



עמנואל
emanuel synagogue
creating community • celebrating diversity

BASIC JEWISH CONCEPTS 2012-5772/5773

Curriculum and Reading List

A Twelve Month Program of Adult Jewish Learning

Gain insight into the most important concepts that underpin Judaism and the Jewish people.

INSTRUCTORS:

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REQUIRED TEXTS:

A Siddur, A Tanakh, A Jewish Calendar

Blu Greenberg

How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household

Abba Eban

My People

Kerry Olitzky and Ronald Isaacs

The How To Handbook For Jewish Living

Rabbi Wayne Dosick

Living Judaism, The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief,
Tradition & Practice

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Michael Strassfeld

The Jewish Catalogues

Michael Strassfeld

The Jewish Holidays

Louis Jacobs

The Book of Jewish Practice

Louis Jacobs

The Book of Jewish Belief

Harold Kushner

To Life

Chaim Potok:

Wanderings

Robert Seltzer:

Jewish People, Jewish Thought

Chumash

Please note: Complimentary Learning Experiences are written in Italics

Contact the synagogue office on: 9328-7833 or at info@emanuel.org.au for more information

TERM ONE

February 9 – April 5: 7:30 – 9:00pm

LIVING WITH JEWISH IDENTITY IN JEWISH TIME

Feb 9 Introduction to Basic Jewish Concepts

Feb 16 **The People of the Book:** The Tanakh: The Hebrew Bible and Its Mitzvot. The Rabbinic Writings - an overview of the Talmud and later Rabbinic writings, the contrast of halakha and midrash.

Reading:

Tanakh:	Genesis 12: 1-6	
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.13-21
Eban	The Ancient World	pp. 7-13
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief	pp. 19-37; 46- 76,166-211
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp.12-27,139-144
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 73-116

Feb 23 **God** The development of Jewish thought and belief about God

Reading:

Dosik	Living Judaism	pp1 – 19
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March 1 **Purim:** The festival of fun with dark undertones: the destruction of the enemy who would destroy us. Includes an overview of the Jewish lunar/solar calendar

Reading:

Tanakh:	The Book of Esther	
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.301-308,387-397
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp.187-199
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 96-102
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 122-125
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 158-162

March 8 **Shabbat - an Island in Time:** Spiritual concepts to ideas such as Kedushat Shabbat, Shmirat Shabbat (Malacha) and Oneg Shabbat.

Reading:

Tanakh:	Genesis 1:1 – 2:3; Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17	
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 25-94
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 103-115
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief	pp. 96-104
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 74-80
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 127-130

March 15 **Shabbat in the Synagogue and in the Home:** Understanding the structures of the Erev Shabbat and Shabbat morning service: Continue with prior week's reading and bring Siddur, to focus on Kiddush and the Amidah.

Shabbat in the Home: The joys of Shabbat – from Hadlakat Hanerot and Kiddush to Zmirot and Havdalah. Bring your own candlesticks, Kiddush cup and tape recorder (for songs).

March 22 **The Jewish Home and Synagogue** – Mezuzah, Objects of Prayer etc. The different objects that give meaning to the rituals practised in the Jewish home.

Reading:

Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 221-225 ;247-248
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The Synagogue and its Symbols: The history of the synagogue as Bet Keneset, Bet Tefillah and Bet Midrash; the leadership of a synagogue (the rabbi, cantor,

educator and board); and the architecture of the synagogue and all its symbolic meaning. This will include the: Sefer Torah, Aron Hakodesh, Parokhet, Bima, Ner Tamid and Menorah).

Reading:

Dosik	Living Judaism	pp.201-219
Strassfeld	Second Jewish Catalogue	pp. 264-269
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief	pp. 115-123
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 28-40
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.301-308;387-397

March 29 Pesach: Freedom and Redemption - Background to Exodus Story and the developments of the traditions of the festival.

