THE PRESCHOOL AS A SYNAGOGUE MARKETING TOOL

A PAPER PRESENTED BY
ALICE MILLER
IN FULFILLMENT OF FTA REQUIREMENTS

AUGUST 1992

Alice Miller
Congregation Bet Breira
9400 S.W. 87 Avenue
Miami, FL 33176
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A congregation’s basic purpose is to provide a place for Jewish families to come together for community, worship, and education. The temple administrator’s job is to make this happen by attracting and retaining members, for we cannot exist without them. At Congregation Bet Breira, through new marketing techniques, we are attracting younger families whose children are enrolled in our preschool and retaining these families long after preschool graduation.

Bet Breira was founded in 1975 by eighteen families, most in their early thirties. The congregation initially held services in a Methodist Church. We quickly reached our original goal of 400 families and within six years we boasted 80 B’nai Mitzvah ceremonies each year. Our Bet Breira family had grown quite rich and full. But since congregants encouraged their peer groups to join the synagogue, we seemed to be attracting a limited (and older) age group. We needed ways to attract families with young children who would grow up in our synagogue and take advantage of all we had to offer. In 1982, we moved into a facility of our own and immediately started a preschool program. In the early years, our centrally located school drew from many families in the surrounding community. We earned an excellent reputation that was evidenced by our capacity enrollment. However, few of these young preschool families opted to become members of the congregation.

In 1990, the need to use our successful preschool as a marketing tool for our synagogue became apparent. It was obvious that by implementing a plan we
could attract new members and encourage affiliation of young families simply by providing their children with a nurturing Jewish learning experience. Our hope was to watch these children grow up as a part of our congregation.

Initially we greatly increased the difference between the preschool tuition for members and the tuition for non-members, immediately making membership more financially attractive. Prior to this change, 10% of our preschool families were members. Afterwards, an additional 20% joined the Temple because of the new fee structure. We also began to develop more family-oriented programming especially for this target group. Tot Shabbats, Purim Carnivals, picnics, Book Fairs, Puppet Shows; and special open house meetings between preschool parents and synagogue staff were designed to foster continual interaction between these two groups.

Perhaps our most enticing innovation was to offer a free year of kindergarten to any preschool graduate who also enrolled in our Religious School program. Of course, this incentive was contingent upon the family joining the temple. For children who had already completed our preschool program through Kindergarten, a free year of first grade Religious School was offered. We even gave a free year of Religious School to those families who were members already...our way of saying “thanks” for being a part of the Temple family. This new incentive proved to be a great financial benefit to the Temple. Some existing members used the tuition fees they saved to enhance their dues category and/or to increase their fair share contribution. This marketing tactic has also helped us
to meet the challenge of keeping children enrolled in Religious School after preschool, without the common break until third grade, when Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirements begin.

It is very important to note that the gains from this preschool program have been much more than just financial. It is clear that preschool continues to provide a base from which to draw younger members and keep the membership vital and growing. We have found that once young children are familiar with our surroundings, long before the "pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah rush", it is natural for them to continue their Jewish education in our Religious School. In preschool, these two and three year old children are given the foundation of a Jewish background. They are eager to sing the songs and tell the stories of their heritage to their parents and grandparents. They form Jewish friendships and anxiously look forward to seeing their peers at Shabbat or High Holiday services. This infectious enthusiasm is evident in their homes and gives parents the incentive to further cultivate this interest by practicing Jewish rituals and affiliating with the synagogue.

If we begin exposing these toddlers to our rich culture, Judaism will become the guiding force in their lives as they are learning about the world around them. Unfortunately, for too many families, this is the only exposure that the children have to Jewish rituals and observances. They, in turn, begin to "teach" their parents and "demand" involvement as they recite blessings before meals. By inviting parents and grandparents to participate in weekly Shabbat programs, these children rekindle within their families a sense of Jewish belonging that may have
been lost. This multi-generational connection is the basis of Judaism and the tool to help keep a congregation full of youth and wisdom. Our preschoolers can generate all levels of new members, from parents to grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. The spirit engendered by them often serves as the catalyst to bring their unaffiliated families back into the fold of Judaism.

