

The JEWISH Proclaimer

Spring-Summer 2006 – 5766

No. 06-01

SPRING GIVES HOPE OF DOING BETTER

| | |
|--|---|
| How helping others helps ourselves. | 1 |
| More inviting of intermarrieds to convert—yea! | 1 |
| Orthodox group sets out to invite interweds, too. | 2 |
| <i>Outreach activity around the continent:</i> | |
| Mobile teaches flexibility in outreach. | 2 |
| Aptos hosts interfaith family dinner. | 2 |
| U of Judaism scores high for Conservatives. | 2 |
| Sheer numbers for Shir Hadash, Los Gatos | 3 |
| Santa Monica—big results for small numbers. | 3 |
| Bridgeport wins a 2 nd NCEJ grant for 05. | 3 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Manchester is Learning to be Jewish. | 3 |
| Hartford Reform consorts with Intro class. | 3 |
| Plantation does 15 for 19. | 4 |
| Skokie street-banners a conversion class. | 4 |
| KC MO/KS doesn't straddle the issue. | 4 |
| Monroe, LA, returns to NCEJ ranks. | 5 |
| NE URJ keeps teeming with Taste. | 5 |
| W Bloomfield is a new entrant. | 6 |
| Poughkeepsie finds advertising helps pull. | 6 |
| Charlotte Taste is evenly split. | 6 |
| Application for NCEJ grants. | 7 |
| Greensboro runs 6-week 101 course. | 8 |
| Houston info center runs a Taste class. | 8 |

WHEN WE HELP OTHERS BECOME JEWS, WE HELP OURSELVES REMAIN JEWISH

We are not putting ourselves out when we reach out to let others know they can become Jewish.

It is not an imposition on Jews to welcome others.

We should be inviting others to learn about Judaism, and to judge for themselves whether they want to become Jewish, because we think the Jewish approach is the best religious framework there is. And we should have no qualms about thinking so—and saying so, certainly within our own congregations.

There are so many benefits to reaching out.

When we reach out, we sharpen our own congregants' sense of why one should be—and remain—Jewish in the first place.

When we reach out, we show unaffiliated Jews, too, that we think enough of our beliefs to welcome others to share—we strengthen their sense of connection and, who knows, some might reaffiliate, and others not drop out altogether.

When we reach out, we bolster the ranks of Jewish synagogue members, in numbers and potential and—income.

When we reach out, we help make the Jewish community a more affirmative, positive, and stronger influence in our communities.

Welcome: Do you belong to a synagogue that you would recommend? If the answer is no, there's the first, essential line of action—to make our synagogues places of welcome and religious learning for both non-Jews and Jews. (If your rabbi isn't outgoing, your members might be.)

If our synagogues are welcoming, and teaching, we can invite others to come in, and learn, and decide for themselves, just as Jews decide for themselves, today especially, whether or not to belong.

The question is, not what's due the synagogue, but what does it offer? How do its members benefit?

NCEJ APPLAUDS REFORM, CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT WELCOMING INTERMARRIEDS

With the National Center to Encourage Judaism in its twelfth year of grants for advertising Introduction to Judaism-type courses at synagogues, it welcomes the decisions of both the Reform and Conservative movements to place more emphasis on inviting intermarried non-Jews to become Jewish.

At the same time, NCEJ applauds efforts within the Orthodox movement also to encourage conversion among intermarrieds. (See story below.)

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 all 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 FIRST of TWO Proclaimers in 2006. Editor: Ash Gerecht.

With those decisions in place and mainstreaming, NCEJ itself continues to emphasize outreach efforts aimed at the entire community and to encourage more individual synagogues to engage in outreach to their localities.

NCEJ grants in 2006 continue at up to half your advertising expenditures for outreach to the general community for a maximum of \$1,000. Individual synagogues may also obtain bonuses for out-of-the-ordinary programs to further converts' education and integration, and for making literature readily, openly available, and a 20% bonus on the basic grant for having received one from us the previous year.