Reading:

Tanakh:	Exodus: Chapters 1-15	
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.398-442
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp.5-46
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 81-91
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 162-174).

April 5 Pesach Funshop: An experiential approach to the joys of Pesach, learning about chametz and leaven, the Haggadah, Seder Plate and symbols, and songs such as Mah Nishtana, Chad Gadya and Echad Mi Yodea. Bring your family Haggadah and Seder Plate.

April 7 Second Night Seder at ESW: Join our community for a traditional second night celebration and commemoration of Pesach. Contact the Emanuel Synagogue office to reserve your place

April 19 Yom HaShoah: You are encouraged to join one of the community commemorations for Yom HaShoah. Details will be provided in class. Please call Board of Deputies for details of morning and evening program (10:30 am and 7:30 pm)

TERM TWO

May 3 – June 28

ISRAEL

May 3 Israel through the Ages – Panel

May 10 Israel the Promised Land: When Israel was again to be re-established as a Jewish homeland, one needed to define what is a Jewish homeland, its language, character, legal system and rationale for existing.

Reading:

Tanakh:	Gn 12:1-6;Ex 6: 2-9;Dt 26: 1-10	Joshua: Ch 24
Eban	My People	pp. 216-238
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 323-356
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 443-456
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 449-456
Eban	Like the Other Nations	pp. 14-22
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp. 62-67
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 126-128
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 195-196
HaTikva		

May 17 The Omer and Shavuot: Jews, the People of the Book: The concept of Revelation of Torah, Aseret Hadibrot, a discussion of Torah as the first 5 Books of the Bible and also our entire teaching tradition with an introduction to Jewish Literature.

Reading:		
Tanakh	Exodus 19-20	
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp 457-467
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp 69-83
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp 92-97
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp 47-56,174-181

May 26 Celebration of Shavuot: Tikkun Leil Shavuot. Services begin at 6:00 pm followed by, a dynamic study program lasting till midnight at least.

May 24 – Jewish History in C20 and C21 (until 1948) – Gain an understanding of the different philosophies that led to the development of Jewry as we know it. The concept of the world wide Jewish community and communal responsibility are explained.

May 31 Philosophers of Zionism From the elders of the Zionist movement to the development of the State of Israel –We will meet various early Zionist leaders, such as Herzl, Achad ha'Am, Ben Gurion and Rav Kook and appreciate their competing cultural, political, religious and nationalist ideologies.

June 7 History of Modern Israel 1 – The Balfour Declaration, Ingathering of the Exiles, Illegal immigration, War of Independence through to the 1967 war.

June 14 History of Modern Israel 2 – From 1967 until today – a whirl wind tour through the History of the State of Israel.

June 21 Contemporary Israel: Israel and the Diaspora, State and Religion, the Palestinians, questions of achieving the dream of “Shalom”

Reading:		
Strassfeld	Jewish Holidays	pp 62-67
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp.323-355
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.449-456.

June 28 Contemporary Streams of Judaism: An explanation of the three main streams of Judaism – Orthodox, Conservative and Progressive, that offer a diversity of practice today.

Reading:		
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 13-21
Eban	My People	pp. 159-196; 214-216
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 59-64

TERM THREE

July 19 –September 13

ZMANIM – LIVING IN JEWISH TIME

July 19 Kashrut in Text and Tradition and at Home: A guide to the laws, traditions, religious significance and varieties of dietary discipline and an opportunity to look at the practical side of keeping a kosher home.

Reading:		
Torah	Gn 1:29-30, Gn 9:1-7, Lv11	
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 256-268
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 95-119
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 18-36
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 98-106
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief	pp. 132-139

EcoKashrut: Tza’ar Ba’alei Chayim and Ba’al Tashchit and Contemporary Understandings.Two of the greatest concerns for us at this time are the human relationship with our fellow animals and the environment we

share. The Torah's teachings on animal rights (Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim) and environment (Ba'al Tashchit) continue to develop to meet these concerns, as part of an overall teaching of "Tikkun Olam", repairing the world.

