



# Quest Noar Family Handbook 2020-2021

*Rabbi Shoshanah Tornberg, Director  
Lee Slobotkin, Administrative Assistant*

215-887-8704

[www.kenesethisrael.org/quest-noar](http://www.kenesethisrael.org/quest-noar)  
<https://www.oyrtbetham.org/mensch-lab/>

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Quest Noar Contacts

Rabbi Shoshanah Tornberg, Director [stornberg@JQuest.org](mailto:stornberg@JQuest.org) **215-887-8704**  
Lee Slobotkin, Administrative Assistant [admin@JQuest.org](mailto:admin@JQuest.org) **215-887-8704**

The Quest Noar office is open:

Monday	9:00am-5:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00am-8:00pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9:00am-5:00 pm
Friday	9:00am-4:00 pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	8:30am-12:15 pm when JQuest B'Yachad is in session.

Quest Noar staff does not check email on Shabbat or holy days.

Dear Quest Noar Families,

Our program focuses on individual meaning, is based on creativity, youth leadership, and student initiative. Envisioned as a journey of guided learning, peer collaboration and personal exploration, Quest Noar is also an important social and identity-forming resource for our developing teens.

Important highlights in the lives of our students bookend the Quest Noar experience: B. Mitzvah celebrations at age 13 on one end, and Confirmation in tenth grade on the other. Both mark milestones of spiritual, psychological, intellectual and social growth for our community's youngest adult members. Quest Noar celebrates these watershed moments for students. And, we also aim throughout these years of learning to embolden and enrich these life highlights with deep meaning and rich content, connected to the lived experiences of these 21<sup>st</sup> century teens.

It is especially meaningful and long-standing in the Reform tradition to celebrate the Confirmation of tenth grade students, marking their more mature acceptance of the mantle of Jewish life and learning. And all of our students' experiences leading to this "Sinai moment" prepares them to profoundly understand their developing role amongst their people and in our world.

We encourage our teen community's members to celebrate the b. mitzvah of peers by attending the Shabbat service at which the teen leads the community in prayer. We also hope that all 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> graders and their families will make it a priority to celebrate Confirmation, traditionally on the holiday of Shavuot, in their respective congregations. It is an important annual celebration in the life of our teen communities.

This year, Confirmation at Beth Am is scheduled for the evening of May 16, 2021. KI's Confirmation for last year's tenth graders will be held on Dec. 12, 2020. The Confirmation of this year's tenth graders from KI is scheduled for the morning of May 17, 2021.

We are committed to ensuring a positive experience for your family and encourage you to be in touch with teachers and our directors with feedback, ideas and suggestions as to how to make Quest Noar work best for our community.

Thank you for being our partner and for journeying alongside us as we work with your teens to bring Jewish learning to life!

Warmly,



Rabbi Shoshanah Tornberg

- **Mission**

Quest Noar engages students in meaningful and intentional Jewish learning while putting student voice and choice at the center.

- **Vision**

Our Quest is for our learners to become Jewish adults with:

- A joyful and loving connection to our Jewish community and history
- Competence and confidence in decoding Hebrew and participating in synagogue worship
- An ability to find inspiration and meaning in the study of Torah and the Jewish tradition
- A dedication to Jewish actions (*mitzvot*) and a connection to Jewish rituals
- An understanding of modern and cultural Hebrew words
- A strong Jewish identity
- A passion for *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *tzedek* (justice), both in and beyond the Jewish community
- A relationship with God: noting God in their world, being thankful for blessings, and reaching out in times of need

- A familiarity with Jewish arts and an ability to join in the songs and culture of our people
- A commitment to *Am Yisrael* (People of Israel), *Eretz Yisrael* (Land of Israel), and *Medinat Yisrael* (State of Israel)

- **Who We Serve and Statement of Inclusivity**

Quest Noar is the teen education program for families of Old York Road Temple - Beth Am and Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel--in grades 7-10.

Quest Noar is committed to creating an inclusive environment for all families, respecting and welcoming equally all learning styles, races, sexual orientations, gender identities, family structures, and religious backgrounds. *We strive to meet the needs of all learners.* If at any time you feel that your family has not been warmly welcomed or we are not meeting your child's needs, please contact the director, so we can address your concerns.

