

*ORGANIZING A UNIT AT A*  
**JEWISH RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION**



**New-Unit Resource Kit**

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# JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

JCCA  
 15 East 26th Street  
 New York, NY 10010  
 212-532-4949

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

*The Circle and Zarkor*—produced by parent organizations

### PURPOSE

- Sponsor cultural, educational, recreational, and social programming primarily, but not exclusively, for the Jewish community.
- Provide programs under professional guidance spanning nursery school to senior adults.

### FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Special Interests.** Jewish culture, physical fitness, youth camps. Membership often open to non-Jews also.

**Special Interest in Scouting.** Scouting is often one of the most successful youth programs in a JCC, especially Cub Scouting and Tiger Cubs BSA.

**Methods of Supporting Scouting.** Operation of units, providing rooms and facilities for training courses, district meetings, etc.

**Scouting-Related Literature.** “Keeping the Sabbath While Camping,” No. 15-109; “Holiday Program Suggestions for Tiger Cub Partners and Cub Scout

Leaders,” No. 15-243; Etz Chaim emblem program for older Boy Scouts, older Varsity Scouts, and Venturers, No. 33186; Ner Tamid emblem program for Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts, No. 33181A; Aleph emblem program for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 33185; Maccabee emblem program, No. 33165 for Tiger Cubs and No. 3933 for counselors; monthly program themes for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 15-231, and for Boy Scouts, Woods Wisdom, Jewish Program Features, No. 15-232. Adults may be nominated for the Shofar award, No. 15-102.

**Structure.** The Jewish Community Center Association is the coordinating body of the Jewish Community Centers and Young Men’s/Young Women’s Hebrew Associations in North America. Locally, the president is the top lay officer of the Jewish Community Center and the executive director is the top professional.

**Local Contact.** Executive director, or director of youth activities. The latter is frequently more knowledgeable about Scouting’s potential in a center.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS/SYNAGOGUES IN MY DISTRICT

Name	Location	Youth Activities Director	Phone	Units

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to assist Scouting professionals when calling on representatives in the Jewish community. While in no way a comprehensive treatise on the many facets of modern Judaism, this document will provide the user with a cursory introduction into the branches of Judaism, Jewish practices and Jewish Holy Days. Such information is vital to the Scouting professional when meeting with rabbis, synagogue representatives, Jewish Community Center directors and leaders in the general Jewish community.

There are four main branches of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism. Despite these different classifications there are a number of shared practices and customs that a Scouting professional must recognize and understand. Familiarity with Jewish religious requirements will minimize awkwardness and demonstrate a respect and sensitivity towards Jewish traditions irrespective of the branch.

Just as there are different branches within Judaism these are also different levels of observance demonstrated by the members of the various branches. Degrees of observance will vary from branch to branch and from individual to individual.

## BASIC JEWISH BELIEFS

From antiquity to the present day, Judaism has been the religious expression of the Jewish people in their efforts to live a life of holiness before God. Judaism has varied a great deal throughout history and has changed and challenged its adherents for millennia. Judaism unifies the Jews of different lands in their common and communal practices.

Judaism is the oldest monotheistic faith. Indeed, it was Judaism that introduced the concept of monotheism to the world. Judaism is a religion. **Judaism is not a race, nor a culture. Judaism is a religion and Jews are linked by a shared set of beliefs and practices.** Members of the Jewish community span the spectrum of human variety. There are Jews of African descent, Oriental Jews and Caucasian Jews. It is a common theology and not genetics that binds together the Jewish people. The following are only some of the important structures, values, ideals and primary beliefs espoused by the Jewish religion.

## GOD

Divine creator and ruler of the universe. **The belief in God is the foundation of the Jewish faith and the foundation of Judaism's belief system. For Judaism, God is non-corporeal and transcendent. That is to say, for Judaism, God has no form, no body, no shape. God is eternal and ever present.** The Bible ascribes certain traits to God, such as mercy, justice, and benevolence. In rabbinic sources, God is described as omnipotent, omniscient, and all good. God is the Creator of the universe and is therefore, above and separate from creation. Be advised that some members of the Jewish community will utilize an incomplete form when spelling the name of God: G-d. This, for some, is a sign of respect and done in response to the teaching that God's personal name is never to be written or spoken.

## THE TORAH

The most sacred object and the holiest document that the Jewish community possesses is the Torah. **The Torah, a scroll written on parchment, comprises the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.** It forms the basis for Jewish Scriptures. Jewish Scriptures is divided into three part: the Torah, the Prophets and the Writings. **Please be aware that Jews never refer to the Bible as “the Old Testament.” When referencing the Bible use the term *Jewish Scriptures*.** The Torah is the foundation for all Jewish Law. According to tradition God gave Moses the Torah on Mount Sinai. Along with the written Torah, God also gave Moses a detailed explanation of the Commandments. This collection of sacred writings is called the Oral Law.

The Torah is divided into 156 readings and one portion is read each Sabbath in the Synagogue. The Torah is read in one year. This cycle of readings concludes and begins again each year on the holiday of *Simchat Torah* (Rejoicing with the Torah). Torah scrolls are always kept in the sanctuary and placed with in the Holy Ark. The Ark is the central feature found within the synagogue.