The preschool parents who have made the choice to get involved are a tight-knit group. They have worked together on various projects. In fact, POPS (Parents of Preschoolers) is like a mini PTA. This cohesive group of approximately 25 mothers (and one father) functions as a preschool committee and also serves as an advisory group that meets regularly with the Preschool Director. Last year, in conjunction with the Temple Education Committee, they organized a "Chanukah Chozera Bazaar", ran the Purim Carnival and baked hamentashen. Working together with an existing Temple committee allowed them to strengthen ties and cultivate friendships within the synagogue. In addition, POPS made and distributed to each preschooler, a tape of Chanukah songs sung by our music director. They organized an end-of-year brunch for the preschool teachers and invited new parents to come and get involved. POPS also planned the graduation reception and sold videotapes of the graduation ceremony. With numerous other fundraisers, the POPS group managed to accumulate a substantial profit. Over three years, they have donated new playground equipment, a new computer, a laminator and a portable microphone. Their input has been productive and beneficial to the congregation and the children. They are but one more way to
increase temple membership by increasing preschool involvement.

Young preschool families can also find social and community benefits through temple affiliation. In addition to helping the Temple, the preschool meets a community need. By providing daycare from the recently extended hours of 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, our preschool is attempting to alleviate the problems faced by dual income families. The social aspect must not be overlooked. Young affiliated families form their primary friendships with other members of the congregation. They often join Havurot and participate in Temple functions together. This only enhances the Jewish background we provide for their children. In addition, there are various opportunities to expand their Jewish knowledge by participation in Adult Education classes, Holiday workshops and formal training.

Additional programs that promote our preschool and eventually benefit our congregation should also be mentioned here. The numerous baby namings performed in our synagogue have become a useful marketing tool. These parents are informed of "Mommy & Me" classes, a mother/baby interactive session for very young babies. This can provide an early feel for our environment. Our Bet Breira Summer camp can also give parents the opportunity to try us out before enrolling in a full school year. Moreover the High Holiday Children’s Services which are open to the public and require no tickets are a popular draw in the community for preschool parents. For many, it is their first visit to our sanctuary and filled with singing children, it makes quite a lasting impression.

We are now enjoying the fruit of our efforts. Children from the first
preschool class are becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah this year. Not surprisingly, these families have shown a particularly strong attachment to the Rabbi and the Temple. These students have demonstrated a richer Jewish background at home, in the synagogue and in the community than their counterparts who began later in the Religious School program.

In analyzing statistical data from our preschool for the past five years, I found that in 1987-1990 only ten percent of the students were from member families. Once we offered the aforementioned tuition incentives, we increased that percentage to thirty-three percent. Last year (1991) was the first year of our free Religious School year for preschool graduates: eight families joined following preschool graduation and took advantage of the free kindergarten or first grade. More importantly, the twenty-two who had joined at the beginning of the previous year to obtain the lower tuition, remained as members following graduation. In total, as a result of the preschool marketing program, we developed thirty new member families who comprised thirty-three percent of our new member population. These thirty new members in one year accounted for over $22,500 in new gross revenue for dues and operating fund assessment.

The financial benefits of operating a preschool cannot be underestimated. Our profit in this area ranges from $40,000 to $100,000 per year. (See attached budget page.) We do not factor in the cost of bookkeeping, custodial costs or utilities, but we do charge to their account the supplies that are actually purchased for their use. Our profit margin from this program has been reduced because of
the recent opening of the Jewish Community Center three miles from the Temple. Yet despite their beautiful facility and spacious areas for programming, we are still gaining the same percentage of families each year from the preschool base, though the school's overall enrollment is slightly down. We have found that most people learn about the preschool through word-of-mouth, and we have an outstanding reputation as the school where children receive personalized attention in a warm and loving atmosphere.

