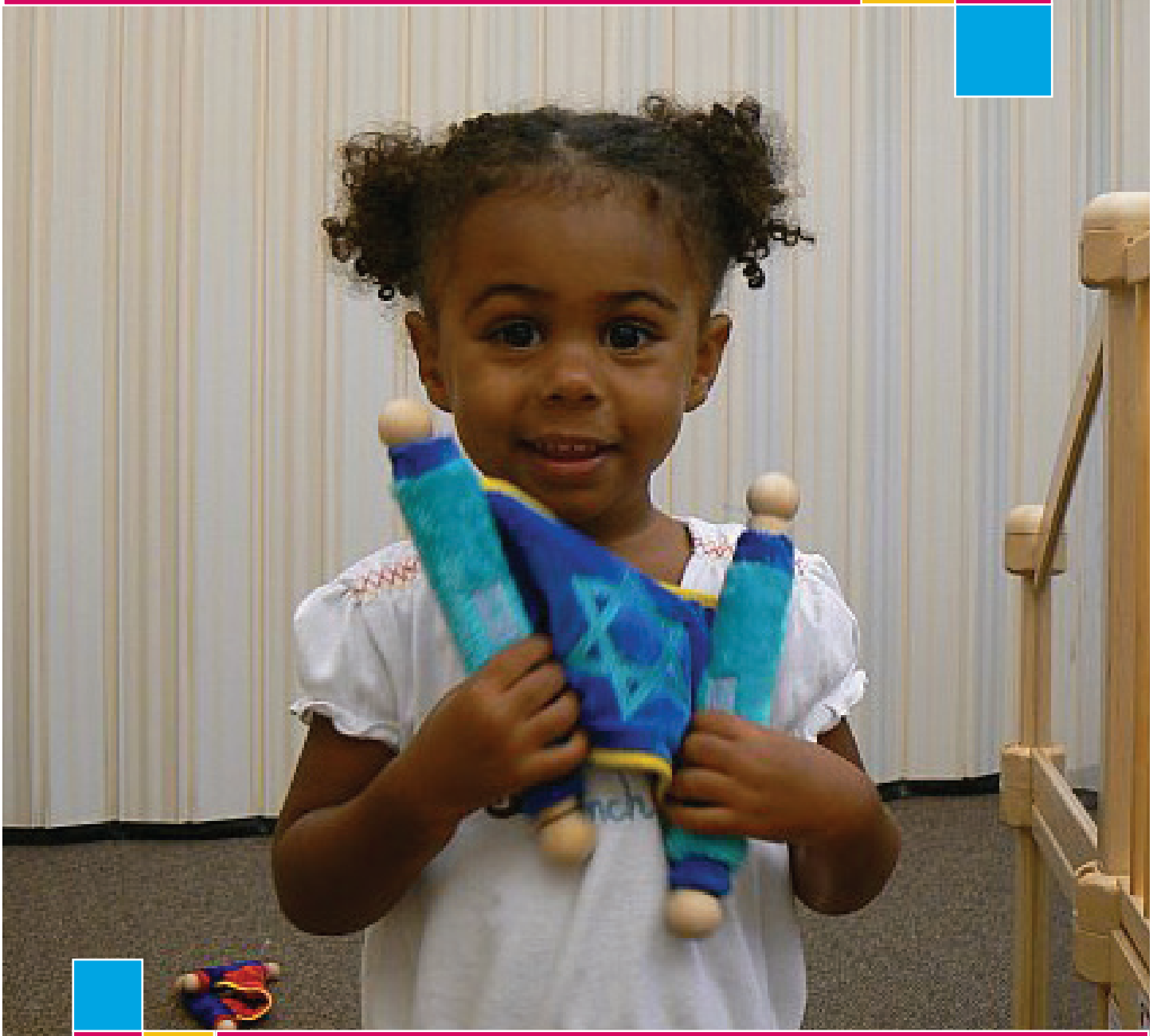
# Audacious Hospitality
# Jews Of Color
# Educational Resource Module

**A Supplement to the Audacious Hospitality Toolkit**



*Pilot Edition*

UNION *for* REFORM JUDAISM
Building Communities.
Reimagining Jewish Life.

# Audacious HospitalityJews of Color (JOC) Educational Resource Module

## An Educational Resource to Help Congregations, Communities, and Groups to be Proactively Inclusive of Jews of Color and Their Loved Ones

**Executive Editor**
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# WELCOME

# Welcome

Welcome to the Audacious Hospitality Jews of Color Educational Resource Module. This module builds on the concepts shared in the Audacious Hospitality Pilot Toolkit and focuses specifically on the knowledge base needed to meet the needs of Jews of Color.

## Our Values, Our Journey

Whether your community has been working thoughtfully on issues of racial justice and inclusion for a long time, or if you are just starting out, this module will support you in the work of becoming more diverse and aware. Some aspects of this work may be new to you and difficult to work through. We hope to be a resource to you in this work through this module and through training that will expand on the concepts that it discusses. Accordingly, this module cannot be used as simply a checklist. Rather, it should be seen as a starting point for having invaluable conversations and creating long-term relationships. It is important to take this first step as a building block and to then go on to incorporate tailored trainings and consulting to create a truly inclusive environment. You can contact the Audacious Hospitality team for support at any time.

This toolkit is designed to help us think through how we can proactively create a community fully supportive to all members equally. Jews of Color are part of our community and it is important that this is demonstrated in the ways we build our community. The goal of these resources is to support creating communities that fully reflect the reality of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic Jewish community, and support congregations, camps and Jewish educational programs in participating in racial justice work that creates a world that is safer and celebratory of Jews of Color.

## Layout

This module is built to be used by congregations, summer camps and youth programs. The module is divided into the following sections:

**Jewish Identity and Community**

This section provides a framework to understand and discuss Jewish diversity. It provides terminology and historical references to understand the vast composition of the global Jewish community and how this impacts our understanding of Jewish identity today.

**Awareness and Inclusion Resources**

In this section we look at the ways that our understandings of race have developed and how this impacts the way we perceive and create Jewish community and identity. We begin to look at biases that block us from creating authentic relationships and strong communities, and understanding changes we can make.

**Literacy Resources**

This section includes an extensive glossary to support the work of inclusion and racial justice, as well as a book list to help us expand our libraries and our deepen our understanding on these issues.

This Pilot version of the JOC Educational Resource Model will continue to expand with additional sections that cover adult and youth educational materials, racial justice educational resources, and much more.

# JEWISH IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

# Jewish Identity and Jewish Diversity

**In a world where there is a consistent drive to fit people into neat little boxes, being Jewish is an enigma.** Are Jews a race, a culture, an ethnicity, multiple ethnicities, a people, a tribe, a historical civilization, or a religion? When does the community decide the parameters of its identity? When is it decided by others or imposed upon us?

There is an amazing diversity of Jews in the world, Mizrahi Jews from the Middle East, Sephardic Jews originally from Spain and Portugal, Ashkenazi Jews from Western and Eastern Europe, Beta Yisrael Jews from Ethiopia and many more. To add to these diverse Jewish communities, there are also people of color who have converted to Judaism, children of color who are adopted by Jewish parents, and children are born into multi-racial Jewish families. Yet when a person of color walks into a predominantly white Jewish space, they are very often treated as an anomaly or an outsider. All Jewish people deserve to feel that our Jewish spaces are their home. For this to happen, the Jewish community must understand that Jews come from all racial backgrounds. We are a multi-racial, multi-ethnic Jewish community.

Searching for a new Jewish community can be a daunting task for anyone. For many Jews of Color, it means facing the risk that you will be treated as a curious stranger whose place is not certain until you explain your presence, rather than being welcomed with excitement as a newcomer who has a lot to offer the community and intrinsically belongs there. This is a process that can feel uncomfortable at best, alienating and dehumanizing at its worst. This often leads to Jews of Color leaving organized Jewish communities. Unfortunately, when Jews of Color leave our communities because they do not feel welcome, they become less visible, which leads to even less awareness of how multiracial the Jewish community actually is.

**What can our community do to create spaces that are truly safe and welcoming for Jews of Color?** How can we create places where anyone who walks into the doors of a Jewish community is treated with respect and feels like they are coming home to family, to people who see them like they belong?

**Our communities are not immune to the impact of the racism** in North America (particularly the United States) in both overt and subtle ways. This racism impacts our ability to create authentic relationships across race often in subconscious and insidious ways. For too long, we have attempted to be "color blind", avoiding conversations about race, thinking this would aid in creating equality in our Jewish spaces. In order to become communities ready to welcome Jews of Color we need to have honest conversations about race, even though these conversations may be uncomfortable, new, and scary.

In this JOC Resource Module we strive to provide a set of resources that will allow us to begin the vital conversations that can lead to more welcoming communities and more authentic relationships. These resources are only a start. Our Audacious Hospitality team will continue to add resources that will further this work, and building a healthy, vibrant, and diverse community requires a commitment to keep learning and growing, that takes time and patience, and the willingness to be open to change and new thinking. We hope these resources are useful in building the communities that we envision; where Jews of Color feel welcome and safe, and that provide space for their authenticity and leadership. Thank you for working with us towards a fully inclusive Reform Jewish future for all Jews and their loved ones.

# Jewish Identity: Terminology FAQ

How human beings construct identity is complicated and can be difficult to discuss, as language shifts and changes over time. It is worthwhile to acknowledge the tremendous variety of understanding of these terms and ideas within and outside the Jewish community. At the same time, it is also important to have a shared starting place in order to have an effective conversation, even if we do not agree. We hope that this discussion of terms is a useful starting point for deeper conversations and understanding. **So, before we go any further, let's define and examine some of the terms that relate to being Jewish.**

**Culture** is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts.

**Is Judaism a Culture?** Yes, multiple! Jews have created amazing works of art, foods, languages, inside jokes, music, dance and many more forms of culture. Due to our long experiences spread out across the world in the diaspora, we developed multiple cultures based on where Jewish communities lived: Sephardic Judaism in Spain, Mizrachi Judaism in the Middle East, Beta Yisrael culture in Ethiopia, and many more. Many of these Jewish cultures have their own additional fusion languages, such as Ladino and Yiddish, in addition to Hebrew and Aramaic, which we share through our sacred texts. The whole of the Jewish community is incredibly multicultural.

**Ethnicity** refers to particular groups of people that share some common ancestry, traditions, language, or dialect because they originated from a specific region or location. Before many countries were formed, ethnicities were a way to classify the people from a certain location who shared a particular culture. The boundaries of countries were often drawn to include a majority of people of a particular ethnicity (Greeks in Greece, Maori in New Zealand, Anglos and Saxons in England) while others included many diverse ethnicities (Spain includes people who identify as Basque, Catalan, Gallego, Gitano and other ethnicities) This sometimes causes a conflation of terminology for "nation" and "ethnicity."

**Are Jews an Ethnicity?** Yes. Similar to culture, Jews are multi-ethnic because we originate from multiple parts of the world. Iraqi and Yemeni Jews may both be considered culturally Mizrachi, but have ethnic differences amongst their communities. The same goes for German and Russian Jews who are both Ashkenazi, but may speak different dialects of Yiddish and eat very different foods. Finally, because of conversion, someone of any ethnicity can choose to convert, adding to the incredible multi-layered diversity of the Jewish people.

