart, and open hands.

Big Ideas for This Year

Because we have two years in a single classroom, our objectives change from year to year as we use different materials to avoid repetition. Here are the big ideas we are working with this year:

Enduring Understandings: Torah Strand

Cita Aleph: I am part of the ongoing story of Torah and the Jewish people

Cita Bet: The laws and rules found in the Torah can help us to live a life filled with holy moments.

Cita Gimel: With the promise of a holy land (*Eretz Yisrael*), we as a holy people (*Am Yisrael*) have a responsibility to work towards becoming holy by observing the *brit* (covenant).

Cita Dalet: My life is reflected in and reflects Torah.

Enduring Understandings: Avodah Strand

Cita Aleph: My Jewish acts help me discover the beauty and order of sacred time and my place in the Jewish story.

Cita Bet: Through *avodah* we can make our lives and the world more *kadosh* (holy).

Cita Gimel: *Keva* and *kavanah*, the fixed order of worship and the personal intention we bring to prayer, are complementary aspects of Jewish worship, combining to help us make sacred connections.

Cita Dalet: The message and power of Jewish prayer can help me understand and define myself as an individual and as an authentic member of the Jewish community.

Enduring Understandings: G'milut Chasadim Strand

Cita Aleph: I am a part of the ongoing story of the Jewish people when I perform acts of *g'milut chasadim*.

Cita Bet: Each individual act of *g'milut chasadim* can make the world more *kadosh* (holy).

Cita Gimel: We have a responsibility to perform acts of *g'milut chasadim* for the people we encounter in our daily lives.

Cita Dalet: Our development as emerging Jewish adults and authentic members of the Jewish community is closely linked to our ethical behavior (*middot*) and the performance of acts of *g'milut chasadim*.

Policies and Procedures

Discipline Policy

Fostering loving relationships imbued with core values (e.g. curiosity, respect, patience, humility, etc.) through persistent, positive reinforcement, we minimize disruptive behavior and the need to discipline students. Through guided *chevruta* [study in pairs] and small group study formats, students witness and practice attentive listening, respectful boundaries, and dynamic dialogue. The cooperative project-based curricula reward collaborative group dynamics and foster a sense of mutual responsibility. Likewise, regular, open communication with parents (about expectations before class as well as honest feedback afterwards) is essential to ensuring a safe, healthy, and enticing learning environment for all.

Should disciplinary intervention be necessary to ensure a safe and stimulating learning environment, we strive to adhere to the traditional Jewish guidelines regarding *tocheicha*, 'loving rebuke or re-direction,' such as:

- striving to avoid 'public embarrassment,' addressing concerns directly with the child privately rather than in front of peers or others;
- giving the student the benefit of the doubt, assuming positive intentions;
- reflecting upon and clarifying our own motives before intervening;
- offering the rebuke in a calm, compassionate, succinct, and caring voice
- Offering opportunities (and guidance) to practice the four stages of teshuvah:
 - THINK: Reflect upon and acknowledge the detrimental impact/s of one's behavior on others - Recognize
 - FEEL: strive for empathy with those offended and feel regret regarding the chosen words/actions, some regret is good, shame is not - Regret
 - ACT: Do or say something to try to rectify any harm and make amends - Resolve and Restore
 - CHOOSE to ACT DIFFERENTLY in a similar situation next time - Revise

If disruptive behaviors persist:

1. Teachers are encouraged to request in-class support from class facilitator or other staff member.
2. If issues persist, the teacher/classroom facilitator will work with the rabbi or Education Director to visit their classroom to observe and offer support. If deemed necessary, the teacher can ask the Education Director to remove the student from the class for that day. Teacher and/or the Education Director would then inform the parents and can require a student to meet privately with the teacher and commit to a behavioral agreement prior to returning to the teacher's classroom.
3. Before or after class, the teacher meets privately with students to create a Teacher – Student Agreement that outlines specific expectations, commitments, tools for success, and repercussions. Teacher consults with parents, rabbi and Education Director in advance of meeting with Student, and informs parent/s, rabbi, and Education Director of the agreement.

If disruptive behaviors persist...

4. Teacher arranges an in-person meeting with Student and Parent to share feedback and objectives, to brainstorm ideas and make mutual commitments. The Education Director or rabbi can attend (and/or facilitate) the meeting at the discretion of the teacher.

If disruptive behaviors persist...

5. The student may be suspended or removed from the class for the remainder of the year at the discretion of the Education Director in consultation with the rabbi. In such a case the Education Director or rabbi will arrange alternative arrangements for the student to continue their studies in a more productive environment.

Attendance Policy for Students

Madrichim will help take attendance at the beginning of each class. If there is a student who has missed two weeks in a row, the Education Director will reach out to their parents to check on them.

