

The JEWISH Proclaimer

Summer-Autumn 2009-5769/70

No. 09-02

REACHING OUT IS THE BEST DEFENSE

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RETRENCHING ON OUTREACH ONLY DIGS DEEPER TRENCHES

Yes, times are tougher than they were.

But there are some items you should not cut. Outreach is one of them.

Look at the simple economics: What does it cost you to add a member? What is a member worth to you, over the life of a typical membership?

(Here's how to figure this: Subtract the percentage of your membership that stayed with you from last year from 100. Divide 100 by that answer: If 90% stayed, divide 100 by 10, the answer--10 years is your average membership life. 10 years membership {add in an annual fee increase percentage, subtract what it might cost to service that marginal member} is worth how much to you? Lose 15% a year, life is 6.67; lose 5%, life is 20 years. If you get in more than you spent over that time, you're ahead at the bank.)

If you spend \$3,000 on outreach programs a year, and bring in one new member, think of the return.

If you retrench on this, you're just digging a hole deeper.

There are scads of good people out there who could become Jews, who could become members, if we bestir ourselves, and let them know the door to Judaism is open, and they come in, and can learn good reasons for becoming Jewish—there are benefits all around. All Judaism benefits from there being more Jews. Reach out, touch someone—grow.

NCEJ CAN HELP YOUR SYNAGOGUE GROW

Relatively few synagogues tap the help NCEJ offers, in reaching out to the broad community.

It's not that difficult, if you believe that isolation is not the answer for Judaism's future, your future.

All you need do is hold an educational class for the general community. Don't limit it to interfaith couples, that's only a minute fraction of the potential.

The Taste of Judaism 3-session minicourse is an excellent way to break in.

While that was started by the Reform movement, and is continuing under its auspices, other Jewish organizations offer classes on the same theme.

You don't have to be Reform to reach out.

An Orthodox enclave in the Washington suburbs in Maryland is conducting outreach classes, for instance. Conservative congregations do it, too.

NCEJ provides grants to partly offset your advertising an outreach program in the secular media, for half the media cost of the advertising for a maximum \$1200 grant. You can get two grants a year, for programs begun in distinctly different quarters.

Individual synagogues offering these courses are eligible for a 20% bonus, if they received a grant from us the previous year. That's 60% of the advertising cost, when you repeat.

Requirements are simple—4 points: Send in the completed application. Send us distinctive comments by students on why they registered or their evaluation of the course. Send us a copy of the ad or different ads, and of the specific media billing.

The application form is on page 7 of this issue. It is also on our website, NCEJudaism.org, as are copies of past *Jewish Proclaimers*. If movement headquarters (like URJ Outreach) make the form available; and you use that, that office receives a bonus.

NATIONAL CENTER TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM, a nonprofit foundation, invites synagogues and other Jewish institutions, as a light unto the nations, to reach out to and encourage more to be Jewish. Box 651, Silver Spring, MD 20918. 301-593-2319. Fax 301-593-2249. E-mail: NCEJudaism@verizon.net. Web: www.NCEJudaism.org. This is the SECOND of two issues this year. Editor: Ash Gerecht. (609)

IF YOUR SYNAGOGUE SUCCEEDS IN OUTREACH IT WILL WIN IN MEMBERSHIP AND IN-REACH

You will be helping all Jews by letting others know about Judaism. You will be doing the best you can for your synagogue, to make it more welcome, to increase membership—and bolster returns.

SOLELY INTERFAITH NOW INELIGIBLE

NCEJ will no longer fund advertising that appeals solely to interfaith couples or families. Until now, such ads have received half the regular grants.

Other organizations are attending to this area of outreach, and we applaud them for their good work.

NCEJ considers trolling for interfaith in any general media an unnecessarily narrow pursuit. We encourage you to attract the general community, which will include those interfaith folk interested. If you welcome everybody, you show you have open doors. You're not keeping anyone out who may be wanting to come in, and only needs to know there's a welcoming attitude.

NOTES ON SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Please fill out the application, especially such questions as synagogue membership, number of conversions, AND student comments. The latter is especially valuable in reporting your good work. Incomplete applications will incur delays & follow-ups.

