



Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

Membership Manual

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom has produced this manual for the exclusive use of the participants in their Sisterhood Chapters. All documents that were not created by the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom are reprinted with permission.

Enriching Women's Souls, Shattering Stereotypes

For use by Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Only

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Stephanie Maravankin who applied to and received a grant from the Amy Adina Schulman Memorial Fund to work on developing the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Member's Manual. The Fund made their decision based on Stephanie's previous internship with Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth and with Stephanie's organizing Jewish-Muslim women's dinner and dialogue programs at American University. Her organizational skills and commitment to interfaith engagement were essential elements in the funding decision.

The Amy Adina Schulman Memorial Fund provides grants to individuals, young adults who volunteer or intern for progressive social action projects in an area of their interest and commitment. The Fund was established in 1987, one year after Amy Adina, 20, died suddenly while a student and activist at Rutgers University. Since its inception, more than 900 grants have been awarded for work in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and the United States. The Fund is an IRS approved tax-deductible 501(c)3; all contributions go directly to grants.

In addition, we thank the many peace-building organizations that have made study guides available to the public. We have included information from many of these guides, including, but not limited to:

- Interfaith Peacebuilders Guide; United Religions Initiative
- Children of Abraham Guide
- Abrahamic Faiths Peacemakers Initiative

Table of Contents

The mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is to build trust, respect, and relationships between North American Muslim and Jewish women. Together, women commit to limit acts of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim sentiment, stand up to hate against one another, and engage in social action work.

INTRODUCTION	4
GUIDE TO STARTING A NEW CHAPTER	10
CO-LEADERS' GUIDE	33
SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE AND EFFECTIVE MEETINGS	39
SUGGESTED MEETING THEMES	55
SHARING HOLIDAYS	88
TOOLKITS FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS	96
RISE AND RESPONSE	
EARTH DAY	
TZEDAKAH/SADAQAH DAY OF SERVICE	
ENDORSEMENTS/MEDIA COVERAGE/SOCIAL MEDIA	113
RESOURCES	116
KEYS TO SPIRITUAL ACTIVISM	
COMMON EXPRESSIONS	
DESCRIPTIONS OF COMMON HOLIDAYS	
SUGGESTED READINGS, FILMS, WEBSITES	

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:

Samantha Facciolo, Assistant Director samantha@sosspeace.org

Alan Kane, Financial Consultant alan@sosspeace.org

Nadia Nasim, Operations Manager nadia@sosspeace.org

Janet Penn, Director of Programs, Resource Development and Training janet@sosspeace.org

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.**

GUIDE TO STARTING A NEW CHAPTER



Dear Sisters,

Welcome to the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We're thrilled you're interested in starting a chapter in your community! As a member of the Sisterhood, you'll have an opportunity to develop deep friendships with a diverse group of Muslim and Jewish women. You'll gain leadership skills to engage in thoughtful dialogue and cross-cultural exchange. And you'll be part of a growing network in North America that is committed to speaking up against discrimination and hate.

In the following pages, you'll find the resources you need to successfully organize a chapter and understand the role of a co-leader. If you have questions or concerns along the way, feel free to email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org. We are here for you!

Thank you for your commitment to and support of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We look forward to supporting you as you embark upon this unique journey.

Guide to Starting a New Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Chapter

Table of Contents

Step-By-Step Guide to Starting a Chapter	13
Best Practices for Chapter Co-Leaders	17
Guide to Your First Meeting	21
Appendices	30
Appendix A: Membership Spreadsheet	
Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer	
Appendix C: Recruitment Follow-Up Communication	

Step-by-Step Guide to Creating a New Chapter

Step One: Contact the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

Your very first step is to use the “contact us” form on the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom website: sosspeace.org/contact-us. A Sisterhood staff person will set up a time to talk with you. She’ll describe the chapter formation process, connect you with others in your area interested in starting or joining a chapter, and answer your questions.

Step Two: Learn more about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

Take a look at the Sisterhood website. Watch our videos and scan the online resource library: sosspeace.org/videos-guides. Think about why you want to start a chapter. The ability to communicate your passion for the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom may just be your strongest asset, especially when recruiting other women to join you.

Step Three: Identify a co-organizer from the other faith

It’s important to start a chapter as **“we,” not “me.”** You don’t want to do this alone! It’s critical to have one Muslim and one Jewish organizer to model shared leadership and build trust in both communities.

Reach out to the central office and we’ll let you know if we’ve identified a woman in your area looking to start a chapter. If we don’t have a contact, reach out to your family, friends, and co-workers. Tell them about the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and how a chapter will benefit your communities. This step may take some time, so be patient. With one or more degrees of separation, it’s quite possible that you’ll find someone in your network of the other faith who will partner with you.

Part of the beauty of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is befriending women who you otherwise might never have a chance to meet. Once you find a woman from the other faith interested in organizing a chapter with you, arrange a time to meet. Learn about her life and explore how you can share the organizing tasks, utilizing each of your strengths and expertise.

If the first woman you meet with isn’t available or interested, ask her for names of other women you can contact. And remember, any Muslim or Jewish woman can start a chapter. The co-organizers of a Sisterhood chapter are instrumental in helping form new chapters. Being a co-organizer, however, does not mean you need to become a co-leader for the chapter once it has launched, though often, this is the case.

If the thought of reaching out to someone you don't know makes your heart pound, then find a Sister from your faith to join you. In fact, you may decide to have two co-leaders from each faith. With four co-leaders, there's always backup, in case one woman needs to pull back for a time.

Step Four: Recruit sisters to join your chapter

Develop your elevator speech. When you and your co-leader(s) from the other faith are ready to invite other women to join your chapter, it's helpful to have an "elevator speech," a brief, consistent way to describe the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom and why you think they should join. It's called an elevator speech because you succinctly make your pitch in the amount of time it takes for an average elevator ride.

Below is one version of an elevator speech. Feel free to adapt or change it to match your style. What's important is to articulate your passion for the Sisterhood and why you want to start a chapter in the midst of your busy life. Here are three main points to share:

- **What:** The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom is based upon three things: (1) building trusting relationships; (2) increasing understanding through dialogue, socialization and community building; and (3) engaging in social advocacy activities.
- **When:** Chapters meet every 4-6 weeks. Sisters share holiday gatherings, special events, attend the annual fall leadership conference, and take part in regional meetings and trainings, as available.
- **Why:** Develop beautiful friendships, create allies, engage in social advocacy, and decrease anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment.
- **Sample elevator speech:** Remember, this is about your story and why you've chosen to become involved with the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. "I became involved with the Sisterhood because I'm concerned about rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism as well as misunderstandings between our two communities. An "us" versus "them" mentality isn't consistent with *my* values. I believe that together, as Muslim and Jewish women, we can shine a light on a different way of interacting. We can forge relationships based on trust and respect. Our friendship will be built on a mutual commitment to protect one another and to stand together against hatred, prejudice and discrimination. When you join a Sisterhood chapter, you agree to meet once every four to six weeks and to listen to each sister with an open heart. We respect differences, share holiday celebrations and take part in community service and advocacy projects. I'd love to hear your thoughts about this vision and see if you're interested in joining me on this journey of hope."

The recruitment process

Remember, when you are forming your chapter, the most important thing is to communicate your passion! Share why you want to start a chapter. Ask questions so you can learn more about

what other women are thinking and experiencing. You may wind up talking with many women before you identify a core group of Muslim and Jewish women, roughly equal in number, to join your chapter. As you network, seek out women of different ages, religious observance, and cultural and socioeconomic background. A diverse chapter not only enriches dialogue, but also breaks down intra-religious, in addition to inter-religious stereotypes.

It may take six months or more to develop your chapter, so don't get discouraged. Think of it as part of your journey and an opportunity to speak with interesting women from many different backgrounds. You may find it useful to take note of everyone's interests and availability, so check out the sample spreadsheet in Appendix A for one way to keep track of your conversations.

Different ways to meet potential sisters

- 1. Contact the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.** Your first step is to contact Samantha at the central office at samatha@sosspeace.org to see if there are currently any women in your area on the waitlist. If so, please give priority to women who have already expressed interest in joining a chapter. You may find that the central office already has a long list of women who want to join a chapter in your area.
- 2. Attend local events.** In addition to attending local interfaith events, many current co-leaders say that the best way to meet women who are likely to be interested in the Sisterhood is to go to community events where Muslim and/or Jewish women gather. And remember, if you don't feel particularly comfortable reaching out to people you don't know, ask your co-organizer to join you. You will make a powerful statement, going together as a Muslim and Jewish team, especially when the primary audience is the Jewish or Muslim community. Seek out programs sponsored by Muslim or Jewish organizations. You can find these community events through your local networks, as well as through the internet, by searching the names of local Muslim or Jewish organizations and houses of worship.
- 3. Reach out to your networks.** Ask family members and colleagues if they can introduce you to Jewish and Muslim women that they may know through their work, children's school, or community service organization. You'd be surprised at how, with one or two degrees of separation, you can discover new networks of women. This is especially important because your goal is to develop a Sisterhood chapter that reflects intra-faith and inter-cultural diversity.
- 4. Reach out on social media.** Share your passion! Dust off and shorten your elevator speech and post requests for Jewish and Muslim women. Invite them to learn more about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. Link to the [Sisterhood Facebook group](#) to connect with the greater Sisterhood network and see positive photos and videos of Sisterhood members in action. Share articles and news (good or bad) that are relevant to the Muslim or Jewish community. Highlight how the Sisterhood is addressing common concerns. "Shares" are everything!

5. **Contact local synagogues and mosques.** Describe the Sisterhood and ask if there are women's study or social groups that you can speak to. Focus on how the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom can help women in their respective communities strengthen their own communities by breaking down stereotypes and misunderstandings.
6. **Other opportunities.** Every day is another potential opportunity! Go to a halal or kosher grocery store and talk to a shopkeeper. Wander into small businesses in a known Jewish, Arab, South Asian, or West African neighborhood. Ask if you can leave a flyer (see Appendix B). Ask if there are groups of women meeting in the area. Reach out to municipal personnel and local officials to receive recommendations of local Jews and Muslims who are active in your community.

These methods and more are outlined in a short video from our Executive Director:
youtube.com/watch?v=FICvF0Lwhrg&t=43s

The Sisterhood's foundation is built upon personal relationships. After you have spoken with women, send out a follow-up text or email (see Appendix C for sample). Suggest that potential sisters visit our website, www.sosspeace.org, and our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/sisterhoodsalaamshalom. Share our Twitter handle so they can see firsthand the impact of our work, [@sosspeace](https://twitter.com/sosspeace), and send them these video links: vimeo.com/136238441 and youtube.com/watch?v=f4xxWEnhEHs. They provide good background on our mission, values, and why someone would want to participate.

Every time you reach out, especially to a woman of the other faith or from a different cultural or religious practice, you are modeling the power of the Sisterhood, sending the message that, as women, we can break down barriers of suspicion and misunderstanding.

Step Five: Decide if you want to be a co-leader of your chapter

Being a co-leader does take additional time, perhaps on average, two hours/month, in addition to your actual meeting. The responsibilities are mentioned below. But the rewards are great! As a Sisterhood co-leader, you'll have the opportunity to strengthen and develop your leadership skills. You'll plan and organize chapter meetings, special events, and deepen your communication skills through facilitating chapter meetings. You'll become part of a strong network of women leaders throughout North America.