Reading:

Handouts
Artson

It's a Mitzvah

pp. 196-215, 50-61

July 26 Tisha B'Av and Jerusalem— The 9th day of the month of Av is a day of mourning to commemorate the destruction of the First (586BCE) and Second (70 CE) Temples in Jerusalem. This day is the culmination of the three week period of mourning which marks the first breach of the walls of Jerusalem before the First Temple was destroyed.

Reading:

Strassfeld
Dosik
Greenberg

Jewish Holidays
Living Judaism
Traditional Jewish Household

pp 85-94
pp.196-199
pp.468-478

August 2 Berakhot: Daily Connections to God and Art of Prayer: Jewish traditional encourages us to recite 100 blessings each day. This session will strive to understand why?, by tackling such areas as: Communicating with God, Keva vs Kavannah, the minyan, the times of prayer (Shacharit, Mincha and Ma'ariv) the structure of Berakhot, their spiritual impact on our lives, and an introduction to the blessings for food.

Bring a siddur to class.

Reading:

Dosik Living Judaism
Greenberg Traditional Jewish Household
Strassfeld First Jewish Catalogue
Jacobs The Book of Jewish Practice
Jacobs The Book of Jewish Belief

pp.203-205;235-245
pp. 137-156
pp.49-63, 150-157
pp. 129-138
pp. 124-131

August 9 The Cycle of Life (Part 1): Birth, Brit and Bar/Bat Mitzvah: We look at the symbolism of the brit milah or brit habit, welcoming the baby into the covenant. We look at the significance of one's chosen name and the ceremony of Pidyon haben for some 30-day old boys. Jewish education and the real significance of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is also explored.

Reading:

Torah: Gn. 17:1-16; Nm. 3:44-51
Greenberg Traditional Jewish Household

Dosik Living Judaism
Olitzky & Isaacs The How To Handbook
Strassfeld Second Jewish Catalogue

pp.166-184,233-254,
264-282
pp. 17-19; 285-295
pp. 115-117
pp. 11-59, 61-83;
138-147

August 16 The Cycle of Life (Part 2): Marriage and Beyond: The Jewish wedding ceremony, its symbols and ceremony are discussed. Marriage as a sacred bond is explored and the place of divorce within Jewish thought (the get and the agunah) is examined.

Reading:

Torah: Gn. 1:24-28; 2:18; 21-24. Dt. 24:1-5
Dosik Living Judaism
Greenberg Traditional Jewish Household
Strassfeld Second Jewish Catalogue
Strassfeld First Jewish Catalogue

pp. 271-273,295-302
pp.120-136,215-232, 255-263, 283-286
pp. 91-102
pp. 158-171

August 23 The Cycle of Life (Part 3): Death and Beyond: The Jewish attitude towards death, the treatment of the deceased (Chevra Kadisha, Tahora and Tachrichim), the stages of mourning (onen, shiva, sheloshim, yahrzeit and yizkor). The afterlife is also considered.

Reading:

Torah: Gn. 34:5-8; Nm. 20:22-29
Dosik Living Judaism
Olitzky & Isaacs The How To Handbook
Greenberg Traditional Jewish Household

pp. 303-322
pp. 97-103
pp. 287-298

Strassfeld	Second Jewish Catalogue	pp. 130-137
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 172-183
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief	pp. 230-238

August 30 Elul - The Month of Preparation for Yamim Noraim/Rosh HaShanah: A discussion of the traditions of Elul, Selichot and the concepts of teshuvah and cheshbon hanefesh. Rosh Hashana, with all its symbolism and meaning is discussed. Bring a Machzor.