Cell Phones

In general we do not collect cell phones for the whole school; however, if cell phones are a distraction in the classroom, we have a “cell phone parking lot” that students can put their phones in. Phones will be returned at the end of the HaMercaz gathering in the sanctuary to close the day.

Communication

The Education Director will send out a note every Monday with reminders such as pizza days, Moving Traditions, what students are expected to learn, and any change of schedule. You can expect an email from your child’s teacher at least every other week with further information about what the students have been learning. If you are not receiving these emails, please contact the Education Director.

Early Dismissal

Students needing to leave early from school must contact the Education Director directly by phone or email. A student verbally communicating that they are leaving early is not acceptable. When it is time for the student to leave, a Madrichol will be sent to the classroom to get the student. No student will be excused from class without a parent notifying the school. No parent should pick up a child directly from the classroom.

Education Committee

Congregation Beth Evergreen and our school are volunteer-driven. Our volunteers are at the heart of our success. Our Education Committee meets once a month to discuss different topics that help our school succeed. If you are interested in being on the Education Committee, please contact the Education Director at elizabeth@bethevergreen.org.

Field Trips

Field Trips are allowed as part of the learning experience, especially if they are walking field trips to the Life Care Center or Elk Run. The following guidelines apply to field trips:

1. Parents must be notified in writing at least two class sessions prior to the field trip.
2. No student may attend the field trip without a signed permission slip on file.

Guest Policy

Students may bring guests to HaMercaz if they are previously registered with the office. Guests that recur will be asked to make a donation to HaMercaz or to sign up as a student.

Hebrew

Students will learn Hebrew at snack time and during 15 minutes each day with Rabbi Jamie or the Education Director. However, we recognize that this is not enough time to really learn the language. Included in each weekly email will be resources to practice at home. Moreover, when children reach 6th grade they will begin studying with a tutor for their Bonei Mitzvah to help them get the individualized Hebrew skills they need.

Illness

If you or your child are feeling sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID or other contagious illnesses, do not come to HaMercaz. If you have attended HaMercaz and then test positive for COVID, please let us know so we can alert families of a potential contact.

Learning Prayers

We will do our best to teach the kids the prayers for the Friday night service over the course of the school year, with an emphasis in January and February. However, the best way to learn the prayers is by repeated exposure. We invite all families to join us at our acoustic Kabbalat Shabbat services on the first Friday of each month.

Schedule

The daily schedule will be as follows:

Cita Aleph	Cita Bet	Cita Gimel	Cita Dalet
4:30 - Snack 4:15 - Sanctuary 5-5:15 - Hebrew 5:15-6:15 - class 6:15 - Sanctuary w/Shinshin	4:30 - Snack 4:15 - Sanctuary 5PM - class 5:20-5:35 - Hebrew 5:35-6:15 - class 6:15 - Sanctuary w/Shinshin	4:30 - Snack 4:15 - Sanctuary 5:00-6PM - class 6-6:15 - Hebrew 6:15 - Sanctuary w/Shinshin	4:30 - Snack 4:15 - Sanctuary 5PM - class 5:40-5:55 - Hebrew 5:55-6:15 - class 6:15 - Sanctuary w/Shinshin

Parents are invited to join us at 6:15 in the sanctuary for closing prayers and presentations from the classes.

Shinshin

The Shinshin is our teen ambassador from Israel. Every week, they will teach the kids something about Israel. This program is intended to strengthen the kids' connection to Israel and the Jewish people.

Snacks

Snacks are served every week from 4:30-4:45PM. It is your responsibility to let the Education Director know if any allergies develop that have not been disclosed on your registration form. Snack time is our way of easing into the HaMercaz day. While it does provide a bit of a cushion for our students traveling long distances, please note that it is considered part of the school day and we do have educational activities during snack time. Please plan on your student participating each week.

Once a month, we have a pizza snack day, which you can sign up for at the beginning of the year. While it is a nominal extra fee, we encourage full participation as students are often quite disappointed if they are unable to participate.

Tardiness

While we encourage punctuality for all our students, we also want to make it clear that everyone is welcome no matter when they arrive. If you are less than 30 minutes late, you may accompany your child into the social hall or the sanctuary, according to the schedule above. If you will be more than 30 minutes late, please let the Education Director know prior to arriving. Someone will be ready to escort your child to their class.

Tzedakah

Tikkun Olam – caring for our world is a vital concept. Please encourage your children to give tzedakah every week (any amount is considered appropriate) and help them to understand that the amount is less important than the deed. Each class will have its own tzedakah box and choose its own charity to give to. Sometimes the school might be participating in a shul-wide tzedakah project and the Education Director will keep you informed.

Withdrawal from HaMercaz

We are not able to give tuition refunds for HaMercaz. Please consider carefully before withdrawing your child.

