

IN GOOD FAITH

THIS WEEK'S PROFILE

# 'I'm teaching them, yet they teach me'

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Name: Sarah Bornstein Congregation: Congregation Beth Yam  
Town: Bluffton Involved for: Member with Congregation Beth Yam since 2006; has worked with religious school for three years  
Position: I'm a religious school teacher. I'm a youth group adviser. I'm a middle-school teacher. I do tutoring and Hebrew coaching ... and then I conduct a toddler service, which is my absolute favorite love of everything, for little kids.



*Submitted photo*

Sarah Bornstein is a religious school teacher at Congregation Beth Yam on Hilton Head Island.

Toddler service. We have religious school every week. The actual toddler service is a once-a-month service for kindergarten and younger. It's a very unique service. ... We — myself, the music director and our choral vocalist — sit on the floor with the children and we're very hands-on. We have books. We have ritual objects. Lots of singing. And then our pews are filled with family members, community members, grandparents, who I think really enjoy watching the enthusiasm and the love of all the kids and their participation. So it's meant for the little kids, but it's amazing how many adults we really get just to be a part of the service.

Community service. We do what we call in our religion a mitzvah. The young people do lots of projects that help out in the community. They do stuff from helping with the children's center to painting the children's center to reading books to the kids to helping with Family Promise. We have an annual carnival that the youth group puts on. They do all the fundraising. They do all the organization ... And then we donate that to local foundations for the less fortunate like Bluffton Self Help and Deep Well.

Teaching the younger generation. It's, of course, amazing working with kids in general, but these kids learning a new language and a new culture truly makes them talented. ... I'm teaching them, yet they teach me. There's always a question. There's always a "Why?" ... It's great to be a part of all that. It's a great feeling, knowing I get to help the younger generations. It's awesome to watch that spark, that love, the belief in God, which I hope that everybody, of course, gets to experience and has that feeling of being a part of a community that has such a great support system.

I feel like people have had negative religious experiences in the past, which pull them away from religion. It's boring, and it's not fun, and they had an experience of "I have to go do this," where I feel as though truly every child, all 50-plus students are engaged and want to come.... And that truly is awesome, especially for being in such a small community with such a small Jewish population.

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