

Youth Education at Beth Am: Preparing for a Lifetime of Being Jewish

Youth and families involved in education programs at Beth Am experience what it means to live in a *kehillah kedoshah*, a sacred community. Children, parents and family members who engage in our programs develop confidence in their ability to live a meaningful, informed, authentic Reform Jewish life* and pass this heritage on to the next generation.

We believe that every family in our community is on a Jewish journey, and adults and children who engage in our programs have meaningful experiences that move that journey forward. Jewish learning at Beth Am is exciting, relevant and memorable, and we provide an array of opportunities for students to connect Jewish learning with Jewish living—by celebrating Jewish holidays, trying out different Jewish rituals, mastering certain Jewish skills, studying Jewish texts and wrestling with significant Jewish ideas.

Our congregation is a loving place where children know that they are loved for who they are—precious, holy, each created in the divine image. Within our education programs we establish smaller learning communities where participants develop deep, long-lasting friendships and a sense of safety and refuge from our high-stress culture.

In all of these ways, we inspire youth and families to be committed, knowledgeable, participating Reform Jews.

* According to “A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism,” adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis in 1999, “Throughout our history, we Jews have remained firmly footed in Jewish tradition, even as we have learned much from our encounters with other cultures. The great contribution of Reform Judaism is that it has enabled the Jewish people to introduce innovation while preserving tradition, to embrace diversity while asserting commonality, to affirm beliefs without rejecting those who doubt, and to bring faith to sacred texts without sacrificing critical scholarship...We are committed to the ongoing study of the whole array of mitzvot (sacred obligations) and to the fulfillment of those that address us as individuals and as a community. Some of these mitzvot have long been observed by Reform Jews; others, both ancient and modern, demand renewed attention as the result of the unique context of our own times.”