We strongly encourage co-leaders to take part in numerous leadership training opportunities provided by the central office, including: the annual Sisterhood conference; monthly co-leader webinars where you'll learn best practices and share ways to address conflicts that may arise in your chapter; regional trainings, as available; and, instructional resources on the Sisterhood website, including brief videos and written guides.

Best Practices for Chapter Co-Leaders

Co-leaders have responsibilities in three general areas: communications, logistics, and process.

Communications

1. **Stay in touch with your Sisters.** Send out an annual or semi-annual calendar of meetings, so that sisters can set aside the time well in advance, as well as reminders before each meeting.
2. **Develop a system for ongoing communication with chapter members.** Find out from each sister if she prefers to receive reminders and notices via text, email, or a private Facebook or WhatsApp group. Send us an email if you'd like help setting up one a Facebook or WhatsApp group. While this may take a little extra time initially, it will make your outreach MUCH easier each month. Some chapter co-leaders enjoy outreach and take it on as one of their unique responsibilities, while others rotate communicating with sisters. Decide with your co-leader(s) what works best for you, and feel free to change your system if it doesn't seem to be working.
3. **Reach out to women who don't regularly attend meetings.** During the first six months, it's normal for membership to fluctuate. Remember that personal relationships form the heart of the Sisterhood. They take time to develop, and it's more challenging to establish trust if women drop in and out of the group. If a sister misses a meeting, or doesn't RSVP, text, call, or email her. Reaching out lets her know that her presence matters to you and to all your sisters. If she misses a couple of meetings, reach out and check in with her. Ask how she's doing. Find out if work or family responsibilities make it difficult for her to attend. If she is committed to the group, but the regular meeting time is difficult for her, talk as a group about possible accommodations. Perhaps you can alternate days (e.g. Sunday afternoons and week nights) or come up with another solution. If she feels she can't make a regular commitment to chapter meetings, ask if she would like to be invited to larger special events and celebrations. That way, she can maintain a positive connection to your chapter. Eventually, your membership will stabilize and reminder emails or texts prior to meetings or special events, should suffice. As a common courtesy, if a sister emails or calls you, we ask that one of the co-leaders gets back to her within 48 hours whenever possible.
4. **Stay in touch with the central office.** The central office is the hub that connects all the local chapters and exists to support each individual chapter. Please send your chapter membership list to Samantha at the central office (samantha@sosspeace.org) within one month of your first meeting. Once a year, we will ask you to update your membership list and invite you to share your best practices and challenges. We'll share selected best practices each month in an email newsletter, which also includes updates about upcoming trainings, conferences, and events.
5. **Utilize regional coordinators.** In 2019, we introduced the concept of regional coordinators, individuals who serve a select group of regions across the country and are available to

assist with challenges, activities, and programming for chapters within each region. Once your chapter is up and running, in addition to the central office, you can refer to your regional coordinator for support. Samantha Facciolo (samantha@sosspeace.org) can put you in touch with the Regional Coordinator(s) serving your area.

Logistics

As a co-leader, you aren't responsible for DOING everything. You just need to make sure that things get DONE. Here are some important logistics to consider:

1. **Group size** A stable group promotes bonding and intimacy. Consistency in membership is very important. We do not recommend people dropping in and out and suggest, once the chapter has reached a stable, core membership, closing to new members.
2. **Location** We strongly encourage you to meet in women's homes, because this setting encourages intimacy in an informal atmosphere. Make sure the host knows how many people to expect so she can prepare the space. On occasion, chapters visit a religious house of worship for a specific educational experience.
3. **Food** See below, [Guide to your First Meeting](#).
4. **Meeting times** Finding a time to meet that works for everyone can be very challenging! Many chapters have found that Sunday afternoons work well. Other chapters meet on a weeknight. With input from your chapter members, decide upon a day and time of the week that works for everyone. If there's no one time, consider alternating meeting times and days. Just remember, in the spirit of inter-religious dialogue, please don't schedule a meeting on the Jewish sabbath (Friday evening, or anytime Saturday before sundown), during Muslim Jummah prayer (Friday afternoon), or during other holidays, unless that meeting is celebrating a specific religious observance. You can find an annual [calendar of Muslim and Jewish holidays](#) on our website.
5. **Meeting themes** There are three common ways to decide upon the theme for each meeting.
 - a. The host of the meeting decides.
 - b. The chapter decides together at the end of the previous meeting.
 - c. The co-leaders decide.

Regardless of which method you choose, it's a good idea to balance time for socializing, learning, and personal sharing. Share your meeting theme with sisters at the beginning of your meeting so everyone knows what to expect. We find that the most successful chapters have a mix of themes that range from members-suggested topics, to discussions chosen from the guide, to holiday or ritual based celebrations, social action/service-oriented meetings, social activities, field trips, and more.

6. **Meeting facilitation** Best practices for meeting facilitation are available in the Running

7. **Committees** Some chapters like to have small committees- a fundraising committee, for example, a Good and Welfare group, which ensures chapter members have support in the event of illness, or a death in the family, or a new baby, or a social action or social (extracurricular get-togethers) committee. Does your chapter have women with a passion for one of these, or another, subgroups? Maybe someone who has a passion for art or dance programs, or trying new restaurants, or checking in with members needing extra support. Maybe you have someone who loves putting together a simple, quarterly newsletter or birthday announcements. If so, consider adding committees of a few women who would like to spearhead specific initiatives within the group.
8. **Information Management** Each chapter decides how it wants to manage members' information and what information is collected, but at a minimum, we ask that co-leaders update the central office with a membership spreadsheet annually and whenever there are additions or losses of members. Some co-leaders prefer Excel spreadsheets or shared Google spreadsheets, but however you manage this information, you should have each woman's name, address, email address, religion, phone number, and other information as needed. Each co-leader should have access to this information, and the chapter should decide together how much information they want to share with one another- phone numbers and email addresses? Birthdays?
9. **National Initiatives** The Sisterhood has several national initiatives, including Tzedakah/Sadaqa Day projects, voter registration drive, and Rise and Respond, a step-by-step guide to responding to Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Co-leaders don't have to lead the charge on national initiatives but we strongly encourage chapters to participate in them. These types of outreach can be great opportunities for other members to take on leadership roles and share their own ideas and skills with the group. Often, you'll be the first to know of upcoming national initiatives, projects, and news. Please monitor your inbox for emails from the central office and share these announcements with your chapter.
10. **National Leadership Opportunities** As a co-leader, you will be invited to participate in monthly Zoom calls for co-leaders. They range in topic from resolving challenges to presentations on upcoming initiatives, to sharing best practices, and panels with guest speakers. The meeting schedule is sent out several months in advance by Janet Penn. Please do your best to attend these meetings by conference call or webinar. You can reach Janet at janet@sosspeace.org.
11. **Co-Leader Facebook Group** There is a co-leader networking and support Facebook group. If you are a new co-leader, please email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org for an invitation to join this group. It is a great forum for discussion, troubleshooting, sharing meeting ideas, asking questions, and more.

Process

Your final area of responsibility may just be the most important part of your leadership. Thoughtful process will enhance everyone's experience in the Sisterhood. Here are some guidelines that will help you create an atmosphere of trust and respect:

- **Share leadership equally.** Commit to leading the chapter as an equal with your partner co-leader. Shared leadership models trust and respect in your chapter. Pair a sister from each faith to lead discussions. Alternate homes when and if possible.
- **Make decisions democratically.** Seek input from chapter members about programming and logistics. Remember, each sister has an equal voice and vote.
- **Balance personal sharing and learning.** Successful meetings strike a balance between sharing personal experiences, socializing, experiential programs, and discussing intellectual topics. Examples of experiential programs include: Ramadan Iftars; Sukkot dinners; community building/social action projects; attending a museum exhibit; and, screening a movie.
- **Follow guidelines.** Co-leaders agree to promote and support the Guiding Principles of the Sisterhood within their chapter.
- **Represent a positive face to the media.** You are the voice and face of the Sisterhood in your local community. When participating in media interviews, present the strengths of the Sisterhood. Internal challenges or concerns are best shared with the central office, not with the press.
- **Be thoughtful about approaching challenging conversations.** Because it can be such a divisive issue, we ask that you refrain from talking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and having other, similarly challenging conversations until your chapter has been meeting for at least a year, has developed strong bonds, and has facilitators who have the skills to maintain a safe space. This guide contains two suggestions for structuring this conversation, *Sharing Personal Narratives* (p. 48), and *Conducting a Successful Dialogue* (p. 41). The Sisterhood has created brief videos and written guides, Engaging in Difficult Conversations: <https://sosspeace.org/series1/>. Feel free to contact the Central Office for additional support.

Guide to Your First Meeting

The goals of your first meeting are to: (1) help every woman feel welcome; (2) ensure that everyone understands what it means to be a member of a Sisterhood chapter; (3) begin to get to know each other; and (4) address logistics.

Staff at the central office will help you kick off your first meeting and are available by email and phone to answer your questions and suggest best practices.

Below are some best practices to address the first goal of **creating a welcoming atmosphere**.

- Before sisters arrive, ask the meeting host to arrange chairs in a circle so no one is “at the head of the table.”
- Greet each woman at the door.
- Ask her to remove her shoes if it is the custom of the house.
- Have nametags readily available.
- Invite women to take refreshments.
- Begin with a general welcome. Some chapters start and end their meeting with a Jewish and Muslim prayer.
- Be mindful of starting and ending on time.
- Maintain confidentiality. What’s said in the chapter, stays in the chapter. But feel free to share what you’ve learned far and wide!

Sharing food

Just saying the name of your favorite holiday dish can evoke warm memories of family gatherings. Food often plays a major role in our cultural and religious heritages and is a wonderful way to bring people together. As a chapter, you’ll decide whether you want to share a meal or snacks at your meetings or events. Some chapters bring potluck to each meeting. Some have the host provide snacks. But, as a part of a North American organization dedicated to honoring both Islam and Judaism, we ask that you observe the religious dietary requirements of your most observant sister. Since there may be a wide variety of observance, please ask your sisters to share their practices, to ensure that everyone is able to partake in the food that is served. Islamic jurisprudence specifies which foods are halal (lawful) and which are haram (unlawful). The laws are derived from commandments found in the Qur’an (Muslim holy book) and the Hadith (sayings of the Prophet). Kashrut is the set of Jewish dietary laws set forth in the Torah (Jewish holy book). Foods that may be consumed according to Jewish law are considered kosher,

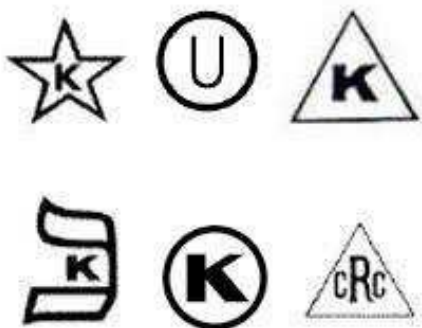
meaning fit for consumption.

Whether you are bringing food to your host's home, or you are the host, please follow these guidelines:

1. Do not serve products made with alcohol, lard, gelatin, or any other pork product.
2. If you are going to a Jewish home, check with the host to make sure it's okay to bring in food prepared in a non-kosher home or packaged food that does not have a kosher symbol. The following are common symbols on packaging that indicate a kosher product. Fruits and vegetables without wax do not require a symbol to be kosher.
3. Alcohol of any kind should never be served. If there is a need for the Jewish blessing over wine, use grape juice instead.
4. Do not serve a dish or bring a dish that mixes dairy products with meat products.
5. Do not serve or bring a dish that contains shellfish (shrimp, scallops, lobster).

