



Family Handbook

*Deborah Rosen, Director
Lee Slobotkin, Administrative Assistant*

215-887-8704 www.kenesethisrael.org/jquest

• CONTACT INFORMATION

JQuest Contacts

Deborah Rosen, Director DRosen@JQuest.org 215-887-8704

Lee Slobotkin, Administrative Assistant admin@JQuest.org 215-887-8704

The JQuest 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 is in session.

JQuest staff does not check email on Shabbat.

• Hours

- ***Sundays: Kindergarten through 6th grade***

- 9:15 am - 12:00 pm @ KI

- ***Tuesdays: 4th through 6th Grade***

- Students 4:45-5:15 PM (on Zoom)

• All About JQuest B

Dear JQuest Families,

Our program focuses on individual meaning, is based on creativity and movement, and seeks to engage every child in exploring what the Jewish tradition is all about. Envisioned as a journey of guided learning and personal exploration, JQuest is rooted in three areas, which together plant the seeds for Jewish life:

Judaic Study: Students will work together, create learning experiences that generate individual meaning, explore their creative passions, and have experiential opportunities in the community to achieve grade-level curriculum goals with guidance from clergy and teachers.

Prayer and Holiday Study: Students will explore the foundations of regular Jewish life through regular participation in T'fillot (prayer) exploring both the fixed nature and the spiritual expression, as well as the foundations of holiday rituals in the home and synagogue.

Hebrew Study: Students will be introduced to the Hebrew language and Hebrew decoding (sounding out letters to form word sounds) based on age and stage of learning. They will focus on learning Hebrew from Sound to Print - gaining a strong aural basis, and then working in small groups to decode the Hebrew prayers.

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 JQuest work best for our community.

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

Warmly,

Deborah Rosen

• **Mission**

JQuest 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**

JQuest is the elementary education program for families of Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel. The program meets on Tuesdays, from 4:30-6:00 pm., when we are able to meet in person.

JQuest 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 appropriate director, so we can address your concerns.

• **JQuest Student Conduct**

Students are expected to behave in a way that allows others to learn and feel safe in order to be in the JQuest program. All JQuest 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 *Talmidim Tovim* (active learners)

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 JQuest.

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 JQuest calendar, go to the KI website, go to Learn and then school calendar. Dates are also available on KenesethIsrael.org/Calendar

AT KI Facility:

• **DROP OFF AND PICK UP**

Students in grades K-3 should be escorted into the building and picked up from their classrooms each Sunday. Children in grades 4-6 will be dismissed from their learning spaces. Families should arrange a meeting location. The director or assistant director will stand at the main door whenever possible to supervise dismissal. On Tuesdays, students will be dismissed from the Mural entrance.

- **Weather Related JQuest 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 page on the KI 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.
- Deb Rosen can be reached on her cell phone (**215-285-9076**) 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

- When meeting in person, students in grades K-4 should refrain from bringing electronics to class unless specifically asked. All electronics should remain off and in bags.
- Fifth and Sixth graders 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 JQuest or any of its participating synagogues responsible for any electronic devices that students bring; any electronic devices brought to JQuest—whether on Sunday or Tuesdays—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 JQuest (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 Sundays, when we are able to meet in person, JQuest families may be asked to bring in challah on a rotating basis to KI. On Tuesday, when able to meet in person, there will be pretzels, cheese sticks, and apple chips for sale at JQuest before class begins. Due to allergy considerations, we ask that you do not bring food to JQuest, including on birthdays and special occasions.

Communication, Family Participation, Feedback

Website

- Information about JQuest can be found on the KI website:
<https://kenesethisrael.org/JQuest>

Home Communication

- Weekly Updates: Teachers of grade-level Quests will send *weekly* updates so that families will know what their students are doing in JQuest. There will also be a weekly email sent about family and JQuest events. Families can stay informed and see the work and experience of their children. If

you do not receive these weekly communications, "News You Can Use" email, or an email from your teacher on Sunday afternoon (K-1) or Tuesday evening (2nd-6th) please contact the JQuest office.

- Social Media: You can follow Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel on Facebook for updates.
- Progress Reports: At the end of each semester, teachers will share student progress reports containing reflections of the students' learning.

Homework

- Students in grades 4, 5 and 6 will be asked to review their Hebrew assignments through an online review weekly. This homework is essential to student success and should be completed weekly. The link is on the JQuest section on the KI website.

Family learning and programs

- Several times a year JQuest will plan family events and parent learning opportunities. We encourage all JQuest parents to attend these events to meet other parents and connect with our clergy. If you have ideas for new events, please contact Deb Rosen.

Feedback

- If you have a suggestion, idea, concern, or question, do not hesitate to send an email or make a phone call. Deb Rosen 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.

JQuest Lay Leadership

KI Education Committee:

- The mission of the KI Education Committee is to support the continuous improvement of the JQuest program, and its curriculum, instruction, assessment, standards, and outcomes. The committee will:
 - Provide advice to the Director
 - Report activity, findings, and recommendations to the JQuest Leadership Committee
 - Identify issues that require attention and provide recommendations to address them
 - Observe classrooms/learning environments and provide feedback to the JQuest Director

- 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.

- **JQuest Leadership Team:**

The JQuest program is overseen by a leadership team made up of the Rabbis, select lay leaders, and education directors of the synagogues. Brian Rissinger, KI Executive Director, serves as the business manager. The leadership team is responsible for visionary and structural work of JQuest.