



CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

Basic Judaism – Fall 2026

Class Syllabus

(Zoom Link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85390495055>)

Assigned Books:

1. *What is a Jew? A Guide to the Beliefs, Traditions, and Practices of Judaism that Answers Questions for Both Jew and Non-Jew* by Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer, revised by Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman. (Kertzer)
2. *Living a Jewish Life: Jewish Traditions, Customs, and Values for Today's Families* by Anita Diamant (updated and revised edition). (Diamant)
3. *Settings of Silver: An Introduction to Judaism* by Stephen M. Wylen, Second Edition. (Wylen)

Calendar of Sessions and Assigned Readings:

Session #	Date	Topic	Faculty	Reading Assignment
1	August 18	Welcome and Introduction Session	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, Ch. 4 Wylen, Chs. 2-4
2	August 25	Spectrum of Denominations	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, Ch. 1 Wylen, Ch. 20
3	September 1	High Holy Day Workshop	Rabbi Adrienne Scott & David Scott, RJE	Kertzer, 214-219 Diamant, 152-163
4	September 8	Sukkot and Simchat Torah	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, 219-222 Diamant, 164-170
5	October 6	Jewish Music as Prisms through History (Online)	Cantor Kenneth Feibush	Kertzer, 60 Wylen, Ch. 6
6	October 13	Wolff-Toomin, Distinguished Lecture Series Featuring Kenneth Stern (In Person)	Kenneth Stern (In Person)	None (This class will be in Person)
7	October 20	Shabbat and Sanctity	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, 171-210
8	October 27	The Jewish Calendar and Holidays	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Diamant, 139-151
9	November 3	Jewish Customs in Death and Mourning	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Wylen, Ch. 7
10	November 10	The Jewish Life Cycle	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, Ch. 8 Diamant, Ch. 4
11	November 17	Land, People, and State of Israel	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, 179-194 Wylen, Chs. 21-22
12	December 8	Chanukah	Rabbi Samuel Rheins	Kertzer, 179-194 Wylen, Chs. 21-22