Although Kendall was the home of the twelfth fastest growing Jewish population in the country in 1975 (Ira Sheskin, Florida Jewish Demography, Volume 4, Number 1, Dec. 1, 1990) when our Temple was founded, twenty percent of the Jewish families have moved thirty miles north of our location to Broward County in the past five years. In addition, South Florida has one of the highest rates of non-affiliation in the United States. Our preschool and the marketing strategies discussed above are helping us to reverse the latter trend and provide young Jewish children and their families with a religious, social and educational environment where they can cultivate their heritage.
APPENDIX

1. Preschool Budget for 1991-92

2. Sample Letters
   a. To Join the Temple
   b. To Rejoin the Temple

3. Sample Tuition Fee Schedule
## CONGREGATION BET BREIRA  
### PRE-SCHOOL BUDGET REQUEST  
**Year ending June 30, 1992**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenues</th>
<th>1991 Budget</th>
<th>1991 Actual</th>
<th>Over (under) Budget</th>
<th>1992 Budget</th>
<th>Budget increase (decrease)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-day Tuition</td>
<td>$140,100</td>
<td>$135,100</td>
<td>($5,000)</td>
<td>$151,600</td>
<td>$11,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Half-day Tuition</td>
<td>213,200</td>
<td>196,300</td>
<td>(16,900)</td>
<td>238,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch Bunch Tuition</td>
<td>28,400</td>
<td>26,500</td>
<td>(1,900)</td>
<td>32,000</td>
<td>3,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registration &amp; Supply Fees</td>
<td>34,200</td>
<td>31,600</td>
<td>(2,600)</td>
<td>30,900</td>
<td>(3,300)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(500)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member, Staff &amp; Family Discounts</td>
<td>(19,400)</td>
<td>(30,700)</td>
<td>(11,300)</td>
<td>(29,500)</td>
<td>(10,100)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>397,100</td>
<td>358,900</td>
<td>(38,200)</td>
<td>424,300</td>
<td>$27,200</td>
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### Operating Expenses

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1991 Budget</th>
<th>1991 Actual</th>
<th>Over (under) Budget</th>
<th>1992 Budget</th>
<th>Budget increase (decrease)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>254,100</td>
<td>246,300</td>
<td>(7,800)</td>
<td>258,500</td>
<td>4,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payroll Taxes</td>
<td>19,500</td>
<td>18,800</td>
<td>(700)</td>
<td>19,800</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payroll Cost</td>
<td>273,600</td>
<td>265,100</td>
<td>(8,500)</td>
<td>278,300</td>
<td>4,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>(1,300)</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>(600)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>12,400</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>(1,000)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture &amp; equipment</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>(2,300)</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks &amp; Lunches</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>6,200</td>
<td>(1,800)</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>(1,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>(1,800)</td>
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<td>(1,000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher enrichment</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>(600)</td>
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<td>(500)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Subscriptions</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>(300)</td>
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<td>(100)</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>(500)</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>(400)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher parties &amp; Gifts</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>(200)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>(300)</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>(1,300)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(1,500)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licenses</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>(200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>(300)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>313,100</td>
<td>295,600</td>
<td>(17,500)</td>
<td>311,800</td>
<td>(1,300)</td>
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**Contribution to Temple**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1991 Budget</th>
<th>1991 Actual</th>
<th>Over (under) Budget</th>
<th>1992 Budget</th>
<th>Budget increase (decrease)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$84,000</td>
<td>$63,300</td>
<td>($20,700)</td>
<td>$112,500</td>
<td>$28,500</td>
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SAMPLE INCENTIVE LETTER
TO MEMBER TO REJOIN THE TEMPLE

June 11, 1992

Mr. and Mrs. Joel Meyer
14841 SW 149 Street
Miami, FL 33196

Dear Joel & Judy:

Our years together have been special...for both Andrew, your family and for Congregation Bet Breira. We want that relationship to continue. We want your family to become part of our family. So we would like to offer our preschool graduate, Andrew, free first grade in our Shabbat School when you re-join the Temple.