Instead of viewing these as restrictions, you have an opportunity to engage in thoughtful conversation about religious dietary laws. What are they? What are people's individual practices? Have they changed over time? What does observing, or not observing, mean to them?

Commonly Found Kosher Symbols



Suggested Agenda for your First Meeting

The suggested times listed next to each agenda item are a guideline only and assume a two-hour meeting. If an agenda item takes longer, adjust the other times accordingly, unless your group agrees to stay later. Since there is a lot to cover in the orientation, simply stating the information below is sufficient for this first meeting. Or, you may prefer to just give a brief summary of the

mission, so people understand what to expect as a participant and do the rest of the orientation over a conference call, or during the next several meetings.

- **Gathering (15 minutes)**

- **Orientation to the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (30 minutes)**

- Welcome everyone to the Sisterhood.
- Introduce the co-leaders and BRIEFLY share your excitement and hopes for your chapter.
- Show the welcome YouTube video from Co-founder, Sheryl Olitzky:
[youtube.com/watch?v=JKpJSIZ1vOk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKpJSIZ1vOk)
- Read the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom mission and give an overview of programs (chapters, annual conference, Building Bridges trip)
- Share the chapter focus on:
 - Dialogue – understanding and compassionate listening
 - Socialization – building friendships
 - Community building/life cycle events – Agree to convene at least one community building or life cycle event each year with your chapter, as well as participate in one larger Sisterhood community-building event.
 - Social advocacy – Together stand up for each other and speak out against hatred and bigotry.
- Hand out and read aloud the Guiding Principles of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.

- **Share personal stories (45 minutes).** Choose one of the suggested themes below.

- **Review logistics (30 minutes)**

- Decide as a group, the time and day that works for future meetings. This is really important to do as a group, so please make sure to leave 15 minutes at the end. If you can't find a day and time that works for everyone, then agree to rotate days so everyone is included.
- Find a volunteer to host your next meeting. (You may want to designate a note taker to record the date and place, as well as any other important decisions.)
- Q&A
- Closing – Especially after dealing with logistics, it's nice to end with a group closing, which might include each woman sharing one sentence about her experience, or if you're short on time, sharing a group song, blessing, or prayer.

- Notice the suggested time frame next to each section. We encourage you to allocate specific time frames for each agenda item when you're planning your meeting. While your times may not be exact, setting an intention will help keep you on track.

Suggested Initial Meeting Themes for Sharing Personal Stories (Choose One)

1. INTRODUCING OURSELVES

Objectives:

- To learn about family customs through sharing the origins of each woman's name
- To begin to understand the influence of our different cultural backgrounds
- To explain how storytelling is key to building empathy and understanding

Introduction:

Our families and cultural background play a large role in the way we define ourselves, as well as the way we are perceived by others. Through exploring the origins of our names, participants can share part of their family legacy. Sharing personal stories is key to establishing each woman's equal voice, since everyone has a story, regardless of her knowledge about her religion.

Materials:

- Large sheet of post-it paper, outlining the questions for sharing
- Marker

Time required:

One hour, divided equally among sisters

Facilitator role:

- Share the objectives and introduction.
- Post the questions below on large post-it paper on the wall for easy reference.

Process:

- Ask each sister to tell the story of her name. Here are some questions she can consider:
 - How do you pronounce your name?
 - What does your name mean?
 - How did you get your name?
 - What influenced that name choice?
 - Do you prefer to go by any other name? Why?
 - What is the story of your last name? Where does it come from and what does it mean? Is it different from other family members' last names?
- Ask one sister to keep track of time. She will let the speaker know when she has spoken for five minutes, or however much time is available, given the size of your group.
- If your group is not too large, you can leave time for a one question after each person.

2. SHARING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES – Option One

Objectives:

- To develop a basic understanding of each woman's "lived" religion
- To begin to see one another as individuals rather than just as "Muslims" or "Jews"
- To begin the process of breaking down stereotypes

Introduction:

Through sharing the meaning of an important religious object and role it plays in your life, sisters will develop an understanding about the ways individuals practice their religion. This learning is not just about the "other" religion, but also highlights the rich diversity within our own religious communities. Sharing personal stories is key to establishing each woman's equal voice, since everyone has a story to share, regardless of her knowledge about her religion.

Materials: You may want to post the questions on a large post-it sheet for easy reference.

Time required:

One hour, divided equally among sisters

Facilitator role:

- Prior to the session, ask participants to bring one item that symbolizes their religion.

Process:

- Ask one sister to start the sharing by presenting her religious item. Suggested questions to explore:
 - How do you use this object (e.g. daily, weekly, special holidays)?
 - How does this item capture the meaning of your religion to you?
 - Does the object have special meaning from your childhood?
- Ask one sister to keep track of time. She will let the speaker know when she has spoken for five minutes, or however much time is available, given the size of your group.

3. SHARING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES – Option Two

Objectives:

- To develop a basic understanding of each woman's "lived" religion
- To begin to see one another as individuals rather than just as "Muslims" or "Jews"
- To begin the process of breaking down stereotypes

Introduction:

These objectives are the same as the previous one, but the activity uses different questions to prompt sharing some of the ways each sister practices her religion.

Materials: You may want to post the questions on a large post-it sheet for easy reference.

Time required:

One hour, divided equally among sisters

Facilitator role:

- Explain the objectives of the activity.

Process:

- Ask one sister to begin, describing in detail one or more religious practices or rituals that are important to her.
 - What meaning does it/they have in her life?
 - What do you most enjoy about the practice?
 - Do you find anything difficult or challenging about the practice?
 - Was the practice part of your life growing up or has it changed over time?
- Ask one sister to keep track of time. She will let the speaker know when she has spoken for five minutes, or however much time is available, given the size of your group.

4. GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER: A HUMAN SCAVENGER HUNT

PURPOSE

To encourage getting to meet all the chapter members.

PROCESS

Give each person a copy of the questions and a pen. Their task is to go around the room and find different people who can answer 'yes' to the questions.

Once they've found someone who can give a positive answer, they should make a note of their name on the list next to that question.

Additional Rules

To encourage the players to talk to as many different people as possible, consider putting a limit on the number of times each person can appear on someone's list – between one and three times, depending on the size of the group.

For example, sister A speaks to sister B and finds that they can answer yes to 11 of the questions. Rather than them being allowed to write down that person's name 11 times, they'd be limited to a maximum of three.

Scavenger Hunt Questions

Here's a suggested list of the 25 questions to use for this game. Revise the list however you desire.

1. Have you ever been in a helicopter?
2. Were you born in a country outside of the U.S.?
3. Do you have four or more siblings?
4. Is your birthday in June?
5. Have you been to the top of the Empire State Building?
6. Is your favorite color green?

7. Can you speak three or more languages fluently?
8. Have you ridden on a motorcycle?
9. Can you play the guitar?
10. Have you ever been stuck in an elevator?
11. Have you met anyone famous?
12. Are you left-handed?
13. Are you wearing socks that aren't black or white?
14. Do you like to play soccer?
15. Have you read all the Harry Potter books?
16. Do you like to watch scary movies?
17. Have you ever been sailing?
18. Do you suffer from hay fever?
19. Have you ever gone swimming in the ocean?

20. Can you whistle using two fingers?
21. Have you ever been to Australia?
22. Were you born between 1960 and 1965?
23. Do you have no middle name?
24. Can you say the alphabet backwards?
25. Do you like Brussels Sprouts?

5. FIND SOMEONE WHO...

PURPOSE

To encourage members to find commonalities with one another and to become acquainted with all members.

PROCESS

Give each person a copy of the questions and a pen. Their task is to go around the room and find different people who can answer 'yes' to the questions. Once they've found someone who can give a positive answer, write that person's name in the blank next to the corresponding question.

Additional Rules

To encourage participants to talk to as many different people as possible, consider putting a limit on the number of times each person can appear on someone's list, say, only two or three times, for example.

Getting to Know You Questions

Here's a suggested list of the questions to use for this ice-breaker. Revise the list however you desire.
Find Someone Who:

- 1) Was born in the same city as you were _____
- 2) Loves to eat Indian food _____
- 3) Loves to go to foreign movies _____
- 4) Has a passion for golf _____
- 5) Loves to cook _____
- 6) Loves to go to museums _____
- 7) Loves to play in the rain _____
- 8) Has actually played in the rain in the last year _____
- 9) Has been teaching the longest _____
- 10) Has lived in a foreign country _____
- 11) Loves to paint _____
- 12) Who has been a pilot _____
- 13) Who has fought in a war _____
- 14) Who makes jewelry _____
- 15) Loves to study fashion design _____
- 16) Who plays the harp _____
- 17) Who served in the Peace Corp _____
- 18) Who speaks more than three languages _____
- 19) Who sings opera _____
- 20) Who is an actor/actress _____
- 21) Attended the same university you did _____
- 22) Was born in New York _____
- 23) Was born in 1964 _____
- 24) Shares your birthday _____

Appendices

- **Appendix A: Membership spreadsheet**

Please email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org for a copy of our chapter membership spreadsheet. Save a copy of the spreadsheet by renaming it with your chapter name, then feel free to edit it in Google Docs or in Excel, whichever you prefer. The most important categories to fill in are name, email address, mailing address, religion, and phone number. Please send this spreadsheet to the central office within a month of your first meeting. It can be emailed directly to Samantha. The central office will ask you to update your list once a year. It's important that you use our version of the spreadsheet to ensure uploading to our database will go smoothly. Thank you for your consideration of this request!

- **Appendix B: Recruitment flyer**

- **Appendix C: Recruitment follow-up communication**

Enriching Women's Souls, Shattering Stereotypes



Join us to build bridges and put an end to hate, negative stereotyping and prejudice.

- Become a member of a chapter
- Attend the annual Muslim Jewish Women's Leadership Conference
- Travel on a Building Bridges Trip
- Visit us at www.sosspeace.org
- Contact us at: samantha@sosspeace.org

Sample Follow Up to Potential New Members

Dear _____,

I really enjoyed speaking with you about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom[®]. We look forward to starting a new chapter in your town and hope that you agree to be part of this exciting movement! It's an amazing organization that is based on a simple principle: it is easy to hate someone you do not know and almost impossible to hate someone you care about.

Through participation in the Sisterhood, you will build friendships between Muslim and Jewish women, learn how to be an advocate of interfaith-based issues, participate in community building activity, and engage in dialogue, compassionate listening, and social advocacy. Our ultimate mission is to combat anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment together.

I look forward to getting to know you. Please feel free to contact me if you'd like more information or have any questions.

In sisterhood,

(Your Name)

CO-LEADERS' GUIDE

Best Practices for Chapter Co-Leaders

Co-leaders have responsibilities in three general areas: communications, logistics, and process.

