

# Junior Congregation



# Chatter

THE place to read all about what's going on in Junior Cong!

Volume 3 Issue 1

Enjoy this special edition of *Junior Congregation Chatter*  
"Junior Congregation 101: The Basics"

## Junior Congregation: Why do we need to do it?

Junior Congregation is an essential part of our children's Jewish education, in which students integrate what they have learned in the classroom and put it into practice. The ultimate goal of the Junior Congregation program is to have our children feel comfortable participating in any Shabbat or holiday service held at GHC or at any other synagogue. However, we need your assistance and support. Parental involvement sends a compelling message to our children that "the sky's the limit" when home, school, and student work together. Therefore, we strongly encourage all parents to attend Junior Congregation services with their children.

Junior Congregation is a dynamic learner's service. It is conducted in both Hebrew and English. Leaders teach the "choreography" of the Shabbat morning service and explain the meaning of prayers. Rabbi Kenter visits to engage students in a discussion of the weekly Torah portion. Cantor Kanarek also drops by to teach students a new melody or to review a familiar one. In addition, students actively participate by leading prayers appropriate to their grade level. It is truly a rewarding experience and you will be excited when you see what your children can do.

We have another full and exciting year ahead of us. As always, we rely on your involvement and support, in partnership with our teaching staff, to lead our children to success. Thanks for your help. See you in the Chapel.

## September sizzle

- 9/12 **Junior Congregation Kick-off** – followed by a special Kiddush. Which leader will it be? Come and find out!!!
- 9/18 **Erev Rosh Hashanah** – join us at 6:30 pm for services in the Main Sanctuary
- 9/19 **First day of Rosh Hashanah** – 10:30 am in the Chapel – Sweeten your New Year by joining Mr. Michael Billig for this special Junior Congregation
- 9/20 **Second day of Rosh Hashanah** – 10:30 am in the Chapel – join Judy Goldstein and talented teen Evvie Jagoda for this special Junior Congregation. Come hear the soaring sounds of the shofar.
- 9/26 **Alison Kellner** returns to the Chapel for her 2009-2010 debut – 10:30 am
- 9/28 **Yom Kippur** – 10:30 am in the Chapel – with the lovely Michael Billig

## October occasions

- 10/3 **1<sup>st</sup> day of Succot on Shabbat** – come shake your lulav!
- 10/10 **Alison Kellner** is back as the leader of the day.
- 10/11 **Simchas Torah** – no scheduled Junior Congregation service – however, you may earn a sticker by dancing in the Main Sanctuary. What – dancing??!!!
- 10/17 The excellent **Eileen Robin** is the leader of the day.
- 10/24 You don't want to miss the dynamic duo – **Chad Lazar & David Sassoon**.

## “But wait, how does it work?”

### The Who, What, Where, and When of Junior Congregation

Junior Congregation meets in the small chapel near the Broadway entrance to the synagogue. Services begin promptly at 10:30 AM. We are incredibly fortunate to have a knowledgeable and dedicated group of parents and teens who make up our volunteer corps of leaders. We are also delighted to report that our three professional leaders – Rabbi Kenter, Cantor Kanarek, and teacher Alison Bender-Kellner – will lead Junior Congregation for a combined total of 12 Saturdays throughout the school year! If you want to know which talented leader will be waiting to greet you on a particular Shabbat, please refer to the sidebar on Page 1 of every edition of *Junior Congregation Chatter*. As you will note, **the official Junior Congregation kick-off will be on Saturday, September 12, 2009.** Soon after, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur arrive. Services for the High Holy Days will be held on **Saturday September 19<sup>th</sup>, Sunday September 20<sup>th</sup>, and Monday September 28<sup>th</sup>** from 10:30 AM - 12 NOON.

Every Shabbat, we try to coordinate Junior Congregation with the service being conducted in the main sanctuary. At the end of Junior Congregation, our young *daveners* join Rabbi Kenter and Cantor Kanarek in the main sanctuary to help lead the concluding prayers *Ein Keloheinu*, *Aleinu*, and *Adon Olam*. Then, the children eat, drink, and “hang out” with their friends at their own Kiddush, held in classroom 5. Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush (peanut-free, please) in honor of your child’s birthday. It is truly a meaningful way to mark the occasion by sharing it with your GHC family.

Children are given the opportunity to choose ahead of time the part(s) they would like to do for the upcoming Shabbat service. Every Sunday, a sign-up sheet will be available during *Tefilah* Time with Mr. Zisser. Children can volunteer to perform various parts of the service, ranging from ark opener to leading a prayer to reading from the Torah. [Mr. Zisser will guide our younger students in choosing parts.] Participation is an excellent opportunity for the students to show off what they have been learning in class, all in front of an encouraging and friendly audience. **Having the children sign up for parts ahead of time is very helpful for the leaders, and keeps the service flowing smoothly.** It would be most helpful for the children if you tell them in advance when they will be attending Junior Congregation. This avoids the problem of children signing up for parts, and then not showing up because they did not realize that they were not coming. Parts that have not been assigned prior to Saturday are given out to students in attendance that day, so that everyone has an active role.

**To fulfill the basic Junior Congregation requirement, students must attend a total of twelve (12) services throughout the school year.** Since the GHC Religious School curriculum emphasizes the content of the Shabbat morning service, students must attend a minimum of eight (8) Saturday morning services towards this requirement. To further encourage the enjoyment of Shabbat and other holidays, Junior Congregation credit will also be available to any student who attends and participates in a congregational service on which there is no scheduled Junior Congregation service. These times include: Kabbalat Shabbat [Friday night], Sukkot, Simchas Torah, Purim, or Pesach. Students will receive one sticker per service attended.

## ♪ Just a few notes ♪

♪ In a New York Minute: We remind you that Junior Congregation services begin promptly at 10:30 am and time definitely flies when you're having fun!

♪ Puttin' on the Ritz: Junior Congregation is not a "black tie" affair; however, we ask that you help to make Shabbat stand out from the rest of the week.

♪ Sometimes you feel like a Nut (Sometimes you don't): We thank you for generously sponsoring a Jr. Congregation Kiddush. Please note that all products purchased for the Kiddush must be nut-free to keep our kids safe and healthy.

♪ Sunrise, Sunset: We remind you to bring all well-labeled food items for the kiddushim into the Dairy Kitchen before Shabbat begins (by late Friday afternoon).

♪ Come Together: Shabbat is a time for family. We strongly encourage all parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins [once or twice removed] to join our students for this wonderful experience we call Junior Congregation.

## The Frequent Daveners Club

As parents, we know that positive reinforcement is always helpful. So, in order to encourage our students to attend Junior Congregation services more frequently, we offer an incentive program. Last year, we had an amazing 25 students enter our "Frequent Daveners Club". This year, the benchmarks for joining the Frequent Daveners Club are:

- Attend 16 - 19 times - students will receive a \$5 gift card to Cold Stone Creamery.
- Attend 20 - 23 times - students will receive a \$10 gift card to Barnes & Noble.
- Attend 24 times or more - students will receive a \$15 gift card to Best Buy.

## HELP WANTED

Sponsors needed for Saturday morning kiddushim (the snack). Please send all inquiries to Lisa Dayan at [dayan@kmm.com](mailto:dayan@kmm.com).

If you have enjoyed reading this edition of *Junior Congregation Chatter*, please make your email address available to us so your family doesn't miss a thing. Email helps us all to stay green!

## Who will be "Class of the Month"?

Every month, we reward the class that, by percentage, attended the most Junior Congregation services. The winning class will have its name printed in this very box for all *Chatter* readers to see. Additionally, the students in the winning