



*CHAI MITZVAH in action — growing congregational engagement!*

## Congregation Beth Ahm's Chai Mitzvah Class Celebration

Congregation Beth Ahm  
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Sidney Blackman  
Linda Bolton  
Paul Darmon  
Debra Darvick  
Martin Darvick  
Julie Englander  
Shaul Englander  
Jody Grossman  
Manny Kalef  
Nancy Kalef  
Debi King

*Small Group  
Participants*

Steven King  
Francine Levine  
Robert Levine  
Rene Lichtman  
Ruth Moltz  
Al Sasson  
Diane Sasson  
Alesa Silver  
Judy Vine  
Jeffrey Weiss  
Faye Wolf

**Chai Mitzvah** is a national program created in 2008 as a way to engage adults in a Jewish journey throughout their lives. Our participants have attended monthly study sessions, identified something Jewish that they wanted to learn, took on or deepened an existing Jewish ritual and engaged in social action. Now it is time to celebrate!

For more information about Chai Mitzvah, go to [www.chaimitzvah.org](http://www.chaimitzvah.org)

# The 9 Session Core Curriculum

**PART ONE:**  
Our Jewish  
Journeys  
Curriculum

- Topic 1: Adult Rites of Passage
- Topic 2: Philanthropy/Tzedakah
- Topic 3: Individual and Community
- Topic 4: Interpersonal Relationships
- Topic 5: Mindfulness/Conscious Living
- Topic 6: Adding New Insights to the Passover Seder
- Topic 7: Israel and the Jewish Spirit
- Topic 8: Gratitude/Modim Anachnu Lach
- Topic 9: Judaism and the Environment

## Individual Projects of the Participants

**PART TWO:**  
POP –  
Power Of  
Passion:  
individual  
choices  
for  
each  
participant

### SIDNEY BLACKMAN

**Learning Project:** I found that taking this course and the discussions in class and with my wife about Jewish practices and thinking more meaningful. Especially one's responsibility to family, friends, co-workers and the community at large which I had taken for granted.

**Social Action Project:** I was asked to blow the Shofar prior to the High Holidays at the Jewish old folk's home; the look on their faces will want me to do it every year. The appreciation that they showed was amazing. I have also visited seniors who are members of our shul. I have talked to the person who is responsible for Meals on Wheels to start making deliveries.

**Ritual Practices:** I have started taking a conversational Hebrew class at our shul, and I have also obtained a transliterated linear siddur, to help me learn what I am saying in Hebrew.

### PAUL DARMON

**Learning Project:** I have learned and studied about the biblical and historical origins of the "counting the Omer" ritual and its kabbalistic implications and led a Saturday morning Torah class and also an "On One Foot" mini-learning session regarding this topic.

**Social Action Project:** I have volunteered at the Jewish Dental Clinic one day a month. I also volunteered at the Saint Vincent DePaul Dental clinic one day a month providing free dental services to those in need.

**Ritual Project:** I counted the Omer and incorporated the kabbalistic meditations every evening for the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot for the first time in my life.

### DEBRA DARVICK

**Learning Project:** I picked up the thread of my Hebrew language studies once again. I also studied the structure of the prayer services with Rabbi Krakoff.

**Social Action Project:** I have been involved in a project that coordinates giving food-filled backpacks for kids to take home to their families on the weekends.

**Ritual Project:** I learned to read one new Torah portion for Sisterhood Shabbat.

### MARTIN DARVICK

**Learning Project:** I studied the structure of the prayer services with Rabbi Krakoff.

**Ritual Project:** I have found a new reading to add to our Friday night blessings.

### JULIE ENGLENDER

**Learning Project:** In order to connect to prayer in a more satisfying way, I read Reuven Hammer's book, *Entering Jewish Prayer*, and have begun to read Heschel's *Quest for God*.

**Social Action Project:** I am part of a group of volunteers that support the Jewish Senior Life Community Garden at Temple Emanuel. I help to plan activities for the residents at the Tietel and Prentis apartments related to the garden, such as seeding, planting, and harvesting as well as deal with garden maintenance.

**Ritual Project:** I have worked on increasing my participation in communal prayer.

### SHAUL ENGLENDER

**Learning Project:** I participated weekly in a Parashat Hashavua discussion with Rabbi Elimlech Silberberg.

**Social Action Project:** I volunteered on a regular basis at the Jewish Senior Life Apartments Community Garden.

**Ritual Project:** I learned the Friday night Kiddush and celebrated Shabbat at home on a regular basis.

## JODY GROSSMAN

**Learning Project:** I participated in a conversational Hebrew class taught by Beth Ahm member Chava Adler. A few of us in the Chai Mitzvah program met with Chava on Sunday mornings for a very worthwhile and enjoyable class.

**Social Action Project:** I chose to participate in this year's projects organized by Beth Ahm's Tikkun Olam Social Action Team (TOSAT). This included cooking and serving at the Ronald McDonald House, contributing to Yad Ezra, the mitzvah crib, and to families for Hanukkah.

**Ritual Project:** When I was a young girl, I said the Sh'ma with my mom every night before bed. For my Ritual Project, I started saying the Sh'ma at bedtime once again.

## MANNY KALEF

**Learning Project:** 9 a.m. Shabbat Study group.

**Social Action Project:** I continued to deliver for Meals On Wheels and I participated in a variety of Beth Ahm activities.

**Ritual Project:** I intend to wear a Kittel on High Holy Days.

## NANCY KALEF

**Learning Project:** Since Rabbi Rubenstein arrived at Beth Ahm, I have attempted to attend as many of his Study Sessions as I can possibly get into my calendar. During this past year, I have continued to attend Conversation Cafe, Shabbat events, Bet Midrash, On-One-Foot mini-learning sessions, book reviews, and any other time the Rabbi teaches.