Communications

1. **Stay in touch with your Sisters.** Send out an annual or semi-annual calendar of meetings, so that sisters can set aside the time well in advance, as well as reminders before each meeting.
2. **Develop a system for ongoing communication with chapter members.** Find out from each sister if she prefers to receive reminders and notices via text, email, or a private Facebook or WhatsApp group. Send us an email if you'd like help setting up one a Facebook or WhatsApp group. While this may take a little extra time initially, it will make your outreach MUCH easier each month. Some chapter co- leaders enjoy outreach and take it on as one of their unique responsibilities, while others rotate communicating with sisters. Decide with your co-leader(s) what works best for you, and feel free to change your system if it doesn't seem to be working.
3. **Reach out to women who don't regularly attend meetings.** During the first six months, it's normal for membership to fluctuate. Remember that personal relationships form the heart of the Sisterhood. They take time to develop, and it's more challenging to establish trust if women drop in and out of the group. If a sister misses a meeting, or doesn't RSVP, text, call, or email her. Reaching out lets her know that her presence matters to you and to all your sisters. If she misses a couple of meetings, reach out and check in with her. Ask how she's doing. Find out if work or family responsibilities make it difficult for her to attend. If she is committed to the group, but the regular meeting time is difficult for her, talk as a group about possible accommodations. Perhaps you can alternate days (e.g. Sunday afternoons and week nights) or come up with another solution. If she feels she can't make a regular commitment to chapter meetings, ask if she would like to be invited to larger special events and celebrations. That way, she can maintain a positive connection to your chapter. Eventually, your membership will stabilize and reminder emails or texts prior to meetings or special events, should suffice. As a common courtesy, if a sister emails or calls you, we ask that one of the co-leaders gets back to her within 48 hours whenever possible.
4. **Stay in touch with the central office.** The central office is the hub that connects all the local chapters and exists to support each individual chapter. Please send your chapter membership list to Samantha at the central office (samantha@sosspeace.org) within one month of your first meeting. Once a year, we will ask you to update your membership list and invite you to share your best practices and challenges. We'll share selected best practices each month in an email newsletter, which also includes updates about upcoming trainings, conferences, and events.

5. **Utilize regional coordinators.** In 2019, we introduced the concept of regional coordinators, individuals who serve a select group of regions across the country and are available to assist with challenges, activities, and programming for chapters within each region. Once your chapter is up and running, in addition to the central office, you can refer to your regional coordinator for support. Samantha (samantha@sosspeace.org) can put you in touch with the Regional Coordinator(s) serving your area.

Logistics

As a co-leader, you aren't responsible for DOING everything. You just need to make sure that things get DONE. Here are some important logistics to consider:

1. **Group size** A stable group promotes bonding and intimacy. Consistency in membership is very important. We do not recommend people dropping in and out and suggest, once the chapter has reached a stable, core membership, closing to new members.
2. **Location** We strongly encourage you to meet in women's homes, because this setting encourages intimacy in an informal atmosphere. Make sure the host knows how many people to expect so she can prepare the space. On occasion, chapters visit a religious house of worship for a specific educational experience.
3. **Meeting times** Finding a time to meet that works for everyone can be very challenging! Many chapters have found that Sunday afternoons work well. Other chapters meet on a weeknight. With input from your chapter members, decide upon a day and time of the week that works for everyone. If there's no one time, consider alternating meeting times and days. Just remember, in the spirit of inter-religious dialogue, please don't schedule a meeting on the Jewish sabbath (Friday evening, or anytime Saturday before sundown), during Muslim Jummah prayer (Friday afternoon), or during other holidays, unless that meeting is celebrating a specific religious observance.
4. **Meeting themes** There are three common ways to decide upon the theme for each meeting.
 - a. The host of the meeting decides.
 - b. The chapter decides together at the end of the previous meeting.
 - c. The co-leaders decide.

Regardless of which method you choose, it's a good idea to balance time for socializing, learning, and personal sharing. Share your meeting theme with sisters at the beginning of your meeting so everyone knows what to expect. We find that the most successful chapters have a mix of themes that range from members-suggested topics, to discussions chosen from the guide, to holiday or ritual based celebrations, social action/service-oriented meetings, social activities, field trips, and more.

5. **Meeting facilitation** Best practices for meeting facilitation are available in the Running Successful Dialogue and Effective Meetings section. It is important to note that co-

leaders are not responsible for leading the dialogue portion of each meeting, only for ensuring that someone has volunteered to facilitate the chosen discussion.

6. **Committees** Some chapters like to have small committees- a fundraising committee, for example, a Good and Welfare group, which ensures chapter members have support in the event of illness, or a death in the family, or a new baby, or a social action or social (extracurricular get-togethers) committee. Does your chapter have women with a passion for one of these, or another, subgroups? Maybe someone who has a passion for art or dance programs, or trying new restaurants, or checking in with members needing extra support. Maybe you have someone who loves putting together a simple, quarterly newsletter or birthday announcements. If so, consider adding committees of a few women who would like to spearhead specific initiatives within the group.
7. **Information Management** Each chapter decides how it wants to manage members' information and what information is collected, but at a minimum, we ask that co-leaders update the central office with a membership spreadsheet annually and whenever there are additions or losses of members. Some co-leaders prefer Excel spreadsheets or shared Google spreadsheets, but however you manage this information, You should have each woman's name, address, email address, religion, phone number, and other information as needed. Each co-leader should have access to this information, and the chapter should decide together how much information they want to share with one another- phone numbers and email addresses? Birthdays?
8. **National Initiatives** The Sisterhood has several national initiatives, including Tzedakah/Sadaqa Day projects, voter registration drive, and Rise and Respond, a step-by-step guide to responding to Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. Co-leaders don't have to lead the charge on national initiatives but we strongly encourage chapters to participate in them. These types of outreach can be great opportunities for other members to take on leadership roles and share their own ideas and skills with the group. Often, you'll be the first to know of upcoming national initiatives, projects, and news. Please monitor your inbox for emails from the central office and share these announcements with your chapter.
9. **National Leadership Opportunities** As a co-leader, you will be invited to participate in monthly Zoom calls for co-leaders. They range in topic from resolving challenges to presentations on upcoming initiatives, to sharing best practices, and panels with guest speakers. The meeting schedule is sent out several months in advance by Janet Penn. Please do your best to attend these meetings by conference call or webinar. You can reach Janet at janet@sosspeace.org.
10. **Co-Leader Facebook Group** There is a co-leader networking and support Facebook group. If you are a new co-leader, please email Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org for an invitation to join this group. It is a great forum for discussion, troubleshooting, sharing meeting ideas, asking questions, and more.

Finally, as a co-leader, you'll often be the first to know of upcoming Sisterhood-wide initiatives, projects, and news. Please monitor your inbox for emails from the central office and pass news and announcements to your chapter. Thank you!

Process

Your final area of responsibility may just be the most important part of your leadership. Thoughtful process will enhance everyone's experience in the Sisterhood. Here are some guidelines that will help you create an atmosphere of trust and respect:

- **Share leadership equally.** Commit to leading the chapter as an equal with your partner co-leader. Shared leadership models trust and respect in your chapter. Pair a sister from each faith to lead discussions. Alternate homes when and if possible.
- **Make decisions democratically.** Seek input from chapter members about programming and logistics. Remember, each sister has an equal voice and vote.
- **Balance personal sharing and learning.** Successful meetings strike a balance between sharing personal experiences, socializing, experiential programs, and discussing intellectual topics. Examples of experiential programs include: Ramadan Iftars; Sukkot dinners; community building/social action projects; attending a museum exhibit; and, screening a movie.
- **Follow guidelines.** Co-leaders agree to promote and support the Guiding Principles of the Sisterhood within their chapter.
- **Represent a positive face to the media.** You are the voice and face of the Sisterhood in your local community. When participating in media interviews, present the strengths of the Sisterhood. Internal challenges or concerns are best shared with the central office, not with the press.
- **Be thoughtful about approaching challenging conversations.** Because it can be such a divisive issue, we ask that you refrain from talking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and having other, similarly challenging conversations until your chapter has been meeting for at least a year, has developed strong bonds, and has facilitators who have the skills to maintain a safe space. This guide contains two suggestions for structuring this conversation, *Sharing Personal Narratives* (p. 48), and *Conducting a Successful Dialogue* (p. 41). The Sisterhood has created brief videos and written guides, *Engaging in Difficult Conversations*: <https://sosspeace.org/series1/>. Feel free to contact the Central Office for additional support.

Planning for Co-Leader Transitions

We understand that for most co-leaders, there comes a time when they'd like to pass the reins to another set of women to take on chapter leadership. Leadership comes with a set of responsibilities toward the chapter and toward your co-leader(s), but it can also be rewarding, creative, and a wonderful outlet to develop a new skillset and to meet new women locally and throughout the United States and Canada!

As you transition leadership roles from one set of women to the next, please consider your personal best practices as a co-leader, as well as the specifics of your chapter and what details new co-leaders will need to know. How do you manage communication and membership information, what committees and leadership roles are part of your chapter, and how are meeting times, locations and themes chosen?

Please know that we at the Central Office are here for you whenever you need support. Whether that's updating us with chapter membership lists, troubleshooting a challenge, or sharing an exciting development, we want to know. You can reach Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org for updates, challenges, general questions or membership changes, and you can reach the Central Office general mailing address at sisterhood@sosspeace.org for Sisterhood-wide questions.

*

*

*

Timing of Leadership Change

Most chapters have a transitional period that occurs over several months. Sometimes, one or more co-leaders need to step down for personal reason—a move, a new job, a new baby—and other times, co-leaders are simply ready for someone else to take on the commitment. We suggest planning the leadership transition ahead of time so chapter members are aware of the change and so that new co-leaders have a chance to make sure they feel comfortable in their new role. Changes in leadership often bring a new and exciting perspective to a chapter and can usher in new ideas or a new focus.

When co-leaders decide they'd like to transition out of co-leadership in order to become regular members of the chapter, sometimes, new women will step forward, eager to fill the role. Other times, chapter members need encouragement to take on the responsibilities, or other times, a chapter will nominate women and decide as a group who the new co-leaders will be. However you make the transition, make sure everyone feels comfortable with the changes and understands the process. Every chapter must have at least one Jewish and one Muslim co-leader, but for various reasons, chapters often have other configurations- two women of one faith, two co-leaders and an assistant, two co-leaders of each faith, etc. Your chapter will find the model that works best for you. If you're having trouble with finding new women to lead or the right fit for your group, please be in touch. We're happy to help.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RUNNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS AND HAVING SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE

Conducting Successful Dialogue

Check out the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom's short videos (four-six minutes) and written tips on how to have a successful dialogue: <https://sosspeace.org/series1/>. They include: how to set your own group agreements, how to frame questions that lead to deeper understanding; compassionate listening, and detailed "activity" instructions for how to lead meetings with structured dialogue and sharing personal narratives.

The four best practices below are adapted with permission from the Interfaith Youth Core's (IFYC) Interfaith Leader's Guide.

Toolkit: Interfaith Leadership requires a framework through which participants view dialogue as a cooperative, rather than inherently rooted in conflict. Participants recognize that they are sharing individual, faith-based perspectives on shared values such as mercy, compassion, and hospitality. Ultimately, leaders influences not just fellow participants, but also their wider communities through story-telling, facilitating relationships, and mobilizing action for the common good.

There are some fundamental ways to put these tools into practice:

1. Establish a Safe, Inclusive Space

Within the context of interfaith dialogue, a safe space is one where each member is provided the emotional and psychological space necessary for establishing sustainable relationships. Everyone agrees to respect one another's identities and privacy, to practice active listening, and to approach interactions with an open mind committed to genuinely learning about others and working for the common good. As explained in future sections, there are some logistical considerations to keep in mind as well.

2. Start with Stories

Stories have the power to transform because they allow us to frame our thoughts through specific context, they allow each person to share her experience, regardless of her expertise in religious traditions, and they allow others to gain insight into and appreciation for each person's experience. Telling a story grounded within one's own religious practice can often be received as less threatening than a conversation on say, the theological tenets of religion or various elements of Scripture. Not each person's experience will be identical, but each woman is invited to share her beliefs and values in an inclusive setting. Story telling can help us not only connect with each other but can also help us make sense of our own narratives and the experiences we've lived. In some cases, they can even inspire individuals or groups to take action for a particular cause.