**Race** is a socially constructed classification of people not based on biological or scientific truth. In North America, race has been used to legitimize the dominance of white people over people of color. Oppression and privilege are integral to the way racial categories were designed, and this impacts the institutions in our society that provide civil rights, housing, education, health care and intentionally obstructs interpersonal relationships across race. While race is not a scientific or factual category, the practice and history of classification of people by race has led to how they are treated, which results in very real, lived experiences.

**Are Jews a Race?** No. While we are certainly not a single race, there are Jewish people of every race. Jews are a multiracial community. Jews by both birth and conversion are white, black, Asian, Latinx, Indigenous, and Middle Eastern. Because race is a social construct, there are times that this concept is confusing and changes over time. Today, most Jews of European descent (Ashkenazi) receive the privileges of being white, which are simultaneously denied to Jews of Color.

**Nation** refers to a large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own.

**Are Jews a Nation?** It's complicated. Before the 19th century, the term "nation" was relatively interchangeable with the word ethnicity, and didn't require the group in question to possess either territory or a government. So, under that definition, Jews were a nation, who in some European ghettos collected their own taxes, ran their own courts, and had a level of self-governance. The State of Israel identifies as a Jewish Nation. However, Israelis can be Jews, Arabs, Druze and other ethnicities. Jews who are citizens of another country and who do not originate from the State of Israel would not be considered ethnically Israeli, or citizens of Israel. At the same time, diaspora Jews faced accusations of disloyalty to the nations where they were citizens due to the concept of Jews as a nation. The sense of nationhood was also magnified by the systematic expulsion and oppression of Jewish communities from countries that did not recognize or protect them as full citizens.

**People/Peoplehood** is the awareness of the underlying unity that makes the individual a part of a group.

**Are Jews a People?** Yes! This is one of the best terms to describe the collective of those who identify as Jews. In Torah, it talks of *amcha*, which means "your people." Peoplehood is a form of collective identity and consciousness that includes a shared past and future and the inheritance of a vast body of thought and diversity of cultures. Jews of every ethnicity, race and culture are part of the Jewish people.

**Religion** is a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman entity or entities, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

**Are Jews a Religion?** Yes. Judaism is a religion. However, since a person can be culturally and ethnically Jewish, they can identify as Jewish without practicing any religion or practicing a different religion. There is a tremendous diversity in the practice of the Jewish religion. While we share the same sacred texts and values, the *minhag*—the local custom—can vary even for synagogues of the same movement in the same city.

**Tribe** is any aggregate of people united by ties of descent from a common ancestor, community of customs and traditions, adherence to the same leaders, etc.

**Are Jews a Tribe?** In some ways. By this definition, we do hail from a common ancestor, but we do not adhere to common leaders, and we follow a diverse set of customs. This is mostly used in a non-formal way to refer to Jewish Peoplehood.

**Civilization** is a developed state of human society, referring to a heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political systems and specific artifacts and technologies.

**Are Jews a Civilization?** Yes. Jewish communities have played a role in creating all aspects of civilization and it is a way to include collectively Jewish communities of multiple cultures and ethnicities.

So, we can say that **Jews are a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural people** who began as a tribe and are continuing to build an evolving Jewish civilization together that includes a religion and a nation.

# Wherever You Go: The Diversity of the Global Jewish Diaspora

The origin story of the Jewish people starts with a single family with common matriarchs (Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah) and patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) whose children ultimately made up the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob's family entered Egypt as a small clan but left as a nation, with his family growing exponentially. In their escape from slavery, they were joined by others wishing to flee, a mixed multitude who joined them in the wilderness and were with them at Sinai. Exodus 13:38 says, "And also, a great mixed multitude went up with them (into the wilderness), and flocks and cattle, very much livestock."

There are many different understandings of who was included in this mixed multitude of people. Many believe this included disgruntled Egyptians and other enslaved communities, but what we are sure of is that from the moment the Jewish people left Egypt, the diversity within the community increasingly expanded. This diversity included interfaith and inter-racial families, including Moses' own family.

His wife, Tzipporah, was the daughter of Jethro, a Midianite priest. Jethro was so committed to being an ally that he was willing to make sacrifices in the Israelite Temple as a show of respect to his son-in-law and acted as Moses' advisor on matters of leadership. The Torah describes Tzipporah as Cushite, originally from the land of Cush in Sub-Saharan Africa, around where Sudan lies now. It was out of this mixed multitude that the people of Israel formed into a unified whole after 40 years of wandering in the desert.

Today, researchers only have a rough idea of how many Jews there are in the world. Current sources estimate between 13 to 15 million people.

The Jewish population of Israel only recently surpassed that of the United States, each with Jewish populations of between 5 and 6 million people. The country with the next largest Jewish population is France, with just under half a million, followed by Canada and the United Kingdom.

Since ancient times, Jews have lived all over the world, creating unique and diverse cultures. These Jewish communities have been distinctive both from other cultures in the countries where they reside, as well from Jewish communities in other countries, often creating their own languages, foods, music, liturgy, and holiday practices.

In North America, Jews have immigrated from all over the world and brought their cultural diversity with them. Educating the next generation of Jews about the rich diversity of Jewish cultural heritages is an important part of preparing communities to be welcoming to Jews of color and Jews of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

**Mizrahi Jews.** Mizrach is the Hebrew word for "East." Mizrahi Jews originate from communities in the Middle East, the original birthplace of the Jewish people. This includes Iraqi Jews, also called Babylonian Jews, who have lived in Mesopotamia since 700 B.C.E. This group also includes Persian Jews, Palestinian Jews, Yemenite Jews, Syrian Jews, and other communities throughout the Middle East. Several of these communities developed Judeo-Arabic, a language of mostly Arabic word, written in Hebrew script. There are small Jewish communities that remain throughout the Middle East. Many Mizrahi Jews immigrated to Israel, France and the U.S. The largest Syrian community in the world outside of Syria currently lives in Brooklyn.

**Beta Yisrael.** The Jews of Ethiopia trace their origins to the tribe of Dan, one of the sons of Jacob. Some members of Beta Yisrael believe the tribe of Dan traveled down into East Africa directly after the Exodus; others believe it was in the 10th century B.C.E. after the death of King Solomon when the Northern Kingdom of Judah split from the Southern Kingdom of Israel. The Beta Yisrael community was spread out over 500 villages in the Gondar region of Ethiopia. In the seventh century, the community experienced a brief period of political independence, but otherwise experienced considerable political strife with its neighbors, as well as vulnerability to political change. The label Falashas has historically been used to refer to this group, but it is actually a derogatory term meaning "landless wanderers." In recent times the community re-claimed the name Beta Yisrael, The House of Israel. In 1977, the State of Israel decided the Law of Return applied to Ethiopian Jews, and since then the majority of the community has made *aliyah* to Israel, though small communities still exist in Ethiopia.

**Sephardic Jews.** Sephardic Jews originate from the Iberian Peninsula, including Spain and Portugal. There is some evidence that Jews arrived in the Iberian Peninsula in the 10th century B.C.E. as part of King Solomon's explorations and an alliance with King Hiram of Tyre. By the second century, larger Jewish settlements emerged. There were three periods in Spain when it was decreed that Jews would be forcibly converted to Christianity, beginning in the seventh century with King Sisebut. This campaign led to Sephardic Jewish communities migrating to places in Northern Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and later the Americas. The persecution also led to the development of two communities: "Conversos" who retained knowledge of their Jewish ancestry but were forced to convert, and "crypto Jews," also called "Anuisim," who practiced Judaism in secret. Many Sephardic Jews speak Ladino, a language that combines Spanish and Hebrew.

**Ashkenazi Jews.** In the fifth and sixth centuries, Syrian Jewish merchants began to settle in what is now Southern France and the Mediterranean. They were followed in the seventh century by both Babylonian and Palestinian Jews. The Jewish community first expanded to Germany and France and then to many countries in Eastern Europe. Ashkenazi Jewry encompasses the Jews of Germany, Hungry, Poland, Russia, and many other European countries. The majority of European Jews, though not all, spoke one of the many dialects of Yiddish, which combines Hebrew and German. There are also European Jews who are not Ashkenazi: the Itlalkim Jews of Italy, who speak Judeo-Italian, and the Romaniote of Greece, who speak Judeo-Greek.

**Kaifeng Jews.** Written records of the Kaifeng Jews of China date back to the ninth century C.E., although some believe the community began hundreds of years before. There is no consensus about their origins. Some believe they are descendants of Sephardic Jews who followed the Silk Road, while others say that they arrived shortly after the destruction of the First Temple or were part of the lost tribe of Ephraim. While there were many Jewish communities in ancient China, the Jews of Kaifeng have received the most attention because they maintained the most documentation of their history. The Kaifeng Jewish community grew to over 5,000 people at its largest. Today, there are over 1,000 people in China who identify as descendants of the Jews of Kaifeng.

**Abayudaya.** The Abayudaya are a community of Jews in the eastern region of Uganda near the town of Mbale. The community's Jewish origins began with the actions of the military leader Semei Kakungulu. Originally, Kakungulu was forcibly converted from his indigenous religion to Christianity by the British colonizers in 1880, but through his own study came to firmly believe that the five books of Moses were the essential religious truth, and chose circumcision. His sons and the larger community followed him as he severed ties with the British and moved his community to the foot of the Mt. Elgon volcano. In 1920, Kakungulu encountered an Ashkenazi Jew named

Yosef who then spent six months in the community conveying knowledge of Rabbinic Judaism and Ashkenazi holidays, customs, dietary laws, and religious practices. The Abayudaya community grew to over 3,000 people, but was severely persecuted by Ugandan leader Idi Amin in the 1970s, forcing many to flee or convert; only a few hundred Jews remained. Today, there are over 1,000 Jews living in nine villages in Eastern Uganda, five Abayudaya synagogues, as well as other Jewish institutions: Jewish day schools, a Jewish hospital, and a medical center. The Abayudaya community in Uganda has also become a place for people from other Jewish communities across the continent of Africa such as Kenya, Ghana, and South Africa to come to learn and study together.

As previously mentioned, there are many more Jewish communities all over the world including those in India, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, South Africa, and Japan. As we know more about the full diversity of the Jewish people, it is easier to realize just how multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural we truly are, while all still being part of the same people connected by our values, religious tradition, and history.

# Embracing Diversity in the Jewish Community

## Background

The Jewish community grows more racially and ethnically diverse through interfaith marriage, conversion, and adoption. It is also important to note that people of color are not new to the Jewish community. In North America, some Jews of Color trace their Jewish ancestry back for many generations. In many communities around the world, Jews of color are the norm rather than the exception. Audacious Hospitality means that we strive to build congregational communities that are not only "warm and welcoming" but that also recognize and honor each person's multi-layered identities.

Due to mass immigration of the Jews of Eastern Europe to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the majority of the American Jewish community is of Ashkenazi descent, identified as white in the American social construct. For many, Jewish and Ashkenazi have been synonymous. Jewish foods meant kneidlach (matzah balls) and kugel (pudding), Jewish dance was the hora, and the Jewish language was Yiddish. In other words, Ashkenazi Judaism was seen as normative, while Sephardi (Spanish descent), Mizrachi (North African or Arabian descent), and Ethiopian Jewish people and practices were seen as "other" or even "exotic."

