

OAK PARK TEMPLE B'NAI ABRAHAM ZION

Education Director

About Oak Park Temple

Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion is a Reform Jewish congregation of roughly 540 families, touching nearly 1,900 lives across Chicago and its Western Suburbs. As our mission statement says, Oak Park Temple is committed to continually creating a warm, welcoming, and diverse community centered around Jewish worship, family, and lifelong learning, and to promoting the rights and well-being of Israel and all humanity. Our staff culture is highly collaborative: clergy, educators, and administrative staff plan and work together, especially on major community events, to create meaningful experiences for families.

About the Role

Our Jewish School, with enrollment currently around 230 students, has been shaped for more than three decades by an Education Director whose relationship-centered approach and regular presence throughout the building are hallmarks of our program's culture. With her retirement, Oak Park Temple is seeking a new Education Director who can build on that foundation and lead our K-12 educational program into its next chapter, adding their own knowledge and creativity to our ever-evolving program. Joining our team, the incoming Education Director will work to:

- **Preserve the relational heart of the program.** Continue the tradition of a leader who is visible and present, knows children and families by name, and treats education as a relationship-first endeavor.
- **Build boldly on our strong foundation.** Thoughtfully evaluate scheduling, Hebrew pedagogy, Tefillah formats, curriculum goals, and teaching methods and bring forward ideas suited to our community's needs and desires.
- **Improve consistency and clarify the learning progression.** We seek a leader to both reinforce our meaningful curriculum and expand upon the cohesiveness of the K–12 arc.
- **Sustain engagement beyond the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** The next Director should bring a clear, compelling vision for keeping students and families meaningfully connected through Confirmation and the teen years.
- **Deepen community-building.** With the goal of introducing intentional structures that support both parental and student relationships.
- **Communicate proactively and consistently.** Clear communication that articulates the content and direction of programming is essential and involves continuous communication with families, teachers, clergy and lay-leaders.
- **Lead and mentor a team of teachers and teenage teaching assistants (madrichim).** Balance trust, autonomy, and coaching, with a goal of giving teachers ownership of lesson planning and implementation, while providing clarity and alignment on the program’s curricular arc.

Key Responsibilities

Curriculum, Instruction & Educational Leadership

- Develop, evaluate, and continuously innovate a coherent K–12 curriculum with a clear, sequenced progression for Hebrew language instruction and Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation.
- Recruit, hire, train, mentor, and supervise religious school teachers and teenage teaching assistants.
- Stay current on trends and best practices in Jewish and supplemental education; participate actively in professional organizations (e.g., ARJE) and support the Temple's relationship with OSRUI.
- Devise and implement grade-level family programming.
- Design a vision for the religious school aligned with the Temple's strategic plan.

Family & Student Engagement

- Build and sustain personal relationships with K–12 students and families.
- Develop and lead parent education programming and intentional community-building opportunities for both children and parents.
- Be visibly present and accessible during program hours, including holidays and Shabbatot when there is children's programming.

Clergy Partnership, Bar/Bat Mitzvah & Life-Cycle Collaboration

- Meet regularly, both formally and informally, with clergy to coordinate on family needs, curricular alignment, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, and overall program goals.
- Collaborate with clergy to develop innovative and engaging grade-level Shabbat services, holiday programming, and Jewish School tefillah.

Communication

- Communicate regularly with Jewish School families through weekly updates, shared calendars, and the Parent Handbook.
- Maintain and improve the Jewish School's presence on the Temple website and social media.
- Communicate regularly with clergy, professional staff, and the Board about program updates and student/family well-being.

Administration & Budget

- In partnership with the Temple Executive Director: develop and manage the education budget, including applying for and managing relevant grants.
- Oversee school calendar creation, enrollment coordination, and class list formation.
- Participate in safety and security planning and training for classrooms and programming.

Qualifications

Required

- Master's degree in Jewish education, or equivalent depth of training and experience.
- Deep knowledge of Judaism and Jewish life, sufficient to serve as a thought partner to clergy and staff on Jewish education and practice.
- Familiarity with Hebrew prayer and ability to manage language acquisition programs.
- Direct classroom teaching experience, preferably including within a supplemental/religious school setting.
- A warm, engaging, relational presence; a genuine connector and community builder.

- Strong organizational, planning, and implementation skills.
- Administrative experience including grant application writing, budget management, and employee recruitment and supervision.
- Comfort with managing, mentoring, and coaching a team of both new and veteran teachers as well as teen teaching assistants and community volunteers.
- Ability to navigate a range of viewpoints within the community with grace and sensitivity.
- Comfort with basic technology and digital tools to support curriculum planning and communication.

Preferred

- Experience at Jewish summer camp or willingness to engage in Jewish summer camp.
- Familiarity with modern pedagogical tools and sensitivities.
- A preference for making Oak Park Temple one's primary Jewish community.

Schedule & Work Model

This is a full-time position sometimes requiring more than 40 hours per week. In-person presence is required most weekdays, specifically during program hours and at weekly staff meetings, congregational events, and monthly Board meetings. Evening and weekend availability is expected. Schedule and hours will be more flexible during the summer months (May-August). Remote work availability is determined by the supervisor/Senior Rabbi. The Director is strongly encouraged and supported by the Temple to serve on faculty at OSRUI for 1-2 weeks each summer.

Compensation & Benefits

Salary: $80,000-110,000 (commensurate with experience)

Employee Benefits Package: medical, dental, and vision insurance plans; retirement benefits through the Reform Pension Board; Paid Time Off (PTO) including vacation days, personal days, and holidays; paid parental leave; professional development allowance; membership in the Association of Reform Jewish Educators (ARJE); complimentary Temple membership dues and school tuition for preschool and religious school.

To Apply

To apply, send your resume and cover letter directly via email to: templeeducatorsearch@oakparktemple.org. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.

** Not sure you meet 100% of our qualifications? Research shows that men apply for jobs when they meet an average of 60% of the criteria, while women and other people who are systematically marginalized tend to apply only if they meet every requirement. If you believe that you could excel in this role, we encourage you to apply. We are dedicated to considering a broad array of candidates.

Consistent with our mission, Oak Park Temple is an equal opportunity employer. The congregation will not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, sex, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship, military status, marital status, physical or mental disability, or any other characteristic protected by law. It is the policy of the congregation that certain positions must be filled by persons of the Jewish faith as a bona fide occupational qualification. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment. All employees, regardless of position, are expected to maintain and contribute to this policy.