**Social Action Project:** I have mentored congregants and guests to navigate through Siddur Eit Ratzon. Since September of 2012, I have held two classes and six attendees have enjoyed the learning experience.

**Ritual Project:** My new ritual has been to light Shabbat candles. I have not participated in this mitzvah for over 25 years. It feels great to get back into the swing of Shabbat properly.

## DEBI KING

**Learning Project:** I attended Howie Lupovitch's lectures, read Jewish themed books and met with Nancy Kalef to help me understand the prayer book for Shabbat.

**Social Action Project:** I have become more active with Tikkun Olam Social Action Team (TOSAT) including buying Chanukah gifts for two families (ten people) and cooking for Ronald McDonald House.

**Ritual Project:** I have continued weekly minyan and attended a few Shabbat morning services.

## STEVEN KING

**Learning Project:** I attended Howie Lupovitch's lectures, and the DVD lecture series.

**Social Action Project:** I assisted the office staff with mailings.

**Ritual Project:** I began attending minyan on a weekly basis and attended a few Shabbat morning services.

## FRANCINE LEVINE

**Learning Project:** I have been reading the Torah portion and commentaries on it each week.

**Social Action Project:** I volunteer now for Friendship Circle Bakery Project, helping young adults with cognitive delays or autism learn to bake bread and sell it at the Friendship Circle. I still volunteer for the Friends of IDF and have done so for the past 11 years.

**Ritual Project:** I have learned a few more prayers and have a stronger voice with them. This happens to be an ongoing project for me.

## ROBERT LEVINE

**Learning Project:** I'm exploring Mussar through the study of Rabbi Hayim Luzzato's *The Path of The Just*.

**Social Action Project:** I'm volunteering as a docent at the Holocaust Memorial Center.

**Ritual Project:** I'm leyning Torah at Minyan.

## RENE LICHTMAN

**Learning Project:** I have listened to a number of books on tape and bought the texts that went along with them, including:

- Professor Shai Cherry: *Introduction to Judaism*
- Professor Isaiah Gafni: *Beginnings of Judaism*
- Professor Howard Lupovitch DVD's on development of Judaism, both Sephardic and Ashkenazi.

**Social Action Project:** I continue to speak at the Holocaust Memorial Center, to classes of students. I conclude my presentations by stressing tolerance and the need for them to not be "bystanders", and to challenge such things as bullying when they encounter it. I am a member of the TOSAT and the JCRC.

**Ritual Project:** I have met with Bob Levine to review the Morning Minyan Service, so as to improve my understanding of it.

## RUTH MOLTZ

**Learning Project:** I have been learning modern Hebrew with Chava Adler. I attend the DVD lecture series led by Nancy Kaplan. I've been doing self-study about Jewish History and customs.

**Social Action Project:** I volunteered to be a resource person for JGN. Two of my Catholic friends have attended, and will be attending future sessions of the DVD lecture series with me led by Nancy Kaplan with the purpose of learning more about Judaism.

**Ritual Project:** I attended nearly every Saturday service since July 2012. I attended Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services for the first time.

## AL SASSON

**Learning Projects:** 1. Learning the long Kiddush. 2. Learning the Kaddish. 3. I took an online course on Astro-Physics and am currently taking Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

**Social Action Projects:** 1. As part of the Tikkun Olam Committee: a. Deliver food to the home bound at Yad Ezra, quarterly. b. Served dinner at Ronald McDonald House 2. I am involved with Kadima, Common Ground and Hillel of Metro Detroit (HMD).

**Ritual Project:** I join the daily Minyan on the first Wednesday of each month.

## DIANE SASSON

**Learning Project:** I have been taking the Jews and Literature class with Howard Lupovitch. It is an excellent class.

**Social Action Project:** I have volunteered at Yad Ezra to deliver meals and at Ronald McDonald House to serve meals. I also volunteered at Bookstock.

**Ritual Project:** I am tutoring my grandson, Max Sasson, for his Bar Mitzvah with prayers and Torah reading.

## ALESA SILVER

**Learning Project:** I studied the history and significance of Kaddish.

**Social Action Project:** I volunteered regularly by visiting hospice patients via Jewish Family Services.

**Ritual Project:** I participated in evening minyan regularly, especially during shloshim.

## JUDY VINE

**Learning Project:** I joined a Beginners Conversational Hebrew class and learned that one can be a beginning Hebrew student for a long time.

**Social Action Project:** I accepted a board seat with Jewish Gay Network, an advocacy/education organization that works on behalf of the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender community.

**Ritual Project:** Our family added the ritual of a D'var Torah to our Shabbat dinner table.

## JEFFREY WEISS

**Learning Project:** I learned to read Torah and read the Maftir during a Shabbat service.

**Social Action Project:** I volunteered twice per month at Fleischman Senior Residence during Thursday Bingo.

**Ritual Project:** I am attending evening minyan, Minha and Shabbat services on a more frequent basis.

## FAYE WOLF

**Learning Project:** I took a class from Jewish Federation's Florence Melton Mini School on the Talmudic Investigation of Emet VaShekker (Truth and Lies).

**Social Action Project:** I attended afternoon/evening services on a weekly basis at Beth Ahm to assure a minyan, with a special effort to attend Minha on Shabbat.

**Ritual Project:** With the aid of a tutor and self-teaching, my son and I learned how to put on Tefillin and say the morning prayers.

*Increased Engagement!  
...as the Rabbi said:*

*“Look at all the things people did for their learning, social action and ritual... and I didn't have to create anything new... it was all there in my congregation!” -Rabbi Steven Rubenstein*

*Success for Chai Mitzvah is  
more engaged Beth Ahm  
congregant!*

