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Creating Inclusive Jewish Spaces Syllabus
Pluralistic Rabbinical Seminary
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Course description:

In this course, Creating Inclusive Jewish spaces, we will explore ways to engage every member of the Jewish community through unique programming whether it be for a holiday, Shabbat or community gathering, virtual or not and cater to Jews of all different backgrounds. We will explore Jewish texts and learn to incorporate them into our teachings of *am yisrael*. We will watch clips of how Jews are using their Judaism in many different ways of expressing themselves. We will explore the concept of otherness and what it may feel like to feel out of place in the Jewish community, and how to think of ways to accept and look out for the other.

1. How to create Jewish spaces that cater to people of all backgrounds and experiences i.e. multifaith, LGBTQ, recovering addicts, non-mainstream, different races, abilities

Example: Multi-Generational Seder; how to engage young children, parents, singles, couples, and the elderly. Place an index card on each table with an icebreaker; each person at your table has to talk to someone they've never met at the table about a family Passover memory they may have. After 5 minutes, one person from each table will share their response.

Different-ability in the Torah; Moshe and his speech impediment:

שמות ד׳:י׳
(י) וַיֹּ֤אמֶר מֹשֶׁה֙ אֶל־יְהוָ֔ה בִּ֥י אֲדֹנָ֖י לֹא־אִ֣ישׁ דְּבָרִ֑ים אָנֹכִ֞י גַּם־מִתְּמוֹל֙ גַּ֣ם מִשִּׁלְשֹׁ֔ם גַּ֚ם מֵאָ֣ז דַּבֶּרְךָ֔ אֶל־עַבְדֶּ֑ךָ כִּ֥י כְבַד־פֶּ֖ה
וּכְבֵ֥ד לָשׁ֖וֹן אָנֹֽכִי׃
Exodus 4:10
(10) But Moses said to the LORD, "Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to Your servant; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."
Think about how this text relates to the EliTalk below. How can we strive to include those with disabilities in a synagogue setting? In Jewish camp? In Jewish school?

Watch this EliTalk (Jewish TedTalk) about living in the Jewish community with a different ability: https://youtu.be/COJvIrVoD-4

Explore this question. What is a time in your Jewish life that you've felt 'other?' Or you noticed someone else who felt 'other'? How did you strive to feel included or include them?

2. How to create an alternative service to help bridge the gap between unique Jewish/non-Jewish backgrounds

Example: Alternative Rosh Hashanah Service; using your outside skills to create a meaningful High Holiday service. Do you meditate? Do yoga? Play the ukulele? Recite poetry? Include your skill in an alternative service to engage Jews who are not normally engaged in High Holiday services. Create a safe, intimate space for sharing with a smaller group. Assign each person a role before the service starts to make them feel necessary in the service. You can give out cards with the roles before the service starts.

3. Understanding different Jewish knowledge levels i.e. Hebrew reading knowledge, Israel knowledge

How can I create a virtual service for Jews or maybe non-Jews too with little Jewish background and minimal Hebrew skills? By sharing a transliterated siddur online? By teaching a *niggun*, a wordless melody? By explaining every Hebrew/Jewish idea in a *dvar torah*?

4. Ve'ahavta Le're'a'cha ka'mo'cha/Love your fellow as yourself

We can look at the *mitzvah* of Ve'ahavta le're'acha ka'mo'cha from *pirkei avot*, the Ethics of our Fathers
How to make everyone feel like an "insider" within Judaism, creating common language
Who/what does Barbie represent? Exclusion or inclusion?

וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ – רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר זֶה כְּלָל גָּדוֹל בַּתּוֹרָה

Rabbi Akiva says: 'you should love your fellow as yourself', is a basic principle of the Torah."

The תרי"ג (613) מצוותcan be divided into two categories:

מצוות בין אדם למקום = mitzvot between man and Hashem, e.g. מזוזה ,תפילין ,תפילה;
מצוות בין אדם לחברו = mitzvot between man and man.
One may not neglect either מצוות בין אדם למקום or מצוות בין לחברו. In fact, if one is lacking in the mitzvah of אַהֲבַת יִשְׂרָאֵל — Love your Fellow Jew — then there is something missing in one's love of Hashem. As our Father in Heaven, Hashem is happy with us when we love each other and live peacefully. Thinking about another and doing a favor for another is a basic principle of the תורה.

5. Course #5: Jewish Guidelines for Inclusive Communities

What are some values we learn from across the Jewish community spectrum that we can apply to create inclusive Jewish communities?

We will explore the values of inclusion set forth by an organization called Keshet, keshetonline.org, an organization that advocates for the LGBTQ population.

We will then discuss what each movement says about inclusion and what it means to them.

6. Coming up to the Torah. Which pronouns should you use? How to address a multifaith family in their child's Bar/Bat mitzvah?

One place where it can be particularly tricky to be inclusive is in the Torah service, because we call people to the Torah for different aliyot. For example, if you are calling someone up to the torah who prefers to use different pronouns, make sure to know how they'd like to be called up to the torah in advance. If you are calling up members a bar/bat mitzvah student's family for an aliyah with his/her parents and one parent is not Jewish, be sure to be mindful of how you may call them up to the torah.

Jewish texts on inclusion:

בראשית א׳:כ״ו
(כו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃
Genesis 1:26
(26) And God said, "**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness**. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth."

שבועות ל״ט א:כ״ח-כ״ט

אין לי אלא אותן העומדין על הר סיני דורות הבאים וגרים העתידין להתגייר מנין ת"ל (דברים כט, יד) ואת אשר איננו
Shevuot 39a:9
I only know (that it applies) to those who stood at Mount Sinai. From where do i know about future generations and future converts? It is stated (Deut. 29:14): And also with him that is not here..."

ברוך אתה יי, אלוהנו מלך העורם, משנה הבריות

Traditional blessing upon seeing unique people or animals

Blessed are You, HaShem our Gd, Ruler of the Universe, who makes creatures different.

Videos for Resources for inclusion:

The Hebrew Mamita: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAeWyGGTdEE

Punk Jews: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5c29lJ3U_A0&t=607s

Tefillin Barbie Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGVxToFPafw&t=286s

I’m Rabbi Arielle and I come to the rabbinate with a background in Jewish education and teaching. I taught Hebrew language in elementary and pre-school and then decided to attend rabbinical school. I served as the Rabbinic Intern to Temple Emanu-El in Miami Beach for five years and loved every part of the rabbinate, from officiating at wedding ceremonies, Bnei mitzvah, funerals, teaching Hebrew school, mentoring conversion students, teaching Hebrew, running synagogue programs for young professionals and young families and so much more! I began my rabbinical career through the Jewish Renewal movement where I learned to incorporate yoga and meditation into my Jewish spiritual practices and learned to see Judaism in a new light. I strive to make Judaism relevant and meaningful on a daily basis. I come from a traditional background and have a strong background in text study in Hebrew and English and am excited to share my passion and love of Judaism with you. In my spare time, I enjoy making jewelry, practicing yoga, and taking long walks with my 3-year-old, Samara, my 7-month-old Amitai and my husband, Alejandro, who wouldn’t want to reveal his age! Looking forward to getting to know each and every one of you!