

JRC Post B'nai Mitzvah Education Program

Mission

Through JRC's Post B'nai Mitzvah Education Program, we seek to:

- Engage our youth in analyzing and responding to contemporary and historical issues through a Jewish lens;
- Develop our youth's leadership and critical thinking skills;
- Help our youth find and deepen their personal linkage to Judaism; and
- Enhance the youth community at JRC.

Approach

We intend to build the program from the grassroots up. That is, the interests of the students will drive the curriculum and inform the class process. Our knowledgeable and strong teacher-facilitators will guide the sessions to allow our youth to explore Jewish issues, expand their skills, find their personal Jewishness and create community in a safe, comfortable and engaging environment.

The teacher-facilitators

The Program will be led by Aviva Feldman, Sam Frolichstein-Appel and Rabbi David.

Rabbi David Eber, Assistant Rabbi for Education, is excited to delve into contemporary and historical issues with JRC youth, using a Jewish lens.

Aviva Feldman, a JRC member and teacher, grew up at JRC, was a *madricha* and participated in JRC's High School Program. She has significant experience working with Jewish youth having worked as an assistant teacher at *Dorshei Tzedek* Reconstructionist Congregation during college, and has a master's degree in Education.

Sam Frolichstein-Appel also grew up at JRC and was highly involved throughout his youth at JRC and at Camp Havaya. Sam also worked at Camp Havaya multiple summers. He recently graduated from Brown University with a degree in Engineering.

The teacher-facilitators will draw on JRC's substantial "human resources," including guest speakers from the congregation, to help them go in depth on topics of interest to students and to bring in speakers who are working on the frontlines of these issues to present and discuss with the students. At all times, either Rabbi David or Aviva Feldman will be present and facilitating the class.

Curriculum

During the first two sessions of the year, the students will get to know each other in ice breakers, explore the question "what does it mean to be Jewish?", discuss their interests for the program and collectively establish a subject matter agenda for the year.

We expect that each subsequent session will be devoted to one area. Some subject areas may be discussed over multiple sessions.

Brainstorming with students, teacher-facilitators and parents in previous years has resulted in the following ideas for subjects or themes. During the first two sessions, students will have the opportunity to add to this list before the group collectively decides on the curriculum for the year.

- Jewish culture
- White Supremacy and Anti-Semitism
- Comparative religion
- Comparative Judaism
- Jewish images in media

- Jewish literature and Jews in literature
- Tikkun Olam
- Spirituality
- Current events (Mideast issues, domestic politics, others)
- Sexual ethics
- Social Media
- Connecting history to today

The core activity for the program sessions will be ***guided discussion and debate***, allowing our students to explore topics of interest to them in a free-flowing but well facilitated setting, and featuring people working on the front lines of these important issues. The class sessions may include any or all of the following:

- Readings or resource materials
- Presentations by teacher-facilitators or guests
- Hands-on activities
- Breakout groups
- Role-playing
- Games relevant to the subjects

While the program will be on Zoom for the time being, we continue to explore possibilities for safe in person gatherings.

Expectations

Students are expected to:

- come with an open mind and a willingness to think, discuss and explore;
- attend regularly; and
- be respectful of fellow students, teacher-facilitators and our space.

There will be very little out of class preparation required. Generally, we will use resource materials that students can read or review during class. Occasionally, we may ask students to read a small amount of material, conduct brief research or think about a specific point between class sessions. We will also encourage students to explore their interests outside of class and share what they have learned.

Details

Dates: The Program will be held on Sunday afternoons from 3-4 p.m on Zoom. The Program will begin on October 18, 2020 and end on April 25, 2021. (Calendars will be provided at the beginning of the school year.) There will be approximately 14 class sessions in 2020-2021.

Class schedule: Meet on Zoom for 15/20 min as a group, and then depending on size, various breakout groups for continued conversations. Class session on average will be 1hr on Zoom.

For more information contact Rabbi David Eber assistantrabbi@irc-evanston.org,
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