3. Practice Active Listening

As important as it is to start with your own story, it is equally essential to be a good listener. Storytelling is not just about sharing one's own story but participating in an exchange.

Listening is a critical skill too often be taken for granted. We most often assume that what we

think we heard is what was said, but frequently, this is not the case. People communicate not only information, but emotion and intent too, and we must actively listen for these as well.

4. Mobilize for the Common Good

Many women come to interfaith dialogue groups like the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom out of a desire not just to know others and their faith traditions but also to serve the common good. Often, once sustainable, respectful relationships have developed, women choose to take action to help a community or cause in need of support. This final step transforms the experience of interfaith relationships into concrete action and benefits not just the women involved but the larger community as well. The act of joining together across lines of difference can be a powerful one, demonstrating to all affected that sometimes, our best partners for change are those who, if not for the deliberately crafted interfaith relationships, we might never have found.

Suggested Group Agreements

https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SOSS_Agreements_Respectful_Meetings_032118.pdf

When talking about highly charged issues that are close to your heart, you may feel uncomfortable listening to perspectives that contradict your experience or position. It's easy to feel defensive and respond with a counter argument. But getting outside your comfort zone is often necessary to understand a different perspective. Remember, listening \neq agreeing!

With that in mind, group agreements define a shared set of behaviors, norms, and expectations for your group. Don't be discouraged if your chapter doesn't always live up to the ideal. Consider them your aspiration. These agreements are based upon the work of Essential Partners.¹

1. **I will speak for myself and from my own experience.** Speak with honesty and admit what you do not know. Begin sentences with "I notice" or "I wonder", as opposed to "you people" or "you think".
2. **I will listen with an open heart and mind.** Assume goodwill and don't let prior assumptions dissuade you from listening to and learning from each other. In addition to listening to the person's position, try to understand her feelings and values. You may never agree with her position, but you may discover shared values and make a human connection.
3. **I will set aside the need to persuade others to agree with me.** Acknowledge that there are many forms of religious expression within and between our faiths.
4. **I will not interrupt.** Wait until a speaker has finished before you respond and refrain from sidebar conversations. Using your cell phone is another type of interruption, so put it away during meetings.
5. **I will "step up" to share my thoughts and experiences and then "step back" so others may share theirs.** Give everyone an equal opportunity to speak, or in the words of renowned educator Peggy McIntosh, maintain an autocratic allocation of time for a democratic allocation of voice.²
6. **I will ask a clarifying question** if I don't understand something being said. For example, "what do you mean when you said ___?" or, "Can you say more about your personal connection to the issue?"
7. **I will "pass" if I don't want to speak.** But if a sister is often silent, check in with her after a meeting. Ask how she's feeling and how you might help her feel more comfortable sharing in the group.
8. **I will maintain confidentiality.** What's said in the group, stays in the group. But please, take what you learn out into the world!

¹ Essential Partners. <https://www.whatisessential.org/fdad>. *Fostering Dialogues Across Divides*, Chasin and Herzig. You can download this 100+page guide for free or \$40 for hard copy (includes shipping).

² <https://www.speakoutnow.org/speaker/mcintosh-peggy>

Developing Your Own Group Agreements

https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SOSS_Developing_Group_Agreements_032118.pdf

Objective: To develop a set of group norms when communication styles differ.

Introduction: We all grow up with a set of communication norms. They define the way we express our emotions, the way we speak to our elders, and many other verbal and nonverbal rules. They're not written down, but we usually know exactly what's allowed. Trouble is, the norms we follow aren't visible to others! Collectively setting group agreements is one way to reduce misunderstandings when our differing communication styles collide. In this activity you'll discuss your communication "comfort zones" and identify your "communication aspirations" as a group. Choose a facilitator before your meeting so she can review the instructions and be prepared to lead the activity.

Materials:

- Paper or notecards and pens.
- Two-three sheets of large post-it paper and a marker.
- One copy of the printed questions (outlined in #2) for each small group.
- Printed copies of the suggested group agreements, one for every sister. (Found in the online library.)

Two Options for Time:

1. One hour, with limited time for debrief.
2. Entire meeting, with time to debrief all the questions (preferable).

Process: (Facilitator also takes part in the small group discussion)

1. **Set the scene** by paraphrasing the introduction, describing why you want to collectively develop group agreements.
2. **Ask your sisters to get in groups of three.** Tell them they will have 30 minutes together to discuss three sets of questions. Give each group a copy of the list of questions (a), (b), and (c) below. For the first ten minutes, ask them to discuss the questions on communication norms. Remind everyone to share the airtime!
 - a. **Communication norms:** What were the communication norms within your family and culture when you were growing up? For example, "it wasn't OK to express anger". In what ways are you comfortable or uncomfortable with these norms now?
 - b. **Trust:** What will help you trust this group with your deepest feelings?

After ten minutes, let sisters know it's time to switch to the next question about strengths and weaknesses. Remind everyone should share airtime!

- c. **Strengths and weaknesses:** What personal strengths do you bring to a “difficult conversation”? For example, I’m a good listener. What are some of your weaknesses? For example, I easily get defensive when my position or beliefs are challenged.

While one sister is speaking, another can write down words or phrases to summarize her responses.

3. **Ask your sisters to return to the whole group** after the three rounds of questions.
4. Hang a large sheet of paper. The facilitator can ask another sister to summarize and write down the feelings that are expressed on the large sheet so everyone can see.
5. **Suggested de-brief for one-hour version:** Ask each sister to respond to the question, “what will help you trust the group with your deepest feelings?” Before you begin the debrief, note how much time is available for each sister to speak. Gently remind a sister to wrap up so everyone has a turn.
6. When everyone has shared, hand out the suggested list of group agreements. Compare your list to the suggested list and see if there are any agreements you want to add to your list.
7. **Suggested questions for facilitator debrief for full-meeting version:**
 - a. How might your personal strengths help you find the courage to talk about highly charged issues?
 - b. How might your sisters support you in the areas that are difficult for you?
 - c. What will help you trust the group with your deepest feelings?

Hang a large sheet of paper. The facilitator can ask another sister to summarize the feelings that are expressed so everyone can see. When you are finished, compare your list to the suggested group agreements and see if there are any you want to add to your list.

Addressing Conflict in Chapter Meetings: What to Do When Group Agreements are Broken

https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/SOSS_Addressing_Conflict_in_Meetings_032118.pdf

Introduction: Group agreements sound good in theory. But it's likely that at some point during a meeting, someone will feel misunderstood or offended. It's important to regularly remind sisters that while they may have strong opinions about what is "right" and "wrong," beliefs and practices are personal. Our role is to listen to and respect each sister's experience, not to suggest that her beliefs or practices are incorrect. Remember, she's not representing her religion, she's representing herself! It's helpful to periodically post and review the group agreements during meetings and to review them before talking about a highly charged issue.

Here are **four general strategies** you can use if you notice tension in your chapter meeting or if someone explicitly says she's upset:

1. Name what you see
2. Ask for clarification
3. Seek input from others
4. Explore feelings

Since you may not know when a sister has said something that's offensive to another sister, remember to assume goodwill! Here are some examples to get you started.

What if...a sister "corrects" another sister, implying that she doesn't know enough about a religious practice to speak about it?

What if... a sister says that everyone should practice her faith in a certain way? For example, "every Jewish sister should keep a kosher home," or "you're not a good Muslim if you don't eat halal meat."

General response: "Remember, we each speak for ourselves and not on behalf of our religious group. Our practices may vary widely and part of the joy of inter-religious dialogue is learning about the range of belief and practice within each group. We've committed to 'step up' to share our thoughts and beliefs, and then 'step back' and listen to others." If the sister insists that information is incorrect, you might:

1. **Name what you see:** "It seems like there are different opinions and perspectives about (fill in the blank). Do people think it's possible for both to exist side-side?"
2. **Seek input from others:** "Does anyone else in the group have information that might shed light on different ways of looking at (fill in the blank)?"
3. **Ask for clarification:** "When you say (fill in the blank), do you mean (fill in the blank)?"
4. **Explore feelings:** "I'm noticing some tension in the room and wondering if anyone else is feeling uncomfortable?" If a sister says something that you feel is judgmental, you might ask a general question: "Has anyone ever felt judged because of her beliefs or practices? What was that like for you?"

Sharing Personal Narratives: Listening and Talking from the Heart

<https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Sharing-Personal-Narratives.pdf>

Objective: To understand different perspectives on a highly charged topic through respectful sharing of personal stories.

Introduction:

This methodology was developed by Rabbi Justus Baird, Dean of the Auburn Seminary in Manhattan, and tested by two chapters of the Sisterhood in Princeton and Highland Park, NJ from September-December 2016.

Sisters share their personal experiences related to an issue and gain insight into the beliefs and values of sisters who may have a very different perspective. Consistent with Sisterhood values, the activity focuses on listening and understanding, rather than debating or trying to convince others to adopt a different point of view.

It is intended for Sisterhood chapters that have developed strong relationships marked by deep trust and respect, over the course of at least one year, and have expressed a desire to deepen their relationships by engaging in conversations that have the potential trigger strong or conflicting feelings.

Topics for this process might include: the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; racism; terrorism; modesty and dress; same-sex marriage or homosexuality; abortion; belief in God; feminism and patriarchy; body image; and group identities (am I an American first or a Jew/Muslim first?)

Time Required: 90-120 minutes

Methodology:

At the meeting prior:

1. Select a topic as a departure point for personal stories. Since not everyone will have a personal story on the topic, the issue should be generalized (e.g. “women’s roles in our faith communities vs. patriarchy). Related stories are welcomed.
2. Select a moderator from the group. Helpful moderator skills include the ability to: (a) listen deeply; (b) keep track of time; (c) help group stay focused on personal experiences; and, (d) manage group discussion so all members are heard.

At the meeting:

1. The Moderator role is to:
 - a. Place two chairs in the center of the room for a storyteller/ listener pair, with the remaining chairs in an outer circle. The moderator also places a “pressure valve” object in the center of the circle (e.g. stone, feather).

- b. Explain the activity objective to the group and remind them of the topic.
- c. Invite someone to be the first storyteller and asks someone from the other faith group to be the active listener. (A Jewish member listens to a Muslim member's story, and a Muslim member listens to a Jewish member's story.)
- d. Ask the storyteller to share her personal experiences related to the topic (2-3 minutes). It's important to clearly state that the purpose is to share specific incidents in her life, not to expound upon her views of "right or wrong". For example, if the topic is homosexuality, encourage the storyteller to focus on her experiences interacting with LGBTQ people, her feelings talking about homosexuality, and how her life experiences have shaped her views.
- e. Invite the listener to give a brief summary of the story, and then complete the sentence, "Given what I've heard, I imagine you might have felt _____," completing the sentence with a short list of feelings or emotions. "Do I have that right?"
- f. Invite the storyteller to respond to the listener's summary.
- g. Invite up to three members of the group to share a moment in the story that they connected with most. "I connected most with the part in your story when.... because...." These validating responses should be focused on connecting with the story and not on making a point or counterpoint.
- h. Explain that if anyone in the group is feeling too uncomfortable to continue, she may choose to pick up the "pressure valve" object or leave the room. In such a moment, the moderator should pause the process, invite reflection and support, and discern the best path forward. That path might include waiting for a few minutes for one or more people to process, asking for a member of the group to sit with the person who is unable to continue, or ending the process altogether.
- i. Invite another storyteller/listener pair into the center of the circle to repeat the process. Continue for as many pairs as time permits.

