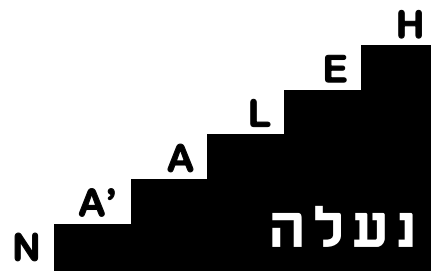


Na'aleh: Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

If synagogues were businesses, their product would be Jews. The more Jews they could manufacture from otherwise illiterate, assimilated, and un-self-aware members, the more successful they would be. That is (to continue the metaphor) the bottom line.

– Larry Kushner



This year-long (October-June) program engaged participants in a variety of Jewish learning opportunities designed to provide a fundamental grounding in Jewish tradition and practice from a sophisticated, adult perspective. Each participant was matched with a congregant mentor/advisor who provided input and monitored progress. The mentor also “presented” the participants to the congregation at the ceremony.

Program Outline & Requirements:

The core program met each Tuesday at 7:30 pm for 1.5-2 hours. There were four tracks or “paths of study”, with participants attending a session of each roughly once per month, for a total of 7-8 sessions in each path:

- ❶ Rabbi-led sessions: Intro to Judaism - focus on the rhythm of the Jewish year, the Jewish lifecycle, key practices and concepts (kashrut, Shabbat, Israel, God, etc.).
- ❷ Cantor-led sessions: focus on cantillation
- ❸ Congregant-led sessions: led by congregants with the requisite skill set, covered d'var torah writing, creative liturgy, the Biblical canon, Jewish history, Reconstructionism, etc.
- ❹ Participant self-study sessions: work in small groups to read and discuss books reflecting the particular Jewish interests of participants (history, spirituality, etc.)

In addition, participants were required to:

- Attend an information session, given once in September and once in October
- Attend Shabbat morning Torah study – minimum of five sessions during the year
- Attend Shabbat and holiday services; attend Tikkun Leil Shavuot (it fell on a Tuesday this year)
- Attend “Synagogue Skills: Hands On and Beyond,” a five-session Shabbat morning series
- *Optional:* Attend monthly “Rhythm and Meaning of Jewish Living” class with the rabbi
- If necessary, work with the cantor or a congregant/mentor on cantillation skills, dvar torah, etc.

Ceremony Requirements:

To take part in one of the ceremonies, participants were required to complete the above, and:

- Read torah or haftorah on one of the ceremony Shabbatot (June 1, June 22, September 21)
- Write and deliver a dvar torah, a 7-minute summary/comment introducing the weekly portion
- Write a piece of creative liturgy
- Write a “Jewish Journey” statement about the meaning of Judaism to him/her, and how that personal understanding/experience was impacted by the program

Fee: \$180 + a contribution to kiddush (minimum \$50). Scholarships available.

Journal: A celebration year book is being produced containing pieces written by the participants, selections from their divrei torah, etc. along with ads of congratulations.



WEST END SYNAGOGUE
A RECONSTRUCTIONIST CONGREGATION
www.westendsynagogue.org

190 AMSTERDAM AVE, AT 69TH ST
 (212) 579-0777