

18 Little Ways to Invite and Support Conversion In Your Congregation

- ❖ Order the URJ Outreach and Synagogue Community brochures¹ about conversion and display them prominently in your synagogue.
- ❖ Feature monthly columns in your synagogue newsletter about choosing Judaism as an adult, written by born Jews and those who have converted.²
- ❖ Create a shelf of recommended books in your synagogue library, containing books about Judaism, conversion and creating a Jewish home, and announce new titles in your bulletin and on your website.
- ❖ Recognize the *simcha* of conversion as a joyous Jewish life cycle event by placing messages of congratulations to new converts in your synagogue newsletter, alongside the congratulations for *b'nai mitzvah* and Confirmation.
- ❖ Make sure the whole community takes part in celebrating new Jews through public conversions during regular worship services that include a *d'var* Torah or a speech by the new conversion candidate.
- ❖ Engage Brotherhood or Women of Reform Judaism in the celebration of conversion by having them present a gift to all new converts.³
- ❖ Give the honor of an *aliyah* to all who have chosen Judaism as an adult during the previous year, at an Outreach Shabbat or a High Holy Day service.
- ❖ Make conversion a sermon topic during a Friday night worship service.
- ❖ Schedule an Outreach program that features a panel composed of converts and born Jews who will share their stories with your congregation about why they are Jews by choice.⁴
- ❖ Encourage the establishment of a mentoring program in your synagogue as a support and resource for those who are not Jewish or who are newly Jewish.⁵
- ❖ Send one or more of your synagogue leaders to the URJ/HUC Outreach Fellows Conversion Certification program in Cincinnati to be certified as group facilitators for those considering or on the path to conversion (offered in 2004 and 2006) or to the Outreach Fellows Interfaith Family Certification program (offered in 2005 and 2007).⁶
- ❖ Establish a series of meetings with the rabbi where non-Jewish spouses can discuss their issues and challenges in the synagogue and can ask questions about Judaism.⁷

- ❖ Establish an annual Outreach Shabbat or an Outreach Weekend in your synagogue.⁸
- ❖ Offer adult education classes that study texts about welcoming the stranger and the role of the proselyte in our tradition. During Shavuot, use the Book of Ruth to teach about conversion.
- ❖ Establish an Outreach chair and committee in your synagogue.
- ❖ Purchase the 1997, 2000, 2002, and 2004 Outreach Idea Books (URJ Press) and borrow creative programming ideas from Reform synagogues around the country that recognize and support conversion and educate our synagogue members about Judaism.
- ❖ Offer a workshop for Jews, whose partners are going through the process of conversion to discuss ways of participating in and supporting their partner's conversion process.⁹
- ❖ Provide education and support for interfaith families who are looking to deepen their connection to Judaism and their home celebration of Jewish life.¹⁰

¹ *Becoming a Jew*

Inviting Someone You Love to Become a Jew

When a Family Member Converts: Q & A About Conversion to Judaism

Call (212) 650-4230 or e-mail outreach@uri.org to order.

² See 2004 Outreach Idea Book, p.177.

³ See 2000 Idea Book, p. 87.

⁴ See 1997 Idea Book, p. 195.

⁵ See 2004 Outreach Idea Book, p. 183 and 2002 Idea Book, p. 212.

⁶ Visit: www.uri.org/outreach/welcome/fellows.shtml

⁷ See 2002 Idea Book, p. 141.

⁸ See 2000 Idea Book, p. 38 and 2002 Idea Book, p. 44.

⁹ See 2002 Idea Book, p. 197 and 2004 Outreach Idea Book, p. 162.

¹⁰ See 2002 Idea Book, p. 135.