

Intro to Judaism 5781
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ברוכים הבאים. Welcome. Eventually you will recognize the letters that began this line and be able to read them. It is a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the Intro to Judaism class. This class is a multi-purpose class. Some of you are on the path to becoming Jewish and some of you already are. Regardless, it is my sincere wish and hope that together we will learn a great deal about Judaism, Jewish history and the Jewish people. This class will be meeting on Wednesday evenings between 8:00pm and 9:15pm. Anyone that is taking this class for conversion will need to take the Hebrew class the precedes it at 7:00pm. We will be meeting each week unless I need to cancel class for some reason. It is very important that we all make every effort to be present for all classes as we cannot go over all of the material again and again.

Here is the list of books that I ask each of you to procure:

- 1) L'Shon Ha-Kodesh: Beginning Hebrew Book for Adults. By Debbie Rowe
- 2) The Sabbath By Abraham Joshua Heschel
- 3) Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary By David L. Lieber (or another Chumash, please check with Rabbi Hearshen)
- 4) The Story of the Jews By Stan Mack
- 5) Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs & Rituals By George Robinson
- 6) The Jewish Holidays By Michael Strassfeld
- 7) Jewish Literacy By Joseph Telushkin
- 8) It's A Mitzvah: Step-By-Step to Jewish Living By Bradeley Shavit Artson

Here are the subjects that we will be covering in this class with the related books listed after each:

- 1) A beginning look at the rabbinic method of studying Torah (Etz Hayim and Jewish Literacy)
- 2) Jewish History (the Story of the Jews and Jewish Literacy)
- 3) Jewish Holidays (The Jewish Holidays)
- 4) Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law (The Sabbath, It's a Mitzvah and Essential Judaism)
- 5) Jewish Daily Living (It's a Mitzvah)

Expectations of Participants in the Class

- 1) Shabbat/Holiday attendance at synagogue services.
 - a. 2-3 times a month either Friday night or Saturday morning.
- 2) Shabbat - Create a Shabbat environment at home and celebrate Shabbat at least twice a month for a complete 25 hour period each time.
- 3) Kosher home observance - Do not mix meat and milk products together. We will build on this as we progress through the year.
- 4) Prayer time- Start by carving out 1 minute from each day for private reflection.
 - a. You can carve out more time if you wish. You can also use the siddur (prayer book) as a guide. We will build on this as we progress through the year.
- 5) Prepare the readings and turn in any journal assignments/projects for class in a timely manner. I will do my best to return them in a timely manner as well.
 - a. These journaling exercises are new for us and will be expected once every other week to explore your growth in the material.
- 6) There will be an introductory Hebrew course in the middle of the year that you are required to attend.
- 7) It is expected that you attend class each week. If you plan on missing class please let me know before class.
- 8) Schedule individual meetings with Rabbi Hearshen once a month and complete the essays on a monthly basis for those meetings.

Outline of Class and Assignments

Date	Subject	Topic	Reading	Assignment*
11/4/2020	A beginning look at the rabbinic method of studying Torah	Study Methods	<u>Jewish Literacy</u> . Pages 115 – 160, <u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 158 – 173	
11/11/2020	A beginning look at the rabbinic method of studying Torah	Looking at texts		Journal: What are some biblical questions you have always had?
11/18/2020	A beginning look at the rabbinic method of studying Torah	Looking at texts		
12/2/2020	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	What is Jewish Philosophy?	<u>It's A Mitzvah</u> . Pages 2 - 31	
12/9/2020	Jewish Holidays	Chanukah and Tu B'Shvat	<u>Jewish Holidays</u> . Pages 161 – 185	
12/16/2020	Jewish History	Biblical History	<u>The Story of the Jews</u> . Page 3 – 72	Journal: Please summarize the reading
1/6/2021	Jewish History	70 CE – 1000 CE	<u>The Story of the Jews</u> . Pages 75 – 105	Journal: Please summarize the reading
1/13/2021	Jewish History	1000 CE – 1700 CE	<u>The Story of the Jews</u> . Pages 107 – 156	Journal: Please summarize the reading
1/20/2021	Jewish History	1700 CE – 1900	<u>The Story of the Jews</u> . Pages 157 – 191	Journal: Please summarize the reading
1/27/2021	Jewish History	1900 CE – Present	<u>The Story of the Jews</u> . Pages 195 – 265	Journal: Please summarize the reading
2/3/2021	Jewish History	Anti-Semitism and Holocaust	<u>Jewish Literacy</u> . Pages 345 – 388	Journal: How do you connect to the Holocaust?
2/10/2021	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	What is Jewish Law?	<u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 228 – 237, <u>Jewish Literacy</u> , Pages 477 – 494	Journal: Why is law valuable and important?
2/17/2021	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	Israel	<u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 34 - 49	Bring one or two articles to class about Israel
2/24/2021	Jewish Holidays	Purim	<u>Jewish Holidays</u> . Pages 187 – 198	
3/3/2021	Jewish Daily Living	Prayer	<u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 174 – 185, <u>Essential Judaism</u> . Pages 7 – 75	Journal: Write your own prayer
3/10/2021	Jewish Daily Living	Prayer	Borrow a Siddur and review it	Journal: Write a commentary on one of the prayers

3/17/2021	Jewish Holidays	Passover	<u>Jewish Holidays</u> . Pages 5 – 45	
3/24/2021	Jewish Holidays	Passover		
4/7/2021	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	Shabbat	<u>The Sabbath</u> . Please read the entire book.	Journal: What is unique about the Jewish approach to time and the Sabbath?
4/14/2121	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	Shabbat	<u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 130 - 147	Journal: What are two things you can do to improve your experience of Shabbat?
4/21/2021	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	Shabbat	<u>Essential Judaism</u> . Pages 76 – 92	Prepare a traditional Shabbat dinner at your house. Describe it in writing.
4/28/2021	Jewish Philosophy/Jewish Law	Ethical Commandments	<u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 50 - 83	Journal: Why does Judaism cover non-ritual parts of life?
5/5/2021	Jewish Holidays	Sukkot/Shemini Atzeret	<u>Jewish Holidays</u> . Pages 125 – 159	
5/12/2021	Jewish Holidays	Shavuot and the Three Weeks	<u>Jewish Holidays</u> . Pages 47 – 93	
5/19/2021	Jewish Holidays	Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur	<u>Jewish Holidays</u> . Pages 95 – 123	
5/26/2021	Jewish Daily Living	Kashrut	<u>It's a Mitzvah</u> . Pages 84 – 95	Journal: Explain your current eating regimen
6/2/2021	Jewish Daily Living	Kashrut		Go grocery shopping and find items that are certified kosher (could be done with a camera)
6/9/2021	Open	Open	Open	Open
6/16/2021	Open	Open	Open	Open

***Assignments will be due at the beginning of class**