

Learning Series:

High Holidays Inclusion: Vital Skills for Congregations

Is your congregation looking for ways to increase inclusion and participation of people of all ages with disabilities, and their families, in High Holiday worship? Are you looking for ways to fully engage and welcome those with disabilities in your community during this important time, and during the coming year?

This learning series will feature live webinars with disabilities experts who will focus on ways congregations can easily add sanctity for all during the High Holidays. Topics covered include providing physical access and orienting ushers to welcome people with disabilities, engaging families with young children with disabilities who may or may not yet be involved at the congregation, sensitive and welcoming responses from the Bima, and creating handouts and publicity that are accessible to all. Participants in each individual webinar will learn skills and helpful strategies for advancing meaningful inclusion in their communities.

Offered as part of the URJ-Ruderman Family Foundation Disabilities Inclusion Initiative, this series will provide strategies for reducing stigma and isolation affecting people with visible and invisible, lifelong or recently acquired disabilities. The series will also identify simple ways that congregations can strengthen their communities through offering deeply meaningful hospitality to those with physical, cognitive, communication, social, psychiatric, developmental, hearing and visual disabilities.

These webinars are open to anyone, from clergy to lay leadership, to congregants and disabilities advocates.

Each webinar in this series will be live-captioned.

Sessions Include:

How to Be A House of Prayer for All People
Thursday, September 8th, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

The High Holidays provide a time for reflection and renewal. During this time it is especially appropriate to consider what makes us feel that we *belong* to our

community and our congregation.

Our Days of Awe can inspire us to become more aware of Jews who do not feel a sense of belonging. Many Jews who live with disabilities and mental health conditions find that the doors to the synagogue and Jewish life are either closed to them, or participation is limited by what others determine is appropriate.

We will examine practical steps and actions you can take before and during the Days of Awe to help open those doors to a meaningful and self-directed Jewish life where everyone's gifts, talents and strengths are valued, and where one's need for comfort, prayer, learning and community are satisfied. Learn what you can do to educate and inspire each member of your congregation to take a more active role in including others.

This webinar will be led by Shelly Christensen, MA, FAAIDD, the author of *Jewish Community Guide to Inclusion of People with Disabilities*, co-founder of Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month, and a leading advocate for inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of Jewish life.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/486992d79f630f4634538d7d4481ef37>

High Holidays and Families with Disabilities: Make it or Break it?
Tuesday, September 13th, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

This webinar will focus on what congregations need to think about when they plan for the High Holidays, when it comes to families who may require accommodations in order to be fully included in the community. Being proactive can make all the difference in families' comfort level in the synagogue, and can ensure full participation in everything the community is offering during the holiest days of the year.

Whether or not children are enrolled in your synagogue's nursery or religious school, you have a tremendous opportunity to ensure that they are successfully included in High Holiday observance. After all, their experience during these days can be the determining factor in whether or not you will see them in your building again.

We will explore specific ideas for engaging young children with disabilities in High Holiday programming. Together, let's plan for full, successful inclusion as



we discuss concrete strategies and tools that can be readily implemented in your community.

This webinar will be led by Meredith Englander Polsky, co-founder and National Director of Institutes and Training for Matan.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/ce4daabed6b6b8677c24e00bf0acd2b8>

Included in Awe: Opening the Gates of Repentance for Everyone
Tuesday, September 20th, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

For those of us charged with community leadership during this time of year, the Days of Awe can just as easily be as awful, as they can be awesome. With so many things to consider, a meaningful plan for the inclusion of people with disabilities can fall by the wayside, leaving us scrambling to include—and often inadvertently failing to provide meaningful opportunities for—a portion of our community.

Join us as we explore inclusion throughout the Days of Awe. Together we will go on the narrative journey from pre-Rosh Hashanah planning through the end of Simchat Torah. We'll start with the narrative built on Matan Koch's 30 years of experience, as we explore what to do, and what not to do. Afterwards, we'll make sure to devote a substantial amount of time to answering your own questions, to make sure that your experience is as inclusive and meaningful as possible.

This webinar will be led by Matan Koch, speaker and inclusion consultant at Capitalizability LLC.

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Creating Sacred Partnerships During the High Holidays
Tuesday, September 27th, 2:00 p.m. Eastern

Ideally, the synagogue should be a welcoming and spiritual place for all people. However, it can be quite daunting when a family with different abilities expresses an interest in joining the community. The ultimate goal is to create a sacred partnership with the family.

What are some of the questions that would be appropriate to ask? What should the synagogue professionals say? What should the lay leadership do? What about the liturgy or rituals that may offend or hinder a person's ability to participate? These questions become even more important as we approach the High Holidays.

Focusing on ways congregations can begin this process, Rabbi Rebecca Dubowe will share her professional and personal perspective as a long-term congregational rabbi, and the member of a family with different abilities. This webinar will provide congregations with strategies for creating sacred partnerships, such as looking at the way they speak about inclusion on the High Holidays, and reviewing the way they invite and welcome individuals with disabilities, and their families.

This webinar will be led by Rabbi Rebecca L. Dubowe. Rabbi Dubowe is the first female deaf rabbi to be ordained from the Hebrew Union College-JIR. She is currently serving as an intentional interim rabbi for Moses Montefiore Congregation in Bloomington, Illinois. She previously served as a rabbi for Temple Adat Elohim in Thousand Oaks, CA and at Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple in New Brunswick, NJ.

<https://urj.zoom.us/webinar/register/8cb7ace9ee0f53eed746f627e8486654>