

The JEWISH Proclaimer

PROCLAIM JUDAISM THROUGHOUT THE LAND

Winter-Spring 5774-2013/4

No. 13-2

JEWISH EVOLUTION, ON ITS OWN TERMS

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The Jewish Proclaimer is mailed to over 3000 synagogues and grantees, mostly in the United States.

MORE JEWS? YOU'LL FIND THEM RIGHT IN YOUR OWN FRONT YARD

And they will have a religious connection—the additions will likely understand the religious basis of Judaism, better than a lot who consider a bagel the perimeter of being Jewish—because they will emerge from some period of study, which many born-Jews have not had because they never belonged to a synagogue, or they went to rote Haeders or dancing/cooking Sunday schools.

What is central to Judaism is—Judaism.

For all the billions spent on free trips to Israel, good and remarkable as that may be, or tikkun olam and social justice goals, good and heartwarming as that may be, nothing can replace the core—the belief in the Jewish framework of wrestling with existence, the belief that the belief is most important, not to be forsworn or blurred or intermingled.

Where are these new Jews, to replace the drifters and bolster the continuing? Right in your own front yard. People who are not satisfied with the existing majority mutants, and want a better and more basic answer to the questions of being here, people who would be heartened by knowing the answers themselves are struggles, not cotton candy wishfulness.

People who can be invited to learn about Judaism, and freely choose to be Jewish.

You can do it, you can find them. We can help.

WHAT'S MISSING IN JEWISH EVOLUTION

What's missing is outreach.

In an open marketplace, where Judaism is being chipped away by competitive faiths, including no-faith, for Judaism not to be contesting is to be forfeiting the match.

To say that when all recognize the Jewish concept of

God, God will be one and God's name will be one, but then not to do anything about it, is passivity, hibernation, insularity, shtetl-ness, but definitely not being a partner in creating the evolving world that Judaism has lived into.

Do we shrink this radical concept of God that Jews universalized as a particular, or do we expand it? All the shtreimels in the world will not cap our faith so much as welcoming people into the mishkan, the big Jewish world of sanctity.

So why don't more synagogues heartedly, positively welcome people? Why don't we let our local worlds know Judaism has open doors? Welcoming people is loving God, a mitzvah and a blessing.

Allow the other, who is a thou like to God, to learn about Judaism, to ask questions, and to make up one's own mind after knowledge about joining. This is the prospect for Jews and non-Jews alike.

Is Judaism about increasing restrictions or about searching how to apply its radical, universal concept of faith, presence, action, and community to the benefit of all?

We let insularity triumph and Judaism (and the land Israel, too) shrink when the authoritarians and exclusivists flourish and inclusiveness lacks a determined faction.

If, after the surveys and reports of apathy and loss, we do not act—then when?

The National Center to Encourage Judaism can help you, as it has been offering for two decades, now.

If your synagogue, JCC, UJF, Jewish Family Service, consortium, or other Jewish organization, offers and advertises an Introduction to Judaism-type course, in secular

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.
1109 Ruppert Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1020. 301-593-2319. E-mail: NCEJudaism@verizon.net.
Web: www.NCEJudaism.org. This is the 2nd of two issues for 2013. (L13) Editor: Ash Gerecht

non-Jewish media, we can help you pay for that outreach.

See the application form on page 7 of this issue, and additional reports on others' outreach, on our website, NCEJudaism.org.

WHERE JEWS ARE BESTIRRING THEMSELVES:


GRAND RAPIDS--SPIRIT NOT SIZE FLOWS

Grand Rapids—Cong. Ahavas Israel (C), an outreach regular, holds a 16-week 2012 Intro class for 9 students, 7 of them not Jewish, only 1 or 2 "serious and committed Christians. Generally, I have more—most of the class this time around are spiritual searchers," says Rabbi David Krishef. The 135-member synagogue witnessed the conversion of 2 families—8 individuals—in 2011.

The 2013 \$75 18-week course had 4 students.

