



Funding Programs that

Welcome People to Judaism

Want to know what type of programs NCEJ funds? Looking for ideas you can adapt to meet the needs of your organization while also attracting more people to Judaism? The examples below are just a sampling of some of the grants we have given out recently.



Conversations with Clergy



“Ask a Rabbi Booth”

Program Description: This program is designed to engage people in conversation with community rabbis through an innovative and friendly approach. The ‘Ask the Rabbi Booth’ will pop up monthly in a public location for 2-3 hours, using a setup similar to a “Peanuts” booth. The rabbis who staff the booth will vary in their approach to Jewish life in order to provide different perspectives, and the venue will also change to attract a diverse audience. —JCC, Springfield, MA

Introduction to Jewish Traditions



“Introduction to Judaism and Shabbat”

Program Description: This program will include an Introduction to Judaism class and deep dive into Shabbat with the goal of reaching out to those in interfaith marriages, people who don’t identify as Jewish, and Jews who have never been involved in a religious practice. A traditional Shabbat dinner is a key part of the program. —Sisterhood of B’nai Israel, Southbury, CT



“Building A Jewish Home—Creating a Jewish Family”

Program Description: This three-session class is designed to help couples make practical decisions on Jewish observance in their home. The first class is on “space” – the physical things that adorn the home from mezzuzot to art to books. The second class is on “time” - Shabbat and holy days. The last class is on “values”, and includes talking about Israel, tzedakah and kashrut. The main text is Anita Diamant’s book “Living a Jewish Life”. —Mount Zion Temple, St Paul, MN



“Raising Jewish Children as a Non-Jewish Parent”

Program Description: It can feel challenging for non-Jewish parents (and Jewish parents who converted as adults) to weave meaningful Jewish traditions into family life when they don’t have memories of their own childhood to lean back on. This program will explore the influence of the participants’ own personal religious experiences and look at the multiple ways Judaism can be expressed within a family. —Women of Shir Hadash, Los Gatos, CA



Introduction to Jewish Traditions (continued)



“Expand the Circle”

Program Description: Interfaith couples (or individuals from such households) with small children will participate in a series of ten sessions focused on navigating Jewish life as a Jewish/non-Jewish family. Sessions will focus on family relationships, holidays, Israel and related issues. —*Jewish Federation of Ottawa, Canada*



“Yachad (Together)”

Program Description: Interfaith couples will participate in a series of activities together, including:

- 1) Two sessions with rabbis, where couples will get to know each other and the rabbis, and explore the Jewishness of their homes and their Jewish goals.
- 2) Three sessions with “role models,” where participants learn from Jewish / non-Jewish couples who have led community Jewish life and are helped to think about their own experiences in light of the role models’ experiences (with holidays, grandparents, etc).
- 3) Participation in several community events, including holiday celebrations. —*Jewish Federation of Greater Chattanooga, TN*

Conversion and Post-Conversion – Related Programming



“Keeping the Faith”

Program Description: Keeping the Faith is an initiative specifically designed to maintain and deepen the connection between recent Jewish converts (and their Jewish partners) and the Jewish community. Working with an advisory committee of recent Jews by Choice, this initiative will offer Jewish educational, cultural, and ritual opportunities for recent Jews by Choice. The program was promoted to all Jews by choice in the Toronto area who converted in the last 5 years under Rabbinical Assembly guidance. —*Rabbinical Assembly Ontario Region, Beth Tzedec Congregation, Canada*



“Conversion Classes Plus Shabbat Dinners”

Program Description: The congregation runs a conversion program from that includes 3 Shabbat dinners at the shul in addition to those hosted by clergy in their homes. Conversion students are also encouraged to attend the 2nd night adult Seder at the synagogue. The classes are promoted on the congregation’s website, on Facebook, and through advertising in local media. —*Congregation Beth Israel Vancouver, Canada*

Holiday – Related Programming



“L’Chayim, To Life!: Exploring the Joys of Shabbat, Purim, and Passover through the Lens of Jewish Food”

Program Description: This is a 3-part baking/cooking series for challah (Shabbat), hamantaschen (Purim) and matzoh balls (Pesach). To maximize participation, participants will be invited to attend one, two, or all three sessions. The series will be promoted not only through print and online media, but also to local “Introduction to Judaism” classes. For those in interfaith relationships, the program will also touch on the experience of being a non-Jewish member of a Jewish family. —*Temple Aliyah, Needham, MA*



Holiday – Related Programming (continued)



“A Shared Seder”

Program Description: This program was one of the Women of Reform Judaism Outreach Grants, funded by NCEJ in 2018-19. Passover is an enormously challenging holiday and the intent was to make it manageable for the novice. This program is extremely replicable. The haggadah, songbook and cookbook used in this Seder are available upon request. —*Women of Temple Bat Yahm, Newport Beach, CA*

“I have tears in my eyes because my partner and I just attended our first Passover Seder together.”
—Shared Seder Participant



“Unpacking Passover: Creating and Leading Your Own Passover Seder”

Program Description: This is a three-part series of workshops about how to create and lead a Passover Seder. The program focuses on using Passover as a doorway into Jewish practice by helping participants customize the Seder, including choosing a haggadah, in order to make it their own. In order to attract people who might be uncertain about coming to a synagogue, the workshops will be held in a local public library. —*Beth Shalom v’Emeth Reform Temple (B’ShERT), Brooklyn, NY*

Spanish Language Classes



“Introduction to Judaism in Spanish”

Program Description: This is an outgrowth of an Introduction to Judaism course which attracted close to 20% native Spanish-speakers. The synagogue serves a diverse community, including a number of Latinos. —*West Suburban Har Zion, River Forest, IL*



“Spanish Language Conversion Course”

Program Description: The synagogue is the sole provider of Spanish language conversion services in Broward County. The curriculum is based on the curricula of the Conversion Institute of the Rabbinical Assembly of America Southeast Region. The books used in the course include two books from Buenos Aires edited by the Seminario Rabinico Latinoamericano. —*Temple Israel, Broward County, FL*

Helping Judaism Grow from Generation to Generation

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Have questions? Or an idea for a program we might fund? Contact Us: 301-802-4254 | ellen@ncejudaism.org