

## **LJL Resources**

**(with thanks to Rabbis Simone Schicker and Lori Levine)**

### **Primary Texts for Conversion and General Jewish Knowledge**

1. *Honoring Tradition, Embracing Modernity: A Reader for the Union for Reform Judaism's Introduction to Judaism Course*
2. *Living a Jewish Life: Jewish Traditions, Customs, and Values for Today's Families* by Anita Diamant. Revised and Updated Edition. Harper Collins, 2007.
3. *Choosing Judaism* by Kukoff, Lydia. URJ Press, 2005
4. *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*. CCAR Press, 2007.
5. *Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Customs and Rituals* by Robinson, George. Atria Paperback, 2016.
6. *The Jewish Home: A Guide for Jewish Living* by Syme, Daniel B. Behrman House, 2017
7. *A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home* by Zion/Fields---Meyer. Shalom Hartman Institute, 2004
8. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Oxford Uni. Press, 2004.
9. *The JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh* (also great if you want the Hebrew text)
10. *Choosing a Jewish Life* by Anita Diamant
11. *Becoming Jewish: The Challenges, Rewards, and Paths to Conversion* by Steven Carr Reuben
12. *Conversion to Judaism: A Guidebook* by Lawrence Epstein
13. *Your People, My People* by Lena Romanoff
14. *Being a Jew* by Maurice Lamm
15. *Embracing the Covenant: Converts of Judaism Talk About Why & How* by Allan L. Berkowitz and Patti Moskovitz, eds.
16. *The Book of Jewish Values* by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin
17. *Lights in the Forest* (CCAR Press)
18. *What is a Jew?* By Lawrence A. Hoffman
19. *Why be Jewish?* by David Wolpe
20. *Are We There Yet?* By Shefa Gold

## **Additional Books for Your Jewish Library**

1. *Lights in the Forest: Rabbis Respond to Twelve Essential Jewish Questions* by Paul Citrin, ed. New York: CCAR Press, 2014. Also available in a PDF electronic version. An anthology of essays written by a wide cross-section of progressive rabbis, responding to a range of theological and philosophical questions.
2. *The Fragile Dialogue: New Voices of Liberal Zionism* by Stanley M Davids and Lawrence A. Englander, eds. New York: CCAR Press, 2018. This book wrestles with and attempts to frame the very fragile dialogue surrounding Zionism and Israel in the 21st century Progressive Jewish community and offers a multiplicity of views.
3. *Mishkan Ga'avah, Where Pride Dwells* by Rabbi Denise Eger, NY: CCAR Press. A celebration of LGBTQ Jewish Life and Ritual.
4. *The Torah: A Women's' Commentary* by Tamara Cohn Eskanazi and Andrew L. Weiss, eds. New York: CCAR Press, 2008. A groundbreaking volume, with downloadable companion study guides also available.
5. *Honest Answers to Your Child's Jewish Questions* by Sharon Forman, URJ Press, 2006. (out-of-print but available through online used booksellers). Suggested responses for when your young child asks questions like, "What does God look like?" or "Why am I Jewish?"
6. *Israel: A Concise History of a Nation Reborn* by Daniel Gordis, Ecco/HarperCollins, 2016. A comprehensive yet accessible history of the state of Israel from its inception to present day.
7. *Judaism's Ten Best Ideas: A Brief Guide for Seekers* by Arthur Green, Jewish Lights Publishing, 2014. A collection of short essays on topics like Joy, Repairing the World, Getting off the Treadmill, and more.
8. *Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life--in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)* by Sarah Hurwitz, Spiegel and Grau, 2019. Amazing memoir by Michelle Obama's speechwriter about her journey to rediscover Judaism and make new connections.
9. *The Sabbath* by Abraham Joshua Heschel, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1951. A classic work; republished many times.
10. *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts* by Barry Holtz, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992. Essays analyze the major traditional texts of Judaism from literary, historical, philosophical, and religious points of view.
11. *Like Dreamers* by Yossi Keli-Halevi, New York: Harpers, 2013. Traces the history of Israel and the divergent ideologies shaping it from the Six-Day War in 1967 to the present.
12. *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor* by Yossi Keli-Halevi New York: HarperCollins, 2018. A heart-felt and beautifully written exploration of Israeli identity and Jewish peoplehood.
13. *Mishkan Moeid: A Guide to the Jewish Seasons*, by Peter Knobel, ed, New York: CCAR Press, 2013. Also available in a PDF electronic version. A survey of the sacred days of the Jewish yearly cycle.