You don't need to repeat comments you've submitted before—we're interested in your new actions, thoughts and plans—but, do complete the application.

From grantees around the U.S.:

MOBILE STAYS THE COURSE

Mobile, AL—Springhill Ave. Temple (R) continues to attract large numbers to its Taste of Judaism 3-session free course.

Attendance was 61, all but 2 not Jewish. Five reported interest in converting.

A special Shabbat service honoring the students drew 60, where usual attendance is about 30. All the liturgy was explained.

Rabbi Donald Kunstadt says, "The reality is it is all done one person at a time and it is a long process."

Among student comments:

-"This has been a great starting-off place in my spiritual journey."

-"Like learning more, and much more comfortable and interested in Judaism."

-"How would I obtain information on joining the Jewish faith?...Have always had an interest." -A 71-year-old single Catholic.

-"I'd like to lead a more meaningful life."

TUCSON'S EMANU-EL IN GREAT TASTE

Tucson—Temple Emanu-El counts them in the hundreds. In its report on 2008-9 Taste courses, with 365 registering—"one for each day of Jewish possibilities," comments coordinator Mila Anderson, she notes:

"We continue to have success with this program. Each year there are more attendees who heard about it from friends, neighbors, coworkers or relatives, and the program's reputation continues to grow."

The temple spent over \$6900 advertising this group of courses. It had 14 conversions in 2008.

It's working on developing a year-long interfaith program with the religious school, incorporating existing approaches such as its monthly Jewish Home and Family class. This covers lifecycle events, holidays, Shabbat and daily rituals.

Of this 2008 group, 257, or 70%, were not Jewish, 13 interested in conversion, 14 exploring their spirituality, 10 with Jewish in-laws or relatives, some through conversion; 10 with nonidentifying Jewish roots or ancestors, 24 who came because they have Jewish friends, 3 non-Jewish clergy.

The 2008 students account for more than half of those in the Basic Judaism class, along with 4 from '07, for 68%. 3 '08 alumni joined the temple.

The temple offers classes in NW, central & E Tucson and in '08 for the first time in Rita Ranch, rapidly growing in SE.

Participants frequently comment how welcomed they are and express deep gratitude there is such a program available..."

"With the rate of intermarriage in Tucson at around 50%, the Taste program is an incredibly valuable tool to help interfaith couples begin to explore Jewish options at their own pace.

"We offer 2 kinds of Jewish foods to sample for each class: challah, kugel, mandlebrot, honey cake, apple cake, chopped liver on rye. The food is home-made and most of it is donated. The response to the food is tremendous."

In addition, the temple tries for media coverage. In '08, a reporter from the 150,000-circ. Daily Star did an article, resulting in a hundred calls. Rabbi Samuel Cohon appeared on a local TV show preceding Good Morning America, with a couple of dozen calls resulting. "My advice is to not be shy about approaching the local media," Anderson says.

The temple's quarterly Simply Shabbat service of outreach draws about 400, instead of the usual 225.

The event is publicized at the U of Arizona Hillel and the Judaic Studies Dept as a service-class.

Among latest student comments:

-One registered because of "a decades-old curiosity and interest regarding Judaism, also a profound dissatisfaction with the religion into which I was born."

"I saw the article in the newspaper and was excited to learn about Judaism from a rabbi!"

"My son will be married to a Jewish beautiful young woman. I want to honor her (both of them actually) getting to know at least a little about Judaism."

school, and to support my boyfriend learning about my heritage. Not only did we both learn a lot, it brought us closer together."

"Ready to go on learning with conversion my ultimate goal."

"I want to be part of this and pass it on, especially to my children, and to other people," says a non-Jewish participant.

"My husband is Jewish and I'm not. I need to take the second course."

"This is the beginnings of my search as to why I have the feelings I do."

"I am not Jewish but my soul loves it."

AMERICAN JEWISH U. RACKS 'EM UP

Los Angeles—The latest report from this leading Conservative practitioner of outreach, for fall 2008 Introduction series, has 358 attending, of whom 255 are not Jewish, with over 2/3 of these interested in conversion.