## MITZVOT: GOD’S COMMANDMENTS

According to tradition the Torah contains 613 commandments, *mitzvot* (singular, *mitzvah*). **These 613 commandments, *mitzvot*, are the obligatory duties and required religious actions and behaviors performed by a practicing Jewish person. Mitzvot are not “good deeds.” Boy Scouts do “good deeds.” A *mitzvah* is a binding act intended to concretize and make real the values upon which Jewish theology rests. Some *mitzvot* are time bound and must be performed with the required time boundaries. *Mitzvot* are not negotiable.**

## PRAYER AND LITURGY

Jewish prayer can be either public or private, and is both fixed and spontaneous. There is a prayer, a blessing (in Hebrew a *b’ra-cha*) for every act and every aspect of life. Because life and all of life is holy and derives from God, Jews respond to that holiness by blessing God the creator. Whether before eating, or upon seeing a rainbow or a shooting star or a favorite teacher, all life experiences are marked by reciting a blessing. Fixed worship takes place three times a day for traditionally observant Jews, morning, afternoon and evening.

## THE SABBATH

**The Sabbath (in Hebrew *Shabbat*) is the most important holiday in the Jewish calendar.** It is celebrated weekly. The Jewish Sabbath begins Friday evening just prior to sundown. It concludes on Saturday night when it is dark enough to see three stars. **It is imperative that Scouting professionals understand that the Sabbath as well as all other Jewish holidays begin just prior to sundown and end in the evening when darkness has fallen.** This practice originates in the Book of Genesis where it states, “there was evening and there was morning, the first day.”

Sabbath worship begins on Friday evening. An elaborate and festive meal follows the evening liturgy. Worship continues the next morning. The Sabbath concludes with a brief service called *Havdalah*. The word *Havdalah* means “separation.” This worship

service brings the Sabbath to a close and ushers in a new week, separating the Sabbath for the six days of creation.

**Work is suspended on the Sabbath as people try to regain equilibrium with God. While many scouting activities are not permitted on the Sabbath, observant scouts can and do go camping and respect the Sabbath rules at the same time. The National Jewish Committee on Scouting has produced a booklet entitled, “Keeping the Sabbath While Camping.”** It is a *mitzvah* for all Jews to observe the Sabbath. Appropriate programming should be planned for troops and scouts who are Sabbath observant. If questions arise when planning a scouting event it is best to seek the advise of a competent rabbi or contact the National Jewish Chaplain of the Boy Scouts of America.

## **ISRAEL**

**The modern state of Israel is the spiritual homeland of the Jewish people, the historic center of the Jewish religion and the birthplace of Islam and Christianity.** The concept of *K'lal Yisrael*, the peoplehood of Israel connects all Jew through an eternal covenant with God and the land of Israel. Spiritually all Jews are related one to the other. The State of Israel fulfills God’s promise made to Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Leah, Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel that the holy ground on which you stand, “will I give to you and your descendants.”

## **THE JEWISH COMMUNITY**

**Judaism is a religion which defines and outlines a way of life for its practitioners. A very clear culture of values is derived from Jewish theology and Jewish ritual. While some have tried to define Judaism as a culture or a life style, this is incorrect. Jewish law, Jewish ritual and Jewish theology define Jewish culture and not visa versa.**

There are divisions within the Jewish community, much like the denominations found within Christianity. The various branches of Judaism differ on points of belief, observance, lifestyle, interpretation of theology and on the degree of secular inclusion. Jewish people can be found all over the world. The Jewish community comprises people of every color and every ethnic culture. This speaks to the fact that the Jewish community is linked by a shared set of beliefs and values, not by common genetic factors.

## **ASHKENAZIC/SEPHARDIC TRADITION**

The Jewish world is divided into two geographic regions. Most modern Jews trace their ancestry back to either Europe or Spain, the Moslem countries or North Africa Those Jews whose roots reach back to Eastern and central Europe are called Ashkenazim. Those coming out of a tradition which developed in Spain, North Africa and the Moslem world are called Sephardim.

Ashkenazim (Ashkenaz is the Hebrew word for Germany) is a term for Jews and their descendants who lived in central and Eastern Europe. Yiddish is the common language of Ashkenazic Jews. Yiddish is combination of middle high German, Hebrew, and Slavic languages..

Sephardim (Sepharad is the Hebrew word for Spain) are Jews trace their origins back to Spain, Portugal, North Africa, the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East. Their tradition differed from the Ashkenazim as a result of social, political and cultural

influences in their countries of origin. They developed a language called Ladino, a mixture of Hebrew and medieval Spanish. The differences between Jews of Ashkenazic origin and Sephardic origin are not theological but reflect the differences of location. **Hebrew is the language of Jewish prayer for all Jews. Torah and *mitzvot* are central to all Jews irrespective of origin.**

## **MAJOR RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS**

As in many religions, Judaism has many branches of followers. Orthodox Judaism, Reform Judaism, and Conservative Judaism are outlined briefly below:

### **ORTHODOX JUDAISM**

Orthodox Judaism represented a very traditional and strict approach to the Jewish religion. Orthodox Judaism teaches that God gave the Torah to Moses on Mt. Sinai. As such, revelation is immutable and binding for all time. Moses received both the Written and Oral Law from God. **For Orthodox Judaism, Jewish Law is authoritative and applicable to every human experience. Orthodox Jewry does not permit secular influences to laws or customs. The community's Rabbi is the chief authority on all questions.** Jewish Law covers all aspects of existence and extends beyond the boundaries of religious ritual and custom. Hasidic Judaism, which was founded in the 18th Century, is a subset of Orthodox Judaism.