Local sponsors of programs advertised solely as interfaith, rather than to all, may receive half the regular grants, without the bonus features.

For applications, see page 7 of this *Jewish Proclaimer*, or download one from our website, NCEJudaism.org. You can also see back issues of the newsletter there.

National movement headquarters will receive a bonus if you use an NCEJ application form it supplies.

Grants this year are for programs advertised in 2005 and 2006. Our grants window is open year-round. All you need do is complete the application—after having the program (send us students' comments, too, if you have them), and include a copy of the ads and of the specific billing for the ads in secular (non-Jewish) media.

ETERNAL JEWISH FAMILY—ORTHODOX—SEEKS TO CONVERT INTERMARRIEDS

Monsey, NY—A foundation branch is spreading programs to convert intermarrieds to Orthodox Judaism across the United States.

It has established *beit din* in at least 7 areas, to help carry out its work.

The Eternal Jewish Family, from Monsey, NY, held a conference in Florida in April on Universally Accepted Conversions in Intermarriage, with 170 rabbis reported attending. EJJ has set up 7 rabbinical courts in the U.S., is planning more, to smooth and standardize the conversion process.

Rabbi Leib Tropper, co-founder, said in April it's handled over 70 conversions since its founding last year, has 130 in process, and gets 6 applications a week from its website.

Sponsor is the Lillian Jean Kaplan Jewish Pride through Education Project.

OUTREACH ACTIVITY IN THE U.S.

SPRINGHILL GETS REPEAT BONUS

Mobile, AL—Springhill Ave. Temple (R) wins a 20% bonus in its Taste of Judaism advertising grant, for having won a grant the previous year as well.

It draws 40 people, all but 2 not Jewish, to its 3-class minicourse, with 3 interested in converting.

All are invited to a Taste Shabbat, and to audit Rabbi Donald Kunstadt's class on Judaism at Springhill College.

One student, "young, liberal and gay," says, "I appreciate the Reform Union making such classes a possibility, and I would like so much to be able to continue study, to know more, and to be a part of the Reform Jewish community."

Another: "I am definitely interested in taking more advanced and intense courses in Judaism."

A woman plans on "pursuing further life-altering experience taking my time making decision considering conversion, seeking answers to life's questions, why I am here, what is God's purpose for me, what is the meaning of life."

APTOS HAS INTERFAITH FAMILY DINNER

Aptos, CA—Temple Beth El (R) holds an interfaith family dinner attended by over a hundred, in contrast to a regular Friday night attendance of 30. It included information on conversion classes, and had pamphlets available.

It plans to hold the event again this December. Its advice to others: Make sure you have money in your budget for outreach.

U OF JUDAISM KEEPS SCORING HIGH

Los Angeles—University of Judaism keeps on racking high totals in its ongoing series of Introduction programs for the area's Conservative congregations. Tuition for the 18-week 63-hour course is now \$308 for one, \$479 a couple, plus \$18 registration. Attendance report is 400, 2/3 not Jewish.

"The number of students enrolling in the outlying areas of Los Angeles has grown which we feel is directly related to the grant money we receive," it says.

Among student comments:

A woman who had attended temple once a year on the high holidays says, "It was only through my husband's conversion class that I began to really learn about Judaism."

Another tells Rabbi Neal Weinberg, "You made my journey to Judaism so meaningful and complete."

GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR JEWISH GROWTH IS AMONG NON-JEWS—OPEN YOUR DOORS

SHIR HADASH WINS ANOTHER GRANT

Los Gatos, CA—Cong. Shir Hadash (R) wins another grant from NCEJ, for its Introduction program. This 7 ½-month course attracts 34 students, 3/5 not Jewish. Some had “Jewish ancestry in their distant past.” Fee was \$150/members, \$175 non.

The 569-family congregation reports 4 conversions in the preceding year.