Among student comments:

"It made me feel so welcomed within the Jewish community. Having the Jews By Choice Shabbat dinners allowed me to meet wonderful people who embraced Judaism too. I made a handful of great friends where we now have Shabbat dinners and attend services. Being single and converting for the love of this religion, these classes, services, Shabbatons helped me to begin new memories of my Jewish life."

"Rabbi Dershowitz is a phenomenal instructor. I really enjoyed being a part of his class. You can tell that when he teaches it's not only as an instructor, but he teaches from his heart. He has a love and passion for teaching."

"I always felt that I could go to Rabbi D any time. I still do!"

"The course is very well rounded and provides a good basic knowledge. I can't think of any improvements."

"Even the efforts of my parents as well as the religious school to convince me of the main core concepts of Catholicism I never felt that any of those ideas fit with me...I was in Israel and I went in front of the wall and I promised myself that no matter how long it takes me but I will become a Jew (even though

Everything you've always wanted to know about Judaism, but were afraid to ask...in only 3 weekly classes!

A TASTE OF JUDAISM...

Explore Jewish Spirituality, Values, and Community with our Rabbis

Deliious Taste of Jewish Food Included

- Classes in Central, Northwest, East Tucson and Rita Ranch
- Free Daytime & Evening Classes
- *Free Childcare provided at Sunday afternoon class

COMING IN OCTOBER
TASTE II: JEWISH IN AMERICA

Listen to "Too Jewish" Radio 690AM, Sundays 9am

call: **292-5816**

Open to all, Jewish or not

No fees or obligation, but space is limited. Preregistration required.

Presented by: **Temple Emanu-El**
225 N. Country Club Rd., Tucson
www.templeemanuelucson.org

Made possible in part by a Compelling Needs Grant from the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona

"I have always wanted to learn about Judaism but was intimidated. I saw this as a chance to learn in a comfortable environment."

"To begin the process of learning more about us. My wife and I are Jewish but we don't practice."

Did this meet expectations?

"I hoped to have my questions answered. It did. I hoped to be satisfied and want to convert. I do. I wanted to be comfortable in that decision. I am."

"To relearn the basics I learned at Hebrew

HAS YOUR SYNAGOGUE OBTAINED A GRANT FROM NCEJ YET? IT'S EASY TO APPLY.

THE SYNAGOGUE THAT WELCOMES NON-JEWS WILL ALSO WELCOME JEWS – AND GROW

in my country-Mexico-it's so known the phrase 'A Jew born, there's no way to make one')

URJ MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL RETURNS

Washington—A light in the window for a light unto the nations: The URJ Mid-Atlantic Council outreach returns to NCEJ grantee ranks after 11 years away. The Council, with 72 member synagogues, puts on consortium-type Introduction series for prospective converts.

For the Fall 2008 twin series, in Northern Virginia and Maryland suburbs, 36 registered. Fees are \$300 single/\$325 couple for the 16-week course.

Says one student: "Just meeting and talking to other people in the same situation was the best part."

Introduction to Judaism Classes

Covering an outline of Jewish history, thought and theology, and an introduction to Jewish holidays and life cycle ceremonies.

Northern Virginia
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8, 2008

NORTHERN VA HEBREW CONG
1441 Wiehle Ave
Reston, VA 20190
Rabbi Henry Weiner, Instructor
MONDAYS • 7:30-9:20 PM

Maryland/ Washington DC
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 4, 2008

TEMPLE EMANUEL
10101 Connecticut Ave
Kensington, MD 20895
Rabbi Paul Tuchman, Instructor
THURSDAYS • 7:30-9:20 PM



For information, please contact Registrar, Introduction to Judaism
Union for Reform Judaism Mid-Atlantic Council
202-232-4242 ext. 18 (voice) 202.483.6550 (fax)
LGoodman@urj.org www.urj.org/mac

KANSAS CITY SEES CONVERSION GROWTH

Overland Park, KS—The Rabbinical Ass'n holds community-wide outreach. Says Pres. Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn, "We're pleased that the conversion program continues to grow, as these classes provide a tremendous benefit to the entire community."

A distinctive element of the program is that it is taught by a rotating group of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox rabbis.

Forty students attend the 2008-9 33-week Introduction program, 24 women and 16 men. Five were married to Jews, and four in relationships with Jews.

Several students reported learning about the class from ads in local papers.