14. *Navigating the Journey: The Essential Guide to the Jewish Life Cycle* by Peter Knobel, ed New York: CCAR Press, 2018. An introduction to the Jewish life cycle.
15. *The Story of the Jews: A 4,000-Year Adventure—A Graphic History Book* by Stan Mack, Jewish Lights, 2001. A pictorial journey through the millennia of ups and downs faced by the Jewish people.
16. *The Complete How-to Handbook for Jewish Living* by Kerry M. Olitzky and Ronald H. Isaacs, Ktav Publishing, 2004. How to practice Jewish rituals, presented in a step-by-step format.
17. *Moral Resistance and Spiritual Authority: Our Jewish Obligation to Social Justice* by Seth Limmer and Jonah Dov Pesner, New York: CCAR Press, 2018.
18. *Voices of Torah: A Treasury of Rabbinic Gleanings on the Weekly Portions, Holidays and Special Shabbatot* by Hara Person, ed. New York: CCAR Press, 2012. Also available in a PDF. electronic version. Multiple perspectives on every Torah portion, written by Reform rabbis.
19. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* by Gunther W. Plaut, ed. Revised Edition, New York: CCAR Press, 2005. Available as an e-book. Updated edition of North America's most popular Torah commentary.
20. *My Jewish Year: 18 Holidays, One Wondering Jew* by Abigail Pogrebin, Fig Tree Books LLC, 2017. Jewish holidays through the eyes of a wondering Jew, with brief reflections from prominent rabbis and Jewish thinkers.
21. *Divrei Mishkan T'filah: Delving into the Siddur* by Richard Sarason, New York; CCAR Press, 2018. Essays on the liturgy of the Reform prayer book. Also available as an e-book.
22. *Gates of Shabbat, A Guide for Observing Shabbat* by Rabbi Mark Dov Shapiro, ed. 25th anniversary edition, CCAR Press, 2016. A practical and inspiring volume for a liberal approach to Shabbat observance. Please check that you are purchasing the latest edition.
23. *Finding God: Selected Responses* by Rifat Sonsino and Daniel Syme, Revised edition. Behrman House, 2002. Essays on significant Jewish thinkers' responses to the questions: Is there more than one way to perceive of God? How can we know God? What does God "want" from us? Please check that you are purchasing the latest edition.
24. *As a Driven Leaf* by Milton Steinberg, Behrman House, 1939. A classic novel republished many times. Tells the tale of renegade Talmudic sage Elisha ben Abuyah's struggle to reconcile his faith with the allure of Hellenistic culture.
25. *A Book of Life: Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice* by Michael Strassfeld Jewish Lights, 2006. Traditional Jewish teachings presented as a guide to behavior and values for all the cycles of life.
26. *Jewish Literacy* by Joseph Telushkin, Revised edition: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History. William Morrow, 2008. Helps answer the question of what it means to be a Jew, in the largest sense.
27. *Jewish Living: Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice* by Mark Washofsky, revised. URJ Press, 2010. The definitive guide for Reform Jewish practice.
28. *Night: A Memoir* by Elie Wiesel, New York: Hill & Wang, 1960. A memoir of the author's experiences during the Holocaust. Republished many times. Available as an audio book and in many languages.

## **Documentary Films**

1. *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport* (2000). 2 h 2 min. Documentary. The Kindertransport rescued over 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia by bringing them to England. Includes extensive interviews of those children and their families.
2. *The Last Laugh* (2016). 1 h 28 min, Documentary. World famous comedians explore whether jokes about the Holocaust can ever be funny.
3. *Secret Lives: Hidden Children and Their Rescuers During WWII* (2002). 1 h 30 min. Documentary. Interviews with people who risked their lives to hide Jewish children during the Holocaust, the children, and their family members.

## **Podcasts of Jewish Interest**

Whether you tune-in during your morning commute, during your workout, or while prepping dinner, here are six podcasts of Jewish interest we hope you'll enjoy. We've carefully selected these out of hundreds of options because we think they'll be of interest to people who are new to Judaism, Jewish community, or Jewish learning.

1. *On the Other Hand: Ten Minutes of Torah*. Rabbi Rick Jacobs, President of the Union for Reform Judaism, offers something to think about from the weekly Torah portion, in ten minutes or less.
2. *Stories We Tell*. Each episode gives you a new story from Jewish tradition to reflect on and discuss with the people in your life.
3. *Unorthodox*. A smart, fresh, fun take on Jewish news and culture, each weekly episode includes a friend from another faith or cultural background with a question they've always wanted to ask about some aspect of Judaism.
4. *Israel Story*. Modeled after *This American Life*, *Israel Story* brilliantly shares everyday stories, told by and about regular Israelis.
5. *Streetwise Hebrew*. A bite-size podcast that discusses Modern Hebrew language gems. From slang to etymology, textual graffiti, Biblical idioms that are still around, influences from other languages, and other linguistic phenomena – host Guy Sharett shows us what we can learn about the Israeli psyche, society, and culture through its language.
6. *The Kibitz*. A monthly podcast on everything Jewish-ish. Part conversation, part Q & A, part audience call-in, this podcast is about asking interesting questions, some big, many little and exploring all you've ever wanted to know about Judaism through a cultural and of course funny lens. "Kibitz" is a Yiddish word that means "to chat."
7. *Tent Weavers*
8. *Judaism Unbound*
9. *Wholly Jewish*

10. *Parsha in Progress*

11. *Kosher Queers*: Weekly queer takes on the Torah portion!

## **Websites**

[ReformJudaism.org](http://ReformJudaism.org)

[BimBam.com](http://BimBam.com)

Union for Reform Judaism – [www.urj.org](http://www.urj.org)

American Jewish Archives – [www.aja.org](http://www.aja.org)

[RitualWell.org](http://RitualWell.org)

Jewish Women's Archive - [www.jwa.org](http://www.jwa.org)

Jewish Book Council: <http://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/books/>

CCAR Press - [www.ccarpress.org](http://www.ccarpress.org)

[MyJewishLearning.com](http://MyJewishLearning.com)

[KeshetOnline.org](http://KeshetOnline.org)

[www.GlobalJews.org](http://www.GlobalJews.org) : The web site of B'chol Lashon ("In Every Language"), an organization at the cutting edge of lifting racial and ethnic diversity within the Jewish community. Lots of fascinating content there.

## **Social Media**

Instagram Accounts:

JewishLGBT: lots of excellent educational content with an inclusive, accepting vibe and lots of interactive Q and A.

MyJewishLearning: interesting educational content from the fine web site of the same name.

Twitter: Rabbi Folberg says: "I recommend our LJI students steer clear of "Jewish Twitter." The same gatekeeping and toxicity that pervades the larger platform is sadly mirrored in a lot of "Jewish accounts." This includes posters who seem to specialize in "trolling" non-Orthodox converts. Avoid!