The rabbi has had a Torah study group at a local bookstore for 13 years, he told us in Feb. 2013, and a second at joint religious school at a Reform congregation on Sundays; a Jewish mysticism-Zohar group with 6 participating; a mussar group half-Jews half-non; and an Art group.

Rabbi Krishef answers questions regularly on the synagogue's website, which has a searchable database with over 1000 questions/answers on Judaism. AhavasIsraelGR.org.



INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

Explore 3500 years of Tradition in the Hebrew Bible and Beyond

Beginning January 9, 2012

Congregation Ahavas Israel
2727 Michigan St., N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Call 616-949-2840 or see AhavasIsraelGR.org under "Adult Education" for more information and additional courses.



LAS VEGAS ATTRACTS TASTE STUDENTS

Henderson, NV—Cong. Ner Tamid has 65 attending its 15th yearly Taste course, in Spring 2012, all nonmembers, 70% not Jewish, 20% considering conversion. But in Spring 2013 it almost doubled, to 113 students, ¾ not Jewish. The 680-member synagogue had 15 conversions in 2011 and again in 2012.

It follows up with a summer Intro program that leads into a fall conversion class, says the new program director, Beth Bowman.

Advertising was a repeated column by 5 inch ad in the Review-Journal, totaling \$2800.

Comments include:

—"I have always been interested in the religion practiced by maternal grandmother's side..."



—"I wanted to convert since I was in my 20s."

—"Interested in hearing about and getting acquainted with my brother and sister's faith since I am of the Christian faith."

—"My interest in converting and becoming Jewish since 2006."

—"I feel welcomed here and I believe these teaching and

Are you Curious?

Get a Modern Reform Jewish Perspective on Jewish Life.

A Taste of Judaism

Open to Beginners, Jewish or Not-

- Basic Philosophy of Judaism
- Meanings of Jewish Holidays and customs
- Understanding of Jewish community and organizations

3 Class Series
7:00 - 9:00 pm Mondays
April 23
April 30
May 7.

FREE - space is limited.
Please register at
702-632-2288

Sponsored by Bradley, Rebecca & Elizabeth Altschuler Scholarship Fund

beliefs resolve a lot of questions and problems I have had with Christianity."

WESTCHESTER INTRO DRAWS MOSTLY JEWS

White Plains, NY--Westchester Adult Jewish Education, part of the county's Jewish Council, draws 76 to its 5-location 18-week Introduction program ending in March '13, of whom 64 were Jewish.

It advertised in both the local paper and the online AOL-Patch. A quiz of students indicated the latter source brought in few if any.

Ad had a catchy headline: With 5,700 years of experience to draw from, these folks teach a really good class.

Director Nina Lubin explains the attendance: About 150,000 Jews live in Westchester County, but only 30,000 are affiliated with a synagogue. The class was an accessible,

With 5,700 years of experience to draw from, these folks teach a really good class!



Introduction to Judaism

- 18 session course at FIVE convenient Westchester locations
- taught by dynamic rabbis and cantors from all over Westchester
- for Jews, non-Jews, prospective Jews, folks related to Jews...A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT ...COME LEARN WITH US

Each location will offer the same curriculum and schedule of topics.
Nominal tuition varies by location - call the number below for details!

Presented by
The Westchester Board of Rabbis

In collaboration with
Westchester Adult Jewish Education (WAJE) and The Westchester Jewish Council

Yorktown Heights	Pleasantville	Tarrytown	Harrison	Scarsdale
Yorktown Jewish Center 2958 Clarendon Road	Rosenthal JCC 600 Bear River Road	JCC on the Hudson 371 South Broadway	Maxx Properties 600 Manorville Avenue	JCC of Mid-Westchester 599 Wilmet Road
Thursdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Thursdays	Thursdays
7:00pm-9:15pm	7:30pm-9:00pm	7:30pm-9:30pm	7:30pm-9:30pm	7:30pm-9:30pm
Begins: October 18 th	Begins: October 10 th	Begins: October 25 th	Begins: October 18 th	Begins: October 18 th

To register or for further information, contact WAJE Director Nina Lubin waje@wajecouncil.org 914-328-7001



low-cost, non-threatening way to take a step into the community. Some enrollees were grandparents with intermarried children, wanting information to pass along. The 40 clergy who took part encouraged their beginner congregants to enroll.