### **REFORM JUDAISM**

As a religious movement, Reform Judaism was established in Europe in the early 19th Century, but it took root primarily in North America.

The principles of the movement are modifications of traditional beliefs and practices that meet contemporary needs. Reform Judaism advocates the harmonization of the Jewish tradition with modern life and culture. **The autonomy of the individual Jew in interpreting the demands of Jewish tradition is a central principle of Reform Judaism.**

Reform Judaism teaches that revelation, while God given, is the result of a divinely inspired process. **Reform Judaism is an historically progressive religion which seeks to apply the profound principles, values and teaching of Judaism to the challenges of an ever changing world.**

### **CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM**

As a religious movement, Conservative Judaism arose in the middle of the 19th Century in Europe and the U.S. As a middle path between Orthodox and Reform Judaism, its founders believed that the traditional forms and precepts of Judaism are binding, while allowing for gradual changes in response to various challenges that a modern society presents.

**In Conservative Judaism, all laws are seen as God given but interpretation is allowed. The community's Rabbi is the chief authority on such interpretations.**

## **BASIC TERMS**

### **YARMULKE/KIPPA**

A yarmulke/kippa (skullcap) is worn by Jews to show reverence for God during worship,

study, and while reciting blessings. Some Jews wear a yarmulke/kippa all the time as a sign of respect. Out of reverence to God, it is traditional for all men to cover their heads when entering a Synagogue sanctuary. **Male scouting professionals meeting with Orthodox and Conservative rabbis should inquirer whether or not it is necessary to wear a yarmulke if meeting in the synagogue.**

### TALLIT

A tallit (prayer shawl) is worn by adult males and some females during specific prayer services. It is a four-cornered garment with fringes knotted at each corner that symbolizes one's commitment to follow God's commandments. The long fringes, one on each corner of the tallit, are called *tzitzit*. The *tzitzit* represent the *mitzvot*, God's commandments. Wearing a tallit is a sign that Jews embrace God's commandments.

### TEFILLIN

Tefillin are prayer boxes that contain passages from the Bible. Wearing tefillin is a ritual that serves to bind the Jews to God. They are traditionally worn by males during morning prayers.

In synagogue, many males wear yarmulkes, tallit and tefillin when appropriate. In some non-Orthodox synagogues, an increasing number of women are also taking on the practice of wearing these religious articles.

### TZEDAKAH

The Hebrew word *tzedakah* means "justice." *Tzedakah* while commonly thought of as philanthropy, really speaks to a deeper sense of Jewish values. Central to Jewish teaching is a concern for the wellbeing of all members of the community. ***Tzedakah* is not charity but a religious obligation to maintain and protect the welfare of all people. These are ancient Jewish concepts and recognized by Jews as an essential part of their observance.**

### THE RABBI

Rabbis are spiritual leaders who teach, sermonize, and perform religious ceremonies and rituals. **Rabbis are the Jewish authorities on all questions of Jewish ritual, practice and Law.**

The majority of synagogues are closely identified with their Rabbis. Some Rabbis act as family, marriage, and spiritual counselors. In addition, many Rabbis act as representatives of the Jewish community in non-Jewish events. In actuality, the Rabbi's true position is that of a teacher. **In Reform and Conservative Judaism, Rabbis may be male or female. In Orthodox Judaism, Rabbis are always male.**

### KOSHER

Kashrut is the Hebrew term for the "dietary laws." The dietary laws are found in the Bible and expanded in the Jewish law codes. **The word kosher means "proper" or "ritually acceptable." Observant Jewish people eat only the meat of animals that have split hooves and chew their cud. Pork and fish with no fins is forbidden. This includes all shellfish. The dietary laws prohibit the eating of milk products and meat products at the same meal. Strict separation between the two food groups is maintained by people who observe the dietary laws.**

Jewish people can eat no birds that are predators. Jewish family that observe the dietary laws will have two sets of dishes, one set of dishes specifically designated for milk meals and another for meat meals. Observant Orthodox Jews will eat only in restaurants that are supervised to ensure that Kosher standards are observed. Conservative and Reform Jews will eat in restaurants and will make appropriate food choices given the restaurant. **Those scouts and scouter who keep kosher will observed these rules even while camping. Ritually observant troops will camp with two complete sets of dishes, utensils and cooking gear.**

## **HEBREW**

Hebrew is the ancient and holy language of the Jewish people. It is referred to as *lishone koddesh* the holy tongue. The Torah is written in Hebrew as are Jewish prayer books and other volumes of Jewish sacred literature. Hebrew is the language of Jewish worship. Jewish school children learn the language as part of their formal Jewish education. Hebrew is also the official language of the modern state of Israel.

## **IMPORTANT RITUALS LIFE CYCLE EVENTS**

### **BIRTH**

The birth of a child is always reason to celebrate. In Judaism, the birth of a child brings hope and carries with it a promise for the future. There are ceremonies that mark the birth of male children and female children.

