

News

Kislev 5761 • December 2000 Volume 1 Number 2



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS
אחדות הרבנים בין-לאומי

Chanukah, O Chanukah! Spark Your Congregation's Interest in the Festival of Lights

Thursday night, December 21, marks the first night of Chanukah and this year's celebration brings with it the special challenges that emerge when the Festival of Lights coincides with Christmas. This year the fourth night of Chanukah falls on Christmas eve and the fifth night on Christmas day. And although this calendar coincidence brings what we Jews call "The December Dilemma" into full focus, it also offers us the unique opportunity to create synagogue and at-home celebrations that can be rich and meaningful for our congregants and instructive and educational to our community.

So, as we light the eight candles, pick and choose from these eight ideas -- Chanukah gifts selected just for you by your IFR colleagues:



1. Chanukah on Las Olas

Boulevard - That's where you'll find Rabbi Larry Winer this year. His synagogue, Congregation Amchah, in Fort Lauderdale, FL will participate in a special community-wide Jewish celebration where synagogues, Jewish organizations and agencies will staff booths which showcase important and interesting facets of the local Jewish community. You'll not only find Rabbi Winer sharing printed information on his unaffiliated congregation that serves all Jews "with warmth and spirituality," but he'll be out distributing "Happy Chanukah" buttons, complete with synagogue address and phone.



2. Family Menorah Lighting at the Synagogue - Friday,

December 22 is the second night of Chanukah and a wonderful evening (since it's Shabbat) for celebrating Chanukah in the sanctuary. Invite families to bring their own menorahs

In this Issue...

Eight Chanukah Candles
... Eight Chanukah Ideas
... Eight gifts just for you
from your IFR colleagues



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS
3720 Alton Place NW • Washington DC 20016

News

Page 2

Chanukah from Page 1

to shul. Arrange small tables or school desks in front of the bimah and cover the table tops with foil. Before lighting the Shabbat candles, invite families to come forward to light the candles. Provide inexpensive "chanukiot" (menorahs) for singles or seniors who need them and enjoy the Festival of Lights, complete with traditional songs, as the candles burn.



3. Shabbat Study - the Book of Macabbes - Make the synagogue a real Beit Midrash (House of Study) on the third day of Chanukah. Hold a teaching/study workshop focusing on the story of Chanukah. Invite both children and adults and divide them into diverse groups so that there are moms, dads, seniors and young people in each group. Using a collection of articles, books, pamphlets, Web information, original text, etc. assign each group to present -- in discussion, story, drama or song -- one aspect of the story. Have each group come forward and make its presentation. Conclude with Havdalah and then light the menorah and sing.



4. The Fourth Night of Chanukah and it's also Christmas Eve - One IFR rabbi rejoices when Chanukah and Christmas coincide because, he says, "It gives our congregation an opportunity to reach out to the Christian community in a meaningful way. Our 'Chanukah Club' offers its services to the local hospitals where we take the places of Christian volunteers who would appreciate having a day off on Christmas eve and Christmas day." Decked out in blue and white and wearing special Chanukah T-shirts, Chanukah Club members answer telephones, deliver newspapers, and work in the gift stores -- putting g'milut chasidim into action in the community.



5. The Fifth Night - a special day for Interfaith families. December 25, Christmas Day, is also the night we light the fifth candle. Encourage the interfaith families in your congregation to appreciate their family's specialness

Continued on Page 3

IFR Directors

Rabbi Lewis Solomon President
Rabbi Aaron Spiegel Vice-President
Rabbi Gary Golbart Vice-President
Rabbi Richard Allen Treasurer
Rabbi Barbara Aiello Public Information
Rabbi Ilana Rosansky RECORDING SECRETARY
Rabbi Lewis "Buz" Bogage
Rabbi Monte Sugarman Membership
Rabbi Roger Ross

IFR Advisors

Rabbi Bernhard Pressler
Rabbi Rami Shapiro
Rabbi Samuel Silver

NEWS Staff

Rabbi Barbara Aiello Editor
M. Jay Rudnick Design & Layout

Send submissions for IFR NEWS to
rbaiello@gate.net

For further information about
IFR, see our Web Site at
www.intfedrabbis.org



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS

Kislev 5761 • December 2000 Volume 1 Number 2

News

Page 3

Chanukah from Page 2

by decorating one room for Christmas, the other for Chanukah. Help them plan celebrations that feature Christmas in the morning and Chanukah at night. One Interfaith family in a southern congregation has a traditional Christmas morning gift exchange and at night, after the Chanukah lights are kindled, each member of the family creates New Year's food and goodie baskets for seniors who receive Meals on Wheels. The idea has become so popular that neighbors drop by to contribute food and personal care items and write "Happy New Year" messages to accompany each basket.



6. Create a Meaningful Chanukah Family or Temple Service - Rabbi Lew Solomon shares a wonderful service that he has prepared and conducted for Hillel students and which can be adapted easily for family observance. Among the many innovative ideas are choral readings of the Chanukah story adapted from Yaakov Bar Nachman's Hanakkah Haggadah, a guided

meditation and visualization on "The Symbolism of the Menorah," the use of Psalm 30 as a beautiful crystallization of the spiritual journey of faith, and the story, "The First Hanukkah Light in Bergen Belsen, from "Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust," by Yaffa Eliach (et. al.) (Contact newsletter editor for a complete copy of the service.)