It also advertises its interfaith group, which has 10 couples, ¾ not Jewish, with a nominal \$15 fee.

SANTA MONICA INTRO GOES CHAI

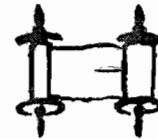
Santa Monica, CA—Beth Shir Sholom (R) attracts 15 to its 18-week Introduction program, 13 of them not Jewish, with ¾ interested in converting. Fee is \$150 members, \$225 non. The 278-member congregation had 6 conversions in the past year.

An information table has pamphlets from URJ and Jewish Lights Publishing on interfaith, conversion, special needs and other topics.

The congregation distributes a 4”x6” fridge magnet detailing its family education year’s calendar.

Learning to be Jewish

A Challenging and Inspirational Exploration of Judaism



Sponsored by the Connecticut Valley Rabbinical Assembly
Evening Classes beginning Thursday, October 27, 2005

Temple Beth Sholom
400 East Middle Turnpike, Manchester, CT

For further information, call Rabbi Richard Plavin at
860.643.9563 ext. 101, or email riplavin@sbcglobal.net

a taste of JUDAISM ...Are you curious?

Three weekly sessions on Jewish
SPIRITUALITY, VALUES, & COMMUNITY

Thursday eves, beginning September 15

Facilitator: Rabbi Fred Greene
Open to Jews & non-Jews

Seating is limited. Call to register: 336-1858

Congregation B'nai Israel
2710 Park Ave., Bridgeport
www.congregationbnaiisrael.org

בני ישראל

*Co-sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism, William & Lottie
Daniel Commission on Outreach and Synagogue Community*

MANCHESTER'S LEARNING TO BE JEWISH

Manchester, CT—Temple Beth Sholom (C) gets 9 students attending its 20-week Learning to be Jewish program; of these, 8 are not Jewish. Fee is \$160. There were 4 conversions in the preceding year.

Some attend because of impending marriages. Some are seeking “a meaningful faith,” Rabbi Richard Plavin notes.

HARTFORD CONSORTIUM HOLDS INTRO

West Hartford, CT—The Reform Rabbis of Greater Hartford hold an 18-week Introduction course attended by 32, 2/3 of them not Jewish. Fee is \$175 single, \$200 couple.

The consortium represents 2500 members in the area. It reports 25 conversions in the previous year.

An outreach Shabbat this January was titled, “Your God, My God, Oh God! The May Ways Jews Believe in God,” with a total attendance of 300, about 50% higher than usual. The event, expected to be held again this summer, will include more participants, it's hoped.

Advice to others: Publicize this well in advance, and make it inclusive.

All interfaith outreach events are featured on the group's website.

For the first time, the consortium sponsored the free Taste sessions last September, attended by 37.

BRIDGEPORT TEMPLE HITS '05 DOUBLE

Bridgeport, CT—Cong. B'nai Israel (R) wins its second NCEJ grant for 2005, with a Taste of Judaism minicourse attended by 10, half of them not Jewish.

The 850-member temple is in the Synaplex program, with various activities to attract participants.

Greeters approach all who enter, new or old. The oneg, as we've mentioned in the past, is wine and cheese before services, at 5:30, with services at 6. Candles are lit, there, before the group walks into the sanctuary.

Shabbat morning service starts with an 8 a.m. minyan attended by 50-60, followed by a community breakfast. (An 11 a.m. service is usually bar mitzvah.)

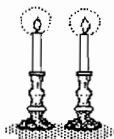
The Reform Rabbis of Greater Hartford Present:

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

A survey course on Jewish Life

MONDAY EVENINGS from 7:45 to 10:00 PM
OCTOBER 31, 2005 to MARCH 27, 2006

Come discover the Jewish holidays
Learn about the Jewish way of life
Explore its texts, traditions and language
ALL ARE WELCOME!