Jews of Color is a pan-ethnic term that is used to identify Jews whose family origins are originally in African, Asian or Latin American countries. Jews of Color may identify as black, Latino/a/x, Asian American or of mixed heritage such as biracial or multiracial. Mizrachi and Sephardi Jews from North African and Arab lands vary in whether or not they self-identify as "Jews of Color." The Steinhardt Social Research Institute's American Jewish Population Project reports that 11% of Jews in the United States are Jews of Color. That number increases to 20% if we include all Mizrachi and Sephardi Jews. In addition, the Jewish community includes many people of color (POC) who join the Jewish community through family ties, i.e. through interfaith marriage, but who retain their own faith-identity.

## Embracing Racial Diversity in Our Synagogues— A Study Guide for Congregations

### What "Jewish" Looks Like

In previous generations, many North American Jews, as well as the general population, relied upon traditional and stereotypical "markers" to indicate someone's Jewish identity. We may have thought that someone "looks Jewish" or "sounds Jewish." Today we understand that those markers of "Jewishness" (which were never entirely accurate) are increasingly incorrect and unreliable. Rabbis are no longer exclusively men with long beards, and a Jew is not always a person with dark hair and pale skin. A person's first and last name, hair color, profession, place of residence, and skin color are not indicative of a person's religion or culture.

And yet, while we may know these facts well, shifting our internal, implicit biases takes conscious work.

## Discussion

How can we set aside our assumptions and recognize our implicit biases so that our congregation can embrace the full diversity of today's Jewish community? One way we can shift our perceptions is to listen to the stories of Jews of Color, in their own words. Let's hear the story of one young Jewish adult, as he describes his experiences. An excerpt is provided below; however, you can read his full story here.

> "Every year on the High Holidays, police officers sit outside our synagogue to protect our community and building from harm.... I appreciate their presence... until all their eyes are on me, a man wearing a kippah and a gold Star of David necklace who also happens to be a person of color. When I arrive, the officers stop, get out of their cars, and follow me into the building. They don't stop pursuing me until the greeter has given the officers a thumbs-up, signaling I am 'safe.' I have been attending the same synagogue for more than 20 years, and I have never seen this happen to anyone else. I am left to think that the only possible sign of threat is the color of my skin, as 99% of the people who walked into the shul before me are white."
> —Rafael Lev

**In Response to Raphael Lev's article, below are some questions to consider:**

- What advice might you suggest for those who serve as religious leaders, ushers, security, school committee members, religious school teachers, etc.?
- What can we do? What should we not do?
- How does the membership of your congregational community reflect the full diversity of the Jewish people?
- How does the leadership of your congregational community reflect the full diversity of the Jewish people?
- How do the activities of your congregation reflect the full diversity of the Jewish people?

## A Few Challenges Jews of Color Often Face in the Jewish Community

- Being mistaken for the maintenance or event staff in a congregation.
- Being asked, "How are you Jewish?" or "Are you really Jewish?"
- Being asked to speak on behalf of all Jews of Color.
- Being disproportionately and aggressively questioned by security at synagogue entrances.
- Being asked, "Who are you here with?" implying, "Why are you here?"
- Walking into a space and feeling like the only person of color.

## Discussion

1. Whose responsibility is it to make Jewish spaces more inclusive and diverse?
2. Who is the leadership in our community? Is it a reflection of the diversity of our community?
3. Are there ways to receive feedback from members or participants about how we are doing in relationship to inclusion, diversity and welcoming? How can we implement the feedback?
4. In what ways have we adapted to the new reality that some of the communities that have been marginalized in the past are now the majority? What steps do we need to take to adapt?

# AWARENESS AND INCLUSION RESOURCES

# Storytelling: A Self-Reflection for Deepening Relationships and Engagement

**"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom." Aristotle**

As we move forward in our effort to build relationships with one another across lines of difference and deepen your commitment to a fully inclusive community, our ability to discuss and understand our own background and history is vitally important. The work of Audacious Hospitality requires that we each cultivate an understanding of the ways in which we think, feel, and relate to those around us who may feel differently. The Jewish principle of *Hitlamdut*, has been translated as "learning about self." We are encouraged to be constant learners about our own motivations and internal world as well as about the world around us. By learning about ourselves we can more deeply listen and connect with others.

One method of cultivating an understanding of ourselves is through an examination of our own stories. We each have our own unique, distinct stories that inform how we walk through and relate to the Jewish community and world today. It is important to do a deep dive into our own stories to uncover where, when, and how we received the messages and understandings we have in our life today. These messages are part of our foundational understanding of the world around us, influencing and perpetuating culture. This may not always be easy, but it can make visible a hidden richness of self-awareness and unconscious patterns and messages with in us. Some of these messages also contribute to the development of implicit bias—stereotypes and perceptions of those we see as different than ourselves that occur without intention or awareness.

## Discussion

Take some time to consider the following questions. Answer them as fully and honestly as you can. You may choose to share your answer in pairs or as a group. Before sharing with a group, invest some time to create a "container" for a considerate, thoughtful conversation in which everyone is respected. You can do this by having everyone go around and say their name and share something about themselves, and use an ice breaker to warm them up to being open with each other.

- Where did you grow up geographically?
- Who lived in the home with you as you were growing up?
- Who raised you as a child?
- What communities did you and/or your family associate with while growing up?
- Where did you go to school?
- Who were your friends? What were they like? What influence did they have on you growing up?
- What role did media play in your understanding of people across lines of difference? How did it impact your understanding of the world around you? Did any messages inspire, scare, challenge or offend you, either now or in retrospect?

**What messages did you receive about the following as you were growing up? Try to recall specific moments, stories and messages you received.**

- Race—Specifically, what messages did you receive about different racial groups?
- Gender—Your gender, the other gender(s)?
- Sexual orientation—Heterosexual vs. same sex or queer couples?
- Age—Young people vs. elders?
- Class—Poor and working-class people? Owning-class people?
- Ability—People with disabilities, visible and invisible?
- Religion—People of different faith traditions, and your own?
- Interfaith marriage—Within your own family and others?

*Courtesy of Ilyssa Parker.*

# White-Ashkenazi Awareness Checklist: Examining Privilege

This checklist is a tool to create more awareness of the privileges hidden in the experience of white Ashkenazi Jews, and as a starting place to begin to discuss the ways we can make all Jews feel safe, welcome, and visible. We hope this checklist leads to more self-reflection and greater awareness. For many of us it is hard to imagine what the experience may be for a Jew of Color who enters into our community, and how it may differ from our own experiences. As white and/or Ashkenazi Jews there may be aspects of our experience in the Jewish community that we take for granted, which are not a universal experience for all people entering into our Jewish spaces. The entirety of the Jewish community experiences forms of anti-Semitism that impact us all negatively, however Jews who are perceived as white receive privileges in our society that are denied to Jews of Color. In order to create a fully welcoming community we need to be able to have a clear understanding of where those experiences differ for someone who is not seen as Ashkenazi, white, or of European descent.

All of the parts of this checklist were written by Jews of Color and based on their experiences. The original version of this Checklist was developed by Corinne Lightweaver, Sasha King, and members of the Jewish Multiracial Network (2006–2009).

## Checklist

This checklist can also be read verbally with participants stepping forward, or into a circle.

- Place a check (✓) next to the statements that apply to you.
- Place a question mark (?) next to it if raises a question for you.
- Place an exclamation mark (!) to those that surprise you or resonate strongly.

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- ❑ At my synagogue, religious school, Jewish Community Center (JCC), or camp I can walk in not be seen as an outsider.
- ❑ At my synagogue, religious school, JCC, or camp I can walk in and not be seen as exotic.
- ❑ At my synagogue, religious school, JCC, or camp I can walk in with my family and not worry that they will be treated unkindly because of the color of their skin.
- ❑ At my synagogue, religious school, JCC, or camp I can walk in and feel that my children are seen as Jews.
- ❑ At my synagogue, religious school, JCC, or camp I can enjoy music that reflects the tunes, prayers, and cultural roots of my specific Jewish heritage.
- ❑ I can easily find books, magazines, and educational materials with images of Jews who look like me.
- ❑ I can easily find Jewish books and toys for my children with images of Jews that look like them.
- ❑ I am not singled out to speak as a representative of an "exotic" Jewish subgroup.
- ❑ When I go to Jewish bookstores or restaurants, I am not seen as an outsider.
- ❑ I find experiences and images that I can relate to and faces look similar to my family in Jewish newspapers and magazines.
- ❑ I do not worry about access to housing or apartments in predominately Jewish neighborhoods.

- ❑ My rabbi never questions that I am Jewish.
- ❑ When I tell other members of my synagogue, religious school, JCC, or camp that I feel marginalized, they are immediately and appropriately responsive.
- ❑ There are other children at the religious school/camp who look like my child.
- ❑ My child's authenticity as a Jew is never questioned by adults or children based on his/her skin color.
- ❑ People never say to me, "But you don't look Jewish," either seriously or because they thought it was funny.
- ❑ I do not worry about being seen or treated as a member of the janitorial staff at a synagogue, school, JCC, or camp or when attending a Jewish event.
- ❑ I am never asked "how" I am Jewish at dating events or on Jewish dating websites.
- ❑ I can arrange to be in the company of Jews of my heritage most of the time.
- ❑ When attempting to join a synagogue or Jewish organization, I am confident that my ethnic background will not be held against me.
- ❑ I know my racial or ethnic background will not be held against me if I attempt to join a minyan in prayer.
- ❑ I can ask synagogues and Jewish organizations to include images and cultural traditions from my background without being seen as a nuisance.
- ❑ I can enroll in a Jewish day school, or historically Jewish college and find Jewish students and professors with my racial or ethnic background.
- ❑ People of color do not question why I am Jewish.
- ❑ I know my ethnic background will not be a barrier in being called to read the Torah.
- ❑ I am not discriminated against in the Israeli *aliyah* (immigration) process as a Jew of my particular ethnicity.
- ❑ I have never had the police called on me or have been escorted out of a service by a police officer while simply praying because of my skin color.
- ❑ I have not been asked to leave a synagogue or a class, nor have I been barred from entering a synagogue, class, or Jewish event due to my skin color.

# Reconsidering Being "Colorblind"

**"To overcome racism, one must first take race into account."**
**Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun**

In North America, after the Civil Rights movement, most Americans understood that racism was "bad," but that didn't mean that there was an authentic commitment to fully change the institutions and ideologies throughout our society that uphold and perpetuate racism. These systems account for drastic social and economic inequality for people of color, particularly African Americans who had been the target of racist public policy and social systems for hundreds of years.

Setting up a simplistic ideology that "Racism is bad" rather than a complex understanding about how racism pervades our social structure has led to a common practice among white people: pushing away the idea that they participate in or benefit from racist systems, consciously or unconsciously. Without letting go of this practice, it is a challenge to choose to understand those systems and their impact on the lives of people of color, which is essential in order to participate in social change. In creating fully welcoming communities, it is important that we are able to have open conversations about race in our congregations, camps, and classrooms, but the impact of racial colorblind ideology can be an obstacle of which we may not even be aware.

Racial colorblindness is based on a false binary between people who are racist, the "bad people," and those who are not, the "good people." This makes conversations that address the existence of racism in our preconceived ideas and institutions difficult and sometimes nearly impossible without eliciting a defensive response. This defensiveness makes it difficult to listen to and understand the lived experiences of people of color, and to ultimately address the issues and make real change.