If there is time after everyone present has shared a story, the moderator may invite reflective discussion about what it was like to hear the stories. If there wasn't time for everyone to participate as a speaker and listener pair, the moderator can ask if the group would like to stay later or continue the process at the next group meeting. If there is time and interest, the moderator may choose to share a personal narrative.

The Sisterhood thanks Rabbi Justus Baird, Dean of the Auburn Seminary in Manhattan for his guidance and wisdom developing this process.

Dialogue vs. Debate³

<https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Dialogue-vs-debate-summary-sheet.pdf>

Dialogue	Debate
Goal: To seek mutual <u>understanding</u> through use of carefully crafted questions.	Goal: To <u>win</u> . Attempt to prove the other side wrong.
Helps people to <u>re-examine</u> positions and assumptions.	Requires that people <u>defend</u> their positions and assumptions.
Use listening to <u>gain insight</u> into beliefs and concerns of others.	Use listening to <u>find flaws</u> and make counter arguments.
<u>Pre-meeting</u> communication <u>essential</u> to process.	<u>Pre-meeting</u> communication is <u>minimal</u> .
Participants <u>speak as individuals</u> with unique experiences	Participants <u>speak as representatives</u> of groups.
Assume that <u>many people have pieces to the answer</u> .	Assume that <u>there is a right answer</u> .
Participants <u>express uncertainty</u> as well as deeply held beliefs.	Participants express <u>total commitment</u> to their point of view.

³ Adapted from Fostering Dialogue Across Divides, Essential Partners, formerly, The Public Conversations Project, Maggie Herzig and Laura Chasin, p. 139.

Exploring Meaningful Dialogue

<https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brief-Introduction-to-Dialogue.pdf>

Introduction: Dialogue is a structured form of conversation that promotes understanding, fosters respect, and builds trust. When addressing a highly charged issue, it's easy to get mired in argument about who's right and who's wrong. Unlike a debate, where the goal is to win someone over to your position, the purpose of dialogue is to understand other people's perspectives on an issue. Through sharing personal experiences, dialogue helps us see that the "other" side is not a monolithic group, but instead incorporates many nuanced perspectives.

The Challenge: In a dialogue, it isn't appropriate to engage in a debate about facts and interpretations. Remember, you may NEVER agree. It's likely that you'll hear perspectives that contradict your point of view, and you won't be able to refute or challenge them. That can be very difficult, especially if the issue is at the core of your identity.

The Opportunity: However, after gaining more nuanced understanding through hearing personal stories, you may discover new options and possibilities:

1. It may be more difficult to hold an "I'm completely right and you're completely wrong" position.
2. You may be able to counter stereotypes based upon insights you've gleaned from the dialogue.
3. You may discover shared values that can lead you to joint action, in spite your disagreements.

Agreements: When your chapter has decided to have a dialogue, participants agree to a set of communication agreements that encourage respectful listening and honest sharing. A complete list is available in the online Sisterhood library. Key agreements include:

1. Speak for yourself, not on behalf of a group.
2. Listen to gain new understanding, not to convince someone to agree with your position.
3. Ask questions to clarify intent.

Pre-Dialogue Planning:

1. **Choose your topic.** Here are two ways to choose your topic. At a prior meeting:
 - a. Brainstorm as a group (15-20 minutes). Hang a large sheet of paper on the wall and ask women to suggest topics. If there is an obvious choice, you're good to go! If not, ask sisters to share their reasons for choosing a particular topic, as well as express any concerns.
 - b. Ask each sister to write down her top two dialogue topics on an individual slip of paper, then fold the paper, and put it in a bowl in the center of the room. Someone can read all the responses out loud and see if a consensus emerges. This method ensures that every sister, not just the more vocal ones, has input in the process. If there is no obvious choice, spend some time as a group narrowing your focus.

In either case, make sure you have consensus on the topic. If a sister isn't comfortable, we respectfully ask that you honor her wishes and hold your dialogue on a topic where everyone can agree. Then, sometime after your meeting, listen to her concerns. Assuming you can address them, address that dialogue at a future meeting.

2. **Choose two facilitators**, preferably one Jewish and one Muslim, to guide the process. Prior to the dialogue, the facilitators will:
 - a. **Develop the questions.** Remember that in a dialogue, it's critical to carefully sequence your questions. Start with a question that asks each sister to share something about her **life experience** that will help the group understand her relationship to and perspective on the issue. Then move to a question that explores **values, hopes, or fears**. Conclude with a question that explores any **areas of doubt or uncertainty**. Depending upon the size of your chapter, you may only respond to one question per meeting. Refer to the video and written resources, *Crafting Great Questions*, in the online library, for more detail.
 - b. **Communicate with chapter members** about the time, place, and topic. Your goal is 100% participation of chapter members. Remember that it's important to reach out to sisters via their preferred method of communication, which might include email, Facebook, WhatsApp, text, etc. Personal outreach sends the message that each woman's presence matters!

Materials Needed: Index cards and pens for each sister.

Facilitator Role at the Dialogue:

1. **Introduce the topic, goal, and dialogue structure.** It's important to clearly articulate the purpose of dialogue. Collectively read aloud your group agreements and ask if anyone has any questions or concerns. As the dialogue progresses, it's your role to remind participants of their commitment to the principles, especially if you sense one or more is not being followed.
2. **Describe the structure.** If your group is ten women or less, continue the dialogue in one group. If you have more than ten women, you may choose to split into two or more smaller groups. If you split into two groups, you may choose to have one facilitator in each group. If you break into more than two groups, the facilitators should circulate between groups to answer any questions and support the women to stay on track.
3. **Pose a question.** Whether you are in one or several groups, the facilitators pose the first question and then ask the group(s) to spend two-three minutes in silence. **Don't skip this step!** A brief period of silence gives everyone time to reflect upon responses to the question and jot down a few thoughts on an index card. Then, during the go-around, everyone can give her full attention to the speaker. Depending upon the size of your group(s) and the time available, you may pose a second (and third) dialogue question.
4. **Keep track of time.** The facilitator can set a phone alarm to keep track of time, or each speaker can hold the phone in turn, and pass it along to the next speaker when the alarm rings. Either way, it's the facilitator's role to let each sister know that she has three minutes (or whatever amount of time you choose) to respond. Remember the phrase: "autocratic

allocation of time for democratic allocation of voice.” While it may feel unnatural to speak for a set time, this structure ensures that every sister has a chance to speak. When the agreed upon time is over, ask the speaker to wrap up her thought and cede her turn. It can be helpful for the speaker to hold a “talking stick” or other object, a reminder that when you’re not holding the stick, it’s your turn to listen.

5. **Manage process.** During the personal sharing, your role is to gently remind speakers to stay focused on their personal relationship to the topic and avoid talking about the “facts” or “solutions to the problem”. If one or more sisters tries to debate the facts, it’s your job to respectfully remind the group to abide by the parameters of dialogue.
6. **Open for Q&A.** After everyone has had a chance to answer the question, or pass, if she so chooses, you can relax the format and open the floor for people to ask each other questions that may clarify what you heard. Remember the purpose of these questions is to better understand a sister’s experiences, not to convince her that her perspective is “wrong” or “she doesn’t understand your experience.”
7. **Model curiosity and openness.** Even though as a facilitator, you won’t take part in the personal sharing, you can help create a respectful and comfortable environment by asking questions out of genuine curiosity and encouraging sharing of personal experiences, not stating positions.
8. **Conclude.** Thank everyone for participating. You can ask people to share a word or two about her experience. If time is limited, you might ask everyone to write down one thing learned during the dialogue and place it in a bowl in the center of the room. Everyone can pick one and read it aloud.

Remember, the purpose of dialogue is to gain new understanding that can lead you to innovative solutions. It asks you to express your certainty as well as your uncertainty through answering three types of questions:

1. What are the **personal life experiences** that shape your beliefs? What can you learn about others to help you understand their perspective?
2. What is at the **heart of the matter** for you? What are your hopes and fears for the future? Can you discover common hopes or fears among your sisters, regardless of your different perspectives?
3. Do you have any **areas of uncertainty**? As you consider the issue, do one or more of your values conflict? Do you have any concerns or gray areas that you are willing to share? How might hearing uncertainly help you understand a sister with a very different perspective?

For more detailed information on running a dialogue, download the free guide, Fostering Dialogue Across Divides, found on Essential Partner’s website:
<https://www.whatisessential.org/fdad>

The Five Practices of Compassionate Listening

<https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/The-Five-Practices-of-Compassionate-ListeningSM-2.pdf>

The intention of Compassionate Listening is to access our deepest wisdom to transform separation and conflict into an opportunity for connection, healing and peace. **Compassionate listening is:**

- **A personal practice** – to cultivate inner strength, self-awareness, self-regulation and wisdom.
- **A skill set** – to enhance interpersonal relations and navigate challenging conversations.
- **A process** – to bring individuals or groups together to bridge their differences and transform conflict.
- **A healing gift** - to offer compassion to a person who feels marginalized or is in pain.

Some Assumptions: A First Step Toward Interfaith Dialogue

1. Compassionate Listening assumes that before authentic dialogue can occur, conflicting parties must first listen to each other. We cannot assume that we really know how it is to be another.
2. Compassionate Listening does not seek to change the other, but to love them. The more a person is loved, the more they are free to respond to inner truth.
3. Compassionate Listening assumes that to build peace we need to acknowledge the humanity and the suffering of the other. Misunderstanding, conflicts, and violence are the result of unhealed wounds.
4. Compassionate Listening trusts that when people truly feel heard, they will be more open to hearing the stories of those with whom they disagree.
5. Compassionate Listening is a practice of reconciliation, and is thus based in the belief that mutual understanding and respect are the foundations for building communities across the borders of difference.

We engage in Compassionate Listening through five core practices⁴:

1. **Cultivating Compassion.** This includes the ability to:
 - Anchor in your own heart and essence and connect to another.

⁴ Practicing the Art of Compassionate Listening, Andrea S. Cohen, with Leah Green and Susan Partnow, February 2017, 2nd Edition.

- Cultivate compassion for yourself.
 - Find the feelings of the other within you and allow that to guide an atmosphere of connection/healing.
 - Experience and express gratitude and appreciation for yourself and others.
 - Seek the gifts offered by conflict and hurt.
 - Practice forgiveness of yourself and of others.
 - Engage in on-going personal work to heal your own wounds.
2. **Developing the Fair Witness.** This includes the ability to:
- Build capacity to stay centered in the “fire” of intense interactions or strong emotion.
 - Notice, unpack and contain your own triggers.
 - Look at a situation objectively by “going to the balcony”, considering each person’s role and stepping into their shoes to see their perspective.
 - Suspend judgment of yourself and others.
 - Distinguish the impact of someone’s words or actions from their intention.
 - Use language that reflects non-judgment (the language of the Fair Witness) when asking questions or providing feedback to others.
 - Seek information and experiences that expand your open-mindedness and increase your capacity to hold complexity and ambiguity.
 - Maintain a process of self-exploration to enhance your awareness and discern the voice of deep wisdom from the field of inner chatter.
3. **Respecting Self and Others.** This includes the ability to:
- Resist giving advice unless asked.
 - Trust each person’s ability to solve his or her own problems (stay out of the rescue/drama triangle).
 - Discern how your emotional state impacts the group.
 - Practice self-care and take responsibility for your emotional well-being.
 - Be respectful of people’s differing tolerance levels and capacity for managing conflict.
 - Hold the intention to “do no harm.”
 - Take responsibility: “I am part of what is unfolding, not separate from it.”
 - Welcome connection yet set respectful limits, akin to creating a healthy membrane between yourself and another.
4. **Listening with the Heart.** This includes the ability to:
- Anchor in the heart when listening for the deeper qualities beneath the stories we hear.
 - Quiet your mind.
 - Stay grounded in your body.