The class will be held at
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL
701 Farmington Ave.
Hartford, CT 06119

TUITION:
\$175 per individual or \$200 for couples

REGISTRATION: Please call Abby Amayou at (860) 233-8215
Or email amayou@cbict.org
for more information or to register

CURIOUS ABOUT JUDAISM?

Treat yourself to this popular course, open to everyone.

Taught by Rabbi Sheldon J. Harr and

by Rabbi Daniel N. Treiser, it covers everything from
Jewish law to legend, from history to Hebrew.

TEMPLE

KOL AMI ★ EMANU-EL

8200 Peters Road • Plantation

www.Kolami-emanuel.com



954-472-1988

Call today to register!

Classes begin August 17th.



PLANTATION KEEPS REAPING CLASSES

Plantation, FL—Temple Kol Ami (R) keeps winning NCEJ awards for its outreach programs. Its 15-week Introduction course draws 19 people, half of them not Jewish. The 1050-member congregation had 6 conversions in the previous year, it reports.

Says Senior Rabbi Sheldon J. Haar, "I believe that by offering such programs, we have made an impact on our community, as well as on individual lives." A new temple board member, and outreach committee chair, came to one of the Introduction classes a few years ago, "and is now a loyal, committed and dedicated Jew."

Kol Ami held an outreach service last Sept. Its usual Friday night attendance is 600+, it reports. It plans better advertising to the community for the one this Sept. The rabbi's advice to others: "Just do it and advertise it. It will reach some and open doors."

CONVERSION CLASSES BEGIN HERE SOON

CALL 847-675-4141

www.converttojudaism.net

SKOKIE SYNAGOGUE ENTERS NCEJ RANKS

Skokie, IL—Ezra-Habonim, Niles Township Jewish Cong., holds a Fundamentals of Judaism course, and enters NCEJ grantee ranks with an across-the-street 4x8 ft. banner advertising the program.

It says, simply: Conversion Classes Begin Here.

The 350-member congregation is a mix of Reconstruction and Orthodox. Fee for the 16-week course, offered twice yearly, was \$200 plus \$100 for books. Of the 40 attending, 30 were not Jewish.

CHICAGO AREA CENTER FOR CONVERSION TO JUDAISM

Considering conversion?

Intermarried or interdating?

Just want to know?

Treat yourself to this popular course, open to everyone. It covers the fundamentals of Judaism: history, Sacred texts, ritual items and times, kashrut, life-cycle, prayer and more.

Classes begin again November 1. Ongoing enrollment possible. Renown Jewish teacher, Gail Ginsburg directs the program at

Ezra-Habonim, the Niles Township Jewish Congregation

4500 Dempster St. Skokie call at 847-675-4141 or

Email chntedu@yahoo.com to register or inquire.
www.converttojudaism.net for course details

KC MO/KS STAYS COMMUNITY-WIDE

Overland Park, KS—Rabbinical Assn of Greater Kansas City (which straddles MO & KS) wins a repeat NCEJ grant for its Community-Wide Conversion to Judaism program.

Of the 29 students attending the 36-week course, all were not Jewish (20 women, 9 men), and considering conversion. Sixteen of the class are already married to Jews, while the others are in relationships with Jews.

**GET YOUR JCCs, YOUR UJFs, YOUR JFSs TO DO
OUTREACH—THEY'LL HELP THE COMMUNITY**

SHARE ROMANCE AND HISTORY OF JUDAISM WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS—OPEN YOUR DOORS

Fee is \$125 for textbooks. The Assn is composed of Reform, Conservative and Modern Orthodox.

There's a 30-minute weekly Hebrew component to the class. Students are exposed to all the rabbis in the group. (One congregation continues its own Intro class.)

After the course, monthly New Beginnings classes focus on holiday workshops and support. These are open to anyone who has completed conversion. Topics this year have included mysticism, rabbinic literature, observance of holidays with one's non-Jewish family, and High Holy Day prayers and texts.

Each student must have a sponsor and meet that rabbi's conversion requirements. The sponsor meets regularly with the student.

