



Intro to Judaism Curriculum

OVERVIEW:

Our Introduction to Judaism® online course will give seekers a strong foundation for participation in the Jewish community and to empower them to further explore Judaism. Weekly classes are augmented by Shabbat programs and additional experiential components.

Participants include singles and couples, Jews and those from various faith backgrounds. The LGBTQ-friendly class is also perfect for individuals raising Jewish children, those who never had a Jewish education, individuals who want to explore their Jewish roots or those who want to explore Judaism on an adult-level. This course is open to all, and is perfect for interfaith couples, those raising Jewish children, spiritual seekers, individuals pursuing or considering conversion, and Jews who want a meaningful chance to reconnect with their Judaism as an adult.

Rabbi Heather Miller teaches, and her style is open, interactive, and encouraging of questions. She was raised in an interfaith family, and joyfully engages with folks of all religious backgrounds and questions. Course materials will be provided upon registration.

DATES:

This program will begin on January 22, 2024 at 1pm PT | 4pm ET. We will start January 22 and go Mondays 9 sessions until March 18. We will then pause briefly and pick back up on April 1 for 9 more sessions until June 3 (with a break of no class on Memorial Day, May 27).

Because each class builds on the next and we will develop class connections, please make every effort to attend all sessions. If you can't attend, please email Rabbi Miller in advance.

ACCESS:

All registrants will be emailed the access to zoom credentials the day prior to the class. Please be sure both Rabbi Miller and Molly Flanagan's email address do not go to your junk mail (this can be done by adding them to your address book).

CONTACT:

For questions or reflections about the classes, syllabus, and material, contact: rabbimiller@keepingitsacred.com.

For questions on registration or other technical issues, contact Molly Flanagan at mflanagan@keepingitsacred.com.

GENERAL SUPPORTIVE WEBSITES:

1. [Jewish Women's Archive](#). JWA documents Jewish women's stories, elevates their voices, and inspires them to be agents of change. Extensive resources including an encyclopedia and curricula.
2. [MyJewishLearning.com](#). A trans-denominational website of information about Judaism. Among other terrific content, they host [Jewish&](#), a blog by Be'chol Lashon which gives voice to the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of Jewish identity and experience.
3. [ReformJudaism.org](#). Reform Judaism is a leading voice in the discussion of Jewish life. Find information on Jewish rituals, culture, holidays, and more. This comprehensive website for the Reform Movement of Judaism offers articles videos, how-to's, and blogs on a variety of subjects of Jewish interest. Your first stop for Jewish information online.

TOPICS:

January 22 at 1pm PT:

1. [What is Judaism? Who are the Jewish People?](#)
 - Jewish Ideas (General)
 - Jewish Peoplehood
 - Who Is a Jew?

January 29 at 1pm PT.

2. [People of the Book – Sacred Jewish Texts](#)
 - Overview of Sacred Jewish Texts
 - Bible
 - Midrash
 - Talmud (Mishnah and Gemara)
 - Later Commentary, Codes, and Responsa

February 5 at 1pm PT:

3. [Jewish Prayer and the Synagogue](#)
 - Prayer, *Keva* and *Kavanah*, Structure of *T'filah*
 - Synagogues/Tour of the Sanctuary
 - Torah Scroll
 - Ritual Garb/Prayer Garb: *Kippah*, Tallit and *Tefillin*

- Hebrew
- *Brachot*
- Hazanut and the Music of Prayer

February 12 at 1pm PT:

4. What Do Jews Believe?

- God and Theology
- *B'rit/Covenant*
- Chosenness
- *K'dushah/Holiness*
- Mitzvah/Mitzvot
- Halachah

February 19 at 1pm PT:

5. Creating a Jewish Life and Home

- A Jewish Home
- Mezuzah
- Kashrut, Jewish Food, Cookbooks, Ethical Consumption
- Jewish Values, Ethics, and Practice (General)
- *Derech Eretz, Musar* (Personal Ethics), *Midot* (Character Traits)
- *Tzedakah*
- Social Justice/*Tikkun Olam*/Messianism
- Business Ethics

February 26 at 1pm PT:

6. Marriage, Partnership and More

- Lifecycle (General)
- Marriage and Partnering
- The Wedding Ceremony
- Divorce
- Love, Sex, Dating
- LGBTQIA+ Couples and Families



- Interfaith Couples/Families

March 4 at 1pm PT:

7. Birth, Childhood, and Jewish Education

- General
- *B'rit Milah*, Simchat Bat, Baby Namings
- Fertility
- Surrogacy
- Family Planning, Contraception
- Genetic Testing
- Pregnancy Loss: Stillbirth/Miscarriage/Terminating a Pregnancy
- Adoption and Fostering
- Parenting through a Jewish Lens
- Jewish Education
- Jewish Camping
- *B'nei Mitzvah*
- Confirmation
- “It Takes a Village”—The Role of Community

March 11 at 1pm PT:

8. Illness, Death, and Mourning

- Healing/Illness
- Health and Wellness, including Mental health, Substance Abuse, Addiction & Recovery
- Hospice/Medical Ethics Related to End of Life Care
- Ethical Wills
- Funerals/Rituals/Mourning
- Aging
- Organ and Tissue Donation
- Afterlife

March 28 at 1pm PT:

9. The Jewish Calendar and Shabbat

- The Jewish Calendar (general)
- Rosh Chodesh
- Shabbat
- Film and Television

NO CLASS MARCH 25.

April 1 at 1pm PT:

10. The Yamim Nora-im (High Holidays); The Days of Awe

- General
- Sin and Forgiveness
- Elul and *Selichot*
- Film and Television
- Music

April 8 at 1pm PT:

11. The Three Festivals: Passover (Pesach), Shavuot, Sukkot

- Pesach (Passover)
- Shavuot
- Sukkot/Sh'mini Atzeret/Simchat Torah
- Film and Television
- Texts
- Passover Haggadot

April 15 at 1pm PT:

12. Other Jewish Holidays: Hanukkah, Purim, and "Minor" Holidays

- Hanukkah
- The Hanukkah/Christmas season conversation
- Tu B'Shvat
- Purim



- Tishah B'Av
- Film and Television

April 22 at 1pm PT:

13. From Creation to the Enlightenment (the Jewish historical experience)

- Jewish History

April 29 at 1pm PT:

14. The Shoah (Holocaust), Anti-Semitism, and Jewish Responses to Evil

- Anti-Semitism
- The Shoah (Holocaust)
- Yom HaShoah

May 6 at 1pm PT:

15. Israel and Zionism

- Zionism
- The Modern State of Israel (Politics, Culture, History)
- Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut
- Film and Television
- Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Medinat Yisrael

May 13 at 1pm PT:

16. The North American Jewish Experience; Tapestry of the Jewish People (Understanding Jewish Diversity)

- Reform Judaism and Other Jewish Denominations
- North American Jewish Communities – Demographics, History, Culture
- Jews of Color
- Interfaith Jewish Families
- Global Jewish Communities
- Yiddish
- Ladino



May 20 at 1pm PT:

17. Becoming Part of the Jewish Family and the Jewish People,

- Conversion, and *Shalom Bayit*

NO CLASS MAY 27.

June 3 at 1pm PT:

18. Next Steps -- Becoming Part of the Jewish Community

- Open Discussion
- "What we believe," (URJ)
- "What we do," (URJ)
- (Podcast) "Sarah Hurwitz: From the White House to the Torah," *Can We Talk?* The Jewish Women's Archives' Podcast, Episode 33.