Students seemed to like having different clergy teaching the classes every week.

One student: "Having just found out I'm of Jewish heritage 3 years ago, I feel like I've learned not just about Judaism, but about my people and even about myself."

CHARLOTTE; GRAND SCORES GREAT RESULT

Charlotte, NC—Temple Beth El (R) spends just over \$1,000 in newspaper ads, and has 66 people attend its Jan. 2013 4-session Taste of Judaism. 83 actually registered.

A taste of JUDAISM
...Are you curious?

Do you want an introduction to Jewish life?
Do you know someone who wants a greater
feel for Jewish traditions?

**JOIN US to explore the Jewish perspective
on living in today's world.**
ALL ARE WELCOME, Jewish or not.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish Spirituality • Jewish Values • Jewish Community 	<p>SEATING IS LIMITED REGISTRATION REQUIRED THREE 2-HOUR SESSIONS</p>
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**Wednesday, January 5, 12, 19, 2011
7-9pm**

To Register, Contact:
Temple Beth El, Charlotte, Shari Hackman at
704-749-3051 or shackman@beth-el.com

Sponsored by the Union for Reform Judaism
William & Lottie Daniel Department of Outreach & Membership

The 1100-member synagogue had 9 conversions in 2012, and 8 in the first quarter 2013 alone, reports Janie Meyers, its new member services & outreach coordinator.

At the 4th class, the rabbi shows a flyer for a 5th class, Contemplating Conversion, for anyone interested.

"If you advertise, they will come!" advises Ms Meyers. "It's easy to hold a simple series of classes in your temple and the outside community really appreciates learning about Judaism as well as visiting the inside of a Temple... We show them the inside of the ark, roll out a Torah, explain how services function, etc. This is a great Outreach opportunity and it builds understanding between those of other faiths and ourselves. You will be amazed how many people convert!"

Student comments:

- "Born into an interfaith family—Jewish Mother raised me Catholic, but she never fully gave up her Jewish roots."

- "More confident about my Jewish ancestry. Have Jewish roots on both sides of family tree, but was raised Christian. I tend to agree with Jewish beliefs."

- "I learned that what I believe is much closer to Judaism, than to my own religion."

- "This class was way above my expectations!... I feel a deep connection to Judaism now—thinking about converting."

HUGE ARTWORK IN HIGH POINT NEWS STORY

High Point, NC—B'nai Israel Synagogue (R) has 50 family members totaling 74 individuals, not large, but you couldn't tell it from the Life & Style front-page story with 11x6.5" artwork in the local Enterprise.

The artwork is the biggest we've seen in a news article on a Taste program, in 3 colors, with a large Taste of Judaism headline, a big Star of David, a couple of menorahs and a stray lamb.

Credit the lay leader, Ms Barbara Collins, who conducted the classes. The congregation, founded in 1888, put up over \$1500 to run ads—and drew so many people it set up a second program in Nov. 2012, with 32 present. 35 pre-registered for the first, in Sept.—but 52 showed up. All but one were not Jewish.

"People were lining up down the hallway and out the front door; I joked to someone that it looked like WalMart at Christmas."

In this city of 100,000, "we would never have guessed that so many people are interested in Judaism, so many people in the High Point area have Jewish roots, and so many are involved in interfaith relationships," Ms Collins says.

Many participants have since attended services; Ms Collins has visited 3 Sunday School classes at different churches as a direct result.

All attendees were given Post-It Note pads and pens with the synagogue's name, address, and phone number on them. Those who showed a specific interest received URJ pamphlets.

