

Teachers

We are proud to have wonderful, caring teachers on our staff for Hebrew school and religious school. Learn more about our teachers below.

Elisa Bailis

Religious School

elisa.bailis@gmail.com



Hello,

My name is Elisa Bailis, and I am so excited to be teaching fourth grade this year. I have been part of the Temple Jeremiah community since 1996. In my time here I've had the amazing opportunity to teach a variety of grade levels, including fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and Alef Hebrew. I am a teacher by profession, and during the week I substitute teach in a variety of districts close to my home in Vernon Hills. I am the mom of three, and in my free time I love fitness, reading the newest and best novels, watching British mystery series, spending time with my family and friends, and relaxing with a nice hot cup of coffee. I look forward to getting to know even more Jeremiah families this year!

Laura Bernstein

Religious School

laurabernstein23@gmail.com



My name is Laura Bernstein and I am very excited to be teaching fourth grade each Sunday at Temple Jeremiah. I grew up at Temple Jeremiah and have celebrated many mitzvahs here. I feel very lucky to be back and part of the amazing team. I have been teaching special education for 18 years and during the week I currently teach special needs kindergarten. I am married to a wonderful man named Corey and we have a 10-year-old son named Jack who is also growing up at Temple Jeremiah!

Melissa Celnik
Religious School and
Hebrew School
mrsclnik@yahoo.com



My name is Melissa Celnik and I have been teaching since 1997. During the school year, you may find me teaching Hebrew to Aleph and Bet students, Torah to Third Graders, or at the public school working with grades K-8.

During non-school days, I love being with my family. We enjoy taking day trips, especially when they magically turn into overnights. I love to cook, create craft projects, sing and dance, and LAUGH. (A little secret between you and me... I love it even more when my three children are laughing.)

I look forward to another great school year!

Shora Cohen
Hebrew School
shoracohen1@gmail.com



My name is Shora Cohen and I have been teaching since 1999. I am originally from Israel, Hebrew is my first language.

I served in the Israeli Army, studied at the University of Jerusalem and completed my studies in Tel Aviv.

I am excited to meet your children and be a part of their Hebrew studies as they climb the stairs to become Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

See you soon,

B'Shalom

Shora Cohen

Jessica Don
Religious School
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My parents joined Temple Jeremiah when I was one year old. I'm a graduate of the religious and Hebrew school programs. I was even a teacher's aide when I was younger and substitute teacher on Sundays once I was older. (Needless to say, I'm a fan of Temple Jeremiah.) On certain Fridays, you can even hear me singing with the temple's Adult Choir.

I'm thrilled to work with First Graders. I love their creativity and curiosity. This year they will investigate their temple – the people, places, and things that create our Jewish community. We'll also begin to explore the Jewish holidays and traditions. They will learn there are many ways to be a Jew.

When I'm not hanging out at temple, I can be found hanging out with my husband, 2 kids ... and probably coffee. Yeah, odds are pretty good I'll have a cup of coffee with me.

Stacy Dudek
Religious School, Hebrew School, and
Confirmation Teacher
stacyidudek@gmail.com



My name is Stacy Dudek and I have been with Temple Jeremiah since 2008. I was a middle school Language Arts/Literacy teacher for 10 years before having children and deciding to stay home with them. I absolutely love teaching at Temple Jeremiah. I have learned so much more about my religion and my culture simply by being present at the temple. I have taught 5th, 7th, 9th, 10th, and Aleph Hebrew and have loved them all! Can I really call coming to temple and interacting with such a variety of great people "work"???

Rabbi Debbie Helbraun
Religious School
Hebrew School Principal
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My name is Rabbi Debbie Helbraun. You can look at the [staff page](#) to see my professional skills and accomplishments. When not at Temple Jeremiah, I love spending time outdoors. I walk 25-30 miles a week, usually with my dogs. I also like to read and listen to music. I am passionate about social justice and teaching. I look forward to two weeks at OSRUI every summer, spending informal time with our youth. Much of the rest of my free time is spent with my family: my husband, Sid; daughter, Becca; and son, Jonah. This year I will be teaching both Fifth and Seventh grades. Although I serve in an administrative role, getting in the classroom and interacting with the students continues to be a priority for me. I especially try to engage in informal, “camp-style” learning, helping students to discover about themselves, their heritage, and how they become active and caring Jews in our ever-changing world.

Alan Hirsch
Religious School
ahirsch15@yahoo.com



Hi, my name is Alan Hirsch and I am thrilled to be teaching both 5th and 7th grade at Temple Jeremiah. I have been a member of the Jeremiah Family for nearly 10 years. I enjoy spending time with my wife Melissa and my two children- Claudia and Emma as well as our two dogs- Chloe and Maggie.