On the eighth day after the birth of a boy, the male child is circumcised and formally named. This welcoming ceremony is called a *Brit Milah*. The *brit milah*, sometimes referred to as a *bris*, symbolizes the covenant that exists between God and the Jewish people. It is a ceremony of utmost importance. It introduces the child to the community as well as establishes the child's relationship with God and the Jewish people. **The *bris* must take place on the eight day after birth. Only issues of the baby's health suspend this requirement. Usually a *mohel*, an experienced professional, performs the circumcision.**

### **SIMCHAT BAT**

*Simchat Bat* is a ceremony designed to welcome female children into the Covenant of Abraham. It introduces the child to the community as well as establishes the child's relationship with God and the Jewish people. This celebration may take place in the synagogue or in the home. While there are no times limitations for a *Simchat Bat*, it usually takes place within the first weeks after birth,

### **BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

Meaning son or daughter of the commandment, a boy becomes a bar mitzvah at the age of thirteen and a girl becomes a bat mitzvah at age twelve.

**A bar/bat mitzvah marks the end of childhood and the beginning of adolescence. Bar/bat mitzvah is Judaism's ceremonial rite of passage.** Once a young person fulfills the requirements for bar/bat mitzvah, the young person is now responsible for observing Jewish law. He/she takes on of the obligations of an adult Jew. The ceremony includes

preparation and study, public recognition and celebration. Orthodox congregations do not celebrate the bat mitzvah as part of the formal religious service in the synagogue. However, the Conservative, Reform movement generally follow the same procedures for both the bar and bat mitzvah. Bar/bat mitzvah mark the child's arrival at the Jewish age of majority.

## **MARRIAGE**

Marriage is biblically ordained. The Hebrew word for marriage, *kiddushin*, comes from the word holy. Judaism understands marriage to be a sanctified institution. During the ceremony both the bride and groom wear white, symbolizing purity. The bride is veiled, a tradition which recalls the occasion when Rebecca covered herself with a veil as Isaac approached her for the first time. The Jewish marriage contract, *Ketubah*, is written in Aramaic and dates from the first century CE. The marriage ceremony takes place under a *Huppah*, a bridal canopy supported by four poles. The huppah symbolizes the home which the bride and groom will establish. The Jewish wedding ceremony begins with the bride circling the groom. It ends with the groom breaking a glass. Both are protective rituals. Marriage continues to be a social, moral, and religious ideal.

## **DEATH**

When a Jewish person dies, the burial must take place within one to three days, after which the mourning period begins. The bereaved remain in the home for seven days of mourning. **The initial intense period is called *Shiva* (seven). Normal activities are suspended during this time of mourning. It is the duty of friends and relatives to visit the mourners during this period.** Parents are mourned intensively for thirty days and then a lesser state of mourning continues until twelve months after the burial. **Rather than sending flowers, it is better to either make a contribution to a charity or a synagogue in the name of the deceased.** Because *shiva* continues for a seven days, sending a food to the home is also a most appreciated gesture.

## **OBSERVANCES**

### **CALENDAR**

The Hebrew calendar is both solar and lunar. The months are lunar and are made up of either twenty-nine or thirty days and the occasional leap month.

The day begins at sunset, the week begins on Saturday night, the month begins with the new moon, and the new year (Rosh Hashanah) is in autumn. **All Jewish holidays, including the Sabbath, begin at dusk and end in dark. The Scouting professional needs to be aware of this reality. Calendars may show the date of a Holy Day without referencing the fact that the Holy Day began the previous evening.**

There are twelve months in the Jewish calendar. The numbering of years is calculated from the creation of the world, which is traditionally understood to coincide with 3760 *BCE*. Jews prefer to use the terms *BCE* (Before the Common Era) and *CE* (during the Common Era) rather than the terms *BC* and *AD*.

As a result of the discrepancy in days between the Jewish calendar year and the Gregorian calendar year, the date of each Holy Day will be different each year. However, the difference from year to year is usually minor and each Holy Day can be expected to occur during the same season every year, i.e. Rosh Hashanah in the Fall, Passover in the

Spring, etc.

### **HOLY DAYS, FESTIVALS AND TIMES OF COMMEMORATION**

In the Bible, in addition to the Sabbath, the Holy Days are festivals of Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot; as well as the "Days of Awe," the New Year, Rosh HaShana and the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot are known as the pilgrimage festivals. So called because people would travel to Jerusalem, the site of the Holy Temple, in order to celebrate them. On all of these Holy Days, including the Sabbath (Friday at sundown to Saturday night after dark), work is forbidden. **In the Orthodox and Conservative communities the first two days of all major festivals are considered Holy Days. The Reform community attributes holiday status to only the first day.** This holds true for Rosh HaShana, Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot. There are other post-biblical festivals on which work is permitted, such as Chanukah and Purim. In all cases, Holy Days are marked by special synagogue services and celebrations in the home.

### **SHABBAT (Sabbath)**

The Jewish Sabbath begins just prior to sundown on Friday evening with the lighting of Sabbath candles and ends after sundown on Saturday evening. Once the Sabbath candles are lighted, fifteen minutes prior to sun down, the Sabbath is inaugurated. A prayer over wine, the *kiddush* is recited as a indication of the unique nature of the Sabbath. A rich egg bread called *challah* is eaten along with the festive Sabbath meal. Jews attend worship on in the synagogue on Friday evening, Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon. The Sabbath is a time for people to regain a sense of order and calm in their lives. The mundane tasks of the rest of the week are set aside as we refresh our bodies and souls.

### **MAJOR JEWISH HOLYDAYS**

#### **ROSH HASHANAH (Jewish New Year) and YOM KIPPUR (Day of Atonement)**

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are considered the most important of all the Jewish Holy Days. They are celebrated during the first ten days of the month of Tishrei (September or October).

