

## New Post-B'nai Mitzvah Program

It's been said that, "Many a truth is told in jest."

So when Michael "Ziggy" Danziger, as Mordecai in this year's Purimspiel at Temple Israel, said, "What's the big deal? You've already had your Bat Mitzvah!" to Esther after learning that she might become a "Sunday school dropout," the sentiment resounded with Barb Gelb.

"If we're totally honest with ourselves," confessed Barb, who is beginning her 7th year as Temple's Director of Education, "in many, if not most, synagogues, a huge challenge as it pertains to a formal Jewish education is keeping the children and their families engaged with Temple life and Jewish learning *after* the 'big event.'"

"You've heard of 'post-partum depression.' Well, we want to avoid a 'post-b'nai mitzvah letdown.' That's why we're thrilled to announce the launch of a very exciting post-b'nai mitzvah program at Temple Israel."

"Many factors went in to re-designing this multi-faceted and vibrant program," explained Barb, "not the least of which was the need to continue to enhance our clergy's direct role in the education process."

"With Rabbis Greenstein, Grossman, and Bauman, and Cantor Kaplan each taking a 'faculty position,' as it were, in this re-vamped program, these students--who are starting 8<sup>th</sup> grade and are fresh off completing the comprehensive b'nai mitzvah program and Hebrew school--will continue to receive direct instruction and mentoring from our resident experts in Judaism," said Gelb.

"Naturally, studying is paramount, but in taking a very realistic look at the world of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, we know how important their developing social lives are and how that fits into their overall growth as young adults."

"So, we've added what we feel are two very necessary social components to the program: Wednesday night dinners and Saturday night 'get-togethers.'"

"These events will bring this group together, quite literally and figuratively, by fostering a cohesive team mentality in tight-knit, casual, and fun venues. There are no hidden agendas at these functions; they are purely social!"

This new multi-faceted curriculum has garnered positive feedback from parents.

"Parents have already given enthusiastic endorsements, and we all are looking forward to the successful implementation of this program this September," Barb noted.

"Additionally, a side benefit of this new program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders is that it is a great segue to our high school program. It provides a seamless transition from one chapter of their Jewish education to another."

The core program for 8<sup>th</sup> graders will be held on Wednesday nights beginning with a dinner (no charge!) at 6pm, and classes will follow from 6:30-7:30pm. Six Saturday night social get-togethers will be scheduled throughout the school year.

Barb Gelb may be reached at [barbg@timemphis.org](mailto:barbg@timemphis.org) or 937-2776. Online registration for the Wendy and Avron Fogelman Religious School is ongoing at Temple Israel's website, [www.timemphis.org](http://www.timemphis.org).

(To watch a video of Rabbi Micah Greenstein singing "Sunday School Dropout"--*with a cameo appearance with Barb Gelb*--at Purimspiel, go to [www.timemphis.org](http://www.timemphis.org) on the "Special Events" page under the "Calendar and News" heading...or... <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9c13xQwqt8>