"At each class I opened with, 'Now don't forget to ask questions, to interrupt me; to argue with me or to discuss anything with me.' I have found by opening each session this way...they are truly becoming participants."

Asked if they'd like an Introduction program in 2014, 55 of the participants said Yes.

Six of the attendees are now in Sunday morning Adult Ed classes. Five are pursuing conversion.

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A student rabbi comes once monthly from New York. Lay leaders conduct services every Friday evening and Saturday morning.

CLEVELAND ED CENTER ROLLS THEM IN

Cleveland—Jewish Education Center holds its fall Taste classes in 2 locations, with 90 students, and the January sessions as well, with 55 attending. 9/10ths are not Jewish. The 6-week follow-up, A Feast of Judaism, started in March 2013.

<p>For the community... Jewish or not</p>  <p>“Taste of Judaism”</p> <p>Explore Jewish Spirituality, Ethics and Community</p>	<p>Three Evening Classes</p> <p>West Side October 11, 18, 25 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.</p> <p>Mayfield Heights October 12, 19, 26 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.</p> <p>Lorain/Elyria November 1, 8, 15 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.</p>	<p>FREE CLASS REGISTRATION REQUIRED</p> <p>Contact Sherri Kaufman Jewish Education Center of Cleveland 216-371-0446</p>  <p>Co-Sponsored by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland & The Cleveland Board of Rabbis with funding support from the Jewish Federation of Cleveland & the National Center to Encourage Judaism</p>
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Advertising costs exceeded \$8,000, says coordinator Sherri Kaufman. Ads in the Plain Dealer's metro section and Saturday religious pages draw the most response.

A student comments: “I am interested in converting. I feel drawn to the sense of community of the Jewish people.”

The follow-up Feast of Judaism program pulls in 55 students, at least half not Jewish.

One attendee came “to have a better relationship with my son's wife. She is a conservative Jew and keeps a kosher home.”

Another says, “My grandmother was Jewish.”

A subsequent summer 2013 Taste course, requested by the Lakewood Public Library for its own series of programs, drew over 100 people, almost all not Jewish.

One came “to find out more about the Jewish religion. I've seen your ad for years, and now I was finally able to attend.”

Another was “interested in finding a local synagogue accepting of both interfaith and gay couples looking to start a family and raise children in the community.”

BREMERTON GETS RABBI, AND TASTE CLASS

Bremerton, WA—Rabbi Sarah Newmark comes to Cong. Beth Hatikvah here, as its first rabbi, and holds a Taste class for 5 non-Jews. (We last heard from Beth Hatikvah in 2002.)

When she wrote us, she had 8 people studying for conversion, at the 55-member congregation.

One student “found he had Jewish DNA on both sides of his family.”

The 20-year old synagogue has kept a low profile. One member expressed concerns it was proselytizing; others were supportive. “There are many Jews in interfaith relationships in our area who do not know about us.”

Rabbi Newmark says, “Engaging congregants in the recruiting process is important. In the future, I would consider doing a sermon at the High Holy Days on welcoming the stranger and specifically ask congregants to help us reach the unaffiliated and those interested in Judaism. I have found that many congregants know of Jewish people in the community—in their kids' schools, dance classes, in their neighborhoods. I would create a strategy to invite these people to participate—perhaps a social event with congregants first to begin to create relationships with me and synagogue so it's less odd to walk in for a class.”

“One student, completely disaffected from Judaism for many, many years...decided to give Judaism another chance following the class. He has started attending services...I could tell he is looking for a spiritual center.”

“We are in a Navy town, and I do get young men on ships who are spiritual seekers and who are interested in learning about

Judaism or even in converting. They are not here long, but I'm thinking that if we were to bring Shabbat to the ship or if I were to teach a class on Judaism on the naval base, this may start these young men (and sometimes women) on the pathway to conversion.”

In the next town over, “there is a ‘messianic’ congregation, and one man, clearly of Jewish roots, asked if he could attend our Passover seder last year and services. Everyone has welcomed him warmly, though I have made it clear that in our Torah discussions, we will stick to Jewish interpretations of Jewish texts. He has been respectful.