- **Quest Noar Student Conduct**

Students are expected to behave in a way that allows others to learn and feel safe in order to be in the Quest Noar program. All Quest Noar students and families are expected to handle themselves according to Jewish values and a spirit of inclusiveness. Families will be asked to follow the *Brit* (behavior contract)

Be *Studentim Chachamim* (thoughtful students)  
 Treat everyone with *Hesed* (Kindness)  
 Help build our *Kehillah Kedoshah* (Holy community)

Should an issue arise with regard to class conduct the following steps will be taken:

Initial discussion: The first referral from a teacher will be handled by the director. The director will often contact the child's parents/guardians to seek guidance on what may be impacting the child's ability to participate positively in Quest Noar.

Parent Conference: The second referral from a teacher will require the parents/guardians to schedule a meeting with the director to work together to develop a plan of action to help support a more positive behavior.

- **When/If We Are Able to Have Regular, In-Person Classes:**

## **When to Come, What to Bring, and What to Leave at Home...**

### **Calendar:**

To access the Quest Noar Calendar, go to the KI website, go to LEARN, go to Quest Noar and then School Calendar –OR–

Go to the Beth Am Website, go to Education and look under Mensch Lab/Quest Noar.

### **AT KI Facility (8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park):**

- **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

Students will be dismissed from their learning spaces. Families should arrange a meeting location. The director will stand at the main door whenever possible to supervise dismissal. Students will be dismissed from the Mural entrance.

- **Weather Related Quest Noar Closing Information**

If we are closed due to weather, we will inform you via email, on Facebook and on our website if it is not the weekend. On Tuesday, if the Abington and/or Cheltenham schools are closed or close early, we will automatically be closed. You may check the JQuest B'Yachad page on the KI website for school closings, check Facebook, or look for an email.

### **AT BETH AM (IN OUR MENSCH LAB FACILITY) (971 Old York Road, Abington):**

- **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

Students should plan to meet their ride at a previously agreed upon location. Convenient options include the carpool line that picks up around the back of the building and the front entrance of the building. The director will stand at the back door whenever possible to supervise dismissal.

- **Weather Related Closing Information (Sundays at Beth Am)**

If we are closed due to weather, we will inform you via email, on Facebook and on our website if it is not the weekend. On Tuesday, if the Abington and/or Cheltenham schools are closed or close early, we will automatically be closed. You may check the JQuest B'Yachad page on the Beth Am website for school closings, check Facebook, or look for an email.

## **FOR ALL STUDENTS:**

### **EARLY AND LATE PICK UP**

- If you need to pick your child up early, a note is requested for the teacher to have your child meet you at the office.
- If, in an emergency, you are going to be late picking up your child, please notify the facility office so that someone can be there until you arrive. Rabbi Tornberg can be reached on her cell phone **(347-216-1547)** after hours for pick-up related issues.

### **DRESS**

- Students are asked to dress in a way that is conducive to learning and reflects the fact that they will be entering synagogue chapels and sanctuaries for Tefillah. Students wearing clothing with obscene language or other inappropriate content, or clothing that does not reflect modesty will be given a JQuest t-shirt to wear. If a student is dressed inappropriately for an on-line session, they will be asked to change.

All students are encouraged (but not required) to wear head coverings, such as a kippah for their time engaged in sacred learning.

### **TZEDAKAH**

- All students will be asked to bring in tzedakah (money for those that have less) to each class session. They should contribute each time they come to learn – the amount does not matter. When we are not able to be in class in person, families are encouraged to collect funds on Shabbat and periodically decide on a recipient of these funds.
- If you have occasion to stop by your synagogue, please bring by some canned goods for those in our community struggling with food insecurity.

### **ELECTRONICS**

- Students can bring devices to access the internet which may be used, at times, during class sessions for educational purposes. Electronics should remain off and in student bags until they are invited to use their electronics.

- At no time is Quest Noar or any of its participating synagogues responsible for any electronic devices that students bring; any electronic devices brought to Quest Noar is at the students' own risk. Should a student be using electronics when not given permission, the teacher will store the device and a parent will be notified.
- Students will have access to electronics during Quest Noar (computers and iPads). Students will be expected to follow the *brit* (covenant of behavior), treating them with care and using the electronic devices for the learning purposes intended.

### **FOOD**

- On Tuesdays there will be pretzels, cheese sticks, and apple chips for sale at Quest Noar before class begins. Due to allergy considerations, we ask that you do not bring food to Quest Noar, including on birthdays and special occasions.

