



Intro to Judaism Curriculum

OVERVIEW:

Our Introduction to Judaism® online course will give participants a strong foundation for authentic and empowered engagement in the Jewish community. This 18-session program is the perfect introduction to Jewish living, theology, texts, history, holidays, and rituals.

This course is designed for spiritual seekers, interfaith couples, individuals pursuing or considering conversion, and Jews who want a meaningful chance to reconnect with their Judaism as an adult.

DATES:

Classes will be held Mondays at 1pm PT/4pm ET from January 22 through June 3, with breaks March 25 (Spring Break) and May 27 (Memorial Day).

INSTRUCTOR:

The program is led by Rabbi Heather Miller and her teaching style is interactive and encouraging of questions. She is queer and a member of an interracial, international, interfaith family, and joyfully engages with folks of all backgrounds. Rabbi Heather Miller, known for her open, affirming, and joyful approach.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:

Weekly classes are augmented by Shabbat and holiday programs and additional experiential components all found on the calendar [HERE](#). Come for the program, stay for the community!

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 BiShvat
- 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)

This Union for Reform Judaism-designed program is supported by the National Center to Encourage Judaism that funds programs that welcome people new to Judaism.