

Foundation Course Program Overview

Thursdays April 24 - September 11, 2025, 7-9pm, held at Shtiebel

Core Learning Topics

- **Torah: Our People's Story** **April 24**
This is an introduction to the Torah's key narratives, personalities, and themes, with a focus on brit (covenant) as a foundational concept in Jewish identity.
- **Ancient Israel: Kings, Priests, Prophets** **May 1**
Exploration of the Tanakh's tripartite structure, historical development, and the role of biblical texts in Jewish liturgical life.
- **Two Jews, Three Opinions** **May 15**
A study of Jewish diversity across geography, culture, and religious practice, including an introduction to contemporary Jewish denominations.
- **Sacred Days: The Festivals of the Year** **May 22**
Overview of major Jewish holidays, emphasising the Jewish calendar as a framework for Jewish values and beliefs.
- **Shabbat: A Cathedral in Time** **May 29**
Understanding the meaning, structure, and observance of Shabbat, including its rituals and contemporary applications.
- **Prayer: Keva and Kavanna** **June 5**
A deep dive into Jewish prayer, its structure, key blessings, and personal spiritual engagement.
- **Passover: Exodus and Us** **June 12**
Exploring the Passover narrative, the Seder, and dietary laws associated with this foundational Jewish festival.
- **God Wrestling** **June 19**
A discussion of Jewish theology, diverse conceptions of God, and personal spiritual reflection.
- **The Rabbinic Revolution** **June 26**
A historical survey of Rabbinic Judaism, including the evolution of Jewish law and key rabbinic texts.
- **Days of Awe** **July 3**
Examining the themes and observances of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, with a focus on the practice of teshuvah (repentance).

- Jews & Food** **July 10**
 An introduction to kashrut (Jewish dietary laws) and the role of food in Jewish tradition, including blessings and ethical considerations.
- Under Crescent and Cross** **July 17**
 A historical overview of Jewish life under Christian and Muslim rule, including significant figures like Rashi and Maimonides.
- The Greatest Blessing** **July 24**
 Jewish perspectives on relationships, marriage, and mikvah, with discussions on inclusion and contemporary Jewish ethics.
- From Generation to Generation** **July 31**
 Exploring Jewish lifecycle events such as Brit Milah, Simchat Bat, and B'nei Mitzvah, along with Jewish approaches to education and naming.
- Life's Hard Times** **August 7**
 A look at Jewish responses to illness, mourning practices, and ethical issues surrounding end-of-life decisions.
- Hatred and Heroism** **August 14**
 A study of anti-Semitism throughout history, culminating in Holocaust survivor testimony and Jewish responses to trauma and resilience.
- Israel: A Great Dream** **August 28**
 An exploration of the significance of Israel in Jewish thought, the history of Zionism, and the connection between Diaspora Jews and the State of Israel.
- The Jewish Mission to Heal the World** **September 4**
 A closing session on Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), Tzedakah (charity), and Tzelem Elohim (human dignity) as foundational Jewish values.

Optional Experiential Programs

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| • Challah Bake & Shabbat Table Service | Fri July 11 | 5-7pm |
| • Havdalah & Tisha B'Av | Sat August 2 | 5-7pm |
| • Slichot & Preparing for the New Year | Thurs August 21 | 7-9pm |
| • Jewish Food | Thurs September 11 | 7-9pm |

Upcoming Shtiebel Community Events & Festival

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| • Shabbat Zikaron (ANZAC & Yom HaSho'ah Memorial) | Fri April 25 | 5.30-7pm |
| • Shabbat Yisrael (Yom HaZikaron & Yom Ha'Atzmaut) | Fri May 2 | 5.30-7pm |
| • Shabbat Lag B'Omer | Fri May 16 | 5.30-7pm |
| • Shavuot Ma'ariv Multigenerational Program | Fri June 1 | 5-7pm |
| • Shavuot Shacharit Service | Sat June 2 | 10.30am-12pm |
| • Share Shabbat | Fri 8 August | 5.30-8pm |