Hila Hollingsworth
Religious School and
Hebrew School
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Dear Parents,
My name is Hila Hollingsworth and I have been teaching at Temple Jeremiah since 2007.
I was born in Israel and spent most of my life there and served in the Israeli army. I went to college and majored in Textile Chemistry. I love to swim, walk, listen to music, teach, and cook. Every summer, my husband, daughter and I go to Israel. My daughter goes to camp there for a month.
Happy New Year!
Hila

Julie Liebman
Religious School
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My name is Julie Liebman and I have been part of the Temple Jeremiah community for 12 years. I'm so excited to teach Third Grade this year! I bring 23 years of teaching experience with me to Temple Jeremiah. During the week, I'm a music teacher at Science and Arts Academy. My husband, Adam, and I have two wonderful children, Brady (8) and Alaina (11). I'm also mom to our dog, Slugger, and our pet gecko, Junior. For fun, I like to exercise, do outdoor activities, and play Candy Crush! I'm a huge Sox fan, but during the winter I cheer for my hometown football team, the Kansas City Chiefs. I look forward to getting to know everyone this school year!

Suzanne McAulay
Religious School
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My name is Suzanne McAulay. I am new to teaching 4th grade this year. I have been an active member of Temple Jeremiah since 2014. I am the mother of one 9 year old son, Konrad.

During the week, I am the Deputy General Counsel of a global financial brokerage firm.

I am excited to be working with the other 4th Grade teachers and your children to create a fun learning environment.

Fred Oskin
Religious School
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I hail originally from Buffalo, New York, but have been in Chicago for approximately 40 years. I am married and have three grown children. As a social worker, I have worked in the Jewish communal service field in New Orleans, Harrisburg, PA, as well as in Chicago.

I have been the Executive Director of two Chicago residential care facilities, the Association of the Jewish Blind and the Northwest Home for the Aged. Besides being privileged to be a religious school teacher at Temple Jeremiah for a long time, I am also a professor in the Dominican University Graduate School of Social Work, plus I serve as an adjunct faculty member of the University of Phoenix.

I work in a local synagogue as an administrator. An especially avid sports fan, I'm a loyal supporter of the Bears, Bulls, Cubs, and White Sox, as well as of the University at Buffalo, the University of Illinois, the University of Wisconsin, Northwestern University, and the University of Southern California.

I also particularly enjoy photography, computers, long-distance running, and bicycling. With our extended family of three grandsons, Jacob, Avery, and Joshua, along with our granddaughter, Maddie (Madison), my wife, Marilyn, and I are now just loving every treasured opportunity we get to spend time with our growing *mishpachah* (family).

Karen Rohrbach
Religious School
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Welcome to Sunday school at Temple Jeremiah; we are going to have a wonderful year! Our curriculum, via stories, videos and art projects, centers on our holidays, the rituals surrounding the holidays and our Jewish identity. We also focus on doing *mitzvot*, good deeds, that kids can do. In addition to all that, one of the most important lessons learned in Kindergarten is to become comfortable in our Temple and to become part of the temple community.

At University, I learned that young children respond best with positive reinforcement; that's what they receive in class.

My family has been members of Temple Jeremiah for more than 20 years. Both of our daughters have celebrated their Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation here; they both served as teacher's aides through high school. When I'm not at Sunday school I am an avid football fan. After Sunday school, I can be found watching a football game...any football game!

Darci Rozner
Religious School
darcirozner@aol.com



My name is Darci Rozner and I am very excited to be joining the Temple Jeremiah religious faculty. For the past 20+ years, I have been an Early Childhood Jewish Educator; I am thrilled to be able to bring my love of Judaism to the First Graders in my class this year. My husband, Michael, and I live in Northbrook with our children, Ryan and Paige. Over the course of the school year, I look forward to getting to know your children and you.

Alexis Ruda
Religious School and Hebrew School
alexisruda@gmail.com



My name is Alexis Ruda. I studied English as an undergraduate and I'm currently working on a Master's Degree in Elementary Education at National Louis University. When I'm not in the classroom, I can usually be found painting watercolors, reading, collecting Lake Superior agates, relaxing with family and friends, and being silly with my two adorable nieces. Temple Jeremiah has been a special place for me since childhood. I am thrilled to be a part of the community of educators at Jeremiah, and I'm looking forward to a fun, creative, enriching year with your children. Please feel free to contact me at alexisruda@gmail.com.

