

“Let My People Know”  
A Temple Beth El JEWISH LITERACY PROJECT  
*Compiled by Rabbi Joshua Hammerman*

Answer these questions, using Joseph Telushkin’s book, “[Jewish Literacy](#)” and [MyJewishLearning.com](#) as your main sources. Page numbers for the Telushkin book may not match all editions.

1. Shabbat Morning Services: The Synagogue
  - A. Attend Shabbat morning services. Try to follow the service carefully. What are the main divisions of the service? Which prayer of that service was most meaningful to you?
  - B. Identify the following ritual objects in the synagogue and explain the significance of each:  
(Pages 641-670)
    1. Bimah
    2. Sefer Torah
    3. Siddur
    4. Tallit, Tzitzit
    5. Tefillin
    6. Kippah
  - C. Identify the following terms used during services:
    1. Haftarah
    2. D’var Torah
    3. Aliyah
    4. Minyan
  - D. Identify the following prayers:
    1. Sh’ma
    2. Amidah
    3. Alenu
    4. Ashrei
2. The Shabbat (Pages 599-606)
  - A. Discuss: What is the meaning of the Sabbath? What are your feelings about it? Write up your discussion.
  - B. Identify the following:
    1. Kiddush
    2. Two Challot
    3. Candles
    4. Havdalah
    5. Birket HaMazon
3. The Calendar (Pages 561-564)
  - A. List the important Jewish holidays in the order they occur during the year and give the reason we celebrate each.
  - B. List the months of the Jewish calendar in order.

4. The Jewish Home

A. Participate as reader of at least four of the following rituals:

1. Ha Motzi
2. Birkat Ha Mazon
3. Portions of the Passover Seder
4. Havdalah
5. Lighting Hanukkah candles

B. Name 4 ritual objects and 4 books that you feel every Jewish home should have.

6. During the course of the year, participate in and/or perform at least twelve of the following Mitzvot: Record the date and your reactions to each, and answer: Why is this Mitzvah important?

A. Tashlich (Symbolic casting away of sins on Rosh Hashanah)

B. Building and/or decorating a Sukkah

C. Lulav and Etrog

D. Hakafot on Simchat Torah

E. Mishloach Manot (gifts of food on Purim or any act of kindness involving feeding the hungry at any time)

F. Matanot L'evyonim (gifts to the poor on Purim)

G. Seudah Shlishit (third meal on Shabbat)

H. Bedikat Hametz (search for leaven)

I. Kibud Av V'Em (respecting our elders by visiting a nursing home)

J. Sefirat Ha Omer (counting the Omer)

K. Bikur Holim (visiting the sick)

The Talmud says one who visits a sick person removes 1/60 of the illness.

L. Tzedakkah (charitable donation)

M. Hachnasat Orchim (Hospitality)

N. Visiting a house of Shiva

O. Attending a Jewish wedding

P. Attending a Brit Milah or Brit Banot

Q. Helping to provide for a minyan for a service where someone is saying Kaddish (even though you may not count yet, bring someone who does.)

R. Malbish Arumim (Providing clothing for the needy.)

S. Pidyon Shevuyim (Redeeming Captives) Write a letter to a congressman, newspaper, or the President, asking for help to save oppressed peoples of the world.

T. Tza'ar Ba'alei Hayyim (Kindness to Animals)

Up to you, but must involve more than giving your dog an extra Milk Bone.

U. Bal Tashit (Save the Earth – Ecology Project)

7. Living Jewishly

A. Explain the main reasons behind the laws of Kashrut (Page 634)

B. What does Judaism teach about kindness to animals? (Page 524)

C. Choose one chapter in Part 12 of Telushkin's book ("Jewish Ethics and Basic Beliefs,") (Pages 495-560), and explain why that principle is important to you.

8. The Jewish Community

- A. Visit at least three different synagogues in the area. Discuss what you think are the main differences between Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism:
- B. What is the role and purpose of the following organizations and institutions? Answer in one or two sentences:
  - 1. Jewish Federation
  - 2. Jewish Community Center
  - 3. Jewish Historical Society
  - 4. Jewish Cemetery
  - 5. The Jewish Home for the Elderly
  - 6. Hadassah
  - 7. Day School
  - 8. Kosher Butcher (or section of a supermarket)
  - 9. Kosher Bakery
  - 10. Jewish Family Service

9. Jewish History

- A. Write short essays on three of these great Jewish Historical Figures:
  - 1. Jeremiah
  - 2. Judah Maccabee
  - 3. Maimonides
  - 4. Rabbi Akiva
  - 5. Rashi
  - 6. Golda Meir
  - 7. Deborah
  - 8. Anne Frank
- B. Jewish Books:
  - 1. List the 5 Books of the Torah in order (Page 23)
  - 2. What are the three divisions of the Bible?
  - 3. What is the Talmud? (Page 150)
  - 4. What is the Shulkhan Arukh? (Page 203)
- C. Holocaust: (Pages 345-390)
  - 1. Discuss your impressions of why the Holocaust happened, and what is our responsibility to those who have survived?
  - 2. If you know a survivor or child of a survivor, ask him/her the same question and record the results of your discussion.
- D. Israel: (Pages 259-345)
  - 1. Identify the following:
    - a. Zionism
    - b. Haganah, Irgun
    - c. Theodor Herzl
    - d. David Ben Gurion
    - e. Menachem Begin

- f. Golda Meir
  - g. May 14/Iyar 5
  - h. Six Day War
  - i. Ethiopian Jewry
  - j. Jerusalem
  - k. Tel Aviv
  - l. Kibbutz
  - m. Masada
  - n. Western Wall
2. Discuss how you would like to see Israel's territorial and security problems resolved and then write about it.
  3. Do at least one of the following during the course of this year:
    - a. Write a congressman or the President about an issue regarding Israel.
    - b. Go to an Israel rally or Salute to Israel Parade
    - c. See an Israeli film, attend a lecture, and become familiar with some of the internal challenges facing Israel (minority rights, religious pluralism, etc.)
    - d. Eat an Israeli meal with Israelis
    - e. Write to an Israeli pen pal at least twice
    - f. Visit Israel, or make plans to visit
10. Electives: Pick one of these areas for extra study and write a brief essay about it
- a. Yiddish culture
  - b. Jewish concepts of God
  - c. Beliefs about the Messiah
  - d. Lifecycle rituals (death, birth and marriage)
  - e. American Jewish history and culture
  - f. Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah and Hasidism)
  - g. Jewish music, prayer and meditation
  - f. Jewish peoplehood

### Final Essay

"In light of all I now know about being a Jew, what does being (or becoming) Jewish mean to me?"