- Create spaciousness to manage the tension created by a multiplicity of views and feelings.
- Offer listening as a gift, choosing to keep your opinions, stories and interpretations out of the way (“less is more”).

5. **Speaking from the Heart.** This includes the ability to:

- Anchor your energy in the heart when seeking words of understanding and connection.
- Be courageous in giving voice to what has truth and meaning.
- Use language that reflects your ability to connect to the wholeness of the other.
- Use language that reflects a healing intention.
- Identify in words underlying needs.
- Use “reflective listening” effectively.
- Name the essence of the issue, feeling, or concerns expressed.
- Reframe issue, need, or situation to promote strength and healing.

Listening Generously

“Listening creates a holy silence. When you listen generously to people, they can hear truth in themselves, often for the first time. And in the silence of listening, you can know yourself in everyone. Eventually, you may be able to hear, in everyone and beyond everyone, the unseen singing softly to itself and to you.” Rachel Naomi Remen, MD.

SUGGESTED MEETING THEMES

Introduction

What follows in this section is an extensive, though not exhaustive, list of suggested meeting themes. These have been designed for all levels of chapter membership, from a group's first meeting through the first year and a half of meetings or even longer. Often, particularly in the beginning of a chapter's existence, sisters will find that they have so many questions to ask but aren't sure where to start. This can also be someone's first experience with facilitated discussion of this kind. What follows in this section of the guide are curricula that can be followed at chapter meetings. Feel empowered to use these suggested themes, or to create your own. Ask chapter members for input as to which topics they might want to discuss and take a vote so everyone knows what theme will be the subject of the each chapter meeting. In time, you'll find chapter members' natural curiosity guiding the discussions you have, but this guide will be here as a resource when you need it.

Have a fantastic discussion topic or themes from one of your chapter meetings? Send us an email! We'd love to hear about it and share your ideas with other chapters.

WHO WE ARE- UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS OF JUDAISM AND ISLAM

PURPOSE

The goal of this session is for participants to develop a basic understanding of both faith groups and to begin to look for commonalities and to respect differences.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To begin to learn and to ask questions. This is about listening to one another with a strong desire to learn about each other's faith.

PROCESS

Since facilitating personal encounters is very difficult, this lesson includes more explicit instructions on how to run the session than subsequent lessons will have. Have hard copies available for women to read during the meeting.

FOR GROUP TO READ TOGETHER

Islam

When Islam is understood as a way of life that is not confined to one cultural reality and one that assumes the cultural contours of the different regions or countries where Muslims live, it is easier to highlight and appreciate Islam as a truly global tradition. As Dr. Ahmet Karamustafa, Professor of History and Religious Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, has said: "Not only is Islam not inextricably attached to specific geographic locales (Judaic, Chinese, and Hindu traditions, for instance, have largely been so attached), but it is genuinely adaptable to most, if not all, human communities anywhere on the globe. To put it in other words, the emphasis on Islam's globality enables us to acknowledge and cherish its transcultural, transethnic, transracial, transnational, in short, its truly humanistic dimensions." While Muslims believe that God sent previous Messengers to specific peoples for specific times, Muslims believe God made Islam a religion for all peoples and all times, since no other Messenger will come after the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)⁵

Beyond being a religious tradition, Islam also represents a civilizational tradition, simultaneously in and above specific cultures. Dr. Karamustafa has also said: "As an ongoing civilizational discourse, Islam is an interactive and inclusive tradition: it interacts with the cultures it comes into contact with and, where it takes root, reshapes and reforms cultures inclusively from within. As a result, there are numerous different Islamic cultures on the globe, and they are all equally Islamic, equal partners in the making and remaking of the Islamic civilizational tradition."⁶

⁵ Traditionally, Muslims say the phrase "Peace Be Upon Him" after invoking the name of the Prophet Muhammad. In all further occurrences in this document, this phrase will be abbreviated as "P.B.U.H."

⁶ Karamustafa. "Islam: A Civilizational Project in Progress."

A monotheistic religion, Islam has six “articles of belief”: to believe in one God, God’s angels, God’s revealed scriptures (Torah, Psalms, New Testament, etc), God’s Messengers (Abraham, Moses, Noah, etc), the Day of Judgment, and fate. While the six pillars of iman or belief sum up what Muslims believe, the five pillars of faith in Islam sum up the devotional obligations that all Muslims are required to fulfill. These pillars of Islam are:

1) To testify that there is only one God and that Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) is God’s Messenger; 2) To perform five daily prayers; 3) To pay the annual zakat (2.5% of one’s annual wealth for the poor); 4) To fast during the month of Ramadan;

5) To perform the hajj (pilgrimage) once in a lifetime

DIALOGUE

While we normally think of Islam as a religion, what does the passage suggest about other ways of thinking of Islam?

For Jewish participants: How does this description of Islam change your perception of what Islam is?

What do you think Islam’s five pillars of faith say about the priorities of the religion?

What questions do you have about the origins of Islam and its core beliefs?

FOR GROUP TO READ TOGETHER

Judaism

The word “Judaism” has two distinct and equally legitimate meanings. Sometimes it denotes a full civilization: the total actualities, past and present, of the historic group of human beings known as the Jewish people. In this significance, it embraces secular as well as sacred elements; for example, the long songs of medieval Hebrew poets, the folk music and dance of Eastern European Jewries, social institutions of all sorts, and much else.

Just as properly, “Judaism” may stand for something more limited: the spiritual aspect of that civilization; i.e. religion. The Jewish religion, however, even when isolated from the rest of the civilization, is far from being simple and homogeneous. No less than seven strands weave together to make it up:

1. A doctrine concerning God, the universe, and humanity; 2. A morality for the individual and society; 3. A regimen of rite, custom, and ceremony; 4. A body of law (Halakah);

5. A sacred literature (Torah); 6. Institutions for which the foregoing find expression; 7. The people, Israel—central strand out of which and about which the other are spun.³

DIALOGUE

Judaism contains both secular and sacred aspects. For Muslims: which do you think of most when you think of Judaism? Which parts do you connect with more as a Jew?

How are Judaism and Islam similar or different in regards to the description given? How might understanding the religions in this new framework change the way you approach members of the other faith?

What questions do you have about the origins of Judaism and its core beliefs?

SHARING PERSONAL NARRATIVES: LISTENING AND TALKING FROM THE HEART

<https://sosspeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Sharing-Personal-Narratives.pdf>

Objective: To understand different perspectives on a highly charged topic through respectful sharing of personal stories.

Introduction:

This methodology was developed by Rabbi Justus Baird, Dean of the Auburn Seminary in Manhattan, and tested by two chapters of the Sisterhood in Princeton and Highland Park, NJ from September-December 2016.

Sisters share their personal experiences related to an issue and gain insight into the beliefs and values of sisters who may have a very different perspective. Consistent with Sisterhood values, the activity focuses on listening and understanding, rather than debating or trying to convince others to adopt a different point of view.

It is intended for Sisterhood chapters that have developed strong relationships marked by deep trust and respect, over the course of at least one year, and have expressed a desire to deepen their relationships by engaging in conversations that have the potential trigger strong or conflicting feelings.

Topics for this process might include: the Israeli/Palestinian conflict; racism; terrorism; modesty and dress; same-sex marriage or homosexuality; abortion; belief in God; feminism and patriarchy; body image; and group identities (am I an American first or a Jew/Muslim first?)

Time Required: 90-120 minutes

Methodology:

At the meeting prior:

1. Select a topic as a departure point for personal stories. Since not everyone will have a personal story on the topic, the issue should be generalized (e.g. “women’s roles in our faith communities vs. patriarchy). Related stories are welcomed.
2. Select a moderator from the group. Helpful moderator skills include the ability to: (a) listen deeply; (b) keep track of time; (c) help group stay focused on personal experiences; and, (d) manage group discussion so all members are heard.

At the meeting:

1. The Moderator role is to:
 - a. Place two chairs in the center of the room for a storyteller/ listener pair, with the remaining chairs in an outer circle. The moderator also places a “pressure valve” object in the center of the circle (e.g. stone, feather).

- b. Explain the activity objective to the group and remind them of the topic.
- c. Invite someone to be the first storyteller and asks someone from the other faith group to be the active listener. (A Jewish member listens to a Muslim member's story, and a Muslim member listens to a Jewish member's story.)
- d. Ask the storyteller to share her personal experiences related to the topic (2-3 minutes). It's important to clearly state that the purpose is to share specific incidents in her life, not to expound upon her views of "right or wrong". For example, if the topic is homosexuality, encourage the storyteller to focus on her experiences interacting with LGBTQ people, her feelings talking about homosexuality, and how her life experiences have shaped her views.
- e. Invite the listener to give a brief summary of the story, and then complete the sentence, "Given what I've heard, I imagine you might have felt _____," completing the sentence with a short list of feelings or emotions. "Do I have that right?"
- f. Invite the storyteller to respond to the listener's summary.
- g. Invite up to three members of the group to share a moment in the story that they connected with most. "I connected most with the part in your story when.... because...." These validating responses should be focused on connecting with the story and not on making a point or counterpoint.
- h. Explain that if anyone in the group is feeling too uncomfortable to continue, she may choose to pick up the "pressure valve" object or leave the room. In such a moment, the moderator should pause the process, invite reflection and support, and discern the best path forward. That path might include waiting for a few minutes for one or more people to process, asking for a member of the group to sit with the person who is unable to continue, or ending the process altogether.
- i. Invite another storyteller/listener pair into the center of the circle to repeat the process. Continue for as many pairs as time permits.

If there is time after everyone present has shared a story, the moderator may invite reflective discussion about what it was like to hear the stories. If there wasn't time for everyone to participate as a speaker and listener pair, the moderator can ask if the group would like to stay later or continue the process at the next group meeting. If there is time and interest, the moderator may choose to share a personal narrative.

The Sisterhood thanks Rabbi Justus Baird, Dean of the Auburn Seminary in Manhattan for his guidance and wisdom developing this process.

IDENTIFYING OUR JOURNEY

PURPOSE

Stimulate discussion providing an emotional understanding of each participant

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

- To share in the understanding of each woman's expectations of belonging to the Sisterhood
- To provide an introduction to each woman's goals

PROCESS Welcome by host Welcome Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to introduce each person to the group

- Explain that this meeting will help to ground everyone in the focus of what the Sisterhood should achieve
- Have each woman bring several magazines, tape or glue, scissors and paper to the meeting
- After an introduction, have the women make a collage by cutting out pictures from magazines to tell each woman's story of the journey they want to take through the Sisterhood

DEBRIEF

What does their collage communicate?

Explain the steps of your journey and what the end point is?

How easy will it be to get there?

Do you anticipate any challenges?

DEEP LISTENING

Listening is a critical skill that can all too often be taken for granted. There are many techniques designed to enhance our ability to listen effectively. We are unlikely, however, to employ them unless we recognize how complicated listening is, and how flawed our assumptions can be based on our inaccurate and incomplete interpretations of messages. Sometimes we assume what we think we heard is what was actually said. People communicate not just data or facts, but emotion and intent, and it is the totality of what is being communicated that we must listen for to truly understand the speaker.

