

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

The primary **goal** of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is to build trust, respect, and sustainable relationships between Muslim and Jewish women.

Different **programs** help the Sisterhood achieve these goals:

1. Local chapters
2. Annual leadership conference
3. Annual Building Bridges trip
4. Leadership development trainings
5. Online resources
6. Facebook group
7. Newsletter

Local Chapters

Local chapters form the heart and soul of the Sisterhood of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. Each chapter consists of 10-20 Muslim and Jewish women, ideally evenly balanced between women of each faith. Chapter members commit to meeting regularly, approximately every four to six weeks, for dialogue, socialization, community-building, and social action projects. The ongoing relationships formed in chapters are the heart and soul of the Sisterhood. Chapters also take part in regional gatherings and trainings, which grant chapter members opportunities to meet sisters from nearby communities and to gain skills to deepen dialogue and activism. Because the Sisterhood is a grassroots organization, we rely on volunteer leadership from women living in each community to spearhead efforts to build new chapters for interested women to join. You can read more about the chapter formation process, and how one joins a new chapter, in future sections.

Annual Leadership Conference

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom sponsors an annual leadership conference, with additional activities starting on Friday afternoon before the Jewish Sabbath and continuing throughout the weekend. The conference is the largest gathering of Muslim and Jewish women in the U.S. and offers inspirational keynote speakers, skill-building workshops to enhance your Sisterhood experience, and an opportunity to meet and learn from sisters across North America.

Annual Building Bridges Trip

The Building Bridges trip is open to all members of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and focuses on how women and their wider communities have stood up and said “No!” in the face of hatred and bigotry. In 2016, members of the Sisterhood journeyed to the Balkans, in 2017 to Azerbaijan, and in 2018, a civil rights trip to the American South. Each trip is specially designed

to lift up women's voices and inspire participants to strengthen their commitment to the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom in their home communities.

Leadership Development Trainings

From time to time, as resources and interest allow, we offer virtual and in-person trainings. These can take the form of daylong workshops, mini-conferences, regional gatherings, webinars, etc. Chapter members and supporters are encouraged to attend these topic-driven trainings, meet others, and learn from experts.

Online Resources

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom has worked hard with consultants and leadership experts to produce a [series of online video resources and written materials](#) to support co-leaders and chapter members as they engage in meaningful interfaith dialogue and action. Please visit our website to view these resources and incorporate them into your chapter interactions.

Facebook Group

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom maintains an online presence through a [global, public Facebook group](#), which is open to chapter members and supporters alike. Individual chapters may also set up private Facebook groups to facilitate chapter communication between meetings. Co-leaders can reach out to the central office for support in setting up individual chapter Facebook groups.

Newsletter

In 2018, the Sisterhood implemented a newsletter to keep its membership and other interested parties up to date on announcements, exciting chapter and Sisterhood-wide news and initiatives and more. [You can find the link to sign up for the newsletter](#) on our website.

Governance

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit, registered in the state of New Jersey. Programs are supported by a very small, dedicated staff and a large group of volunteers from across North America. The volunteer board of directors creates policy, develops strategy, and monitors fiscal oversight of the organization as a whole. While your chapter is local, you are part of a larger, North American-based organization, with a defined mission, set of core programs, and by-laws. When you start a local Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom chapter, you agree to abide by the mission, goals, and programs of the Sisterhood, and to welcome a member of the staff or board or directors to one of your chapter meetings.

As a non-profit, federal law prohibits the Sisterhood's central office and local chapters from raising funds or taking part in a political campaign on behalf of a candidate for public office.

(You may do this as a private citizen, but not on behalf of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.)
However, there are no restrictions on cause-related advocacy.

Staff:

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The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is an organization predicated on inclusion, respect, and openness to learning about and from one another. We welcome into our chapters anyone who self-identifies as either Muslim or Jewish and is a woman. Above all, we seek sisters who are willing to uphold and respect our mission and our members. We look forward to getting to know you.

Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Goals

The mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is to build trust, respect and sustainable relationships between Muslim and Jewish women and teenage girls. Through these relationships, we commit to working together to limit acts of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment, to stand up to hate, and to engage in social action work.

The Goals of Membership in the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom:

1. To know yourself more deeply and expand on your appreciation of, understanding of and participation in your own faith tradition
2. To know your “sister in faith” genuinely and to develop trust in and respect for her beliefs and practices
3. To develop a relationship with your “sister in faith” that is considered a sustainable friendship
4. To be an advocate for establishing a more inclusive community that focuses on interaction among persons of various faiths and especially between Muslims and Jews
5. To take action to diminish any acts of anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment

SOSS 2014 adapted from Leonard Swidler, Toward a Universal Theology of Religion, p. 26

Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Guiding Principles

As Muslim and Jewish women we share much in common about our faiths and values. We shall listen to each other, learn to trust one another, respect our differences, and pursue friendship, peace and justice. We will speak out against all forms of prejudice, hatred, and discrimination. All Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom participants must agree to the following:

As Muslim and Jewish sisters in faith we:

- 1. Desire to pursue sustainable friendships that are based on mutual respect.**
- 2. Will not allow any prior assumptions to dissuade us from listening to each other and learning from each other.**
- 3. Acknowledge that there are many forms of religious expression within and between our faiths.**
- 4. Accept that everyone in our Sisterhood has equal status and an equal voice.**
- 5. Participate and commit to attending meetings.**
- 6. Commit to learn more about our own faith and practices.**
- 7. Embrace change in our own assumptions, perceptions, and practices as our knowledge level increases.**
- 8. Acknowledge that we will practice the art of good listening.**
- 9. Listen without judgment, are open to expanding our knowledge base and understanding our sisters in faith.**
- 10. Refrain from hateful and hurtful language, facial expression, or body posture.**
- 11. Speak with honesty and admit to what we do not know.**
- 12. Use “I” language to express our own beliefs.**
- 13. Pay attention to etiquette and respect differences in daily living.**
- 14. Will not seek to convert the other.**
- 15. Avoid scheduling meetings and/or activities during the time of Jummah prayer, the Jewish Sabbath and Jewish holy days.**
- 16. Avoid entering into a dialogue about challenging topics, such as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict for at least a year, until trust and respect have been established among chapter members. When entering into such a dialogue, use the enclosed Compassionate Listening curriculum as a guide.**
- 17. Speak out in public, guided by faith, reflection, and experiences to preserve and protect religious freedom.**