“A number of my conversion candidates went from Christianity to ‘messianic Judaism’ and then found ‘the real deal.’ I haven't fleshed this out in my thinking, but it's something I think about—how to expose those who think they are Jewish via so-called messianic Judaism (which is really fundamentalist Christianity) to Judaism.

“I think that advertising Adult Ed programming to that community, particularly, may be important. Some of these people were born Jewish; others feel ‘grafted into’ Judaism...We Jews do not recognize them as Jewish. But sometimes messianic Judaism is a way station, and I wonder if we can capitalize on this.”

SPOKANE: VIM, VIGOR, DETERMINATION

Spokane, WA—When Cong. Emanu-El (45 families) applied to NCEJ twice—in December 2012 and March 2013--we responded:

“You illustrate what a small congregation with vim, vigor, and determination can do.”

Its Taste minicourse in fall 2012, at the Universalist Unitarian church, drew 32, ¾ of the students not Jewish. It had just hired its first, part-time, rabbi, and had its first conversion.

Of the students, many “thought they had Jewish ancestors and others felt a close identity with Judaism. One woman felt an inexplicable closeness with Ann Frank...The Jews who attended were all in interfaith marriages. They wanted the non-Jewish spouses to become familiar with the tenets of Judaism,” says program administrator Patricia Frishman Barber. “I had to turn away many people because our class was full.”

The temple is focusing on getting the students involved “rather than heading directly to conversion. We have noticed that when the Jewish spouse wants to attend and participate, the non-Jew goes along. If the Jewish one is lukewarm to the idea, then they just don't come around.”

Introduction to Judaism

taught by Rabbi Tamar Malino

Interested in Conversion to Judaism? Part of an interfaith family? Want to learn more about the fundamentals of Judaism?

This is the class for you!

Congregation Emanu-El is offering a 15 class course starting January 22nd from 7-9 PM on Tuesdays. Cost: \$50 for members and \$200 for non-members. Less for additional family member.

To register contact Patti Barber

509-835-5050

CONGREGATION

barber@spokaneemanu-el.org

In January 2013 a 15-week Intro program started, for 9 people, 7 of them not Jewish, and the temple by March was up to 52 families. Class fee was \$50 member/200 non.

“Some people are trying to expand their knowledge of Judaism while deciding if they want to convert. There are several couples where both have been Christians. In some instances, only one is planning conversion. Some already put their children in our religious school. A young single mother of small children is ‘testing the waters’ to see if Judaism is a ‘good fit’ for her and her children. Several women are drawn to our rituals and holiday celebrations. One man, who has been a Quaker for years, refers to Judaism as ‘expanding his spiritual nourishment.’”

“We are such a small congregation that each newcomer gets the red carpet treatment,” says Ms Barber.

MOBILE: SPRINGHILL PLANTS THE TREE

Mobile, AL—A regular participant in outreach, Rabbi Donald M. Kunststadt of Springhill Ave. Temple (R), says, “It is long, slow work in the trenches of Jewish outreach and I am convinced it will pay off in time.”

The 302-member synagogue spent nearly \$1400 to attract 15 to its fall 2012 Taste program, all not Jewish.

At its 2013 URJ-sponsored Taste, it drew 25, all but 2 not Jewish. It invited students to audit the rabbi’s course on Judaism at Springhill College.

More attendees seem to be referring to the Jewish base of Christianity, to explain their presence.

Among student comments:

-Going further, one says: “The fundamental principles of (Reformed) Judaism align very closely with my beliefs....Very interesting.”

-“Family rumors about being Jewish. Father-in-law raised in the Jewish faith.”

-“Seeing the invitation in the Mobile Register prompted me to take this course.”

-A 66-year-old Protestant: “Interested in learning more about my heritage. My father’s family was Jewish.”

-A Catholic nurse, searcher for a spiritual home: “I want to learn more. This class did ‘give me a taste.’”

