**QUESTIONS**

* **Temple Shaaray Tefila**
* **Garden House School of New York**
  + *Describe some typical family activities*
  + *Describe your child’s bedtime routine*
  + *Tell us what you think the ideal preschool environment is for your child*
* **Temple Emanu-el**
  + *How or from whom did you learn about the school?*
  + *What words would best describe your child?*
  + *What is your favorite time of day to spend with your child and why?*
  + *What do you find to be the most enjoyable areas of parenting? Most stressful?*
  + *Please share a brief anecdote that tells us something about your family.*
  + *Is there something that you would like to share that would help us better understand your child/family?*
  + *What language other than English is regularly spoken at home?*
* **York Avenue Pre-School**
  + *Short note about your child*
* **92nd Street Y**
* **Temple Israel**
  + *What words would you use to describe your child and why?*
  + *What do you hope your child gains from his/her preschool experience?*
  + *Does your child have any particular strengths or areas of concern that you would like to bring to our attention?*
* **Park East Day School**
* **Park Avenue Synagogue**
  + *Please share important information about your child not captured in these questions*
* **All Souls School**
* **Christ Church**
* **The Caedmon School**
  + *What would you like us to know about your child?*
  + *Describe the kind of school environment in which you see your child being the most successful.*
  + *How did you learn of The Caedmon School? Please indicate*
* **The Episcopal School**
* **Central Synagogue**
  + *Why are you interested in our school?*
  + *Briefly describe your child’s personality:*
  + *Any languages other than English spoken at home?*
  + *What are your child’s favorite activities?*
  + *Anything else about your child/family?*

**ANSWERS**

**Temple Emanu-El**

*How or from whom did you learn about the school?*

In 2013 our family moved from Los Angeles to New York City, and decided to join the Temple Emanu-El community. Since then we have also attended programs at Emanu-El such as Mommy & Me (now Baby Bop), where we met some great teachers (Hadar Orshalimy) and welcoming families who have had wonderful things to say about the Nursery School. *[Shameless plug]*

*What words would best describe your child?*

Curious and vivacious are the two words that best describe our son Camden. Camden is bright, naturally inquisitive, and eager to learn how everything around him ‘works’. When faced with a new situation, be it a new toy, a new class or even a new food – you can practically see the wheels in his mind churning and trying to ingest, process and figure out what he is looking at and what he is supposed to do with it. We are constantly impressed by the energy and enthusiasm Camden brings to any endeavor he undertakes. Without fail, when Camden gets to a class, he is the first one to stand up ready and eager to participate in the day’s activities. Camden is incredibly outgoing and is jokingly referred to in our building as the “mayor” because he walks around every morning saying “Hello, good morning” while giving each employee a high-fiveand greeting them by name. He has an insatiable zeal for life and lights up any room with his smile and infectious laugh.

*What is your favorite time of day to spend with your child and why?*

With all the hustle and bustle of living in New York City, mornings can be especially challenging for any family. That said, we believe it is incredibly important to develop a positive and exciting routine in the morning as it sets the rhythm for the day. Camden has made this task incredibly easy for us as there is so much life and excitement in his eyes from the second he pops up out of his bed. Like a blank canvas, he wakes with such hope for what is in store that day. When we walk into his room to get him up, he immediately springboards up, leans over and looks into his brother’s (Chase) crib and says “Morning Chasey! Wake up! Breakfast time!”. He then runs out of the room eagerly hunting for our dog (Chloe) and then yells, “Chloe! Breakfast time!”. Sitting at the breakfast table with Camden is equally as amusing where he showcases his inner foodie and tells us what he’d like for breakfast, lunch and dinner that day! Amazingly he somehow comes up with a different order every day! *[Dana to add language about hope/excitement/blank canvas]*

*What do you find to be the most enjoyable areas of parenting? Most stressful?*

As working parents of two young boys we are constantly paying attention to the little things, which in turn are really the big things. This requires a lot of work and relentless responsibility, but similar to our stressful careers, the rewards are enormous. Our boys are miniature versions of us, discovering for the first time everything we take for granted. They respond to it fully and genuinely, with no filters or inhibitions, no irony or detachment. They help us stay in the present and in the moment, and allow us to see everything from a new, fresh perspective. It is the times they get excited about something as simple as the bubble machine they saw in the park or the digger truck on the street that helps us to realize that every moment is a new adventure. We love seeing our kid’s eyes light up with each new discovery. From realizing they can talk or say a new word, to mastering riding a scooter, or cheering for themselves after they complete the ABC’s, everything is done with an innocence and sense of awe. It is seeing things through their eyes and seeing a part of ourselves in their personalities, but an even better version.