Among comments:

"I read about the class in the KC Star, I think. My husband pulled the advertisement out of the paper and left it for me, knowing I had an interest in pursuing conversion."

"The class is wonderful. The things I learn in it, along with being part of a group of people similarly interested and excited about Judaism reaffirms my decision to accept the covenant that Judaism entered into with God."

"The class is excellent! Thought provoking! Inspiring! I learned about it from a friend who had read about it in the Kansas City Star. And with the help of my friends/teachers/tutors I am learning Hebrew, which isn't bad for a 68-year-old want-to-be Jewish lady."

"It pains me to say I did not see the ad in The Star. But I did search The Star's Web site archives to find out more about the class."

Says the Assn president, Rabbi Alan Cooper: "We are fully confident this program will continue to grow and provide a tremendous benefit to our entire community."

MONROE RETURNS AFTER A DECADE

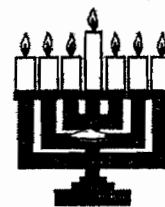
Monroe, LA—Cong. B'nai Israel (R) returns to NCEJ after almost a decade—its previous grant was in 1997. The new one is for a 4-session Taste program that attracted 30 people, ¾ not Jewish, with 4 interested in converting.

A TASTE OF JUDAISM.

For those who want to know more about contemporary Judaism

Sponsored By

Congregation B'nai Israel
2400 Orell Place, Monroe

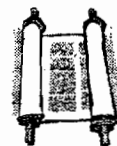


FREE TO THE PUBLIC

Four different sessions

JANUARY 21 AND 28, FEBRUARY 4 and 11

For further information and to register,
please call 387-0730



Each month the 89-member congregation holds a "Jewish Inquiries" study.

URJ BLOWS UP ONGOING NOR'EASTER

Needham, MA—From Aug. to Nov. last year, the Northeast region of Union for Reform Judaism offered 6 Taste of Judaism minicourses, with over 120 registering.

One example: 22 registered for classes at the Hillel House, with ads in the Boston U student paper and local papers. Age range was 18-36, religious range Jewish-Russian Orthodox, Catholic, Buddhist, with 5 interfaith couples.

Among comments:

An 18-year-old Catholic: "I feel much more capable of making an informed decision about conversion."

A man, 35, of no faith, engaged to a Jewish woman: "I fear change and lack faith in my life and want to feel a part of something greater than me and to live by ways I can believe in."

About 60% of participants contacted the office either by phone or e-mail after seeing the newspaper ads, says Joyce Schwartz, the outreach coordinator.

Many visited the new regional website after seeing its address in the ads.

One said: "I have been considering conversion for 5 years and now believe I am ready to make the first step. I saw your ad in today's Metro and I'm so glad it was there!...Making the decision was not the hard part since I have self-identified as a non-Christian for so many years. The hard part is knowing whom to contact to get started..."

In this second half of the program year the region has scheduled more Taste classes. "With your continued support, we will reach our goal of enrolling close to 300 individuals during this program year."

Ms Schwartz speaks of the value of Taste as "a low-threshold gateway to Judaism" leading to the "awakening of Jewish souls."

W BLOOMFIELD JOINS NCEJ GRANTEES

West Bloomfield, MI—Temple Israel (R) holds an 11-week Introduction course attended by 16, half of them not Jewish. Fee is \$130 single, \$150 couple. The 3200-member congregation had over 15 conversions in the past year, it reports.

It's produced its own pamphlet, Outreach at Temple Israel, which it gives to those preparing for an interfaith marriage as well as those considering conversion, which outlines its various programs—a Taste class in early spring, a Gesharim (bridges) group for those converting, a New Beginnings discussion group following the Intro course, and an interfaith couples discussion group.

"Jewish Personal Trainers" are volunteers who help families include new Jewish traditions in their homes. Clergy selects mentors to help newcomers through a Jewish year. Shabbat Solos is a group that sits together at Kabbalat Shabbat Friday night services.