-A 55-year-old esthetician: “I have never felt at home in my parents’ (Episcopalian) congregation.”

TUCSON: EMANU-EL’S BAR MITZVAH TASTE

Tucson—2012 was Temple Emanu-El’s “Bar Mitzvah Edition” of the Taste program—its 13th year.

This national leader in outreach held classes in 4 locations, with a total of 271 students, reports Mila Vasser, program coordinator.

She also notes “the level of support for Israel among the non-Jewish participants,” ¾ of total students. 7 could be considered halachically Jewish but don’t identify as Jews; 6 have Jewish relatives; 3 have Jewish grandchildren; 12 have Jewish in-laws. 5 were non-Jewish clergy. 26 were interfaith couples. Teens show up, both with parents and without. Of 25 in the year-long Basic Judaism class, all but one came from Taste classes.

Five families joined temple from the 2012 Taste class. Advertising budget was over \$5600.

Offering the classes in various parts of town is critical to getting involvement, Ms Vasser says.

Key to success is lowering barriers. “The classes have an open, comfortable atmosphere, where it is easy to ask any questions.”

Temple offers 2 kinds of Jewish food to sample at each class, mostly made by its women members.

Temple conversion group meets quarterly, to discuss the process, and any issues or questions that come up. 22 attended the Nov. 2012 meeting.

There were 10 conversions in 2012, including 3 groups of mothers with children.

Among reasons for registering for the class:

- Saw a Jew on Mary Hartman and was intrigued.
- To understand sister-in-law better.
- College Holocaust course teacher recommended, for extra credit.
- Husband was Jewish and he just died.
- Daughter (and her sons) have ½ (or ¼) Jewish blood and should know more of the heritage.

And after the class:

- I could embrace this religion myself.
- Like I’ve touched into my roots—both as a Christian and a descendant of Sephardic Jews.
- A big maybe on conversion—not there yet but very interested. Still searching.
- Liked the honeybread and the discussion of the Torah.
- Thank you for being like Abraham and “opening” the “door of the tent” to people.

APTOS DOES 4-SESSION TASTE PROGRAM

Aptos, CA—Temple Beth El (R) returns to NCEJ after a 7-year absence, draws 25 to a 4-session Taste course in fall 2012. It had a class on spirituality, and Torah, and split Community into one on Israel and one on the different movements in North America.

Half the group identified as Jews with any formal education, says lay leader Kathy Ruiz Goldenkranz.

The 528-member synagogue had 8 conversions in the preceding year.

Among reasons given for taking the course:

–“Wife is Jewish. I am supporting her in joining the TBE community. I have always felt just a little more comfortable around Jewish people for some reason.”

–“Wanted more information about Judaism as I grew up with a very little contact with a Conservative temple and know very little.”

–“Always felt Jewish, learned my maternal lineage is Sephardic Jew—it all fell in place.”

–“I am half-Jewish, but was not raised in any religion. I am curious to know more about Judaism.”

–“My husband is not Jewish-I wanted to experience the class with him, also knowing I would learn something new myself.”

–“There is a conversion in the family,..I need to communicate with my sister, who became a lesbian, not understanding why she converted to Judaism. Come from a Christian background since 1896.”

LONG BEACH CONTINUES TASTE, INTRO

Long Beach, CA—Temple Israel (R) continues both Taste and Introduction programs. Thirteen sign up for Taste, 9 of them not Jewish, and 16 for Intro, ¾ of them not members, and 7 not Jewish.

Intro runs 18 weeks, with fees at \$200 for members, \$280 non. It's followed with a voluntary Ambassador mentor program, linking a student with a congregant, and a study program where 3 to 5 meet with Rabbi Steven Moskowitz for 9 sessions before the bet din and mikveh. Each convert is asked to write a column for the monthly bulletin, and receives a one-year free membership in the 510-member temple. It had 7 conversions in 2012.