## Here Are Some Common Phrases that Fit into the Binary of "Good" and "Bad" Around Race

- "I was taught to treat everyone the same, so I'm not a racist."
- "I see people as individuals. I don't care if you are green, blue, or polka dotted."
- "Racism is in the past."
- "Everyone struggles, but if you work hard…"
- "My parents were/were not racist, so I am not."
- "I work in a diverse environment, so I'm not racist."
- "I have a person of color in my family, so I'm not racist."
- "I don't see color, I just see people."
- "My children are so much more open."
- "I already know all about racism. I don't need to have this conversation."

This binary of good and bad can lead us to think that the way to address the problem is to never talk about it and to choose to believe it does not exist. Some believe that addressing racism is the problem. There is often an equating of all racism with white separatist and extremist groups, such as the KKK, Nazis, or skinheads whose active racist behaviors and ideologies are overt. Some reject racism because they don't identify themselves by stereotypes of racists as mean, or old fashioned, or Southern. These views allow us to ignore the pervasive racism that is subtle, institutionalized, accepted, and subconscious, and which exists in all of the social institutions in which we

participate. Beverly Tatum, president of Spelman College, talks of the racism embedded in our cultural messages as "smog in the air," noting that "we don't breathe it because we like it. We don't breathe it because we think it's good for us. We breathe it because it's the only air that's available." In order to make change, we need to recognize that it exists and take action.

Many people think that small children are too young to talk or learn about race, and that they are inherently socially colorblind. However, studies have shown that children begin to understand racial differences as young as three or four years old, and that a three-year-old child of color already understands that white skin is preferable in our society to dark skin, based on images in children's books, movies, and games, and the cultural attitudes they experience. Researcher Dr. Melanie Killen wrote in her study that there is a "view that if you talk about race, you are creating a problem and what we're finding is that children are aware of race very early."

**Valerie Strauss writes in the *Washington Post*:**

> White anxiety starts during childhood when white children are often taught that all skin colors are equal and should therefore be ignored. This is called "colorblind socialization" and many white parents practice it with their children early on in a well-intentioned but highly damaging attempt to prevent racism. The way colorblind socialization plays out is to avoid any conversations about skin color. If a child brings it up, you must quickly correct and silence them and explain that mentioning someone's skin color is rude, and even racist. The problem with this strategy is that instead of nurturing children's natural curiosity about differences, it teaches them to be wary and to feel ashamed if they even notice their friends' skin color.

Silence on the topic of race with children allows the ideas they derive from other sources to go unchallenged, and retains the assumptions that they reach based on the structural and historic racism that is observable in their environment.

A 2007 study in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* found that parents of color are about three times more likely to discuss race than white parents. This is due to the daily impact that unjust racial social policy has on the lives of people of color.

The average black person, relative to the average white person, is approximately three times as likely to live in poverty, and almost six times as likely to be incarcerated. African Americans owned only a twentieth of the financial wealth in 2011; the median white household had $111,146 in wealth holdings, compared to $7,113 for the median black household and $8,348 for the median Latino household (source: U.S. Census Bureau Survey of Income and Program Participation). Unjust racial social policy is also responsible for the historic and current restrictions on housing, education, healthcare and jobs, in addition to the unjust criminal justice systems that lead to generational wealth disparities, and a lack of access to social mobility, health, and justice. Many of these gaps are increasing despite the common perception that things are getting better.

## Here Are Some of the Impacts of Racially Colorblind Ideology

1) It invalidates the identity of people of color
2) It invalidates people of color's experiences with racism
3) It leads to a simplistic and inaccurate ways of dealing with inequality created by racism
4) It ignores that we do notice race, and there is no way to get around it
5) It associates discussing or addressing race as something negative
6) It hinders honest conversations about implicit and unintentional bias
7) It maintains the status quo, rather than leading to needed change

## Here Are Some Suggestions and Resources for Further Learning

1. Develop a habit and practice of pushing past your discomfort in talking about race.
2. With children, start naming and identifying race in descriptions of the world around them. Adults can say, "Look, here's a picture of a little girl. She has pale skin. We call that 'white.' This little girl has brown skin. She might call herself 'black' or 'African American.'
3. With children, make race a part of your discussions of "fairness," and teach them to take action when they hear or see something unfair.
4. Don't ignore images or messages you find unacceptable or stereotypical, or your own biases or prejudices. Talk them out with your family, peers, and children.
5. Attend a diverse range of cultural events.
6. Learn African-American, Latinx, and Asian-American history and choose books for your children and yourself that include diverse characters and historical stories that include positive depictions of people of color.
7. Learn about your own community and its current and past history around race. What laws created the inequality that persists in our neighborhoods, cities, state, and country? Learn what people who are most impacted are doing to solve these problems and support their actions towards a solution.

## Here Are Actions We Can Take in Our Jewish Congregations, Teen Programs, Schools and Camps

1. Listen to the voices of the Jews of Color in our community and their experiences of racism. Be willing to listen. Be willing to believe them.
2. Be brave in supporting conversations about how to make our congregation more welcoming and safe for Jews of Color.
3. Make sure the libraries and classrooms include books, resources, and images that feature Jews of Color and address diversity and race.
4. Create opportunities and events for members and participants to talk about race and inequality in our communities.
5. Join the RAC and other social justice organizations working to create more justice and equity.
6. Complete the Congregational Reflection in the Audacious Hospitality Pilot Toolkit (page 36). Take action in the areas where your congregation can improve.
7. Provide opportunities for staff to participate in professional development focused on cultural competency and inclusion.

# What are Microaggressions and How Can We Address Them?

**Microaggressions are the constant and continuing reality of slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities visited upon marginalized groups by well-intentioned, moral, and decent family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, students, teachers, clerks, waiters and waitresses, employers, health care professionals and educators.**
**Derald Wing Sue, *Microaggressions in Everyday Life***

While overt and active racism is something known to be unacceptable in today's culture, many well-meaning people are vulnerable to reproducing the subtle racism in our society. In order to form deeper connections with each other, we need to learn how to be in better relationship across race. Institutional racism has created a high degree of social and geographical segregation that persists in our modern society, which can mean that we are not aware of what is appropriate and inappropriate across cultures. Instead of feeling guilty about what we do not know, it is important to be open to continue learning and developing new ways of interacting with one another that will contribute to building better relationships.

Microaggressions exist in many of our interactions unintentionally. Learning about them can help us be more intentional in the ways we interact and can also help us realize the negative impact that our words can have even if our intention is positive or neutral. Microaggressions are both verbal and physical. Many make people of color feel alienated, unwelcome, or unsafe. Some of the most common questions that Jews of Color receive when entering a Jewish space are focused on why the speaker thinks they may not belong there.

## Here are the Questions and Comments Jews of Color Commonly Hear

- So, how are you Jewish?
- Where are you from? No, where are you really from?
- You don't look Jewish.
- What are you?
- I don't really see you as (black, Asian, Latino/a).
- You're not really (black, Asian, Latino/a) like them.
- Can I touch your hair? (or touching someone without asking)
- You're really smart/pretty for a (black, Asian, Latina) person.
- Your voice sounds white.
- I am surprised that you know so much about being Jewish/Torah.

- Do you work here? (Or other ways of expressing the assumption that a Jew of Color is a staff person rather than a member or guest)

When meeting a new person for the first time, realize that their story is personal and they may not be comfortable sharing it with someone with whom they have not established a relationship.

Starting conversation with a new person can be awkward in any situation. Focus on not making assumptions or asking very personal questions. It is **very important** to not assume that someone is new simply because you have not met them before.

**Below are some good openers to start with:**

- "We haven't met before, have you been coming for a while, or is this your first time?"
- "Did you like the service/speaker/food/event?"

**If you establish that they are new:**

- "It's nice to meet you. How did you hear about our congregation/program/event?"
- "Have you met our Rabbi/Education Director/Board Chair? I'd love to introduce you."

See our resources in the Audacious Hospitality Pilot Toolkit, "A Welcoming Culture" (pp. 15–16) and "How to Make Small Talk" (p. 17) for more suggestions and information.

# Things You Can Do to Embrace Racial Diversity in Our Jewish Communities

1. As you explore aspects of racial diversity and racial justice in the Jewish community, share what personally resonates with family members, friends, and others in your synagogue, camp or school.
2. Share what personally resonates at committee and/or Board meetings.
3. Share the URJ's "Who Are Jews of Color?" fact sheet. Reflect with others in your Jewish community on how it mirrors or does not mirror your congregational and/or Jewish communal experiences.
4. Read a book or article, or watch an ELI or TED Talk on racial justice recommended on the resource page. Share that resource with other members of your Jewish community.
5. "Like" relevant organizations so their posts are added to your Facebook feed, or subscribe to their email blasts.
6. Write a blog post, article, or book review for your organization's newsletter or website.
7. Choose a book or chapter of a book for an upcoming book club meeting (or similar gathering) by an author who tells a Jewish story outside the European-Ashkenazi Jewish experience.
8. Start or participate in a RAC Reads or racial justice book club in your congregation or organization.
9. Invite families that include people of color to engage in an open conversation with leadership to share their experiences and what needs they see.
10. If you are a Jew of color, or a person of color who is part of a Jewish family, consider sharing your experiences with your clergy and congregational or organizational leadership to help them understand how your community might be more welcoming and inclusive.
11. Review your programmatic calendar with the appropriate lay and professional leaders to ensure that offerings are representative of the diversity of the Jewish People. Invite scholars, authors, and creative artists from diverse Jewish backgrounds to offer programs.
12. Plan an author night, film viewing, musical program, or worship service or other program that focuses on the experiences of Jews of Color. Advertise widely for anyone who is particularly interested in the topic to join the planning team to encourage diverse voices.
13. Work with the appropriate organizational leadership to ensure that the language and photos on your website, publicity materials, membership packet, and religious school communications reflect the full diversity of the Jewish community.
14. Make Jewish racial and cultural diversity visible in your physical space, through photographs, posters, and books. Highlight diversity in Jewish ritual objects on display and in use. When offering "Jewish food," broaden the menu to include Sephardi, Mizrachi, and Ethiopian Jewish favorites.
15. Work with volunteers and staff of early childhood and family programs to ensure that children's books, dolls or figurines, and art materials are inclusive of many skin tones and diverse Jewish ethnic and racial identities.
16. Include readings, prayers, and music in your worship that reflect the diversity of the Jewish community. Let your clergy, educators, and leadership know that this is important to you.

17. Support your clergy, both publicly and privately, when they speak out for racial justice in sermons and in the larger community.
18. Initiate or participate in community, state, and national efforts advancing racial justice. Help make racial justice a priority for your synagogue's social advocacy and social justice work. The issues the congregation supports and works for indicates communal priorities and interests and sends a strong statement of inclusiveness. Regularly consult the RAC's website for updates on racial justice campaigns and opportunities for involvement in advocacy efforts.
19. Assume that people of color at a Jewish communal setting are Jewish until you are told otherwise.
20. Provide training around racial and cultural diversity with those who serve as greeters and ushers.
21. Be open to being uncomfortable and receiving new ideas and information that may challenge your previous understandings. Listen to the stories of others. Remind yourself that even if your congregation, school, or organization does not look diverse, your members may come from diverse families.

