

***KB PARENTS' SUNDAY SCHOOL SURVEY***  
***June 2008***

There are currently 26 families attending KB Sunday School. 28 families completed the survey from which 3 has children who already graduated from Sunday School. The currently School parents' respond rate was 89%.

**Community Building**

**How important is it to you that KB Sunday School be oriented toward building a community for your children?**

42.3 % answered it is very important.  
57.7% said it is important.

In the additional comments section, parents made the link between community building and having a sense of belonging to humanistic Judaism as well as positive Jewish identity. They also wrote about the danger of a "false community", in the sense that everyone talks about community building but the actual opportunities are slim and the given population is very spread out.

**Combined Classes**

**How would you feel about having combined classes (1st and 2nd, 3rd and 4th etc.) and a rotating curriculum for each year in order to encourage community building and to ensure there are a sufficient number of kids for various activities?**

56% of responders liked the idea of combining classes.  
28% were neutral.  
16% preferred small classes.

Comments: combining classes is preferable as long as:

1) Careful consideration of developmental level is taken into account; 2) we don't repeat curriculum; 3) teachers are trained, and 4) there is good student teacher ratio (since we don't want to loose the personal attention piece. Eight children per class would be the ideal minimum for making the school experience comfortable for most kids. Grades should be combined to meet this minimum.

Although it may be a bit more challenging for faculty, it might be useful to build some flexibility into the curriculum, i.e., combined classes for some topics, splitting into smaller groups for others.

**Teachers**

**How important is it for you that KB teachers will be professional and/or experienced teachers vs. student leaders "in training"?**

40% of respondents preferred professional/experienced teachers.  
37% of respondents answered it's not so important for them.

Comments: many commented on the importance of having experienced teachers in upper grades while giving opportunities to leaders “in training” in the lower grades, “younger leaders can be fun for the kids.”

Other parents preferred a model of having a professional teacher and a student intern. One responded wrote: ”energy and enthusiasm are much more important than actual pedagogical skills, at least once a certain level of basic "class control" skills have been assured.”

### **Parents involvement in classroom**

#### **How willing are you to participate in your children classrooms?**

65% of parents are very willing or willing to participate in their children classrooms. The 35% who were “not willing” and “not very willing” said that participating in classrooms will take them away from their Sunday morning experience and they will miss adult content programs. One parent also wrote that s/he believes it is good for the kids to have separate time. Another parent suggested: “to draw on the skills/interests of all parents to participate in the classes to the greatest extent possible”.

### **Homework/family activities**

#### **What is your level of expectation regarding homework/family activities at KB Sunday School?**

38.5% think students should be given homework to support the work in class.

30.8% said they would prefer to have homework once in a while.

30.8% prefer not to have any homework.

Additional comments: some parents expressed their preference for fun and no homework. Some said their children already have too much going on and don't want to be adding Sunday School homework, specially under 4<sup>th</sup> grade. One parent wrote “it didn't seem to matter whether the kids do the homework or not.” Yet another wrote ”Reading is sufficient- but I think that it should be expected, not "optional", so that those who read it can build on it rather than reading it again in class.”

### **Hebrew**

#### **How important is it for you incorporate Hebrew into the curriculum so that your children will learn some Hebrew vocabulary?**

61.9% of respondents agreed it is important to incorporate key terms and phrases in Hebrew and to be exposed to letters. “It is impossible to learn a language in the amount of time our kids spend in Sunday School.”

Comments: one respondent proposed a weekend or All Day Ulpan (only once or twice in the year) in 4th grade, so students get some real immersive sense of the language.

Another respondent wrote “Families that are interested in learning Hebrew can get their own instruction. In 15 sessions, we can't do everything, so should focus on what families can't get elsewhere for example, Humanistic Jewish perspective on things.”

### **Bna'i Mitzvah**

#### **How important is to you that your pre-Bar/Bat- Mitzvah child gets introductory information about this ritual during KB classes?**

64% of respondents think it's important to get introductory information about the Bar/Bat- Mitzvah ritual so the kids can make decisions on whether to have it or the kind of ceremony they would like to conduct. The material taught does not need to overlap with the material covered in Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. This will be important in the 2-3 years prior to the ceremony.

One parent wrote “It is ok to introduce them to it, but not to push it. It's not for everyone, but it is good for kids to know that KB ceremonies are just as legitimate as those of their friends who are having the traditional model.”

Another parent commented: “The question is whether Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are part of -- presumably the culmination -- of the school program or unrelated to it.”

Another parent added: “This is something we take care of within our family. As far as our needs are, it is not necessary to include in curriculum.”

### **Sunday School Overall satisfaction**

#### **Overall, how satisfied are you with KB Sunday School?**

84% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with the Sunday School.

### **Number of sessions**

#### **This year KB increased the number of Sunday Sessions from 13 to 15 which included 14 Sunday School Sessions and 1 All Congregation Morning. What was your level of comfort regarding the amount of KB Sunday School sessions?**

48% of respondents are comfortable meeting 15 times a year.

40% prefers to meet less than 15 times.

8% would like to meet more times.

8% has no opinion.

Comments: parents expressed concerns regarding the unevenly spaced meetings. It's hard for families to commit to every other weekend. “I'd like to have the meetings more evenly spaced. I think there were too many between Passover and the end of the year. And I think there are some big spaces between meetings in the fall and winter, which is not so great as kids lose a sense of connection to each other and KB”

Another parent wrote “I think turnout at a few of the sessions suffered because we had too many this year.”

Regarding commitment a parent wrote: “When we joined the congregation there were only 13 meetings. The low number of meetings was definitely a factor in feeling we could "commit". Even adding 2 extra sessions this year has felt like too big a stretch.”

Another respondent wrote: “15 sessions is too much. We've seen through increased absences that most families cannot commit to coming this many times.”

### **Returning to KB Sunday School next year**

#### **Are you planning to send your kids to KB Sunday School next year 2008/9?**

According to the survey all but three students (2 families) will return to the Sunday School on the academic year 2008-9.

### **Community Values**

#### **Please choose at least five values that you believe your children should explore during Sunday School.**

The list of values according to the parents' ranking is:

Tikum Olam, repair of the world or social justice (88.5%)  
Tzedakah, giving to worthy causes (84.6%)  
Respect the dignity of others (79.9%)  
Honesty, integrity, truth (76.9)  
Honoring tradition (61.5%)  
Learning (61.5%)  
Community (57%)  
Humor, fun (57%)  
Family (46.2%)  
Creativity (46.2%)  
Questioning, skepticism (42.3%)  
Bravery, courage (38.5%)  
Reason (30%)  
Staying positive (26.9%)  
Sharing (23.1%)  
Scientific, inquiry (15%)  
Growth (15%)

Respondents added: History, Jewish identity, Jewish stories, how to make ethical decisions, freedom, justice, peace and conflict resolution.

### **Additional Comments**

“Claudia Lach was great, I hope she returns”

“My kids claim they would like more solid learning, less artsy/crafty.”

“It might be helpful to know the Sunday school "lesson" or topic ahead of time, so families could do some reading or at least a little talking about it ahead of time. This might make the time with the children on Sundays more productive.”

“Making learning fun and interactive is important as well as teaching thru different media (books, film, games.)”

“We like the way KB Sunday School has worked over the past few years. We look forward to some innovations and renewed enthusiasm, but we hope the changes aren't too drastic

“The 5th grade text book was great! I've not been as impressed with the previous text books which I thought were too difficult for kids to understand and get the pertinent points from.”