The Jewish New Year celebrates Creation as told in the Book of Genesis. Rosh Hashanah is a time for people to engage in reflective soul searching. It is a time to perform a spiritual inventory. Unlike the secular New Year, Rosh HaShana is serious and contemplative. The ten days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, called the Days of Awe or the Ten Days of Repentance, mark a period when people are to seek and extend forgiveness to one another. Only when that has been done will God grant forgiveness and atonement to us.

Rosh Hashana is celebrated with symbolic foods such as apples and honey, which represent the hope for a sweet new year.

*Yom Kippur* is the *Day of Atonement* and is observed by twenty-four hours of fasting and prayer. During *Yom Kippur* the every day activities which occupy our time and our

thoughts are set aside. This prayerful day is spent in the synagogue where we confront our inner selves, judge our conduct and assess our behavior during the year just ended and ask for the strength needed to make the New Year better than the old year just ended. People mark the conclusion of Yom Kippur with a break the fast meal. This may take place in the synagogue or at private homes.

sunset signals the end of the Holy Day.

***Please note that a vast majority of Jews, from all backgrounds, observe these holy days and attend synagogue on the first two days of Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur. Work is not permitted on the aforementioned days.***

### **SUKKOT (Festival of Tabernacles) and SIMCHAT TORAH (Rejoicing with the Torah)**

Sukkot begins five days after Yom Kippur and lasts for eight days. *Sukkot* commemorates the wandering of the Israelites in the desert, the building of a tabernacle as a Holy Sanctuary, and the construction of temporary dwellings. It also celebrates the fall harvest. In many ways *Sukkot* is the biblical forerunner to Thanksgiving.

To celebrate this festival, a *sukkah* a booth is built, open on the sides and covered with natural vegetation. The *sukkah* is reminiscent of the flimsy shelters used by the Children of Israel during their desert sojourn. Many people will eat meals in the *sukkah*. Other symbolic objects that are used to celebrate *Sukkot* include the *lulav*, a (palm branch joined together with sprigs of myrtle and willow and an *etrog*. The *etrog* is the citrus fruit known as a citron.

The last day of *Sukkot* is *Simchat Torah*. *Simchat Torah* celebrates completion of the yearly synagogue Torah reading cycle and beginning the cycle again. *Simchat Torah* is a festival of great celebration with singing, dancing, and processions of people carrying Torah and waving flags.

### **PESACH (Passover)**

**Passover is the great biblical holiday dedicated to the concept of religious freedom and human dignity. It commemorates the Children of Israel's escape from slavery and highlights God's redemptive hand on the plane of human history.** Passover gets its name from a story in the book of Exodus. We read that the angel of death "passed over" the dwellings occupied by the Children of Israel.

The Hebrew term *seder* means "order." The *seder* is the name of the festival meal eaten on the first and second nights of the holiday. There is a very specific and ritualized order to the Passover ceremony. During the *seder*, the symbolism of each traditional food is explained and the events of the Exodus are retold in a book entitled the *Haggadah*. Passover begins on the fifteenth day of the month of *Nisan* (spring) and continues for eight days.

**It is important that a Scouting professional understands that *matzah*, unleavened bread, is eaten for the entire duration of the holiday. All foods stuffs which contain leavening agents are prohibited during Passover. All branches of Judaism recognize**

**and observe the Passover rules. The Orthodox and Conservative communities celebrate Passover for eight days, the Reform community celebrates for seven days.**

### **SHAVUOT (Festival of Weeks)**

*Shavuot* recalls that moment in Jewish history when God gave the Torah to the Moses atop Mt. Sinai. *Shavout* takes place fifty days after Passover and is sometimes referred to as the holiday of Pentecost. *Shavuot* all celebrates the spring harvest when people would make pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem with their first fruit offerings.

The days between Passover and Shavuot are seen as days of mourning and sadness. During this period, formal joyous celebrations, like marriage ceremonies, are not preformed. This time period is dedicated to remembering the misfortunes that afflicted the Jewish people during the days of Roman domination, as well as during the Crusades of the Middle Ages.

### **TISHA B'AV: The Ninth Day of Av**

*Tisha B'Av*, which falls during the summer, is the Jewish people's national day of mourning. It is the saddest day in the Jewish year. On *Tisha B'Av* Jews recall the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the other calamities that have happened as well.. It is marked by a full fast, a fast of twenty-five hours, from sunset to the following day's nightfall, with prayers of mourning and with limitations on usual workday realities. The three-week period leading up to *Tisha B'Av* is also considered a time of mourning. History notes that the siege of Jerusalem began three weeks prior to *Tisha B'Av* with the Temple being destroyed on the ninth day of Av. This period is referred to as "the three weeks." No joyous celebrations are to takes place during this time. As a further sign of mourning, from the first day of Av to the ninth day of Av Jews refrain from eating meat and drinking wine, except on the Sabbath.

