

Congregation Netivot Shalom Welcomes Intermarried Households



Welcome Home to Netivot Shalom!

Welcome to Netivot Shalom! Anyone seeking a connection to God, to *Torah*, or wanting to learn more about Jewish customs or people will find a warm, friendly and supportive home here. Netivot Shalom has been at the forefront of the movement to create an inclusive community, encouraging all who seek a spiritual and communal home to join with us.

We are a diverse community and count amongst our members people who are Jewish, those working towards becoming Jews-by-choice, and supportive non-Jewish friends and family (*k'rovei Yisrael*). Our community is truly representative of the world in which we live, and we welcome anyone who wishes to join us. We extend a warm reception to intermarried households.

To all, we say welcome! We encourage interfaith households and individuals to join us at Netivot Shalom. This brochure is intended as a guide for those who might have questions about our practices. In addition, Rabbi Creditor –teacher and spiritual leader of Netivot Shalom – is happy to meet and to discuss any concerns in greater depth. We encourage you to be in touch with the synagogue office to schedule coffee or a walk with him. And please say hello to the Rabbi at services!

Participation in Services and Events

Everyone is welcome to worship at Netivot Shalom, and to participate in our educational programs and community activities. We are an egalitarian Conservative Jewish congregation, and women participate fully in worship and in leading our services.

One of the beautiful things about Judaism is our rich tradition of the Sabbath (*Shabbat*) and holidays. All are welcome and encouraged to participate with us in the many customs associated with these special occasions. *Shabbat* is our day of rest (from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday) and we frequently have a Friday evening service to welcome *Shabbat* (check the calendar for dates). *Shabbat* morning services are every Saturday at 9:30. A communal light meal (*Kiddush*) around noon is an opportunity to socialize and become acquainted with congregants. The Jewish year is marked by many beautiful and spiritual holidays that we celebrate both in home settings and communally. We invite you to participate and learn with us.

If you are attending our services, but are not familiar with our practices, here are some broad guidelines:

- Men and women are encouraged to wear a head covering (*kippah*) and a prayer shawl (*tallit*). Both are spiritual practices we celebrate as a community, and these accessories are available in the entryway to the sanctuary.

Congregation Netivot Shalom

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Participation in Services and Events (continued)

- A greeter is usually present in the foyer and is available to answer any questions you might have. There is also an announcement sheet that helps navigate the service, and provides useful information about upcoming events.
- Our services are conducted largely in Hebrew. There are several white binders on a shelf against the left wall of the foyer that contain the prayer book in a transliterated form. We encourage you to use this during the service as it will enable you to participate more fully.
- Help yourself to a prayer book (*siddur*) and a book of *Torah* readings (*chumash*) on the shelves adjacent to the sanctuary. Feel free to ask for assistance.
- You may sit anywhere in the sanctuary.

One goal of Judaism is to make the world a better place (*tikkum olam*). As part of an “activist” religion, committed to both social justice and the practice of character development (*middot*), members of Netivot Shalom participate in many activities within our own community (visiting and assisting the sick, bringing meals to families with new babies and comforting the mourner) and within the larger community (meals for the homeless, visiting the elderly, ecological activism and involvement with other social activist organizations).

Common Issues Regarding Intermarriage

Interfaith relationships frequently involve some discussion of participation in the partner’s tradition. Every couple is distinct and unique in this process, but the following are some areas we have found to be important:

- **Life cycle events:** We encourage both Jews and *k’rovei Yisrael* to actively participate in life cycle events, such as baby namings, circumcision (*brit milah*), Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and end of life rituals. While recognizing that our tradition imposes certain limits, non-Jewish participants have a variety of ways to share in these events and fully partake in their significance. We seek ways to make these experiences meaningful and inclusive. The Rabbi is happy to discuss the details of these events with you.
- **Children’s religious identity:** As a Conservative synagogue, Netivot Shalom follows the Jewish law (*halachah*) of matrilineal descent in determining a child’s Jewish identity (a child is “born Jewish” if born to a Jewish mother). Of course, any child may be converted at any age. All children may attend our pre-school and religious school, but only children who are Jewish may become Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- **Marriage:** Our Rabbi is available for consultation and discussion regarding marriages, although he can only officiate at a wedding ceremony when both members of the couple are Jewish.
- **Conversion:** We are always open to those who seek to join the Jewish people, but it is not required to be part of our community. Our Rabbi is available to discuss all aspects of this option.

At Netivot Shalom, we are always open and encouraging to those who seek to join us. Rabbi Creditor, our staff and Board of Directors are ready to answer your questions at any time. Welcome!

Congregation Netivot Shalom wishes to thank Temple Beth David, Palm Beach Gardens, FL and Temple Emanuel of Newton, MA for sharing their materials.

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Contact our membership chair at:
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