7. Community Understanding - Be Proactive! Share Chanukah All Over Town - Offer your services to local schools, churches, senior centers and community groups to conduct a model Chanukah celebration. Pack up your menorah, candles, song sheets and blessings and share the meaning of the holiday with your non-Jewish friends. Contact banks, offices and local stores and ask if



FREE

Get your Chanukah Kit

Half Jewish? Part of an Interfaith Family? Been away for a long time?

Reconnect with your traditions. Share them with your interfaith grandchildren. Free Kit includes menorah, candles, dreidels, gelt, How-to's for lighting, tips for your at-home celebration...

Temple Beth El
TBE
Bradenton, Florida
Supplies Limited

Call to reserve your kit 555-5555

Pick-up date and time at TBE and an Out East location will be provided

Sample advertisement created by Rabbi Barbara Aiello



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS

Kislev 5761 • December 2000 Volume 1 Number 2

News
Page 4

Chanukah from Page 3

you can display an inexpensive tin menorah, candles and short description of Chanukah alongside their Christmas decorations.



8. Free Chanukah kits -

A creative way to attract unaffiliated Jews back to the Jewish community - Rabbi Barbara Aiello, Temple Beth El in Bradenton, Florida encouraged her congregation to make cash contributions for a Chanukah Outreach Program. With the donations received, Temple members created a Chanukah Kit containing an inexpensive menorah, candles, a dreidel, gelt, a box of latke mix, and a booklet of blessings and at-home service ideas. The local newspapers carried advertisements for the free kits (see preceeding page) and dozens of unaffiliated Jews called to reserve their kits. Temple members distributed them on specific pick up days, shared information on the Temple and the local Jewish Federation and extended the hand of Jewish welcome to all.

Register NOW for the Second Annual IFR Conference

Don't Miss the Exciting Workshops and Speakers!

Mark your calendars now and reserve your place for the Second Annual IFR Conference to be held once again in the Duncan Center, Delray Beach, Florida, Sunday, March 4 through Tuesday, March 6.

Conference proceedings begin Sunday evening with a brief Board of Directors meeting followed by supper and a keynote address by Rabbi Joseph Gelberman, founder and director of the Rabbinic Seminary International and renowned Kabbalah author and scholar.

Worship services open Monday's events and lead to an important workshop conducted by Rabbi Richard Allen on Pre-Marital Counseling of Interfaith Couples.

Rabbi Gelberman

*keynotes, Rabbi Solomon
presides at Second Annual
IFR Conference - March
2001*

Continued on Page 5



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS

Kislev 5761 • December 2000 Volume 1 Number 2

News

Page 5

Conference from Page 4

Other speakers invited to present include Rabbi Ilana Rosansky, Rabbis Monte and Anna Sugarman, Rabbi Larry Winer, Rabbi Suzanne Carter, Rabbi Barbara Aiello and Rabbi Gary Goldbart whose discussions will focus on text study, innovative worship services, outreach programs, creative musical worship and much more. And, Rabbi Gelberman will lead a Kabbalah class, as well.

IFR members will participate in President Lew Solomon's organizational review, as well as in a discussion regarding membership needs. Officers will be elected and members will discuss and approve a Code of Ethics.

The Duncan Conference Center is located at 15820 South Military Trail, Delray Beach, Florida 33484 -- one half hour south of the Palm Beach International Airport and 45 minutes north of the Ft. Lauderdale Airport. JFI, Southwest Airlines is scheduling inexpensive flights to and from the

Palm Beach Airport beginning on January 21, 2001. Check out their fares at www.southwest.com.

Cost is \$67.50 per person per night (double occupancy) and includes full board plus the use of the facility. •Two nights, double occupancy is \$135/per person. •Cost for a private room is \$175/night. •All rooms include twin beds and private bath.

Commuter rate is \$52 and includes dinner the first night, lunch and dinner on the second day and lunch the last day. Vegetarian meals are available if registrants indicate in advance.

Fill out your applications on the IFR web site and send your 50% deposit to:

Rabbi Suzanne Carter
1540 Masters Circle #177
Delray Beach, FL 33445

Resources:

**National Jewish Outreach
Program (NJOP)**
485 Fifth Avenue
Suite 701
New York, NY 10017
www.njop.org



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RABBIS

Kislev 5761 • December 2000 Volume 1 Number 2

Conference *from Page 5*

The cutoff date for Registration is February 1. For further information about registration, contact Rabbi Carter at ***rabbicar@gate.net***.

Rabbi Carter asks if any IFR members want to participate on the Panel on Innovative Worship Services or Interfaith Pre-marital Counseling, please let her know.



Outreach to Unaffiliated Jews

In the next issue of IFR News, look for creative ideas to attract Jews back to the Jewish community and synagogue life. There are a number of national organizations that are ready to help with fresh ideas and approaches -- not to mention your IFR colleagues -- who have had tremendous success in increasing and sustaining Temple membership.

Send us your Outreach ideas by January 30, 2001 and include your best programs for working with Interfaith families. You won't want to miss this important special edition of IFR News.

News

Page 6

Outreach?

How are you attracting unaffiliated Jews to your congregation? Let us know

Share your ideas with your IFR colleagues