Jordan Shacter
Religious School and Hebrew School
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I am looking forward to another year at Jeremiah! I am a certified K-9 teacher, but currently work as a full-time stay-at-home dad to my three daughters, Dena, Penny, and Aliyah, plus our brand-new son, Yitzi! Along with my wife, Devorah, we live in the West Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago. In addition to my responsibilities at home and at temple, I also act as a Chazan for Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur services at Bay Shul in Buffalo Grove, where I grew up and my parents still live. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family, including my many nieces and nephews, and cheering on the Chicago Cubs.

Marina Shubin
Hebrew School
marinas25@gmail.com

My name is Marina Shubin and I have been a Hebrew and Religious School teacher for more than 18 years at several area synagogues, Jewish institutions, and public schools, in both formal and informal settings. I have been a Bnai Mitzvah tutor for Temple Jeremiah for the past three years and I am very excited to start teaching Gimel and Daled classes in Hebrew School this year.



Judy Tatar
Religious School
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I moved here from Israel in 1999 to receive a B.S in Psychology from Loyola University Chicago and a Masters in Psychology from National Louis University. Prior to living in Israel, I grew up in Russia, moving to Israel when I was nine years old.

I now live in Highland Park with my husband and daughter and we love spending time with our extended family, traveling and having fun outdoors!

Hello!!

My name is Judy Tatar and I am so excited to be joining the Temple Jeremiah religious faculty this year. I will be teaching 2nd grade.

My undergraduate education was in marine biology and special education...how's that for diversity! I received my masters in reading consultation from the University of Chicago. I retired from teaching after 34 years at New Trier High School and then Lincoln Hall Middle School in Lincolnwood. I love working with all age groups, watching my students' grow, and of course those "light bulb" moments.

I grew up in Evanston and at Beth Emet Synagogue and taught in their religious school for many years. I live in Wilmette with my husband Jerry and our two big, hairy dogs. My three children, Daniel, Michael, and Laura are all grown up and Laura made Aliyah last September.

My heart belongs to my granddaughter, Olivia Sophia.

I love to sing, travel, and spend time with my family doing whatever. I am an actress and have been in several commercials and completed two short films.

We joined Jeremiah last October and I immediately joined the choir. I am also a member of the Inclusion Committee which focuses on programming for differently abled people.

I look forward to meeting my rising second graders and parents!

Please feel free to contact me at jbtatar@gmail.com.

Mindy Tibbetts
Religious School and
Hebrew School
mmtibbetts@comcast.net



Hi, my name is Mindy Tibbetts and I have been teaching at Temple Jeremiah since 2003. I teach Third Grade Sunday school and Hebrew school during the week.

My husband, Mark, and I have three wonderful children and one big dog! Speaking of dogs I have always had a special place in my heart for all animals. During my free time I enjoy spending time with my family, my pets, and my friends.

Not only do I teach at Temple Jeremiah but I am a member as well!

Jacob Wallach
Religious School
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Hi, my name is Jacob Wallach. I grew up in Israel during the country's formative years and completed my primary and secondary education there. I served two and a half years in the IDF as Tank Commander in the Armor Corps. I completed college and graduate school in Chicago. My wife and I have two wonderful children, a son and daughter, as well as four granddaughters. Two of our granddaughters, Talia and Maya, attend school at Temple Jeremiah. During the years 1978-1985 I returned to Israel with my family. I wanted my children to experience some of my childhood experiences and have a good command of Hebrew. I had a chance to do more army reserve duty, including a stint in Lebanon during operation "Peace for the Galilee." We returned to Chicago in May 1985.

My personal interests include: Bible Study, History of Israel during the 2nd Temple, World War I & II, collecting print books, and sports. I love soccer and played six years in an Israeli soccer league.

I have been teaching at Temple Jeremiah for over nine years and also taught Hebrew, Bible and Jewish studies at many Chicago-area synagogues covering grades one through eight.

I look forward to sharing my knowledge with your children and helping them learn to appreciate their continuing Jewish education.

Ros Wolfe
Hebrew School
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Hello, my name is Rosalyn Wolfe and I have taught religious and Hebrew school at Temple Jeremiah for over 25 years and been a member for over 30 years. I have specialized in students with special needs and I am one of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutors. Along with teaching, I also serve as Executive Director of a Synagogue in Wheeling. I have varied experiences in congregations throughout the community serving as temple administrator along with teaching Adult Education, B'nai Mitzvah, and Confirmation. I currently reside in Northbrook and have three children that all became Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Confirmed at Temple Jeremiah. I look forward to working with your children.