**Other ideas I have about what I and my Jewish community can do are:**

# Black, Jewish, and Avoiding Synagogue on the High Holy Days

*A version of this post originally appeared on NPR.org in October 2016.*
Leah Donnella

Last time I worshipped in a synagogue was on September 5, 2014. And I won't be going today.

That might surprise my friends, who put up with my bragging ad nauseam about how Jewish I am.

You got a great deal on plane tickets? Reminds me of the time I took a free Birthright trip to Israel. Going skating? I haven't been on skates since my bat mitzvah reception, held at the roller skating rink in Villanova, PA. You say you love the musicals of George Gershwin? Ha, that sounds just like Gershenfeld, my mother's maiden name, which is also my middle name, which means "barley field" in Yiddish, the language my ancestors spoke in Eastern Europe.

Some of this is just me being obnoxious. But it's also a way to claim a part of my identity that's hidden from most people. I'm a black woman. No one ever assumes I'm Jewish. When I talk about Judaism, people look at me in a way that makes me feel like I'm breaking into my own house. Especially the people inside the house.

As an invisible Jewish woman, I've been subjected to a lot of comments that I don't think I would hear otherwise. I had a friend in college who would reference how much the financial aid office was "Jewing" her. A colleague once described an actor as "cute, but with a Jew nose." A classmate complained that he was getting crowded out of law school by "the Jews."

In those moments, I want to remind everyone that those are my people they're talking about. My so-called stingy, big-nosed, overbearing people. If you're talking about them, you're talking about me.

But it's one thing when goyim don't recognize my faith. It's a different level of sadness when it comes from other Jews.

I think back to that last time I was in a synagogue in September 2014. It was a Shabbat service for prospective members at a Reform temple in Philadelphia, two weeks before Rosh Hashanah. As with every new year, I was re-evaluating my life.

What the hell am I doing here? I thought. The question was both literal and existential.

I'd gone to the synagogue with my boyfriend, who is white, Catholic, had a Jewish father, and grew up in a Jewish neighborhood in suburban New Jersey, which is to say he knows his way around a shul.

As soon as we walked in, I started feeling like an accessory. This was a super progressive synagogue, and I wasn't the only person of color in the congregation. But the way people greeted him first, always; the way someone explained to me what to expect of the service (it will be an hour long with portions in Hebrew and English); the way an usher smiled and asked me, not my boyfriend, "What brings you here?"

Those moments made me want to scream, I'm one of you!

When the service started, I was the one singing too loudly, and the first to stand every time the rabbi said, "Please rise." After it ended, I found myself aggressively kissing strangers on the cheek, practically shouting "Shabbat shalom" at women in cardigans who tried not to make eye contact. I stayed around to introduce myself to the rabbis, told them I'd been looking to join a synagogue for months. I promised I'd be back soon for the High Holy Days.

But I knew I wouldn't go back for Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. I knew I wouldn't go back at all.

I was already dreading the thought of doing it again, having to face those saccharine smiles trying to understand, Why are you here?

Again, I'm a black woman with a Jewish mother, and I live in the United States of America. When I say that I'm used to being in places where I don't look like I belong, I mean it. Looking out of place is one of the most consistent parts of my life.

But it's different in a synagogue. There's something about feeling like an outsider in the place where you grew up that stings. Like family members who no longer recognize you.

It wasn't always like that. As a kid I could be black and Jewish and it wasn't a big deal. Sometimes people at my synagogue would raise an eyebrow at my brown skin, but when that happened, it was obvious they were the newbie, not me. I miss the synagogue of my youth, with the rabbi who'd pinch my cheeks and say shayna punim, and the opera singer-cum-cantor who would go nuts on the V'ahavta.

I used to go to Hebrew school, Sunday school, Shabbat services, and Purim parades. Once a month, I'd sit in the multipurpose room with my parents and make Jewish crafts. My mom was once the vice president in charge of social action on the synagogue's board of trustees. I brought tzedakah each week, I knew the prayers, I had friends, I had enemies, I had a carpool. I wasn't just passively part of that community because my ancestors lived through a pogrom. I helped create the community.

And at a certain point, I stopped going. Mostly because I didn't have to. But when I tried to go back in college and beyond, I'd meet people who thought they needed to explain my faith to me.

Now, without everyday ties to Judaism, I find myself fighting for it, even as I avoid the hard stuff, like taking the time to join a synagogue, getting to know people again, suffering through those awkward explanations.

The longer I stay away, the less I feel like I belong. How long is it before I have to stop claiming that those are my people, especially when they don't claim me? That's the hardest part about not looking like I'm Jewish. I feel like if I'm not careful, eventually that part of me will fade away.

## Questions for Discussion

How does this story make you feel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What was surprising about this article?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What can we do as individuals to create a community where a Jew of Color like Leah feels seen and welcomed?

_____

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_____

_____

What can we do as a congregation or organization to build a fully welcoming community for Jews of Color?

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_____

What do you think would support the return of someone who has left the Jewish community because they were made to feel unwelcome?

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_____

# LITERACY RESOURCES

# Key Terms for Diversity and Racial Justice

Becoming open to new ways of thinking and acting requires new vocabulary. In working towards full inclusion of all Jewish people, we may need to adopt new words and phrases for our work to be successful. These works are commonly used in anti-racism and anti-bias work of all types, and are used throughout our resources, literature, and trainings.

**Abayudaya.**
The Abayudaya are a community of Jews from the eastern region of Uganda near the town of Mbale.

**Active Listening.**
Active Listening is the act of listening attentively to what another person says and expressing interest through your facial expression, body posture, and other non-verbal behaviors, such as sitting forward in your chair. Paraphrasing (reflecting back in your own words) what you heard the other person say can be very helpful in establishing how well you heard or understood the message.

**Affinity Group.**
An affinity group is a group of people who share interests, issues, and a common bond or background, and offer support for each other. These groups can be formed between friends, or people from the same community, workplace or organization. Affinity groups can represent a narrow or broad definition of a dimension of diversity.

**Allies.**
Individuals (or groups) that are not part of the targeted or marginalized group and who take a stand against prejudice and discrimination. Allies choose to support the struggle of communities to which they don't belong, because they have common goals and are committed to social justice. Examples of allies include white people who work to end racism; men and women who support the struggle for inclusion of transgender individuals; African-American people who fight discrimination against Arab Americans; and heterosexual men who act to end homophobia.

**Anti-Semitism.**
Hatred of or prejudice against Jews and Judaism. The Anti-Defamation League divides anti-Semitic incidents into two categories: 1) "harassment, including threats and assaults directed at individuals and institutions; and 2) vandalism, such as property damage, cemetery desecration, or anti-Semitic graffiti."

**Ashkenazi Jews.**
Jews originally from European countries. The Yiddish language arose in Ashkenazi Jewish communities.

**Assimilation.**
The process whereby an individual of a minority group gradually adopts characteristics of the majority culture. This adoption results in the loss of characteristics of one's native culture, such as language, culinary tastes, interpersonal communication, gender roles, and style of dress.

**Beta Yisrael.**
The Jews of Ethiopia. This community has been mistakenly referred to as Falashas, a derogatory word meaning "landless wanderers."

**Class.**
Class is a social status based on income, wealth, power, or position that is relative and is based on others in a particular society. Income classes can fluctuate. In North America, there are no hard and fast divisions between class groups, thus making class hard to definitively define. Some people grow up in one class and as adults live in another.

**Classism.**
Classism is defined as the biased attitudes and beliefs that result in and help to justify unfair treatment of individuals or groups because of their perceived socioeconomic grouping. Classism can also be expressed in the form of public policies and institutional and cultural practices that stigmatize and prevent people from breaking out of poverty rather than ensuring equal economic, social, and educational opportunity.

**Colorblind.**
Term used to describe personal, group, and institutional policies or practices by people who perceive themselves as not viewing race or ethnicity as a determining factor. These people or institutions may not carry overt racial prejudice, and see their colorblindness as a virtue, a manifestation of justice that they believe will result in an equitable world. However, attempting to be colorblind within a system within which race is a factor in determining life's opportunities actually causes and supports racism.

**Comfort Zone.**
People are inside, rather than outside, our comfort zones when discussing topics or engaging in activities that are familiar and do not cause us to become uncomfortable or upset. Anti-racist and anti-bias work requires people to step outside their comfort zone.

**Culture.**
Culture is made up of the behaviors, traditions, beliefs, attitudes, norms, social roles, and values that are shared by a particular group of people. Cultures are not static; they continue to evolve and change.

**Defined Norm.**
A defined norm is a standard of being or behavior against which all other things are defined. The defined norm is supported by institutional power, and in some cases economic power and institutional violence. In the United States, that norm is male, white, heterosexual, Christian, temporarily able-bodied, youthful, with access to wealth and resources. It is important to remember that an established norm does not necessarily represent a majority in terms of number; it represents those who have ability to exert power and control over others.

**Discrimination.**
Actions that are intended to have a negative impact on individual people or disadvantage a targeted social group.

**Diversity.**
Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. Pro-diversity policies and attitudes recognize everyone and every group as valuable and valid. The word diversity addresses, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, religion, ability/disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance.

**Empowerment.**
Empowerment is the process through which people gain the power and resources necessary to shape their world and reach full human potential. Empowered individuals, organizations, communities, and social groups believe in their capacity to act and take action.

**Equality.**
Equality refers to treating everyone the same. All the members of a society, group, or family are given the same access to resources, the same status, rights, and responsibilities.

**Equity.**
Equity is the practice is giving everyone what they need to be successful. This is based in the idea that people do not all have the same needs, so they should receive the appropriate resources to achieve success, not arbitrary equal amounts.

**Essentialism.**
The practice of categorizing an entire group based on assumptions about what constitutes the "essence" of that group (e.g., assuming that women are better nurturers due to something that is innate in their being). Essentialism prevents individuals from remaining open to individual differences within groups.

**Ethnicity.**
Ethnicity refers to particular groups of people that share some common ancestry, traditions, language, or dialect because they originate from a specific region or location.

**Hate Crime.**
A hate crime is any criminal act overtly motivated by bigotry and bias. Hate crimes include (but are not limited to) threats, attempts, or completed acts motivated at least in part by racial, religious, ethnic, disability, gender, or sexual orientation prejudice. Federal statutes identify the hate or bias component of a crime as a specific offense, separate from but related to the original offense. Hate crimes carry additional penalties and mandatory sentences for perpetrators who are found guilty.

**Inclusion.**
Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

**Implicit Bias.**
Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. They include both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. The implicit associations we harbor in our subconscious cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance.

**Institutional/Structural Violence.**
Institutional or structural violence is the use of power to cause harm (i.e., violation of human rights) and to enforce structural oppression. Structural or institutional violence can be subtle, often invisible, and often has no one specific person who can (or will) be held responsible (in contrast to behavioral violence).

**Internalized Dominance.**
This behavior occurs when members of a privileged social group adopt prejudicial beliefs and attitudes toward others and identify their group's socially superior or dominant status as normal or deserved. Internalized dominance may express itself through feelings of superiority over or scorn for targeted groups and avoidance of members of targeted groups. For example, a heterosexual who believes only heterosexuals are good parents, or a man who only considers men qualified for the job and resists working with women.

**Intersectionality.**
Intersectionality is the complex, cumulative manner in which the effects of different forms of discrimination combine, overlap, or intersect.

**Marginalization/Marginalized Communities.**
The placement of minority groups and cultures outside mainstream society. All that varies from the norm of the mainstream is devalued and at times perceived as deviant and regressive.