**There are many rules associated with the observance of *Tisha B'Av*. Because the Holy Day falls when scout camp, jamborees and other scouting functions are in high gear, the Scouting professional should consult an appropriate rabbinic authority for guidance.**

### **CHANUKAH: Festival of Lights**

*Chanukah* is a post-biblical holiday. It marks the victory of individualism over totalitarianism. On *Chanukah* we celebrate the Maccabees' victory over Greek-Syrians who sought world domination. Beginning in either November or December, *Chanukah* is a winter celebration and lasts for eight days. In 165 BCE, the Maccabees recaptured the Temple from the Greek-Syrians. The Temple was cleansed and purified. Only one day's worth of sacred oil was found to light the sacred light and rededicate the Temple to God. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days until more was found. Jews light the *Chanukah menorah*, one candle each night, to commemorate the miracle that took place.

**Scouting professionals should be aware that Chanukah is not the Jewish Christmas. References to such a comparison are to be avoided.**

### **TU B'SHEVAT: New Year of the Trees**

*Tu B'shevat*, the fifteenth day of Shevat is the Jewish arbor day. *Tu B'shevat* marks the

beginning of spring in Israel, a celebration of trees and concern for the environment. It can be understood as the holiday of ecology.

**PURIM: Feast of Lots**

*Purim* commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from a planned massacre at a time when the Jewish community was living under Persian rule in 450 BCE. The story of *Purim* is found in the Book of Esther and is retold during this holiday. *Purim* is a totally joyous holiday. It is a time for merriment, joy and the sending of gifts to friends and loved ones. It is also the custom on *Purim* to make donations that help support the less fortunate in the community. The story of Esther is read on *Purim*. Children dress up in costumes and loud noise makers are sounded when the name *Haman*, the story's villain, is read aloud.

**YOM HASHOAH: Holocaust Memorial Day**

*Yom Hashoah* was established to remember the Holocaust and memorialize the six million Jewish souls that perished under Nazi tyranny, It also commemorates the Warsaw ghetto uprising. Many communities acknowledge *Yom Hashoah* with interfaith gatherings, governmental proclamations and worship services.

**YOM HA'ATZMAUT: Israel Independence Day**

Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrates the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948 and its rebirth as a modern country.

**LAG B'OMER: The 33rd Day of the Omer**

*Lag B'Omer* serves as a break in the mourning period between Passover and *Shavuot*. Referred to as the "Scholar's Holiday, *Lag B'Omer* serves as a reminder of the faith and courage demonstrated by Rabbi Akibba's students who saved the Torah. Rabbi Akibba's students, scholars in their own right, defied the harsh rule of the Roman conquerors and continued to teach Torah when such teaching was outlawed. No special liturgy or synagogue ritual exists for this day.

**YOM YERUSHALAYIM: Jerusalem Day**

The newest holiday in the Jewish calendar, *Yom Yerushalayim*, is celebrated each year on the 28th day of the month of Iyar. *Yom Yerushalayim* is the anniversary which marks reclaiming of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel. In 1967, as a result of the Six Day War, Jerusalem was recaptured from the Arabs and united as the eternal capitol of the Jewish state.



# JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

## National Agencies Involved

Torah Umesorah (Orthodox)  
160 Broadway  
New York, NY 10038  
212-227-1000

Yeshiva University (Orthodox)  
National Commission on Torah  
Education  
500 West 185th Street  
New York, NY 10033  
212-96-5266

Solomon Schechter Day Schools  
(Conservative)  
155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010  
212-260-8450

## FOUNDED

1944

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

*Torah Umesomh Report*

## PURPOSE

- Combining of religious and secular studies in a single educational system.
- Strengthening of religious convictions and Jewish values. Depending on the ideological/denominational philosophy of the school, specific religious practice might be taught.
- Development of emotional, social and physical strengths and levels.

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Structure.** Most of the denominations within Judaism sponsor day (“parochial”) schools. A list of these schools can be obtained through the local Jewish Federation, or a local Jewish communal leader such as the rabbi. Some schools are independent, some are affiliated with synagogue groups, and others are members of national Jewish educational organizations.

Regardless of affiliation, these schools can be approached individually since they differ widely.

**Local Contact.** Principal of school, federation personnel, rabbi.

**Scouting-Related Literature.** “Keeping the Sabbath While Camping,” No. 15-109; “Holiday Program Suggestions for Tiger Cub Partners and Cub Scout Leaders,” No. 15-243; Etz Chaim emblem program for older Boy Scouts, older Varsity Scouts, and Venturers, No.33186; Ner Tamid emblem program for Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts, No. 33181A; Aleph emblem program for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 33185; Maccabee emblem program, No. 33165 for Tiger Cubs and No. 3933 for counselors; monthly program themes for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No.15-231, and for Boy Scouts, Woods Wisdom, Jewish Program Features, No. 15-232. Adults may be nominated for the Shofar award, No.15-102.

## JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS IN MY DISTRICT

School	Location	Principal	Phone	Units

# JEWISH RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

## CONGREGATIONAL AFFILIATES

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (Orthodox)  
333 Seventh Street  
New York, NY 10001 212-563-4000

**Youth Affiliate:** National Conference Synagogue Youth (NCSY)

Union of American Hebrew Congregations (Reform)  
838 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021 212-249-0100

**Youth Affiliate:** North American Federation Temple Youth (NFTY)

United Synagogues of America (Conservative)  
155 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10010 212-533-7800

**Youth Affiliate:** United Synagogue Youth (USY)

Federation of Reconstructionist Congregation and Havurot (Reconstructionist)  
270 West 89 Street  
New York, NY 10024 212-496-2960

**Youth Affiliate:** None

National Council of Young Israel (Orthodox)  
3 West 16th Street  
New York, NY 10011 212-929-1525

**Youth Affiliate:** Young Israel Youth

## RABBINICAL AFFILIATES

Rabbinical Council of America (Orthodox)  
275 Seventh Avenue  
New York, NY 10001 212-807-7888

## PURPOSE

- Serve as religious, social, and cultural center of the Jewish community.
- Promote loyalty to God, the teaching of the Holy Scripture, and help Jews wherever they may be.
- Organize Jewish educational programs in Hebrew and religious schools for youth and adults.