Another aspect of parenting we enjoy is watching them ‘get it’. Whatever milestone they’re reaching for whether it be their first step or learning to form a sentence, bearing witness to someone you love achieving their goal for the first time is seriously special (and inspiring). Our kids remind us that the possibilities are endless; that life is an unmapped territory ready to be explored. With their optimism and unspoiled outlook, they give us a daily injection of Carpe Diem we will not get anywhere else.

Overall we enjoy making memories as a family, whether we are taking the boys on family trips, spending time at the beach, having a picnic in the park or just enjoying some low key time at home. Our children are young but these are the…

Other Points – (need help writing)

* When we put Camden to bed and he whispers “I love you” or “2 more minute hugs”, your heart just melts. Or the fact that he asks to sit under the cuddle blanket to read a book
* We love his imagination
* The big smile and running hug he gives when you walk in the door
* The giggle sound when he crack up at himself
* When he is so proud of his “big boy bed”
* When Camden says an unprompted please or thank you.

The all-consuming love for our kids is what creates the challenges of parenting, yet makes it all worthwhile. We worry about our kids, try to figure out what’s best for them, and constantly focus on keeping them healthy and safe. Although Camden communicates well and is able to generally express his ideas, wants and needs, he is still learning to cope with strong feelings. We look forward to him attending nursery school where he will develop even better language skills and have more experience working with his peers, handling disappointment and following rules. He is bright and happy but like most toddlers, life with him is a roller-coaster ride. He is persistent, assertive, charismatic, perceptive, tenderhearted and analytical which are wonderful traits he will carry with him to adulthood. He is realizing that he is a separate individual from us which means that he is driven to assert himself, communicate his likes and dislikes and acts independently (as much as he can). These changes cause a mix of worry, and sometimes, frustration.

We will never forget how Camden reacted when he was brought to the hospital to meet his baby brother, Chase. He was only 18 months old and was not able to fully comprehend the concept of a sibling. He saw the baby lying on me and immediately climbed up the bed to jump in my arms. I scooped him up and held him tight and then showed him his baby brother. The next thing we heard was “no Chase”. At that moment it became clear. Navigating life with two kids under two was going to be tricky. That is not to say it isn’t amazing too. There has been nothing more heartwarming over the past 6 months than seeing Camden fall in love with Chase and, though he is still in diapers himself, he has taken on the role of big brother and protector. Every morning he pops up out of his bed, leans over the side and says “good morning Chasey”.

Despite the challenges of being a parent, we experience times of fulfillment that are hard to beat. It is the little moments of parenting, like when Camden says “danana” when he means banana or when he starts dancing around the living room the second he hears music. These little things have made the difference and paying attention to them has had a big impact on us as parents.

*What language other than English is regularly spoken at home?*

Camden’s caregivers predominantly speak French to him during the day whereas his parents speak exclusively English with him. From time to time, Camden will interchange the words in conversation or use both the English and French word when he is trying to communicate. For example, when someone is cooking he will usually say “the oven is very chaud, very hot, très chaud” or when someone leaves the house he will say “Bye, au revoir!”.

**NOTES**

* Best part about being parent
  + The little things – because in the end you will remember that they are the big things
  + "To be a good father and mother requires that the parents defer many of their own needs and desires in favor of the needs of their children. As a consequence of this sacrifice, conscientious parents develop a nobility of character and learn to put into practice the selfless truths taught by the Savior Himself." - James E. Faust
  + Seeing things through his eyes
* Most stressful part about being a parent
  + The hardest thing about being a parent for me is allowing my adult children to make their own mistakes
  + Finding the balance between being the type of parent you want to be and the type of parent you should be
  + The 'tough love'; shouting at them, grounding, being cruel to be kind
  + I make at least five mistakes a day at a bare minimum. I hope one of those doesn't turn out to be truly serious.
  + Knowing that you can't control everything and you can't always make it right.
  + The constant worrying - "damn if you do damn if you don't". Example: "is he eating too little?" "is he eating too much?" "is he sleeping too little?" "is he sleeping too much?" "is he supposed to do that?" "why is he not rolling over yet?" "does he have a temperature?" "why is he coughing?" "why does his poop look like that?"
  + The fact that I am responsible for making decisions for the little guy and, if I screw up, well, it's him who suffers the consequences.
  + Trying to balance being a great mom with a stressful job outside the home and being a wife to someone I truly love
  + Wondering if I'm doing it right
  + Hoping your making the right decisions, hoping you’re doing a good enough job, feeling guilty about having to work too much
  + The emotional rollercoaster. she will be screaming one minute and then smiling at you the next. one minute you want to be crying right there with her and the next you can't help but smile at her gummy smile
  + Learning that you can't safeguard him from everything and that discipline doesn't make you a bad parent.
  + Separate entity after 12-15 months, can’t explain – process to creating independence