Among student comments:

"I really enjoy the Intro to Judaism class. For the first time in my life, I've found a religious setting where I feel comfortable. I was raised Catholic, but never felt 'at home' in the church. Here, I feel like I am learning beliefs and practices that make sense to me on so many levels."

"This class is helping us prepare for our wedding. We haven't resolved all of our issues, but we are

talking about them."

Says program coordinator Tracie Goldman (248-661-5700), "We hope...we can share our Outreach ideas and programs with other congregations across the country."

**Better than shopping
Better than tennis
Better than sleeping in**

**OPEN
TO ALL!
FREE OF
charge!**

Introduction to Judaism

Explore the roots of the world's oldest and most dynamic religion. Gain insight into the formation of the Hebrew language, path and by-ways of the Jewish people's connection with the Land of Israel, history, and customs. Intended for those with little background but great interest in the Jewish faith.

Tuesdays at 7:30pm

November 1 - December 6, 2005

Temple Beth-El

118 Grand Ave • Poughkeepsie

To Register Call: 454-0570 or email Tbelpgm@hvcbiz.rr.com

POUGHKEEPSIE HOLDS 5-CLASS INTRO

Poughkeepsie, NY—Temple Beth-El (C) runs a free 5-session Introduction course for 12 students, half of them not Jewish. The 535-member congregation had 4 conversions in the previous year.

With advertising, Beth-El "had a significant increase in participation from outside the Temple membership."

CHARLOTTE SPLITS TASTE ATTENDANCE

Charlotte, NC—Temple Beth El (R), which won an NCEJ grant last year, returns with a Taste course attended by 22, evenly split between Jews and non. Five were interested in converting. The 1100-member congregation had 11 conversions in the preceding year.

Beth El is considering changing the 7-9 p.m. hours for the class: "Some find that too late. In light of those comments (and we do have older people who would like to take the classes) we are going to offer a daytime option as well as evening this summer on a trial basis," says Stephanie DiPaolo, outreach coordinator.

(continue on page 8)

**MORE FRIENDLY JEWS ARE IN SYNAGOGUE
THE MORE FRIENDLY SYNAGOGUES ARE**

NATIONAL CENTER TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM -- APPLICATION, 2006-2005
Box 651, Silver Spring, MD 20918 - 301-593 - 2319 - Fax 301-593-2249 - E-mail: NCEJudaism@verizon.net

NCEJ grants, for year 2005-2006 programs, are for a maximum of \$1000 up to one-half the cost of the secular (non-Jewish) press or media advertising. Individual synagogue grantees may win a **20% bonus** atop the basic grant, if you received an NCEJ ad grant the previous year, for a \$1200 maximum. . Programs must be open to all; local sponsors of those limited to interfaith are eligible for half the regular grant, without bonuses. We help you let your broad community know people are welcome to obtain information about Judaism.

Eligible courses are of two types: 1) Introduction to Judaism, Taste of Judaism, 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, or lectures not of interest or help to prospective converts. Aborted programs are ineligible.

Send in your completed applications after your program starts. **Include demographic information and class reaction** as requested; a copy of the ads (for radio/tv, of the text) and of the specific billing. We welcome your additional comments. You are eligible for two grants yearly for separate programs in different quarters. Grants are at NCEJ's sole discretion.

(For Outreach Shabbat grants, fill in Sections 1 & 3; for course grants, fill in Sections 1 & 2.)

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

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail: _____
 Web? _____ Contact person _____ Role _____

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 2 bonuses of \$100 each for these ongoing out-of-the-ordinary activities, at NCEJ's discretion. Supply detailed documentation; cursory response doesn't qualify.

1) _____ You actively welcome attendees at oneg shabbat/kiddush with more than such routine as bima announcements or colored cups; both rabbi & board take continuing initiative. _____ You operate programs to further integrate interfaith & converts. More than Dec. dilemma-type sessions or monthly interfaith. What others can learn from and copy. Details, please.