Text of Songs for Chanukah Shabbat

Candle Lighting (Cita Alef/Bet)

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech
haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav
v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.

Chanukah Blessing of Gratitude (Citas Gimel/Dalet)

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech
haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu
v'imoteinu bayamim hahaeim baz'man
hazeh

Shehechyanu (Cita Gimel)

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech
haolam, shehechyanu v'kiy'manu
v'higyanu laz'man hazeh

Chanukah, Oh Chanukah (Citas Alef, Bet, Gimel)

Oh Chanukah, oh Chanukah, come light the
Menorah.

Let's have a party, we'll all dance the Hora.

Gather round the table, we'll give you a
treat,

Sevivon to play with, latkes to eat.

And while we are playing, the candles are
burning low.

One for each night, they shed a sweet light
to remind us of days long ago.

One for each night, they shed a sweet light
to remind us of days long ago.

Oh Chanukah, oh Chanukah, festival of joy.
A very special holiday for every girl and boy.
Spin the whirling dreidels all week long.
Eat the sizzling latkes, sing a happy song.

Now light them tonight then, the flickering
candles in a row.

Retell the wondrous story of G-d in all Her
glory,

and dance by the candles' cheery glow.
Retell the wondrous story of G-d in all His
glory,

and dance by the candles' cheery glow.

Sevivon (Citas Alef, Bet, Gimel)

Sevivon, sov sov sov

Chanukah Hu Chag tov

Chanukah hu Chag tov

Sevivon, sov sov sov

Chag simcha hu la'am

Nes Gadol Haya Sham

Nes Gadol Haya Sham

Chag simcha hu la'am

Ma'oz Tzur (Cita Dalet)

Ma'oz tzur yeshu'ati,

lecha na'eh leshabe'ach,

tikon beit tefilati,

vesham todah nezabe'ach.

Le'et tachin matbe'ach

mitzar hamenabe'ach.

Az egmor

beshir mizmor

chanukat hamizbe'ach

I Have A Little Dreidel (Citas Alef, Bet)

I have a little dreidel, I made it out of clay,
and when it's dry and ready, oh dreidel I
shall play.

Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, I made it out of
clay,, and when it's dry and ready, dreidel I
shall play.

It has a lovely body, with legs so short and
thin,
and when it gets all tired, it drops and then I
win.

Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, I made it out of
clay, and when it's dry and ready, dreidel I
shall play.

I Have A Little Dreidel (cont.)

My dreidel's always playful; it loves to laugh
and spin;

a happy game of dreidel, come play, now
let's begin.

Oh dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, it loves to laugh
and spin, dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, come now
let's begin.

One person spins the dreidel
And when the spinning's through
The dreidel drops with one side up
And tells you what to do.

Nun means you get nothing
Gimmel means you win
Hay means you get half the pot
And Shin you put one in.

Mi Yimalel (Cita Dalet)

Mi yi-ma-lel g'vu-rot yis-ra-el, otan mi
yimneh? Hen be-chol dor ya-kum ha-gi-bor
go-el ha-am.

Sh'ma!

Ba-ya-mim ha-hem, baz-man ha-zeh,
mac-ca-bee mo-shi-a uf-o-deh —
Uv-ya-mei-nu kol am yis-ra-el
yit-ach-ed, ya-kum ve-yi-ga-el

Who can retell the things that befell us?
Who can count them? In every age a hero
or sage came to our aid.

Hark! In days of old in Israel's ancient land,
Brave Maccabeus led the fearless band.
And now all Israel must as one arise;
Redeem itself through deed and sacrifice.

Ocho Kandelikas (Citas Gimel, Dalet)

Hanukah Linda sta aki
Ocho kandelas para mi,

Hanukah Linda sta aki,
Ocho kandelas para mi.

Chorus: Una kandelika

Dos kandelikas

Tres kandelikas

Kuatro kandelikas

Sintyu kandelikas

seysh kandelikas

siete kandelikas

ocho kandelas para mi.

Muchas fiestas vo fazer, con alegrias i

plazer (2x) ...CHORUS

Los pastelikas vo kumer, con almendrikas i
la miel (2x) ...CHORUS

Chanukah Chag Yafeh Kol Kach (Cita Gimel)

Chanukah, Chanukah

Chag yafeh kol kach

Or chaviv misaviv

Gil l'yeled rach.

Chanukah, Chanukah

Sevivon, sov, sov

Sov, sov, sov, sov, sov, sov

Chag na'im va tov.

Chanukah Chanukah

Dedicate eight days

Candles bright, cheerful light

Beauty, joy, and play

Chanukah, Chanukah

Letters spinning 'round

Nun and gimmel, hey and shin

Wonders then and now.