"A large number of the students, including several couples and extended family members, are on a personal journey and religious search based on past experiences," notes administrator Annette Fish.

Students say:

"Being able to hear from all the different Rabbis in the area I think makes the program unique."

"I especially like the fact that we will have a chance to visit all the synagogues and hear from all the different Rabbis. I feel that this is giving me a much broader view of Judaism and a greater appreciation of the culture and traditions."

"My tremendous decision to convert to Judaism is only matched by the FANTASTIC series of conver-

JUDAISM

Community-Wide
Conversion to Judaism Classes

A 33-week course taught by local rabbis for those considering conversion to Judaism.

Classes meet Thursdays • 7-9 p.m.
Beginning August 28th
Orientation August 21st • 7:30-8:30

Call 913-327-4622 or email afprogram@aol.com
for registration materials and information.

SPONSORED BY THE RABBINICAL ASSOCIATION OF GREATER KC
WITH FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE JEWISH HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF GREATER KC

sion classes! ..It would be beneficial to have an evening where we meet and converse with congregants from our chosen congregations to compare our readings with their experiences."

NEW GRANTEE IN E LANSING, MICHIGAN

East Lansing, MI--Cong. Shaary Zedek (R), with 260 members, receives its first NCEJ grant for a Taste of Judaism mini-course attracting 34, of whom 30 were not Jewish. Says Rabbi Amy Bigman, as a result of the 11/08 course, "we received many requests for further study."

Among student comments:

"There were many misconceptions which I had earlier."

"I have a basic understanding of my daughter-in-law's faith. I have a deep love and respect for her & now I see how she was raised."

"It is just fine to be the kind of Jew I am—living

**A TASTE OF JUDAISM:
ARE YOU CURIOUS?**

Whet your appetite in a three-session exploration of Judaism.
Open to the Beginner, Jewish or Not
Free of Charge -- Registration is Required as Space is Limited!

Three classes on Wednesday evenings,
beginning on November 5, 7-9 pm
Congregation Shaarey Zedek
1924 Coolidge Road, East Lansing

Need Information? Want to Register?
Call (517) 351-3570, ext. 2, by October 22

Sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism
William and Lottie Daniel Commission
on Outreach and Synagogue Community

0010513263

in a Midwest small community for over 40 years, I have felt that I forgot what it is like to be Jewish... I never had Jewish training and found the first class unfamiliar to me & was very informative about Holy Scripture & Hebrew terminology.”

URJ MIDWEST COUNCIL COMES BACK, TOO

St. Louis—Here, the return to the NCEJ list is after 8 years. The URJ Midwest Council’s Intro program has an attendance of 25, with “many singles contemplating conversion,” reports Amy Ogle, assistant regional director.

The ad we picture has a nice, fresh look.

**Do you have questions about
Judaism you'd like answered?**

Introduction to Judaism...
An adult learning opportunity starts August 19th

This class is perfect for...

- Anyone interested in learning more about Judaism
- Those on a spiritual journey & thinking of conversion to Judaism
- Interfaith Families
- Parents deciding what faith tradition to raise children

For more details, information & registration costs call 314.997.7566 or visit our website
www.urj.org/mwcc/education/introductionjudaism

REWARDS FROM THE OUTREACH BILLINGS

Billings, MT—Cong. Beth Aaron (R), with 51 member units, finds an ongoing payoff on the Taste course it offered in Nov. 2008. “We’re still reaping

the rewards,” says Coordinator Donna Healy.

Program leader was a past president, Andy Rio, who had taken pararabbinic training in Cincinnati in 2000-1.

Several attendees of the group of 30, all but one not Jewish, had Jewish ancestors or descendants. One’s father was Jewish, though this was not spoken about until after his death. Two with Jewish ancestors seemed interested in joining, but not converting. The group included two pastors and one nun.

While the class was free, several made donations afterward. Students suggested names of friends who were eager to take the class after hearing about it. Waiting list for the next class is about as large as the first one’s registration. All adult ed classes have been opened to non-members, for an \$18/mo. fee.

One volunteer helper commented, “The class is such good PR and generated so much good will, how can we not keep it going?”

