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Monday, September 21, 2020

Dear Religious School Families,

I wanted to let you know of a special opportunity for CBI Religious School parents. Our congregation took the step of becoming an affiliate of the nationally recognized Miller Introduction to Judaism Program this summer. We are offering free enrollment in the Miller Introduction Program for any parent in the Religious School as an expression of our commitment of offering outstanding Jewish learning for our congregants and families. The standard tuition for this program is \$270 But for Religious School parents the only cost to you is for basic study resources for a total of \$20,

What is the Miller Introduction to Judaism Program?

The program originates from the American Jewish University of Los Angeles where I did a portion of my rabbinic training. It is a product of the Conservative Movement. It reflects a pluralistic perspective on Jewish life. The curriculum has been developed by well-regarded Jewish educators and rabbis. The curriculum covers 18 broad subjects such as the Sabbath and Jewish festivals, Jewish home and life cycle, the Jewish library, Jewish thought and history, perspectives on God and ethics, modern Jewish history, understanding anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, and the significance of Zionism and the State of Israel. Beginning Hebrew is built into the curriculum, reflecting the view that the language of the Jewish people is an important way to understand Jewish culture.

The materials are lucid and well organized. The class sessions invite curiosity, encourage reflection, and maintain intellectual honesty. I will serve as the lead teacher, with knowledgeable congregants including a couple of our Religious School parents serving as guest instructors for selected topics. Thirty-five hours of instruction are offered over weekly Tuesday evening classes from the beginning of October 2020 through mid-May 2021.

The program is designed for parents in the religious school who aspire to be an engaged Jewish role model for their children, for couples of different religious backgrounds who want to explore the role Judaism will play in the life of their families, for Jewish persons who want to build a solid foundation of Jewish knowledge and practice, and for persons seriously considering conversion to Judaism. I believe it is an excellent opportunity for Religious School parents to study together, build community through learning, engaging, and discussing the role Judaism plays in your lives.

Because we still cannot gather in-person, the class sessions will be offered on a secure Zoom Video connection. When there is an "all clear" concerning the pandemic, we will start in person instruction with an option for Zoom Video participation for those in remote areas. The Miller Introduction Program at B'nai Israel will gather for the first class on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, 7-8:30pm. More information about the curriculum, the reading, the schedule and the application can be found at <https://www.bnaisrael-nm.org/learn/miller-intro-to-judaism>.

I invite you to join the Miller Intro to Judaism Program and enjoy this benefit of Jewish growth as part of your membership at B'nai Israel and your enrollment of your children in the CBI Religious School.

For more information on the Miller Introduction to Judaism or to request an application, contact volunteer coordinator, Suzy Savage, at YourwaytoJudasim@gmail.com or calling her phone at: 505 600-5530. Also, feel free to contact me with questions.

Shanah Tovah,

Rabbi Dov Gartenberg