Text of Prayers for HaMercaz-led Shabbats

Shabbat Is A-Comin' (Cita Alef, Bet)

Shabbat is a-comin', oh yeah
Shabbat is a-comin', oh yeah
Shabbat is a-comin', Shabbat is a-comin'
Shabbat is a-comin', oh yeah

We're gonna light the neiro, oh yeah...

We're gonna sing the kiddush, oh yeah...

We're gonna say HaMotzi, oh yeah...

Hineh Ma Tov (Cita Alef)

Hineh ma tov uma na'im
Shevet achim gam yachad.

Candle Lighting (Cita Alef, Bet)

Baruh atah adonay eloheynu meleh ha'olam
asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu
lehadlik ner shel shabbat.

Shalom Aleichem (Cita Gimel, Dalet)

Sha-lom a-lei-chem,
mal-a-chei ha-sha-reit,
mal-a-chei el-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-l'chei ha-m'la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch hu.

Bo-a-chem l'sha-lom,
mal-a-chei ha-sha-lom,
mal-a-chei el-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-l'chei ha-m'la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch hu.

Bar-chu-ni l'sha-lom,
mal-a-chei ha-sha-lom,
mal-a-chei el-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-l'chei ha-m'la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch hu.

Tsei-t'chem l'sha-lom,
mal-a-chei ha-sha-lom,
mal-a-chei el-yon,
mi-me-lech ma-l'chei ha-m'la-chim,
ha-ka-dosh ba-ruch hu.

Lecha Dodi (Cita Gimel)

Lecha dodi likrat kala, p'nei Shabbat
n'kab'lah!

Barechu (Cita Gimel, Dalet)

Barechu et Adonai hamevorach
Baruch Adonai ha-mevorach l'olam va-ed

Ma'ariv Aravim (Cita Gimel)

Goleil ohr mipnei hoshech vehoshech
mipnei ohr

Shema (Cita Alef, Bet)

She-ma yisrael, adonai eloheinu, adonai
echad

V'ahavta (Cita Dalet)

V'-a-hav-ta et A-do-nai El-o-he-cha,
b'-chol l'-vav-cha uv'-chol naf-sh'-cha
uv'-chol m'-o-de-cha
V'-ha-yu had'-va-rim ha-ei-leh a-sheer
a-no-chi m'-tzav'-cha ha-yom al
l'-va-ve-cha.
V'-shi-nan-tam l'-va-ne-cha v'-di-bar-ta
b'-am
b'-shiv-t'-cha b'-vei-te-cha uv'-lech-t'-cha
va-de-rech uv'-shoch-b'-cha uv'-ku-me-cha.

Uk-shar-tam l'-ot al ya-de-cha v'-ha-yu
l'-to-ta-fot bein ei-ne-cha.
Uch'-tav-tam al m'-zu-zot bei-te-cha
u-vish-a-re-cha.

Text of Prayers for HaMercaz-led Shabbats

Mi Chamocha (Cita Gimel & Dalet)

Mi chamocha ba'elim adonai
Mi kamocha nedar bakodesh
Nora tehilot osey feleh

Avot (Cita Dalet)

Baruch atah adonai eloheynu v'elohey
avoteinu v'imoteynu
Elohey avraham, elohey yitzchak, elohey
ya'akov
Elohey sarah, elohey rivkah, elohey rahel,
v'elohey le'ah

Ha'el hagadol hagibor vehanora el elyon
gomel chasadim tovim vekoney hakol
vezocher chasdey avot ve'imot umami
ge'ulah livney veneyhem lema'an shemo
be'ahavah.
Melech ozer umoshia umagen. Baruch atah
adonay magen avraham ve'ezrat sarah.

Oseh Shalom (Cita Gimel)

Oseh shalom bimromav
Hu Ya'aseh shalom aleinu
Ve'al kol Yisrael
Ve'al kol yoshvei teivel
Ve'imru, imru, Amen.

Ayn Ode/Aleinu (Chorus: Cita Alef, Bet, Gimel)

Ayn Ode, ayn ode
Ayn o-o-o-o-ode, Ayn o-o-o-o-ode

(Verses: Cita Dalet)

Aleynu leshabeah la'adon hakol
Latet gedulah leyotzer bereyshit
Shenatan lanu torat emet
Vehayey olam nata betohenu (Ayn ode...)

Va'anahnu korim umishtahavim umodim
Lifney melech malhey hamelahim
Hakadosh baruh hu (Ayn ode...)

Kakatuv betorateha
Adonay yimloh le'olam va'ed
Vene'emar
Vehayah adonay lemelech al kol ha'aretz
Bayom hahu yiyeh
Adonay ehad ushmo ehad

Kiddush (All classes)

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu melech
ha'olam, borei pri hagafen.

Motzi (All classes)

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheynu melech
ha'olam, ha motzi lechem min ha'aretz.