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Special Interests.** Youth programs, educational programs, support for families, special programs for celebrating life cycle events, and holidays.

**Special Interest in Scouting.** The religious emblems programs, Maccabee for Tiger Cubs, Aleph for Cub Scouts, and Ner Tamid for Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers, appeal to rabbis and educators.

For the most part there are no ongoing Jewish programs for boys in grades 1–4. The Scouting program can be utilized as a creative approach to maximizing Jewish education, identity, belonging, enrichment, and more.

Jewish Youth Affiliates Organizations primarily deal with high-school-age youth (Exploring affiliation is a natural resource for them).

**Methods of Using Scouting.** Tiger Cubs, Cub Scouts, and Explorers have the greatest potential in Jewish institutions.

Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative)  
3080 Broadway Street  
New York, NY 10027 212-678-8060

Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (Reconstructionist)  
Church Road and Greenwood Avenue  
Wyncote, PA 19095 215-887-1988

## OTHER MAJOR JEWISH YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

Lubavitcher Youth Organization (Hasidic-Orthodox)  
1409 President Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11213 718-778-6000

B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (Nondenominational)  
1640 Rhode Island Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20036 202-857-6633

B'nai Akiva of North America (Orthodox-Zionist)  
25 West 26th Street  
New York, NY 10010 212-889-7900

Young Judea-Hashachar (Zionist)  
50 West 58th Street  
New York, NY 10019 212-355-7900

Pirchei Agudath Israel (Orthodox)  
5 Beekman Street  
New York, NY 10038 212-791-1820

**Scouting-Related Literature.** “Keeping the Sabbath While Camping,” No. 15-109; “Holiday Program Suggestions for Tiger Cub Partners and Cub Scout Leaders,” No. 15-243; Etz Chaim emblem program for older Boy Scouts, older Varsity Scouts, and Venturers, No. 33186; Ner Tamid emblem program for Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts, No. 33181A; Aleph emblem program for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 33185; Maccabee emblem program, No. 33165 for Tiger Cubs and No. 3933 for counselors; monthly program themes for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 15-231, and for Boy Scouts, Woods Wisdom, Jewish Program Features, No. 15-232. Adults may be nominated for the Shofar award, No. 15-102.

**Structure.** Many national synagogues and youth organizations have regional offices. Each local synagogue or congregation is autonomous in its election of officers. The spiritual leader is the rabbi. Other individuals—depending on the size of the synagogue—that could be contacted are the executive administrator, educational or youth director. Most synagogues have men's clubs or brotherhoods that could also serve as chartered organizations.



# JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE U.S.A.

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1811 "R" Street Northwest  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 265-6280

## FOUNDED

1896

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

*Jewish Veteran*

## PURPOSE

- Combat bigotry and prevent defamation of Jews.
- Prepare youth to become responsible citizens.
- Cooperate with and support existing educational institutions and establish new ones.

## FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

**Special Interests.** Youth. Help to Veterans, community service.

**Special Interest in Scouting.** Eager to organize Scouting units as a method of encouraging doctrines of universal liberty and equal rights.

**Methods of Using Scouting.** Unit operation, unit leadership.

**Scouting-Related Literature.** "Keeping the Sabbath While Camping," No. 15-109; "Holiday Program Suggestions for Tiger Cub Partners and Cub Scout Leaders," No. 15-243; Etz Chaim emblem program for

older Boy Scouts, older Varsity Scouts, and Venturers, No. 33186; Ner Tamid emblem program for Boy Scouts and Varsity Scouts, No. 33181A; Aleph emblem program for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 33185; Maccabee emblem program, No. 33165 for Tiger Cubs and No. 3933 for counselors; monthly program themes for Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts, No. 15-231, and for Boy Scouts, Woods Wisdom, Jewish Program Features, No. 15-232. Adults may be nominated for the Shofar award, No. 15-102.

**Structure.** National organization is administered through State departments. Scouting functions under the Scouting Committee.

National commander is the top officer. Top professional is the national executive director. State department commanders are the executive officers. Each post has a post commander to handle local operations.

**Local Contact.** Post commander.

## J.W.V. POSTS IN MY DISTRICT

Name	Location	Name of Contact	Phone	Units

# STEPS TO SUCCESS

## Organizing a Unit at a Jewish Religious Organization

Target Date

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Review the brochure **Scouting and the Jewish Community (15-200)** and the **Fact Sheet (02-547)** prior to making an appointment.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Contact the rabbi for an appointment.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Make a sales call on the rabbi.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The congregation adopts **Scouting** and the rabbi appoints a chartered organization representative.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The chartered organization representative appoints an organizing committee of parents and interested congregation members. They meet to discuss the next step and complete the **New-Unit Application**.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The organizing committee selects and recruits key leaders and committee members.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Train leaders in program planning (**Fast Start**).

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Plan program for at least the first six months.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Recruit youth members and orient parents.