**Microaggressions.**
A microaggression is a statement, action, or incident regarded as an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group, such as a racial or ethnic minority.

**Microaffirmation.**
A microaffirmation is a statement or action, often hard-to-see, subtle or unintentional, that serves to encourage or support others.

**Minorities.**
A minority is a group of a certain race, ethnicity, or other specific social or cultural group that includes fewer people compared to a larger group, or the rest of the population. This is an outdated term, given that people of color collectively are a global majority. Women are the majority in our society, but in the past have been incorrectly called "minorities" as well. It is preferable to use the specific name of the group you are talking about rather than refer to them as "a minority."

**Mizrahi Jews**.
Mizrach is the Hebrew word for "East." Mizrahi Jews originate from communities in the Middle East, including Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Morocco, and Syria. Many Mizrahi communities speak a Judeo-Arabic language.

**Multiculturalism.**
Theory and practice that promotes the peaceful coexistence of multiple races, ethnicities, and cultures in a given society, celebrating and sustaining language diversity, religious diversity, and social equity.

**Myth of Scarcity.**
Myth of Scarcity is the idea that resources are limited in such a way that those not in power are to blame for economic inequality.

**Nation.**
The term nation refers to a large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own. Earlier in history, before the creation of most modern nation-states, the term nation was interchangeable with the word ethnicity, and didn't require the group in question to possess either territory or a government.

**Nationality.**
Nationality refers to one's country of origin.

**Oppression.**
Oppression is characterized by prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control. Oppression is systematic and pervasive and can be woven though social institutions as well as seen in individuals. The word refers to hierarchical relationships in which a dominant group benefits from the disempowerment and subordination of a targeted group.

Individual/Interpersonal Oppression refers to the behavior of individual members of one racial, ethnic, or gender group, for example, that is intended to have a differential and harmful effect on the members of another race, ethnic, or gender group.

Institutional/Systemic Oppression is the policies of businesses and institutions, and the behavior of individuals who control them, that are intended to have a differential or harmful effect on race, ethnic, or gender groups, for example, who lack power in societal institutions. Examples of institutional oppression include companies that will not hire or promote people of color and schools that provide better funding to men's athletics than women's athletics.

Cultural Oppression refers to the way that the cultural values, expressions, and histories of a dominant group are defined as superior to all other groups' values, expressions, and histories. It is not necessary for anyone to say, "My group's culture is superior." Cultural oppression occurs simply when one set of values, expressions, or histories is treated as universal, representing the best in all of humanity. Cultural oppression exists when one culture is considered "normal," thereby identifying all other cultures "strange," "invisible," or both.

Internalized Oppression is when members of a target social group adopt and believe the negative perception of their group, as seen in negative images, stereotypes, and ideology of the dominant group. People suffering from internalized oppression accept their socially subordinate status as deserved, natural, and inevitable. Internalized subordination may express itself through feelings of self-doubt, fear, and powerlessness, and through wanting to be like the dominant group. For example, the belief by a person of color that white skin is more beautiful than other skin tones.

**Owning Class.**
The owning class are investors and their family members with enough income from assets that removes their need to work to pay for the basic cost of living. A subset of this group has positions of power or vast wealth that put them in the ruling class. Signs that someone might belong to the owning class can include: 1) elite private schools and colleges; 2) large inheritances; 3) luxuries and international travel; and 4) owning multiple homes. In North America, people in the owning class are disproportionately white and male.

**Power.**
Power can reside within an individual (often known as empowerment), between individuals (often known as power with), and between groups (often known as power over) in society. It can be defined as the ability of an individual or group to act on a particular goal or influence a situation or relationship; it can also be construed as the ability of individuals or groups to access resources (symbolic, material, social) in a community or the larger society.

**Prejudice.**
A set of negative personal beliefs about a social group that leads individuals to hold biases against people from that group or the group in general, regardless of individual differences among members of that group.

**Privilege.**
A "system of advantage" that gives people from more powerful social groups access to resources, opportunities, and experiences that are denied to and at the expense of others simply because of the groups they belong to. Privilege may be unrecognized by those who have it; the person with privilege may assume their privilege is earned or is available to everyone. Systems of institutional oppression provide a defined group in society access to privilege while at the same time this privilege is denied to targeted groups without any specific action on the part of the individual.

**Race.**
Race is a socially constructed classification of people that is not based on any biological or scientific truth. In North America, race has been used to legitimize the dominance of white people over non-white people. Oppression and privileges are integral to the way racial categories were designed. They impact the institutions in our society that provide civil rights, housing, education, and healthcare, and they intentionally obstruct interpersonal relationships across race. While race is not a scientific or factual category, the classification of people by their perceived race leads to real experiences in how they are treated interpersonally, and by legal and social structures.

**Racism.**
Racism is a systemic historical and social construct that penetrates every aspect of our personal, institutional, and social life and is based on the false social construct of race. It is the use of power to oppress others both as a group and as individuals based on their race. It has personal, cultural, and institutional and internalized manifestations and includes prejudice against people of color in attitudes, feelings, and behaviors. It serves to create discrimination, suspicion, exclusion, fear, or hatred of people of color in order to uphold the system of white supremacy.

**Reverse Discrimination.**
A term used to describe a type of discrimination wherein members of a majority or historically advantaged group (such as Caucasians or males) are discriminated against based on their race, gender, age, or other protected characteristic. These types of claims typically arise in the areas of employment or education. Occasionally, the term also is used to negatively describe programs meant to advance or promote minorities and address inequality, such as affirmative action.

**Segregation.**
A system of "enforced separation of groups" that is maintained by the group in power as a way to protect their privileged status.

**Sephardic Jews.**
Sephardic Jews originate from the Iberian Peninsula, including Spain and Portugal. Historically they speak Ladino, a language that combines Spanish and Hebrew.

**Social Construct.**
A social construct is an idea that has been created and accepted by the people in a society. It is not inherently natural, and may differ from one society to another.

**Social Justice.**
A vision of a society in which the distribution of resources is equitable, all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, and every person has the opportunity and power to fully participate in the social system.

**Stereotypes.**
An oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or conclusion about an entire group based on beliefs and judgments about an individual member of that group. Stereotypes exceed necessary, useful categorizations and generalizations. They are typically negative, although not always, based on little information, and highly resistant to change, even in the face of contradictory evidence.

**Tokenism.**
Tokenism happens when a limited number of people from non-dominant groups are chosen for prestigious positions in order to deflect criticism of oppression, or the need to construct the system more equally.

**White Privilege.**
White privilege is the concrete benefit of access to resources and social rewards that are given, unknowingly or explicitly, to those perceived of as members of the white race, by virtue of their position in a society of racist norms.

**White Supremacy.**
White supremacy is the belief that white people are superior to those of all other races and should therefore dominate society. While white supremacy includes acts of intentional racism and race-based violence, it also includes actions of implicit and subconscious bias, based on stereotypes and defined norms.

## Sources:


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Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, Second Edition, Routledge, 2007

Williams College

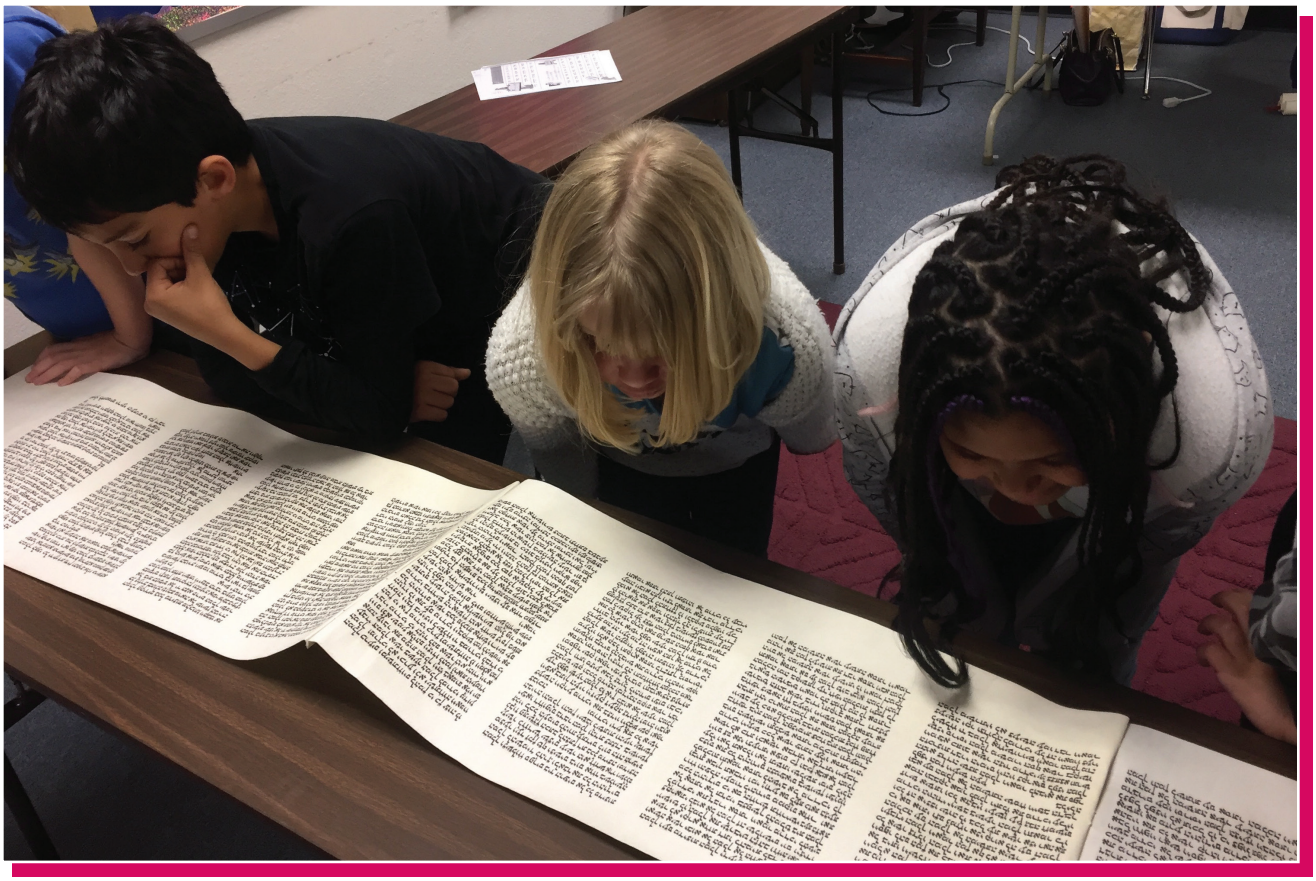
# Book Lists for Inclusion, Diversity, and Racial Justice for Kids and Adults

Including the following books in your synagogue library, classrooms, or camp programs can enhance knowledge and understanding of inclusion, diversity, and racial justice in your community. We hope the adult book list helps readers explore how to become allies, the wide-ranging narratives of Jews of Color, the history of our diverse Jewish cultures, and the struggles that people of color have faced in this country and around the world. There are always new books being published, so this list may not be fully comprehensive, but it's a great start to expand your library with books that will provide Jewish youth of color with images and stories to connect to that demonstrate that their stories are represented and help all Jewish kids understand the amazing diversity of the Jewish community in fun and engaging ways.