Friendships made during the preschool years can grow even deeper during Religious School. As everyone scatters to different schools for first grade, Congregation Bet Breira can be the glue that holds these friendships together.

The preschool years are only the beginning of what Congregation Bet Breira can be for your entire family. Join us - we want to count the Meyer family in the Bet Breira family.

If you are interested, please call me at 595-1500.

Sincerely yours,

Alice Miller
Executive Director
SAMPLE INCENTIVE LETTER
TO NON-MEMBER TO JOIN THE TEMPLE

June 11, 1992

Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Shapiro
14830 SW 149 Avenue
Miami, FL 33196

Dear Jeffrey & Brenda:

Our years together have been special...for both Andrew, your family and for Congregation Bet Breira. We want that relationship to continue. We want your family to become part of our family. So we would like to offer our preschool graduate, Andrew, free kindergarten in our Shabbat School when you join the Temple.

Friendships made during the preschool years can grow even deeper during Religious School. As everyone scatters to different schools for kindergarten, Congregation Bet Breira can be the glue that holds these friendships together.

The preschool years are only the beginning of what Congregation Bet Breira can be for your entire family. Join us - we want to count the Shapiro family in the Bet Breira family.

Sincerely yours,

Alice Miller
Executive Director

RABBI
Barry Tabachnikoff

CANTOR
Daniel Marmorstein

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Alice Miller

EDUCATION DIRECTOR
Arnold Bergman, R.J.E.

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR
Sylvia Sondak

OFFICERS
PRESIDENT
Edward Winitz

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Dale Moses

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Gary Canner, Administration
Robert Ewen, Ritual
Monte Kane, Development
Beva Lowe, Auxiliaries
Amy Mittelberg, Membership

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Harriet Shapiro
Michael Weiss
Stuart Weiss

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Nina Meyer
Richard L. Levy
Howard Cantor
Lawrence E. Stein
Gilbert Mart
Naomi Olster
Barbara S. Stein
Stanley Newmark
Jack M. Dresner
Leonard Caplin

Affiliated with The Union of American Hebrew Congregations
TUITION
1992-1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 days (18 mos)</td>
<td>$85.00</td>
<td>$100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>105.00</td>
<td>135.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 days (2 yrs)</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>105.00</td>
<td>135.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>170.00</td>
<td>215.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Day 4's</td>
<td>290.00</td>
<td>335.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>300.00</td>
<td>345.00</td>
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EARLY MORNING DROP-OFF
7:30-8:30 $3.50 (daily) $55.00 (monthly-M) $60.00 (monthly-NM)

LUNCH BUNCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-1:00</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>55.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-2:30</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td>120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-3:30</td>
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<td>160.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:30</td>
<td>3.50 no activ</td>
<td>5.00 with activ</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-6:00</td>
<td>7.50 per day</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>110.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00-6:00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>235.00</td>
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<td>2:30-6:00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>145.00</td>
<td>165.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-6:00 hr</td>
<td>3.50 no activ</td>
<td>5.00 with activity</td>
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NOTE: 5 day - 7:30-6:00 p.m. - 5 day + afterschool care
Member: $400.00 Non-Member: $465.00
7:30-6:00 p.m. - Full day 4's or kindergarten +
afterschool care
Member: $435.00 Non-member: $475.00

SUPPLY FEE:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Non-Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 &amp; 3 days</td>
<td>$50.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 days (2½, 3 &amp; halfday 4's)</td>
<td>75.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4's (fullday)</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2's</td>
<td>25.00</td>
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10% discount on one (1) sibling.
5% discount if paid in one (1) payment.
3% discount if paid in two (2) payments.