2) _____ You supply numerous free pamphlets/booklets on becoming Jewish. Send us the list, and copies of any you yourself have prepared. You must have a rack or table in an open area, with pamphlets free for the taking any time. Details necessary.

(2) **COURSE TITLE** _____ 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 (especially welcomed; use separate sheet):

What follow-up programs & contacts do you have in place?

Your thoughts/suggestions in general about classes, alternatives, follow-ups 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? _____

What advice would you give other synagogues planning such an event? _____

A Keruv class of 34, for those on the road to conversion, meets every Sunday morning. People enter this after the Taste-Intro courses. There's a 12-month curriculum. Conversion usually takes about 18 months.

Ms DiPaolo has prepared workbooks the rabbis use. Students must complete a take-home exam before they go before the Beit Din.

Beth El also has a MOJO class—Making Our Judaism Official, currently with 8 students. Also a 12-month curriculum, classes are monthly, for people who have led a Jewish life and raised Jewish children in a Jewish home. Class focuses on theology, history, and philosophy, Mitzvot, death, and after-life.

During Outreach Shabbat a special program honors the non-Jewish spouse.

Ms DiPaolo (704-944-6838) has created 2 brochures—one, "Have You Ever Thought about being Jewish?" outlining steps and answering some questions; and "Through the Water," explaining a touring play on conversion which could be an outreach tool for other congregations. The play, by Stan Peal, takes the stories of 12 Jews-by-choice, and weaves them into 6 characters. Production costs are \$1000 with lighting and technical support, or \$700 without.

GREENSBORO FINDS JUDAISM 101 A HIT

Greensboro, NC—Beth David Synagogue (C) runs a free 6-week Judaism 101 course that attracts 65 people, all but 9 not Jewish. The 450-member congregation had 5 conversions in the past year.

The synagogue this past year established a Keruv committee, for, as Rabbi Eliezer Havivi says, "bringing close to our people those who are Jewish but have drifted away, and of welcoming those who are not Jewish, but who are part of Jewish families."

Rabbi Susan Tendler also teaches a 6-week class that mostly attracts converts or those in process, and goes on from one cycle to another, on such subjects as prayer, lights, life cycles. She's also begun a formal "conversion mentor" matchup.

HOUSTON INFO CENTER HAS TASTE CYCLE

Houston—Jewish Information Center here (The Center for Spiritual, Cultural and Educational Outreach) holds a free 4-session Taste of Judaism limited to 20 people 4 times a year.

These are mostly non-Jewish—90% so, at one class. Says Rabbi Howard Siegel, the director, "A certain percentage come with an interest in pursuing Judaism, while the majority are church-going Christians interested in learning about Judaism.

"At least 30% of the participants continue in our 17-session Basic Judaism course that fulfills the educational requirements for conversion."

BOOK: TORAH EXPLAINED TO CHRISTIANS

Rabbi David J. Zucker has published *The Torah: An Introduction for Christians and Jews* (Paulist Press, 230pp, paperback, \$18.95.)

From a Jewish perspective the book links the Torah to the Christian Testament. Discussions include an historical overview of the Biblical period, and the Bible in Jewish and Christian life.

***The Jewish Proclaimer* Sent to U.S. Synagogues**

This issue of *The Jewish Proclaimer* is sent to 3400 synagogues and institutions in the U.S. and some in Canada.

Individuals seeking copies may view them freely on line at our website, or may get print subscriptions for a year with donations to NCEJ.

**NATIONAL CENTER
TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM
Box 651
Silver Spring, MD 20918**

Spring-Summer 2006 – 5766 No. 06 - 01

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
SOUTHERN, MD.
PERMIT NO.

**What Can Benefit Others
Can Benefit Ourselves—
Why It's a Mitzvah All-around
To Invite the World
To Learn about Judaism**