## **Communication, Family Participation, Feedback**

### **Website**

- Information about Quest Noar can be found on the KI website: <https://kenesethisrael.org/quest-noar>. You can also find this information on Beth Am's website <https://www.oyrtbetham.org/mensch-lab/>. On these sites you can find information about curriculum for each grade, links to prayer and Hebrew study, and contact information.

### **Home Communication**

- Progress Reports: At the end of each semester, teachers will share student progress reports containing reflections of the students' learning.

**Hours** - For KI and Beth Am students in grades 7-10

**When Meeting In-Person**

	<b>Tuesdays - Weekly</b>
<b>6:15-6:30</b>	Dinner
<b>6:30-7:00</b>	Elective
<b>7:00-7:15</b>	Shuk (social games)
<b>7:15-7:45</b>	Core Class

**When Meeting Virtually (During COVID-19 Pandemic):**

- In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to Jewish learning and community. Our Quest Noar program continues on-line, starting Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020 until further notice. We will reevaluate in December. For more information on what to expect from our on-line learning program, please see below. Here is the way our on-line learning will work:

	<b>Tuesdays - Weekly</b>
<b>6:00-6:30p.m.</b>	7th-10th Zoom with class Q(1)
<b>6:35-6:50p.m.</b>	7th-10th Zoom for Shuk games
<b>6:55-7:25p.m.</b>	7th-10th Zoom with class Q(2)
	<b>Additional Scheduling</b>
<b>asynchronous</b>	outside assignments and material engagement should take no more than 30 minutes per week and should be an expected part of the learning

- As students will be in Zoom classes for limited periods of time (one can only Zoom so much!), it is essential that students also engage in asynchronous learning at home to augment what would be an in-person experience in absence of a pandemic. **These learning pieces are NOT HOMEWORK, but a piece of "class time" upon which the Zoom sessions depend for success.**

**Feedback**

- If you have a suggestion, idea, concern, or question, do not hesitate to send an email or make a phone call. Rabbi Tornberg is fully committed to ensure a positive experience for every child and to continually reflect on how our program can best fit your family's needs.



## Quest Noar Lay Leadership

### **Beth Am Education Committee:**

- You can become part of the team that builds the Mensch Lab and Quest Noar toward its mission. This parent body provides enrichment programming for students, support to teachers and input on school policy and philosophy.
- If you are interested in becoming involved, contact Jamie Lincow, Beth Am's Vice-President of Education at [JamieLincow@gmail.com](mailto:JamieLincow@gmail.com).
- If you have concerns, please contact the JQuest Office.

### **KI Education Committee:**

- The mission of the KI Education Committee is to support the continuous improvement of the JQuest and Quest Noar programs, and their curricula, instruction, assessment, standards, and outcomes. The committee will:
  - Provide advice to the Director
  - Report activity, findings, and recommendations
  - Identify issues that require attention and provide recommendations to address them
- Members of this Committee include representatives from KI both with and without students enrolled in the program. They represent congregational stakeholders and members with a background in Education.
- If you have concerns, please contact the JQuest Office.



## **Additional Information for Beth Am Mensch Lab families:**

### **Amanda Sham Resource Center for Special Needs**

- Beth Am is committed to excellence in education and a belief that all Jewish children are entitled to learn about their heritage. We are proud to offer support through the Amanda Sham Resource Room for Children with Special Needs. We understand that children utilize different modalities to learn and progress at various speeds. The Resource Center, staffed by experienced special education professionals, will utilize progressive and innovative teaching techniques with a diverse scope for our entire school population. This program will service students in kindergarten through grade 7. For further information, contact Rabbi Tornberg.

### **Shabbat Service Attendance**

- Students in grades 3 through 7 are *required* to attend a minimum of four (4) services, all of which must be Shabbat services. Two services must be at Beth Am and two may be elsewhere with a note from the parent with date of the service and the name of the synagogue. One year prior to b. mitzvah, students must attend eight (8) services (depending on b. mitzvah date – see B. Mitzvah Manual). When Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, and Simchat Torah take place on Shabbat, these Shabbat services will not count towards the service requirement.
- Our Shabbat service attendance policy aims for children, along with their parents, to have the opportunity to practice the rituals and traditions taught in our Mensch Lab. This type of enriching experience permits our children to better understand what it is to be Jewish, and, also helps our children develop a connection to our worship services. You are strongly encouraged to attend with your children.
- **Policy:** Students will attend at least two services before receiving their b. mitzvah date and student(s) will have attended four services prior to beginning b. mitzvah training. All students will complete the remaining service requirement by the end of the Mensch Lab year.