



# OVERVIEW

## FLORENCE MELTON ADULT MINI-SCHOOL

# CURRICULUM

The Adult Mini-School Institute retains sole ownership over the Adult Mini-School curriculum. The local sponsoring agency, the coordinator, and the teachers undertake not to publish or pass on the curriculum or parts thereof to any third party, or to make use of them for any purpose other than the Adult Mini-School program without the expressed written consent of the Adult Mini-School

## FACT SHEET

### **What is the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School?**

It is a school for adult Jewish learning that provides the opportunity to acquire a foundation in Jewish knowledge in a systematic way over a period of two years.

### **What are the goals of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School?**

- # To convey a basic but sophisticated core of Jewish knowledge.
- # To integrate Jewish history, Jewish law, Jewish language, Jewish practices and ideas.
- # To encourage Jews to become part of a learning community.
- # To stimulate critical thinking and reflection in a non-judgmental environment.
- # To teach the common roots and the experiences of a pluralistic Judaism while affirming each denominational group.
- # To enable the transfer of Jewish learning into the contemporary world, connecting Jewish study and Jewish life in a natural way.
- # To stimulate increased participation in the Jewish community.

### **What are the courses?**

#### **Rhythms of Jewish Living**

Introduces students to the ideas, beliefs, and practices which define and shape a Jewish life. This course demonstrates the consistency, the depth, the human sensitivity of Jewish life. A fundamental objective is to create awareness of *Kedusah*—separateness, holiness, specialness—of Jewish living.

#### **The Ethics of Jewish Living**

A text-centered approach to the study of Jewish ethical foundations. These foundations are broken down into categories, dealing with ethical issues such as justice, life and death, sexuality and community.

## **Purposes of Jewish Living**

Whereas most courses never answer the questions, who, what, where, when and how, this course is devoted to the question, “why?” Why is it that Jews do what they do and believe what they believe? The goal of this course is to identify the purposes of Judaism as they arose out of the historical experience. Once these are described, disparate and seemingly unconnected Jewish rituals and beliefs begin to make sense. A unifying idea that links all elements is the development of the covenant relationship with God.

## **Dilemmas of Jewish Living**

This course is to demonstrate that many critical issues facing the Jewish people today have been with us throughout history. In the course of pursuing the roots of current critical dilemmas, an overview and chronology of Jewish history will emerge. Jewish history is presented not only as a chronology of events but also as an ever-evolving set of ideas and conflicts resolved in a variety of ways in diverse communities in different times.

## **Which Judaism does the curriculum teach?**

The curriculum is nondenominational in nature. It is appropriate for all forms of Jewish commitment. Teachers present information in a descriptive manner (“this is our tradition”), and represent the attitude that Judaism can enrich life. The options offered by mainstream Judaism today are discussed.

## **Who can enroll?**

The classes are for adult learners who desire a strong foundation in Jewish learning. There are no prerequisites.

## **When do classes meet?**

Students meet once a week for 30 weeks for 2 1/2 hours per meeting. Students are asked to commit themselves to one year at a time. There are special extra-curricular activities that may be scheduled as well such as mikvah visits, field trips or cultural events. The day of the week and time depend each year on the location the class is established.

## **THE PURPOSES OF JEWISH LIVING**

**PURPOSE:** This course answers the questions “why is it that Jews do what they do and believe what they believe?” The goal of this course is to identify the purposes of Judaism as they arose out of the historical experience. Once these are described, disparate and seemingly unconnected Jewish rituals and beliefs begin to make sense. A unifying idea that links all elements is the development of the covenant or contractual relationship with God.

1. Introductory lesson
2. Creation
3. Human Beings
4. Sin
5. The chosen people
6. The Land of Israel
7. The Covenant
8. The Exodus
9. Miracles
10. The Revelation
11. Mitzvot I
12. Mitzvot II
13. Women I
14. Women II
15. What was Revealed on Mt. Sinai
16. Revelation, Torah & Halakhah
17. Theology & Practice-Driving on Shabbat
18. House for God
19. Providence
20. Leadership I
21. Leadership II
22. Prayer
23. Destruction & Exile
24. The Messianic Era
25. What happens after we die?
26. God’s Justice I
27. God’s Justice II
28. State of Israel
29. Study
30. Summary

## **THE RHYTHMS OF JEWISH LIVING**

**PURPOSE:** The Rhythms course introduces students to the ideas, beliefs, and practices which define and shape a Jewish life. This course demonstrates the consistency, the depth, the human sensitivity of Jewish life. A fundamental objective is to create awareness of Kedusha-separateness, holiness, specialness of Jewish living.

1. Introduction
2. Yamin Noraim
3. Shalosh Regalim
4. Sukkot
5. Kashrut
6. Brachot
7. Tefilah & Siddur
8. Tefilah & Siddur
9. Torah Services
10. Shabbat
11. Shabbat
12. Hanukkah
13. Jewish Calender, Rosh Hodesh
14. Tuman & Taharah
15. Birth
16. Conversion
17. Bar/Bat Mitzvah
18. Jewish Symbols
19. Purim
20. Shalosh Reglim
21. Pesach
22. Haggadah
23. Other days on the Calender
24. Marriage
25. Divorce
26. Death
27. Sefirat Ha-Omer-Shavout
28. Siyyum
29. Fast days
30. Summary

## **ETHICS OF JEWISH LIVING**

**PURPOSE:** This course is a text centered approach to the study of Jewish ethical foundations. These foundations are broken down into categories, dealing with ethical issues such as justice, life and death, sexuality and community.

1. Introduction
2. Moral awareness in Judaism
3. The worth of human life
4. Capital Punishment
5. Capital Punishment / Euthanasia
6. Euthanasia II
7. Suicide
8. Abortion I
9. Abortion II
10. All for one or one for all?
11. Who Shall live?
12. Organ Donation
13. Redeeming captives
14. What is hateful unto you
15. Truth telling
16. Lashon HaRah
17. Business ethics
18. Tzedekah
19. Becoming one flesh
20. Premarital Sex
21. Marriage
22. Divorce
23. Homosexuality I
24. Homosexuality II
25. Obligations to Parents
26. Obligations to Children
27. Animal & Environmental Responsibilities
28. Tikkun Olam
29. Overview
30. Summary

## DILEMMAS OF JEWISH LIVING

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this course is to demonstrate that many critical issues facing the Jewish people today have been with us throughout history. In the course of pursuing the roots of current critical dilemmas, an overview and chronology of Jewish history will emerge. Jewish history is thus presented not only as a chronology but as an ever developing set of ideas and conflicts resolved in a variety of ways.

1. Introduction
2. Saul & David
3. The Destruction of the Temple
4. The Hasmonean revolt and dynasty
5. Roman Rule
6. The rise of Christianity
7. The revolts against Rome
8. Exile
9. The Babylonian Center
10. Moslem Spain
11. Christian Spain
12. The Inquisition and Expulsion
13. The Center in Ashkenaz
14. Poland
15. Ashkenazic Culture
16. Community
17. Sabbateanism
18. Hasidism
19. Enlightenment and Emancipation
20. Responses to Modernity: Ideological Movements in Western Europe
21. Russia
22. Enlightenment in Eastern Europe
23. Revolutionary Movements
24. America: The first phase
25. Zionism
26. The Yishuv
27. The Holocaust
28. The State
29. America in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
30. Summary