Two class members began studying Hebrew in January. Their participation helped make that class a go. “But the biggest benefit is that the class is taught by an intermediate student, a woman disabled by crippling rheumatoid arthritis. She lives in subsidized housing and depends on other congregation members to get rides to temple. Teaching has been her way of giving back to our community and she is tickled by the performance of her students.”

Two Taste participants have “offered to fix goodies to bring to the next session of Taste of Judaism classes,” which began in Feb.

This first Taste class has prompted board discussion on how to welcome new and prospective members. “We now have an updated welcoming letter, Chai in the Big Sky.”

“We always have members from out-of-town who cannot make the Friday night services, so we are experimenting with occasional Saturday morning services.”

The temple is the only synagogue in eastern Montana, an area of about 85,000 sq. miles. Some families attend High Holy Day services from eastern Wyoming, where the closest temple is in Casper, midway across that state.

In Billings a decade ago, a brick was thrown through a Chanukah window, and the general com

**DOES YOUR SYNAGOGUE HAVE A BUDGET
LINE ITEM FOR OUTREACH? IT SHOULD.**

YOUR SYNAGOGUE IS THE FOCUS OF JUDAISM. YOUR SYNAGOGUE IS THE POINT OF DELIVERY

munity responded by putting paper menorahs in their windows.

“Perhaps because of our isolation, there is a great deal of curiosity about the Jewish religion in Montana. When we built our new Temple building in the fall of 2005—the first new synagogue to be built in Montana in more than 50 years—over 600 people toured the building during an open house on a Sunday afternoon.”

The level of knowledge of Judaism is low. “It’s tough to find a grocery store clerk who knows what Matzoh is, or that Chanukah and Hanukkah are the same holiday. There is even more confusion about the difference between Jews and Jesus groups, who are also present sporadically in the area. Within the last year, a Chabad rabbi has also become active in Bozeman, a city 120 miles west of Billings.”

The temple had student rabbis twice monthly from Cincinnati, but last fall could get only a monthly student from Los Angeles. “We have always tried to organize lay services and also to fulfill frequent requests for speakers from local churches and organization, but we have only a limited number of volunteers...”

“At least once each school semester, a religious studies group from one of the local colleges attends services with the congregation. Sometimes the class outnumbers the congregants.”

Student comments:

—“Our soon-to-be daughter-in-law is Jewish and our grandchildren will be raised Jewish. My knowledge of Judaism is very limited, though I have been reading some literature.”

—“Thanks for being patient and listening.”

—“More about the Hebrew Bible. And give us a way to offer some money for your expenses.”

One liked “Bringing the Torah out so that we all could look at it up close; reciting the blessing and then offering a sermon on it.”

—“Good for a sense of community—all of us in Billings. Do it again, please.”

—“I have always had an interest, via literature and culture. Then, in 1994, I discovered my father was Jewish, being born in Europe and coming alone at the age of 11 in 1912.”

MONTICELLO PLAYS THE RIGHT TUNE

Monticello, NY—Temple Sholom (R), with 141 members, and one conversion the previous year, draws 13 to its Introduction program, 7 of whom were not Jewish. Course is free to members, \$100 for non.

NEW BERN ANSWERS THE YEARNING

New Bern, NC—Temple B’nai Sholem, (R), with 75 households, shows what a small congregation can do with outreach. It has held repeated Taste of Judaism classes, and continues attracting students.

The latest, in Fall 2008, draws 21, all but 2 not Jewish. “We had many more non-members, Christians, than in the past,” says adult ed chair Marcia Luhrs. “Class participants were knowledgeable and involved with their churches. A couple had Jewish parents/grandparents but weren’t raised Jewish.”

Follow-ups include Torah Study, Intro, Hebrew, and Shabbat services. “We’re all lay-led—no staff. We do what we can.”

**TASTE OF JUDAISM...
ARE YOU CURIOUS?**

“Whet your appetite”
in a three-session exploration of Jewish
· Spirituality · Values · Community

Wednesdays, 7- 9 p.m.
October 22, 29 and Nov. 5
Temple B’nai Sholem
505 Middle Street, New Bern

This FREE Adult Education course is open to the community.
For more information and to register, contact Marsha Luhrs
at 252-617-5960 or meluhrs@yahoo.com
Pre-registration is appreciated by October 20.

