

Our Dear Parents,

WE ARE STARTING OUR NEW SHABBAT SCHOOL YEAR! We are so very excited to continue to work with you and your children! We have big plans and great hopes for you, our children and our congregation this year! As we have been experiencing together, G-d has much in store for this next season together. As we continue this journey together, one of the things that stands out to us is the GREAT need for us to equip and help you be the best parents possible. You hold the keys to the future of your children. With this in mind, we want to come alongside you and assist you to teach, train, and grow your children into the men and women who can help lead the next generation.

In hopes of helping to facilitate this, we are implementing a few changes that we want you to be aware of. Here are some of the things that we plan to focus on this year along with some of the changes.

- **Learning the roots of our Faith**

- **Learning the Hebrew AlephBet.** We will continue to work with our children to learn the Hebrew AlephBet. We want to do this so that they can continue to learn and grow in the truth of G-D's Word.
- **Learning Liturgy.** As we continue to learn more and more liturgy, the Word of G-d comes alive! We want to pass this love for the things of G-d on to our children. We will work on learning more liturgy this school year. We want the children to learn to sing it together this year so that the children can lead the congregation in worship of Adonai!
- **Learning about some of the Unique Expressions of our Faith** - the meaning and purpose behind things like the tallit, shofar, etc..
- **Learning about the Feasts of G-d.** We want the children to understand why we do what we do, even as we are learning more and more about what it means to be Messianic believers in Yeshua.
- **Learning the books of the Bible.** This is a skill that will serve them greatly in years to come as they continue to learn more and more about our Faith.

- **Class Order and Schedule**

- **The Jewish months.** As we continue to learn about the Jewishness of our Faith, and since we celebrate according to the lunar calendar, we realized that it did not make sense to continue teaching according to a solar month. So we are going to try something different. For this school year we are going to be teaching according to the Jewish calendar (a lunar calendar). This should work well with our Messianic Curriculum, as it is built around the Jewish calendar. Our teachers will rotate according to the Jewish months.
 - **The month of Elul starts this week,** and we will begin teaching according to this schedule.
 - We will attach a schedule of what the dates of each month will be. We encourage you to talk with your children about what the Jewish months are and when they start.
- **The classes.**
 - We will have 2 Shabbat School classes again this year.
 - Age 4 - 1st grade (through the completion of 1st grade)
 - 2nd grade - 5th grade

- **Incentive program**

- Our summer incentive program was a great success! We all had a great time doing it! We want to continue to incentivize our children to memorize Scripture and other things that will help them to grow in their Faith. Please be on the lookout for upcoming announcements about it. We will be giving you more information about the things that your children can do to earn points and what the rewards will be.
 - **Memory Verses.** Psalms 119:11 says “*Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against You.*” We want to encourage all of our children to memorize Scripture. This is something that will help them all of their lives. There will be verses for the children to learn every week (every two weeks for the younger kids). **Please help them learn their verses.** Not only will they earn points for this, but they will also experience L'Chaim (LIFE) at the same time.
 - **Memorizing Liturgy.** In the same way, we want our children to know and understand the things that we are saying in the service, why we say them, and what they mean. We will be awarding points for reciting the *Shema, Kiddush* Blessings, and more. Again, please pay attention to future communication about this.
 - ****** Note:** If you need help with ways that you can help you kids learn these things please let us know. Again, we want to come alongside you and help you! We will also try to provide you with links to YouTube videos that can help your children learn.

Please be aware:

- **Information Forms & Permission Slips.** We will be asking you to fill out *new Family Information forms and Photo permission slips*. We understand that many of you have already done this before, however we really want to make sure that we have current and accurate information for all of our kids.
- **Performances.** We are planning for our children to do a few performances throughout the year. These may require additional practices. We would really like for all of our children to be able to participate in this. It encourages us and the congregation to see them grow, and it encourages the children to be able to be seen. We will communicate more about this as time goes on.
- **The Web Site.** We will be posting parent letters and information on the Bat Zion web site (www.batzion.org) in the Children’s Ministry section. Let this be a go-to place for you for information about the Children's Ministry

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement. We are REALLY looking forward to this year with you!

With Anticipation,

Ben and Heidi Parker

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Our "school year" will be broken down into the following 10 months:

1. **Elul** (Aug 23 - Sept 20) - 1st Shabbat = 8/26/17
2. **Tishrei** (Sept 21 - Oct 20) - 1st Shabbat = 9/23/17
3. **Cheshvan** (Oct 21 - Nov 18) - 1st Shabbat = 10/21/17
4. **Kislev** (Nov 19 - Dec 18) - 1st Shabbat = 11/25/17
5. **Tevet** (Dec 19 - Jan 16) - 1st Shabbat = 12/23/17
6. **Sh'vat** (Jan 17 - Feb 15) - 1st Shabbat = 1/20/18
7. **Adar** (Feb 16 - Mar 16) - 1st Shabbat = 2/17/18
8. **Nisan** (Mar 17 - Apr 15) - 1st Shabbat = 3/17/18
9. **Iyyar** (Apr 16 - May 14) - 1st Shabbat = 4/21/18
10. **Sivan** (May 15 - June 13) - 1st Shabbat = 5/19/18