Reading:

Tanakh: Lv:23		
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 130-134
Olitzky & Isaacs	The How To Handbook	pp. 61-64
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 309-330
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp. 95-99

Sep 6 Yom Kippur: An introduction to the Mahzor and prayers such as U'nataneh Tokef and Avinu Malkeinu, the Shofar service, special customs of the day. The lead up to Yom Kippur (Aseret Yamei Teshuvah, Yamim Noraim), the Prayers of Confession, afflicting one's soul, the five prayer services and the scriptural readings.

Reading:

Tanakh:	Lv Ch:16	
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 134-146
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 330-341
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 64-72
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp. 99-124
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 107-117

Sep 13 Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah: The festival of Sukkot, its symbols, rituals and deeper meaning will be discussed. The skills required for waving the four species (Lulav, Etrog, Aravah and Hadas) will be taught.

Reading:

Torah	Ex 23:12-17; Dr 16:1-17	
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 147-151
Olitzky & Isaacs	The How To Handbook	pp. 65-72
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 342-373
Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays	pp. 125-160
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 73-78
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 98-106

Shemini Atzeret concludes the festivals of Tishrei; Simchat Torah is a later addition to Shemini Atzeret. The Torah both begins and ends its reading cycle at Simchat Torah. We will look at this practise, its rituals and symbols and appreciate its deeper values. The Jewish calendar is also cyclical. We will look at its composition and how the chaggim (Jewish holy days) find their place within it.

Reading:

See readings for Sukkot.		
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp.119-126;149-151
Olitzky & Isaacs	The How To Handbook	pp. 138-140
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.301-308;342-373

Erev Rosh Hashanah:	16 September
Rosh Hashanah Day 1:	17 September
Rosh Hashanah Day 2:	18 September
Erev Yom Kippur:	25 September
Yom Kippur:	26 September
Erev Sukkot:	30 September
Sukkot 1:	1 October
Sukkot 2:	2 October
Shemini Atzeret:	8 October
Erev Simchat Torah:	8 September
Simchat Torah	9 October

October Sukkot Celebration. BJC Sukkot Dinner (Pot luck vegetarian)

Bring a plate of vegetarian food or some drink to feed at least four other people. We will sit in the Sukkah, wave the lulav and etrog, discuss any unanswered questions and have an opportunity to better learn who are some of the other people in the class.

TERM FOUR

Oct 18 – Dec 6: 7:30-9:00pm

THE JEWISH STORY

Oct 18 Siddur: Its Structure and Meaning: The history of the Siddur; the Siddur as an expression of Jewish faith, hope and value; the structure of the service. A special focus is upon the Amidah, the central prayers of all services.

Bring a siddur to class.

Reading:

Strassfeld	Second Jewish Catalogue	pp 269 - 291
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp.201-202;207-210;226-234
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.157-159;189-193,208-211.

Oct 25 – UPJ Conference / Jews of Ashkenaz

November 1 Excursion to Sydney Jewish Museum.: An introduction to the Shoah: We have arranged for the museum to open exclusively for our class. We will visit the downstairs exhibition to learn about the first Jewish communities of Sydney. Australia, after Israel, has the highest per capita rate of Shoah survivors. A survivor will then give us a personalised tour of the upper floors of this museum.

Reading:

Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.443-448
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 181-183
Strassfeld	Jewish Holidays	pp. 56-62

Nov 8 Tzedakah and Gemilut Chassidim – The central precepts of righteous giving, both of money and self

Reading:

Dosik	Living Judaism	pp 1-19
Classroom handouts		

Nov 15 Lashon HaRa Literally meaning “the evil tongue” this refers to the transgressions of gossiping and slander and the evils that can result from these two acts.

Reading:

Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 198-207
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Nov 22 War and Peace The Jewish attitude to the ethics of War and Peace

Reading:

Classroom handouts

Nov 29 Chanukah: This latter Jewish holiday has intriguing roots, rich symbols and a plethora of tales explain its significance in Jewish life.

Reading:

Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 151-155;
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 374-386.

Dec 8 Ask the Rabbis An interactive conclusion to our Programme of Study and commencement for what lies beyond.