

BASIC JEWISH CONCEPTS
2010-5770/5771

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 4 – March 25: 7:30 – 9:00pm

LIVING WITH JEWISH IDENTITY IN JEWISH TIME

Feb 4 Introduction to Basic Jewish Concepts

Feb 11 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 18 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

Feb 25 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 4 Shabbat in the Synagogue: 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.

March 11 Shabbat in the Home: An experiential approach to the joys of Shabbat - from Hadlakat Hanerot and Kiddush to Zmirot and Havdalah. Bring your own candlesticks, Kiddush cup and tape recorder (for songs).

Mar 18 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).

March 25 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.

March 30 *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 11 *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

April 22 – July 1

HOME, COMMUNITY and WORLD

April 22 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	pp.203-205;235-245
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp. 137-156
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp.49-63, 150-157
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 129-138
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief	pp. 124-131

April 29 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.

May 6 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

May 13 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 18 Celebration of Shavuot: Tikkun Leil Shavuot. Services begin at 6:00 pm followed by, a dynamic study program lasting till midnight at least.

May 20 No Basic Jewish Concepts Class.

May 27 The Cycle of Life (Part 1): Birth, Brit and Bar/Bat Mitzvah: We look at the symbolism of the brit milah or brit habrit, 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	pp.166-184,233-254, 264-282
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp. 17-19; 285-295
Olitzky & Isaacs	The How To Handbook	pp. 115-117
Strassfeld	Second Jewish Catalogue	pp. 11-59, 61-83; 138-147

June 3 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	pp. 271-273,295-302
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.120-136,215-232, 255-263, 283-286
Strassfeld	Second Jewish Catalogue	pp. 91-102
Strassfeld	First Jewish Catalogue	pp. 158-171

June 10 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	pp. 303-322
Olitzky & Isaacs	The How To Handbook	pp. 97-103
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	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
Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice	pp. 60-65

June 17 The Jewish Home – 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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June 24 Jews of Eastern Europe: A journey through the culture and development of Ashkenaz.

July 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

TERM THREE

July 22 –September 16

ZMANIM – LIVING IN JEWISH TIME

July 22 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	Jewish Holidays	pp 85-94
Dosik	Living Judaism	pp.196-199
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.468-478

July 29 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. 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.

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		

Aug 5 History of Zionism: The continued struggle to found the Jewish State in the hostile world of the 20th century.

Aug 12 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

Aug 19 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.323-356
Greenberg	Traditional Jewish Household	pp.449-456.

Aug 26 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

Sep 2 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 16 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:	8 September
Rosh Hashanah Day 1:	9 September
Rosh Hashanah Day 2:	10 September
Erev Yom Kippur:	17 September
Yom Kippur:	18 September
Erev Sukkot:	22 September
Sukkot 1:	23 September
Sukkot 2:	24 September
Shemini Atzeret:	30 September
Erev Simchat Torah:	30 September
Simchat Torah	1 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 14 – Dec 2: 7:30-9:00pm

THE JEWISH STORY

- Oct 14 God** The development of Jewish thought and belief about God
Reading:
Dosik Living Judaism pp1 – 19
- Oct 21 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
- Oct 28 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
- Nov 4 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 11 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
- Nov 18 War and Peace** The Jewish attitude to the ethics of War and Peace
Reading:
Classroom handouts
- Nov 25 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 2 Ask the Rabbis** An interactive conclusion to our Programme of Study and commencement for what lies beyond.