Credit for compiling the majority of the resources on this list goes to the Jewish Multiracial Network, Understanding Prejudice, Zeba Blay at Huffington Post, and WPCR—White People Challenging Racism in Boston. If you know of another book that should be on this list, please let us know.

## Activities

- Start a Monthly Book Club focused on stories of Jews of Color, or learning how to address racism.
- Feature new books in your newsletter.



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## Books for Young Children on Jewish Diversity

**A Turn for Noah: A Hanukkah Story**
by Susan Remick Topek, illustrated by Sally Springer
A simple story of a boy who learns to spin the dreidel, after much effort. One of the characters pictured (not Noah) is a Jewish boy of African descent. (Preschool)

**Abuelita's Secret Matzahs**
by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, illustrated by Diana Bryer
In engaging, accessible language, this book tells children the fascinating but little-known story of Crypto Jews, Jews forced to convert to Christianity during the Spanish Inquisition who secretly maintained their Jewish identity and customs throughout the ages. (Elementary School)

**Always an Olivia**
by Carolivia Herron, illustrated by Jeremy Tugeau
An elderly black grandmother passes on the story of the family's Jewish origins to her young granddaughter, Carol Olivia. As family members flee the Spanish Inquisition, are kidnapped by pirates and eventually sail to America, one daughter in each generation is given the name Olivia, from the Hebrew Shulamit meaning "peace," to honor the Jewish part of their ancestry. (Ages 7-10, Grades 2-4)

**As Good As Anybody: Martin Luther King, Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel's Amazing March Toward Freedom**
by Richard Michelson
A beautiful and inspiring tribute to a little known alliance in American history, this book describes how two icons for social justice, formed a remarkable friendship and turned their personal experiences of discrimination into a message of love and equality for all.

**Black Mirror**
by Nancy Werlin
Frances has always felt isolated at her New England prep school, but more so now that her brother has killed himself by overdosing on heroin. When Frances joins the social services charity her brother belonged to, she discovers that all is not as it seems, and realizes how little she really knew him. Frances is multiracial (Japanese-American and white) and Jewish.

**Bluish**
by Virginia Hamilton
Bluish is unlike any girl 10-year-old Dreenie has ever seen. At school she sits in a wheelchair and her skin so pale it's almost blue. Dreenie, herself new to the New York City magnet school, is fascinated by her, but wary as well. Unaware that the nickname Bluish could have derogatory connotations ("Blewish," for black and Jewish), she fixates on the moonlight blue skin tones of this curiously fragile child. Together with Tuli, a biracial girl who pretends to be Spanish (often with poignantly comical results), the three carefully forge a bond of friendship, stumbling often as they confront issues of illness, ethnicity, culture, need, and hope.

**Celebrate Hanukkah With Light, Latkes, and Dreidels**
by Deborah Heiligman
Part of National Geographic's holidays around the world series, with photos of African and Asian Jews, among others, and a latke recipe at the end.

**Chag Sameach: A Jewish Holiday Book for Children**
by Patricia Schaffer
Photographs show Jewish families celebrating Jewish holidays. The pictures include multiracial families through intermarriage and adoption. Includes a girl reading torah, a boy in a wheelchair eating matzo and a toddler lighting Chanukah candles.

**Chloe Leiberman (Sometimes Wong)**
by Carrie Rosten
A novel about a Chinese Jewish girl's obsession with fashion. (Teens)

**Clap and Count! Action Rhymes for the Jewish Year**
by Jacqueline Jules, illustrated by Sally Springer
Clapping, counting rhymes, musical rhymes, and fingerplays introduce Shabbat and Jewish holidays to preschoolers in a participatory way. Includes pictures of children of color.

**Daughters of the Ark**
by Anna Morgan
Tells the story of Debritu, a 14-year-old Ethiopian Jewish girl who, together with her two younger brothers, makes her way across miles of hostile and dangerous country before finally arriving in Israel in 1984, during Operation Moses. (Ages 10 and up)

**Day of Delight, A Jewish Sabbath in Ethiopia**
by Maxine Rose Schur
Fascinating in its detail about one ethnic/religious group in Africa, this story tells about children in a traditional Jewish family in a small village.

**Elijah Angel: A Story for Chanukah and Christmas**
by Michael Rosen, illustrated by Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson
An Ashkenazi Jewish boy befriends an elderly African American barber, who is also a woodcarver. The barber makes the boy a special gift for the holidays. Based on a true story. (Elementary School)

**Four Sides, Eight Nights: A New Spin on Hanukkah**
by Rebecca Tova Ben-Zvi, illustrated by Susan Natti
Four sides of a toy, eight nights of celebration, forty-four candles burning in honor of an ancient miracle, two-thousand-one-hundred-seventy-some years of Hanukkah—this book contains everything you ever wanted to know about the Hanukkah holiday, centered of the children's game of dreidel (a spinning top). It includes jokes, history, customs, trivia, science facts (just how fast does a dreidel spin?) come to life, with wacky and informative illustrations throughout. Depicts Jewish children of color. (Elementary School)

**God's Paintbrush**
by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, illustrated by Annette Compton
Looks at the way that children speak about God in ways that are different from adults. Provides diverse images of children in their journey of spiritual questions.

**I Love Jewish Faces**
by Debra B. Darvick
A picture book for the youngest readers with photos of Jewish children of all colors.

**Jalapeno Bagels**
by Natasha Wing
A Mexican-Jewish child learns that food represents both parts of his heritage. Includes Yiddish and Spanish glossaries.

**Jews of the Wild West, A Multi-Cultural True Story**
by Kay Miller
A picture book of family, friendship, and adventure in New Mexico.

**What Makes Someone a Jew?**
by Lauren Seidman
A picture book with photos of Jewish children of many colors.

## Picture Books for Young Children on Diversity and Social Justice

**Teammates**
by Peter Golenbock
A story of friendship between Jackie Robinson and his teammate PeeWee Reese.

**If this Bus Could Talk**
by Faith Ringgold
The bus tells the story of Rosa Parks.

**Martin's Big Words: The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**
by Doreen Laura Rappoport
A picture book biography of the Civil Rights leader.

**Sit In: How Four Friends Stood Up by Sitting Down**
by Andrea Davis Pinckney
This picture book celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Woolworth's Lunch Counter Sit-in in Greensboro, NC.

**Belle, the Last Mule at Gee's Bend**
by Calvin Alexander Ramsey and Bettye Stroud
A historical fiction that tells the story of how Belle the mule contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.

**The Other Side**
by Jacqueline Woodson
Two girls strike up a friendship across a fence that divides white from black residents in their small town.

**Let's Talk About Race**
by Julius Lester
A look at how each human represents a unique story.

**Jackie's Gift**
by Sharon Robinson
The author calls the book, "A story to help people look beyond race and religion and into people's hearts."

**The Crayon Box that Talked**
by Shane DeRolf
A poem that celebrates the creation of harmony through diversity.

**It's Okay to Be Different**
by Todd Parr
The whimsical illustrations celebrate the many ways we are all different.

**The Sneetches and Other Stories**
by Dr. Seuss

A reminder that while we may look different, we are all really the same.

## Chapter Books and Books for Older Elementary-Aged Children

**Twice Toward Justice**
by Philip Hoose
A biography of Claudette Colvin, a teenager who was frustrated by injustice and—before Rosa Parks—sat down to fight it.

**When Hurricane Katrina Hit Home**
by Gail Langer Karwoski
The story of two very different children who were both affected by Hurricane Katrina and how they learn what is important in the aftermath of the storm that changed their lives.

**Hot Pursuit: Murder in Mississippi**
by Stacia Deutsch and Rhody Cohon
A later elementary appropriate account of Mikey Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Chauncey, the three young Civil Rights activists who were murdered in Mississippi in the summer of 1964.

**Whirlwind**
by Carol Matas
Two young immigrants to Seattle in 1942 bond as they endure taunting from their peers because of their origins.

**Across the Alley**
by Richard Michelson
Willie and Abe develop a friendship that challenges stereotypes as they look out their bedroom windows in post World War II Brooklyn.

**Stealing Home**
by Ellen Schwartz
A biracial boy is left orphaned in 1947 and has to learn to cope with a lack of acceptance from his family while learning to accept the different sides of himself.

**King's Courage—Blast to the Past**
by Stacia Deutsch and Rhody Cohon
Four kids travel back in time to convince Dr. King not to get discouraged before leading one of his voting rights marches.

**The War Within**
by Carol Matas
After General Ulysses Grant issues an order expelling all Jews from the territory under his control, young Hannah Green begins to question many of the values she took for granted, including slavery.

## Books for Adults

**Beyond the Whiteness of Whiteness: Memoir of a White Mother of Black Sons**
by Jane Lazarre
A Jewish woman married to an African-American non-Jewish man describes her experience of raising her sons and her encounter with the reality of racism in the U.S.

**Black, Jewish and Interracial: It's Not the Color of Your Skin, But the Race of Your Kin, and Other Myths of Identity**
by Katya Bibel Azoulay
Examines how adult children of interracial parents (Jewish and black) think about personal identity. Blends historical, theoretical and personal perspectives to explore possibilities and meanings when black and Jewish merge.

**Black, White and Jewish**
by Rebecca Walker
A memoir written by the daughter of an African American mother and an Ashkenazi Jewish father who was born during the civil rights era of the 1960s.

**Black, White, Other: Biracial Americans Talk about Race and Identity**
by Lise Funderberg
Stories of biracial adults, written by a biracial Jewish woman (Ashkenazi Jewish and African American).

**Bridge Across Broken Time: Chinese and Jewish Cultural Memory**
by Vera Schwarcz
Explores the meanings of cultural memory within the two longest surviving civilizations on earth.

**Chicken Soup with Chopsticks**
by Jack Botwinik
Depicts the theological challenges a Jew is confronted with in dating a Chinese woman, and how this experience leads them both to become Torah-observant.

**Dim Sum, Bagels, and Grits: A Sourcebook for Multicultural Families**
by Myra Alperson
A resource guide for interracial families of all kinds, written by a single Jewish mother whose adopted daughter was born in China.

**Half a Heart**
by Rosellen Brown
A novel about a white Jewish woman who loses custody of her biracial baby. A reunion occurs when the daughter reaches adulthood.

**In Every Tongue: The Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Jewish People**
by Diane Tobin, Gary Tobin, and Scott Rubin
A groundbreaking look at the changing faces of the Jewish people and implications for the world Jewish community.

**Is That Your Child? Mothers Talk about Rearing Biracial Children**
by Marion Kilson and Florence Ladd
"Is that your child?" is a question that countless mothers of biracial children encounter whether they are African American or European American, rearing children today or a generation ago, living in the city or in the suburbs, are upper middle class or lower middle class. Social scientists Marion Kilson and Florence Ladd probe mothers' responses to this query and other challenges that mothers of biracial children encounter.

**Jews in Old China: Studies by Chinese Scholars**
edited and translated by Sidney Shapiro
Shapiro and his colleagues detail their analysis to reveal that Jews were not only present in Kaifeng, known as Bianjing in the Song Dynasty, but lived in large numbers in other Chinese cities as well.

**Lovesong: Becoming a Jew**
by Julius Lester
This autobiographical chronicle of Julius Lester's Jewish journey is a meaningful addition to the body of scholarship on conversion. It also offers opportunity for reflections on black/Jewish relations in the U.S.

**Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire**
by Michael Pollack
"Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries reads, in many ways, like an adventure story, crisscrossing geographic locations and transcending ages. It is altogether engrossing. Pollack has sniffed out every available clue on the Chinese Jews; his research is solid and well documented. Both in terms of relating the history of the Chinese Jews and tracing their impact on the Western mind, there is no better work available." —Anson Laytner, "Judaism"

**Oreo**
by Fran Ross
This uproariously funny satire about relations between African Americans and Jews is as fresh and outrageous today as when it was first published in 1974. Born to a Jewish father and black mother who divorce before she is two, Oreo grows up in Philadelphia with her maternal grandparents while her mother tours with a theatrical troupe. Soon after puberty, Oreo heads for New York with a pack on her back to search for her father; but in the big city she discovers that there are dozens of Sam Schwartzes in the phone book, and Oreo's mission turns into a wickedly humorous picaresque quest. The ambitious and playful narrative challenges accepted notions of race, ethnicity, culture, and even the novelistic form itself.

**Secret Thoughts of an Adoptive Mother**
by Jana Wolff
A white Jewish adoptive mother describes the experience of adopting a child of color.

**Shades of Community and Conflict: Biracial Adults of African-American and Jewish-American Heritages**by Josylyn C. Sega
This study of 18 adults of African-American and Jewish-American heritage explores how biracial subjects of two minority parents negotiate mixed-race heritage and identity in a society that maintains a hostile attitude toward interracial unions.

**The Beautiful People of the Book: A Tribute to Ethiopian Jews in Israel**
by Colette Berman and Yosef Miller
A coffee table book that places beautiful photography in historical and cultural context with extended captions and narratives.

**The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother**
by James McBride
The story of James McBride's mother, a Polish Jew and daughter of a rabbi, who moved to New York city, and met and married a black man (McBride's father). The book is a testament to one woman's true heart, solid values, and indomitable will.

**The Flying Camel: Essays on Identity by Women of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish Heritage**
edited by Loolwa Khazzoom
Personal and political essays by over a dozen Jewish women, edited by an American woman of Iraqi Jewish descent.

**Black Jews in Africa and the Americas**
by Tudor Parfitt
Black Jews in Africa and the Americas tells the fascinating story of how the Ashanti, Tutsi, Igbo, Zulu, Beta Israel, Maasai, and many other African peoples came to think of themselves as descendants of the ancient tribes of Israel. Pursuing medieval and modern European race narratives over a millennium in which not only were Jews cast as black, but black Africans were cast as Jews, Tudor Parfitt reveals a complex history of the interaction between religious and racial labels and their political uses.

**Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Other Pressures**
by Milton Ellerin
Discusses commonalities between the oppression of African Jews and the oppression of Asian Jews. Also provides statistics from 1980s on numbers of Jews in shrinking North African and other communities.

**The Jews of China, Volume One: Historical and Comparative Perspectives**
edited by Jonathan Goldstein
An interdisciplinary effort by Chinese, Japanese, Middle Eastern, and Western sinologists and Judaic studies specialists, this book scrutinizes patterns of migration, acculturation, assimilation, and economic activity of successive waves of Jewish arrivals in China from approximately 1100 to 1949.

**Under One Canopy: Readings in Jewish Diversity**
by Karen Primack
Featuring the works of over fifty poets, essayists, storytellers, and songwriters. A tribute to Jewish diversity by Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, African, and Asian writers.

**Waiting for Lucinda: One Family's Journey Through International Adoption**
by Amy Shore
Written with passion, honesty, humor, and love, Jewish author Amy Shore describes the ups and downs of adopting a child from Guatemala. From hope to heartache, anger and determination, the will to believe when all else fails, bureaucratic red tape, an interesting cast of international characters, and the agony of the wait, the author details her journey to meet Lucinda.

**Weaving a Family: Untangling Race and Adoption**
by Barbara Katz Rothman
A path-breaking study by a noted sociologist of the immediate and continuing impact of race and adoption in our society. Katz Rothman draws on her own experience as a white Jewish mother of an adopted black child.

## Books for Adults on Racial Justice

**The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace**
by Jeff Hobbs
This moving biography recounts the life of Robert Peace, a young man who escaped the streets of Newark, New Jersey, to attend Yale University—only to lose his life after graduating.

**The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness**
by Michelle Alexander
Scholar and activist Michelle Alexander examines the impact of law enforcement and mass incarceration on race relations in present-day America.

**The Fire Next Time**
by James Baldwin
One of James Baldwin's most important book of essays, The Fire Next Time explores themes of race, religion and identity.

**Between the World and Me**
by Ta-Nehisi Coates
Toni Morrison has described this debut book from Ta-Nehisi Coates as a "required reading." In the form of a letter to his teenaged son, Coates distills what it means to be black in America today.

**Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism**
by Bell Hooks
For the reader who wants to learn more about black feminism, Ain't I A Woman is considered one of the most important and comprehensive works on how sexism and misogyny specifically affect women of color.

**Citizen**
by Claudia Rankine
Poet Claudia Rankine meditates on police brutality, racial fatigue, depression, and the denigration of black bodies.

**Negroland: A Memoir**
by Margo Jefferson
Margo Jefferson shares a bold and thought-provoking memoir on her upbringing as the daughter of black socialites in 1960s Chicago.

**Welcome to Braggsville**
by T. Geronimo Johnson
This darkly comic debut novel is about four University of California, Berkeley students from different backgrounds who decide to protest a Civil War reenactment.

**The Bluest Eye**
by Toni Morrison
Morrison's first novel perfectly captures the effects of racism and colorism, telling the story of an 11-year-old black girl with low self-esteem who prays desperately for her eyes to become blue.

**Race Matters**
by Cornel West
Still considered one of activist Cornel West's most important books, *Race Matters* bluntly takes on everything from affirmative action, to black crime, to religion within the black community—and what solutions, if any, there are.

**Invisible Man**
by Ralph Ellison
In this seminal 1952 novel, an unnamed narrator recounts his epic life story, from his coming-of-age in a rural Southern town, to his migration to the violent streets of Harlem.

**Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?**
by Beverly Daniel Tatum
Through research and case studies, psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum confronts the subtle ways in which racism dictates the ways both white and non-white people navigate the world.

**Slavery by Another Name**
by Douglas A. Blackmon
Writer Douglas A. Blackmon exposes the horrific aftermath of the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery, when thousands of black people were unfairly arrested and then illegally "sold" into forced labor as punishment.

**White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son**
by Tim Wise
Wise, who speaks widely on U.S. campuses, looks at his life in relation to the white privilege he received from age three on.

**White Lies: Race and the Myths of Whiteness**
by Maurice Berger
Berger grew up in NYC 1960s with a Jewish liberal father who loved Martin Luther King Jr., and a dark-skinned Sephardic Jewish mother who hated black people: he describes his journey toward understanding racism.

**How Jews Became White Folks & What That Says About Race in America**
by Karen Brodkin
Explores how Jewish immigrants assimilated within the whiteness framework and addresses the bootstraps myth.

**A Chinaman's Chance: One Family's Journey and the Chinese American Dream**
by Eric Liu
This memoir is about a family trying to balance the obligations and relationships of Chinese culture, where being in community is paramount, with the more individualistic values of U.S. culture. Liu writes about how the Chinese language is structured to illuminate relationships, while English, being noun-heavy, tends to classify objects. His describes his young daughter's fluctuating choices about which aspects of each culture to identify with. Liu identifies as an American-born Chinese.

**A Cup of Water Under My Bed**
by Daisy Hernandez
This Latina author, a former *New York Times* reporter and colorlines.com editor, describes her complicated relationship to Spanish and English cultures and languages. As the daughter of a Cuban and Columbian parent, her memoir describes her gradual recovery of Spanish and her family's evolution from mystification to acceptance of her bisexuality.

**My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me: A Black Woman Discovers Her Family's Nazi Past**
by Jennifer Teege and Nioka Sellmair
At age 38, Teege picked up a library book and discovered a horrifying fact: her grandfather was Amon Goeth, the vicious Nazi commandant depicted in the film "Schindler's List" as the "butcher of Plaszow." She was raised in Germany by adoptive parents, and she earned a degree from Tel Aviv University. She wrestles with the question, Can evil be inherited?

**Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask**
by Anton Treuer
The Ojibwe author, who speaks widely on Native history and culture, has collected the 127 most often asked questions from "Why the long hair?" to queries about casinos, mascots, foster care, alcoholism, blood quantum, and U.S./tribal jurisdictional complexities. His answers are pithy, informative, wise, and often humorous.

**What If I Say the Wrong Thing? 25 Habits for Culturally Effective People**
by Verna A. Myers
In a book that can be read in an hour but enlighten for a lifetime, Myers shares her own prejudices as well as those of others she has observed as a diversity and inclusion consultant. The "bit-sized" examples are deeply sympathetic, but eminently do-able. She helps people practice habits such as these: get familiar with your biases, look for your blind spots, and use your mistakes to grow, avoid in-group favoritism, acknowledge your unearned advantages, be an active bystander and expand your comfort zone. Order from www.shopABA.org.

**Moving Diversity Forward: How to Go From Well-Meaning to Well-Doing**
by Verna A. Myers
A consultant on diversity and inclusion, wrote this engaging book for "well-intentioned white people." She uses a party as her core image: "Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being invited to dance." She writes as if she is having an in-person conversation with her readers, and she shares her personal experiences throughout the book.

**Talking About Race: A Workbook about White People Fostering Racial Equality in Their Lives**
by Kaolin
The author adapted her successful University of Massachusetts college course into this book for use by individuals, small study groups, and secondary or higher education classrooms. It consists of 140 self-study questions for readers to ponder, along with space to write responses, and an array of honest, sometimes conflicted, thoughts and feelings that her students were willing to share.

**Love, Race, and Liberation: 'Til the White Day is Done**
edited by JLove Calderon and Marcella Runell Hall
A hands-on, creative, accessible collection of lesson plans to prompt dialogue and action. Plus "love letters" written by some of the leading voices on race and racism.

**Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice**
by Paul Kivel
This book helps white people see dynamics of racism in society, institutions, and daily lives. It includes stories, exercises, and advice for working together.

**Fire in the Heart: How White Activists Embrace Racial Justice**
by Mark R. Warren
Interviews with 50 progressive white activists about how their eyes were opened to racial injustice and about what made them commit themselves to combatting it. Author explores the challenges they face: how to address fellow whites' racism without creating defensiveness; how to recognize times when they themselves are undercutting the leadership of people of color by dominating decision making, and how they stay committed to multi-racial work despite such mistakes and the inevitable tensions that arise.

**Some of My Best Friends: Writings on Interracial Friendships**
edited by Emily Bernard
Personal stories show the complexities of interracial friendships: Latino and white, black and Asian, black and Jewish.

**Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe**
by Richard Alba and Nancy Foner
The authors look at how various immigrant groups fare in Canada, U.S., Germany, Netherlands, Britain and France, and factors like colonialism, religion, and national "narratives": France's "Republicanism," Germany's "ethno-cultural" view, Canada's "multiculturalism," U.S. "immigrant nation," and what each country could learn from the others.

**Einstein on Race and Racism**
by Fred Jerome and Rodger Taylor
Describes Einstein's anti-racism activism, which history books and biographies usually fail to mention. Jerome is white and Taylor is African American.

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