Sponsored by Temple B’nai Sholem and Union for Reform Judaism
www.bnai-sholem.org

“Visitors continuously attend our congregation to learn about Judaism, or just to see what a service is like. Some choose to pursue conversion. One of our members, who is a Para-Rabbinic, is willing to guide them on a path (with the help of a rabbi about 100 miles away!)... (continue on page 8)

NATIONAL CENTER TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM -- APPLICATION, 2008-2009

Box 651, Silver Spring, MD 20918 - 301-593 - 2319 - Fax 301-593-2249 - E-mail: NCEJudaism@verizon.net

We help you inform your broad community all are welcome to learn about Judaism and become Jewish. NCEJ grants, to synagogues, consortia, agencies, regional offices, etc., for 2008-2009 programs, are for a maximum of \$1200 up to one-half the cost of the secular (non-Jewish) media advertising. Individual synagogues may win a **20% bonus** atop a yearly basic grant, if you received an NCEJ grant the year before, for a \$1440 maximum. 2008-2010 URJ Taste recipients, since NCEJ is a co-sponsor, may receive half a regular grant. You may apply for two grants yearly for separate programs in distinctly different quarters. Grants are at NCEJ's sole discretion.

Eligible courses are two types: 1) Introduction to- Taste of- Basic Judaism, or similar classes. 2) Adult Education classes of interest to prospective converts--these ads must state, "Open to All" or "Open to Jews and non-Jews." **Ineligible** are such ads as: Institutional, High Holy Day, Shabbat or Shabbaton, membership, Hebrew, Chanukah, Passover, cooking, dancing, interfaith, or lectures not of help to prospective converts. Aborted programs are ineligible.

Send in your completed applications after your program starts. **Must include** a) demographic information, b) student reactions, c) a copy of the ads (radio/tv, of text) and d) of the specific billing. Incomplete submissions incur delays.

[For course grants, complete Sections (1) & (2); Outreach Shabbat grants, Secs. (1) & (3).]

(1) Organization _____ Cong. membership numbers _____ Date _____
 (___ Reform ___ Conservative ___ Reconstruction ___ Orthodox ___ Mix of: _____ No affiliation _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail: _____

Web? _____ Contact(Rab-Ctr-ExD-Adm-Coord-Pres-Chr) & Title _____

Ads ran in these venues _____

Dates run _____ Size of ads _____ Total print/air cost of ads _____

How many conversions at your synagogue/consortium/institution (specify) last secular\ religious year? _____

PROGRAM BONUSES FOR SYNAGOGUES: Award winners are eligible for a one-time bonus for each new initiative of ongoing out-of-the-ordinary welcoming/convert-encouraging activities, at NCEJ's discretion. Supply details; cursory response doesn't qualify. Examples:

-You welcome attendees at oneg shabbat/kiddush with more than such routines as bima announcements or colored cups; staff & board take part. - Programs integrate interfaith & converts. More than Dec. dilemma-type sessions or monthly interfaith--what others can learn from and copy. -You supply free pamphlets/booklets on becoming Jewish, a rack or table in an open area, pamphlets free to take any time; send us the list, and copies of any you yourself prepared.

(2) **COURSE TITLE** _____ Date held _____ Fee (Members/non) _____

Course length: _____ # Students: _____ (Numbers or %:) Members _____ Nonmembers _____ Jews _____ Non-Jews _____

In interfaith relationship _____ Interested in converting _____ Your comments on class makeup? _____

Student comments on class (report the most interesting on separate sheet; pro forma reply causes delay.)

What follow-up programs & contacts do you have? _____

You have any thoughts/suggestions about classes, alternatives, follow-ups, approaches to increase conversion (separate sheet): _____

(3) OUTREACH SHABBAT (Mainly prospective-member events ineligible.) Add details on a separate sheet.

Title of your event? _____ When held? _____

Attendance: Your estimate of number of members _____ Of nonmembers _____ Usual attendance: _____

Did you include: Explanations _____ Information on classes, or conversion? _____ Have pamphlets available? _____

Describe how you made this different from your usual service _____

Would you hold this service again? _____ When? _____ How would you change it? _____

Any advice to other synagogues planning to do this? _____