A Taste student comments: “I didn't have much of a Jewish education growing up.”

An Intro student: “It has been like seeing the world through a new set of eyes.”

TASTE AND INTRO CLASSES AT LOS GATOS

Los Gatos, CA—Cong. Shir Hadash (R) continues its outreach classes, with 10 attending its Taste course in Aug.-Sept. 2012, all non-Jews, and 27 at its \$180 Intro course

50% Jewish, 100% Welcome

Or are you 100% Jewish recognized 50% of the time?

Or 25% Jewish and 100% proud?

Come meet other fascinating fractions in a welcoming environment to do the math.

Join us for a **casual dinner and conversation** at a restaurant in Mountain View at 6:30 pm on September 8th. Register here and we'll reply with the restaurant location. The first ten people to register get dinner free!

Contact Dawn at dawn@buildingjewishbridges.org
or 510-845-6420 x11 with questions.



Cosponsor: Congregation Shir Hadash
www.shirhadash.org



Four Rabbis Agree!



...on Inviting you to
Introduction to Judaism



Are you curious about Judaism?

Are you considering conversion?

Were you born Jewish but it's been awhile?

All are welcome!

A lively, welcoming class for Jews and non-Jews seeking to know more about Judaism. Learn about beliefs, holidays, home life, ethics, spirituality, Hebrew reading and more. This course also fulfills the educational requirement for conversion.

Tuesday nights from 7 - 9 pm beginning November 1st.

For more information contact Patty
at patty@shirhadash.org or 408-358-1751 x7.

Sponsored by Congregation Beth David, Temple Emanu-El, Congregation Shir Hadash, and Congregation Sinai.

beginning in Nov. 2012. All but one were not members; 71% not Jewish.

Student comments:

–“I felt as a non-Jew raising my children Jewish it was important to begin the process of learning about Judaism more fully.”

–“In some ways it's overwhelming and I feel more confused than before, but I know it's just because I've only started to learn more...I feel more connected to Judaism and like, I'm following the right path for myself.”

HARTFORD RABBIS KEEP REACHING OUT

Hartford, CT—Reform Rabbis of Greater Hartford continue their outreach, with 13 students at the Oct.2011-April 2012 18-week Introduction course. They noted a 52-year age range in students.

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM	
Presented by The Hartford Area Reform Rabbis	
Offered ONCE per year	
The 18 classes will be held at CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL 701 Farmington Avenue West Hartford	OCT. 10, 2012 to MARCH 20, 2013 WEDNESDAY EVENINGS 7:00 - 9:15 PM
FOR INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER: Contact Cheryl Goldberg at (860) 233-8215 ext. 224 or email: cgoldberg@cbict.org TUITION: \$180 per individual or \$230 per married/engaged couples	
The curriculum promises comprehensive study including basic Hebrew, Jewish history, liturgy, holidays and life cycle events as well as the Jewish perspective on spirituality, values and community! Discover the beauty of prayer, the endurance of traditions and learn about the Jewish way of life. <i>It's not how, when?</i>	

The Oct.'12-March'13 class drew 15. Nine converted in the preceding year, at the member units. 11 were not Jewish.

Most of the registrants come from rabbi referrals, and shul bulletin advertising helps, too, says coordinator Cheryl Goldberg.

Trying one large color ad and internet “hits” did not seem to help, as the number of students didn't really change, she notes.

BOTH TASTE, INTRO IN JACKSONVILLE AD

Jacksonville, FL—Cong. Ahavath Chesed (R) runs an ad featuring both the Taste of Judaism free minicourse and a 4-month \$100 Introduction program. The 725-member congregation welcomed 11 converts to its rolls in the year and a half to October 2012, reports Executive Director Goldie Lansky.

In July 2011 45 enrolled, split between Jews and non, in the Taste course. A year later, 45 again enrolled, with a similar division.