\_\_\_\_\_

10. Complete the paperwork and submit it to the council office.

\_\_\_\_\_

11. Start unit meetings.

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Install the unit and formally present the charter at a meeting of the congregation.

# Overcoming Objections To Organizing a New Unit

## 1. **We already have a youth program.**

It's great that your organization cares about its youth (and the youth of the community). Scouting is ideal to work hand in hand with existing programs to enhance what you currently offer. Not only are our goals/values compatible, but our methods can/will work well with what you do. Scouting can bring programs and facilities to you to make a good program even better.

## 2. **We tried Scouting once and it didn't work.**

What do you feel was the reason? (Explore – look for the biggies – lack of organization/commitment, uncommitted or poor leaders, lack of training, lack of vision, poor support from district/council/BSA.)

Address each issue:

Organizational Commitment – Starts at the top – the strong commitment of your (head, board, etc.) will be contagious.

Leaders – Use selection, not recruiting – get often and get the very best in organization (after all, it's your program), train them and then support them!

Vision – Be creative about how to serve the youth of the organization; have a community dream and then implement the dream.

BSA Issues – Assume it won't happen again – promise and **deliver**.

## 3. **We don't have any youth in our organization.**

Scouting provides a means for your organization to become known in the community, especially among families with children of Scout age. It's **great** advertising and community goodwill. In addition, the Scouting program is a tremendous tool to outreach into the community and give people an opportunity to become a part of your organization.

## 4. **We cannot afford Scouting.**

The ninth point of the Scout Law states: A Scout is thrifty – he learns to pay his own way. We teach that Scouts and units should pay their own way. We provide the opportunities for troops to raise money for their use. The only cost to the chartered organizations is a charter fee of \$20.

## 5. **We don't have any space in our building for them to meet.**

I understand how you feel; others have also felt that way. We have found that many are able to identify classroom meeting areas as possible meeting places for the Scouting program. Additionally, several organizations have used the resources of their members or employees to provide meeting space for meetings. The other potential solution is that of a joint chartered organization to charter the Scouting program.

**6. No one knows anything about the Scouting program.**

Many of our very best leaders have started out knowing little or nothing about the Scouting program. Our council provides various training courses throughout the year, roundtables and self-study materials. Subjects include outdoor skills and other topics. We also provide volunteer support for leaders to help them provide a high-quality program.

**7. We don't agree with several of the Boy Scout stands on membership.**

We feel that as a private organization we have a right to establish our membership requirements. I thank you for your time, but I feel that there's nothing further we can do at this time to help you.

**8. We cannot charter a Scouting program because we have no leaders.**

The BSA has a process to help you choose leaders. The process involves listing the characteristics required for a leadership position and then identifying individuals who fit those characteristics.

**9. We cannot charter a Scouting program because our youth are mostly from single-parent families.**

One of the strengths of the Scouting program is its ability to include and serve a variety of family configurations. In fact, Scouting is particularly helpful to youth from single-parent families.

**10. No one has time to be a leader.**

It's important that you find the time; if you don't, there are people on the streets who will find the time to spend with your child, and they may not be the type or kind of people you want your child to be around. Scouting has a program that brings families together, consisting of family camping, religious awards, etc.

**11. Liability is a major concern of our organization.**

The general liability policy issued to the Boy Scouts of America provides primary liability insurance coverage for all chartered organizations and participating organizations for liability arising out of their chartering of a traditional Scouting unit. Your \$20 charter fee covers your organization with the liability insurance provided by the BSA.



# NEW-UNIT ORGANIZATION PROCESS

1. **Identify the prospect.** District leaders identify a community organization prospect with the potential to operate a unit after researching the youth market and considering the most promising community organizations.
2. **Approach the prospect.** An influential Scouter or the district executive makes an appointment to meet with the head of the community organization or top leadership group in the organization after researching the organization and determining how Scouting can help meet its needs.
3. **Make the sales call.** The district executive and the unit organizer or other influential Scouter meet with the head or top leaders of the community organization to sell them on how Scouting can help meet the needs of the organization and to obtain the willingness of the organization's leaders to establish a unit.
4. **Organization adopts the program.** The organization formally adopts the Scouting program, confirms the appointment of a chartered organization representative, and appoints an organizing committee.
5. **Organizing committee meets.** The organizing committee and the new-unit organizer meet to plan the next steps for establishing the unit and complete the new-unit application. A commissioner is assigned by the district to assist the unit.
6. **Select and recruit key leaders.** Using BSA selection procedures, the organizing committee selects and recruits unit leaders and confirms unit committee members, and the community organization approves all unit adults.
7. **Train the leaders.** Unit leaders complete Fast Start training and are invited to the next basic training course and the next district roundtable.
8. **Plan and organize the program.** New unit leaders are trained in program planning and the first month's program is developed.
9. **Recruit youth members and orient parents.** Recruit youth members, hold an orientation meeting for parents and youth, and select/recruit additional adults as needed.
10. **Complete the paperwork.** Complete all adult and youth applications, collect necessary fees, and submit with new-unit application to the council service center.
11. **Conduct first unit meeting.** Unit leaders begin youth meetings with the coaching of their unit commissioner.
12. **Follow up.** The unit is installed with a presentation of the charter to the chartered organization.

**Note: Do not delete any steps, although some steps may be accomplished at the same time without regard to suggested sequence.**