

April 26, 1959

REPORT OF THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL COMMITTEE

CURRICULUM- The Curriculum of the Temple School this year entered the second of four transitional stages. It was marked by increasingly satisfactory results in Hebrew instruction on lower and intermediate levels of learning. Grade Four, using the "Rocket to Mars" approach to Hebrew instruction, progressed so rapidly that most of the class has, for over a month, been working on next year's Hebrew textbook. Grades 8 & 9, at this stage, leave much to be desired, primarily because of the diversity of prior Hebrew training (ranging from none to much) of students in these grades.

TEXTS As satisfactory new materials appear, they are worked into the curriculum. The Rabbi plans to spend the first week of July in New York for the express purpose of analyzing all new books of the Union and all other publishers with an eye to enriching further the curriculum.

In 1959-1960, the curriculum will enter the third annual phase of transition. In this phase, all grades, above Grade 4, with the possible exception of Grade 10, will have full Hebrew programs. (Grade 10 will have one too if certain class members with inadequate Hebrew background accept the Rabbi's invitation to a one-week course, of five $1\frac{1}{2}$ hour periods, before the school year opens.) Phonograph recordings will be introduced as teaching and study aids in the coming year.

ARTS & CRAFTS & MUSIC

More elementary teachers felt at home with arts & crafts projects this year. The students generally found the projects increasingly satisfying. Under this general heading, two extremely successful baking projects were introduced: miniature challas and hamantchen. The need for a full-time instructor specializing in arts and crafts is felt. Similarly, the need for a full-time music instructor is sorely felt. Such an instructor would handle group singing in the classes, elementary and advanced student choirs and musical productions in the school. The need for this added personnel has not been pressed by the School administration because it is aware that the Temple is hard-pressed financially.

WORSHIP

As the religious service is the heart of the synagogue's function, so the Temple School regards the preparation of its students for adult worship as its primary, though not exclusive, objective. The services conducted by the School are thus regarded as extremely important. We are pleased to report significant achievement in this area. Two services are conducted by the Rabbi on Sunday mornings: one for Kindergarten through Grade 2, a second for Grades 3-5. The degree of student participation, even in the Hebrew (though formal Hebrew instruction has not begun till Grade 4), is most gratifying and should pay dividends in future years of Hebrew instruction.

On the Sabbath, formal Jr. Congregation services are conducted by the Rabbi and older students. It is a regular adult service; and student participation reflects gratifying achievement.

At the service for primary grades, most of the Rabbi's sermonettes are in song, often involving group participation. At the Sabbath morning service, the reading of the Torah and the explanation of the weekly portion is, in the school curriculum, regarded as Bible instruction. The relevance of the Bible to modern living is constantly stressed. Through the medium of this service and this sermon instruction, the Rabbi is able, over a period of years, to guide the students to a gradually maturing God-concept.

BLESSINGS

To inspire appreciation of tradition and to familiarize the children with personal prayer through blessings, we serve juice and crackers after Chapel services on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

WEEKDAY INSTRUCTION

This was the second year that the Temple School operated as one integrated school rather than as separate Religious and Hebrew Schools. Under the present program, Grades 5-10 have, in addition to week-end class, one week-day class. This year, for the first time, because of the unavailability of teaching personnel on week-day afternoons, we instituted evening classes for Grades 7-10. We are pleased to report that, with rare exceptions, the results were most gratifying. Students responded better in the evening than they did when they had to come directly from public school, after a full day of classes. Grades 5 and 6 were kept in the afternoon as after-school classes because of our feeling that parents might not approve of youngsters of such tender age being out till 8 or 8:30. It is, however, our feeling that here too better pupil reactions would result from evening classes. Mrs. Charles Maierson taught Grades 5&6 on Tuesday afternoons until her departure from Sharon at mid-year. The Rabbi taught for a number of weeks until the services of Mr. Joseph Routman were secured. Mr. Routman is currently teaching these groups. These classes meet separately for 50 minutes of History and meet together for a 30 minute activity period or story hour. Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Kaplan, Mr. Harold Rosenblum and the Rabbi teach the upper grades on Wednesday evenings. The Rabbi now takes Grades 7, 8, & 9 together for 30 minutes of conversational Hebrew on Wednesday evenings. On Sunday morning we have 76 children in attendance, on Saturday morning we have 52 children and 69 children meeting for weekday sessions.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

With the exception of one month, the Temple School operated without a part-time, paid administrative assistant. During part of the time, the very valuable volunteer assistance of Mrs. Reginald Weiss eased the burden considerably. But since her illness at mid-year, the Rabbi has had no administrative assistance. He has felt this lack greatly.

REPORTS

A new report form, designed to keep parents more intimately abreast of their youngster's progress, was instituted this year. However, because of the lack of administrative assistance, these reports have not all reached parents. Some were mailed this week; the remainder are being processed for mailing early in the coming week.

PREREGISTRATION

The School Committee has considered instituting pre-registration at the end of last year; but felt it more expeditious to wait a year. It is intended, accordingly, that, at the last day of school this year, youngsters will be registered for the next school year. This would enable the School Committee to have all the information it needs in June for next year's planning, as well as to save one added administrative step at the beginning of the year, which is always such a busy time. Details of preregistration will be announced.

JR. CONGREGATION

The Junior Congregation Board met this morning for its second meeting. One of its functions is to distribute to worthy Jewish causes monies collected through Keren Ami at Religious School. This board will pattern their activities after the adult congregation board. Two members from each Saturday class were elected by their classes to this board. The Board will have counterpart committees for each adult committee of the Senior Board.

TEACHER
WORKSHOPS

This year the Religious School teachers attended 11 workshops. The six that were held prior to the school year were to prepare teachers for this school year. A workshop was held for each of the four Festival holidays. This year the Western Regional Teachers Workshop was held at Temple Rodef Shalom in Pittsburgh.

PTO

Because the need was felt to promote the welfare of Jewish children, to stimulate religious interest, to bring into closer relation the home and the Temple School, and to develop between educators and Temple members a united effort, the Temple Beth Israel Parent-Teachers Organization was formed.

We wish to thank Mrs. Joseph Frand and her Sisterhood Festival Committee for arranging and serving appropriate observances for Succot, Hanukkah, Purim and the model Seder for Pesach.

At this time the Religious School Committee wants to thank the following teachers and substitutes for their dedicated service: Mrs. Esther Cohen, Mrs. Helen Barr, Miss Helen Shapiro, Mrs. Nellie Polangin, Mr. Howard Mermelstein, Mrs. Carol Kaplan, Mr. Melvin Kaplan, Mr. Joseph Routman, Mr. Harold Rosenblum, Mrs. Alice Lipsick, Mrs. George Garfunkel and Mrs. Judith Weiss, and *Kenneth Pokrass*.

I also want to extend personal appreciation to Rabbi Robert Bergman, Mrs. George Garfunkel, my vice-chairman and all the members of our Religious School Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Herman J. Salkin
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Chairman