(continue on page 8)

NATIONAL CENTER TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM -- APPLICATION, 2013-2014

1109 Ruppert Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903-1020 - 301-593-2319 - 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 2013-2014 programs, are for a maximum of \$1250 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 \$1500 maximum—in effect, a 60% grant. (Current URJ full-grant Taste program recipients may receive half a regular NCEJ grant as well.) You may apply for each of two grants yearly for separate programs in distinctly different quarters. Grants are at NCEJ's sole discretion. (Positive ads [Sec.3] start at 60% subsidy.)

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 (if radio/tv, of text) and d) of the specific billing. Incomplete submissions incur delays.

[For course grants, complete Sections (1) & (2); Power of Positive Advertisements, 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? _____

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

3. POWER OF POSITIVE ADVERTISING (See NCEJudaism.org website instructions.)

You run an ad inviting attendees, stressing a positive approach to Judaism, 2"x2 column minimum, using/modifying one of our suggestions or your own approved by us in advance. (We'd like detailed comments from you, on a separate sheet.)

How many newcomers showed up: _____ What increase in normal attendance? _____

What reaction from congregation on ad and this approach? _____

What's your own reaction to having tried this? _____

When might you advertise like this again? _____

What advice to others thinking about doing this? _____

Among comments:

-“Now I better understand what my daughter-in-law is talking about.”

-“The similarities between my Christianity and Judaism are startling to me. I always thought Jews believe something very different from what I was taught.”

The Aug.-Dec. 2011 Intro course drew 31, of whom 26 were not Jewish. A year later, total was 32, with 16 indicating conversion was the prime reason for attending.

Among comments:

-“If Hebrew School had been this interesting, I may not have fought with my mother each week.”

-“Do all Jews know this?”

BALTIMORE STARTS SMALL TASTE, GROWS

Baltimore—The Bolton Street Synagogue (unaf.) starts its 3-session Taste course with only 4 students, but ends with 12, as initial students invited others to join in.

The 162-member synagogue had 2 conversions in the preceding year, reports Administrator Debbie Barnes.

KANSAS CITY SCORES FOR CONVERSION

Overland Park, KS—Rabbinical Ass'n of Greater Kansas City (M0-KS) attracts a score of students to its 35-week Aug. 2012-May 2013 “Judaism for Conversion Candidates” course.

Class included 11 women, 9 men. Two were already married to Jews, had or expected children; and five were in

**NATIONAL CENTER
TO ENCOURAGE JUDAISM**
1109 Ruppert Road
Silver Spring, MD 20903-1020

No. 13-02

Winter - Spring 2013-14/5774



WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE JEWS?
Just look about—they're all around—
If you invite your neighbors to learn
About Judaism, and decide
What they would like to do.
NCEJ can help you reach out.

relationships. Two had extended family members who were Jewish. Eleven were “on a personal journey and religious search based on past experiences,” reports Annette Fish, administrator.

Course is taught on a rotating basis by Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Orthodox rabbis, presenting multiple perspectives. Classes include a 30-minute Hebrew component.

One student comments, “Most Rabbis have a very clear message & topic.” But another says, “I do feel at times they forget that we may not always know what they are talking about.”

The new class coordinator, Aaron Nienshultz, was one of the first participants in the area's community conversion program, which began in 2003. For the past five years he has worked in the Jewish community as an educator, youth adviser, and pararabbinic leader, with “a remarkable enthusiasm and passion for Jewish learning,” Ms Fish comments.

In the decade, she notes, 168 adults and 57 of their children have completed their conversions.

Why haven't there been more, in a metropolitan area of several million? Enrollment requires a rabbinic sponsor. The newspaper ads generate 40-plus phone calls yearly. Those who don't enroll are generally seeking a short-term course, or have no interest in conversion. Some are from Messianics. People who call but have never attended a service or met with a rabbi are encouraged to visit synagogues, attend services, and talk with a rabbi.

The only synagogue offering its own, shorter course is B'nai Jehudah (R).

LIFE IS LIKE TORAH STUDY

Even though you may not understand all
you have just gone through,
You have to go on to the next chapter.