PURPOSE

To challenge our assumptions and heighten our insight into the listening process. Directions

1. Introduce the Session:

Pass out small cards and pens

Assign participants a number (count off) to print on their card that is big and easy to read. Have the participants find a partner and designate one partner as an “A,” the other as a “B”.

2. Sharing in Pairs: Have the A’s tell the B’s a true story from their lives.

The story should be only sixty to ninety seconds long. It may be from any period or aspect of their lives (e.g., something that happened this week, something that happened in childhood).

- The B’s should LISTEN ONLY. They should not interrupt or ask questions.
- When the A’s finish, have the B’s tell a story.
- Have the partners exchange cards. Each person now has the card with the number of the story just heard.

3. Sharing in New Pairs:

- Each person now tells the new partner the story that she or he just heard, in the first person (i.e., “I took the goldfish....”), as accurately as possible, as if it is her or his story. Stress that each participant is to attempt to tell the story exactly as they heard it. (Note to facilitator: Do not tell the participants that they will have to repeat their partner’s story until this point.)
- When both participants have told their stories, ask them to exchange cards.

4. Sharing in New Pairs: Have everyone find another new partner.

- This time, ask people to make sure that they are not paired with someone who has a card with a number they have already seen. This process ensures that people will not get their own story back or hear the same story more than once.

- Again, have the participants exchange stories (as above) and swap cards.
5. Large Group Discussion: Have the participants form a circle and one by one tell the story that they just heard. Debrief the exercise, using the following tips:

Have the participants share randomly, rather than going around the circle. This will enhance their ability to stay present and be receptive.

Ask people to listen to the stories without commenting or “claiming” their own story, until all of the stories have been told. The impulse may be strong to correct the stories in the moment, but the flow will be smoother and the debriefing richer if the participants can wait until everyone has spoken.

DEBRIEF

Debrief the story-telling experience using some of the following questions:

1. How many of you felt your story remained accurate?
2. Did anyone not recognize her story?
3. Did you listen differently once you knew you were going to have to repeat the story you heard?
4. How did it feel to have your story repeated in its current form?
5. How did it feel to tell someone else’s story?
6. What kinds of things can we listen for? (e.g., information and facts, emotions, the intent or point of the story) Which were the easiest to discern? Which were the most important? How do they relate to each other? Which are the most “real”?
7. What kind of things did we change in our telling? Why? (e.g., we forgot some details; we wanted to make connections to close gaps in logic; in telling the story as our own, we inadvertently or deliberately made it more personal, for example, we changed the gender of key people)
8. What did we “make up” that we were sure we heard?
9. How did the tellers interact with the listeners who were silent?
10. Did you change the story based on the non-verbal cues of the listener? Why or why not?
11. Why bother listening if no one truly gets it right?

12. How is it we are able to function in the workplace when we misunderstand one another so easily?

13. What should we do with this information to improve the effectiveness of our listening?

INFLUENCES ON MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: TELLING MY STORY

PURPOSE

To reflect on and share the sources and values of our own religious tradition or spiritual path, and to increase our awareness of the diversity and richness of that path.

To practice extending to one another a respectful, open ear and holding authentic conversations, as well as to increase our understanding and trust and build relationships.

PROCESS

1. Introduce the Session: Start with a brief dialogue session.

- How can we listen so that others can speak about their religious identity without fear or defensiveness?
- How can we speak about our own teachings and practices so that others do not feel we are trying to convert them?
- How can we remain centered in our beliefs while listening to others who are centered in theirs?
- What are some of the risks and difficulties that the group can identify?
- What principles of interaction would the group like to adopt to make this exercise comfortable for everyone? (See Section Two.)

2. Materials needed: Large sheets of newsprint or other paper, markers, paints, crayons or other art supplies; paper and pens for writing; easels, chart paper, and markers for capturing key points of small group or large group discussion

3. Allow quiet time and working space for participants to draw or write the answers to some of following questions of their choosing before they are shared with the full chapter in group dialogue:

- Visualize the spiritual story of your life as a river or another image that appeals to you (perhaps as a mountain, a road, a journey, a tree, or other image).
- What were its beginnings? What sources nurtured you along the path or fed its roots (e.g., teachers, parents, spiritual mentors, community experiences)?
- Have you followed a single path, or have there been multiple branches? Has it changed course?
- Has it been smooth or perhaps bumpy or turbulent? What difficult places have needed to be cut through or crossed over? Describe the easy and hard places, dams or rockslides, still places, steep or rushing times, floods, droughts, turbulence, warmth, or coldness.

- How large is the river? Is it narrow or wide? Is it deep or shallow?
- What is the river's relationship to its surroundings? Is it solitary or in company? Who are or have been companions and co-travelers along the way?
- What is happening for you right now in your story? What changes or growing edges? New intentions? Sketch in or describe a possible future.
- Looking back over your spiritual journey, what values did you keep or change over time? Can you identify one value that has been close to you the entire journey?

DEBRIEF

After each person has had time to reflect and answer the questions (30 minutes), ask everyone to regroup and to share their own river story. This is done by sharing their river and the answers to the aforementioned questions

SADAQA AND TZEDAKAH- Giving to Others

PURPOSE

The goal of this session is for participants to develop a basic understanding of the role of sadaqa and tzedakah in our faith as well as in our personal lives

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To begin to learn and to ask questions. Both the Jewish and Muslim traditions place a strong emphasis on helping those less fortunate. This concept is based on the idea that our own good fortune is given to us from God and we, therefore, are obligated to share with those who do not have. This can take the form of either giving money or giving time. These two avenues of contributing to the community are shared by both religions, allowing Muslims and Jews to work together to create a more just society.

PROCESS

Since facilitating personal encounters is very difficult, this lesson includes more explicit instructions on how to run the session than subsequent lessons will have. Have copies available for all of the women to read during the meeting and to then engage in dialogue.

FOR GROUP PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION

Qur'anic and Biblical Texts on "Charity"

Qur'an 2:177

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God, and the Last Day, and the angels, and revelation, and (God's) messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him for your relatives, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who seek assistance, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage; to be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts that you have made; and to be firm and patient in distress, in adversity, and throughout all times of peril. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing.⁷

Qur'an 2:274

Those who spend their wealth in charity by night and day, secretly and openly, they will have their reward from their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear or to regret.

Qur'an 76:8-9

(The righteous) feed the poor, the orphan and the captive for the love of God, saying: 'We feed you for the sake of God alone; we seek from you neither reward nor thanks.

⁷ As indicated in the introduction, all Qur'anic quotes are from Ahmed Ali, *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Discussion:

1. According to the passages from the Qur'an, what type of person gives to the poor and why should one give? What does this say about the importance of charity in the Muslim tradition?
2. In the first verse, giving to charity is listed among many other acts of righteousness. How does charity relate to these other practices of faith? Is it equal to them in importance? How is it the same as the other ones and how is it different? Can it be seen as an overarching category into which the others fall?
3. According to the texts, should one give to charity for the sake of the individual in need or for God? Do you agree with this reason to give? How might this change how a Muslim gives to charity?

Deuteronomy 15:4-11

There shall be no needy among you – since the Eternal your God will bless you in the land that the Eternal your God is giving you as a hereditary portion.... If, however, there is a needy person among you, one of your kin in any of your settlements in the land that the Eternal your God is giving you, do not harden you heart and shut your hand against your needy kin. Rather, you must open your hand and lend whatever is sufficient to meet the need...Give readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return the Eternal your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. For there will never cease to be needy ones in your land, which is why I command you: open your hand to the poor and needy kin in your land.

Exodus 23:10-11

Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but in the seventh you shall let it rest and lie fallow. Let the needy among your people eat of it, and what they leave let the wild beasts eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and your olive groves.

The first Biblical verse declares that “there shall be no needy among you,” but then goes on to describe what to do “if there is a needy person among you” and says that “there will never cease to be needy ones in your land.” How can you resolve this apparent contradiction? Consider the following commentary (which is based on classical Jewish commentaries) as one possible solution to the contradiction.

“There shall be no needy among you.” Should Israel be faithful to the law of God, there will be no poor to borrow among them, and the law concerning the cancellation of debts will find no application.

“There will never cease to be needy ones in your land.” Though they were promised that if they kept God’s commandments there would be no needy among them, it is here taken for granted that not for all time will all people lead such an ideal life. Poverty must, therefore, be regarded as an existing evil at some place or at some period. (Fisch, Rabbi Dr. S. The Soncino Chumash. Ed. Rev. Dr. A Cohen. Soncino Press)

Sadaqa/Zakat and Tzedakah

Zakat

Derived from the Arabic root word Z-K-W, the word zakat literally means purification, increase and growth. The Qur'an promises to multiply the wealth of those who spend for Allah's sake seven times over. The meaning reflects the Islamic philosophy that one purifies and increases his or her wealth by donating a portion of it to the needy through zakat or sadaqa.

Two terms are used. Sadaqa is a broad term conveying "sincere giving." Within sadaqa is the concept of zakat. Zakat does not mean charity. Zakat is not voluntary, unlike charity, but is an obligation upon every Muslim who has earned a minimum level of wealth. The third pillar of Islam, zakat is the duty to give 2.5% of one's accumulated wealth and assets – not just one's income – to those in need.

Just as the performance of the salat (prayer) is both an individual and a communal obligation, so payment of the zakat instills a sense of communal identity and responsibility. As all Muslims share equally in their obligation to worship God, so they are all duty bound to attend to the social welfare of the community by redressing economic inequalities through payment of an alms tax or poor tithe.⁸

Tzedakah and Charity

The Hebrew word tzedakah contains the same root letters as tzedek, "righteousness," and is most accurately translated as "righteous giving." It is commonly translated, inaccurately, as "charity." The Jewish concept of tzedakah is obligatory giving. It is about contributing to the common good and helping fellow human beings.

Tzedakah is a social obligation incumbent upon everyone. If we were to depend on everyone to have giving hearts, we would first have to work to change attitudes and feelings, and then hope that those feelings would lead to sufficient giving. Judaism is very practical and very clear about our ethical obligations in this realm, as though saying: "Give 10% of your net income to those in need. It would be nice if you did it joyfully. But do it."

Biblical ethics are permeated with laws assuring protections of the poor. The obligation to alleviate poverty required both individual Tzedakah and a communal governmental response. By early Talmudic times, at least four communal funds (plus communal schools for boys) were required in every sizeable community. These included a daily food distribution program, a clothing fund, a burial fund, and a communal money fund. By the Middle Ages, these had grown into a veritable bureaucracy of communal social welfare institutions. Tzedakah in Jewish history functioned as a system of taxation, not a voluntary philanthropic enterprise.⁹

DIALOGUE

⁸ Esposito, *Islam: The Straight Path*.

⁹ Albert Vorspan and David Saperstein, *Jewish Dimensions of Social Justice: Tough Moral Choices of Our Time* (New York: UAHC Press, 1998), 85.

According to these passages, what are the differences between tzedakah, zakat, and charity? How do the implications of these terms affect how you give to others?

Do you think it is better to give out of emotion or obligation? Why? How do tzedakah and sadaqa go beyond giving money?

How can/do you incorporate these different aspects of giving into your life?

Charity versus Good Deeds

The Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said: “Every Muslim has to give in charity.” The people then asked: “(But what) if someone has nothing to give, what should he do?” The Prophet replied: “He should work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity (from what he earns).” The people further asked: “If he cannot find even that?” He replied: “He should help the needy who appeal for help.” Then the people asked: “If he cannot do (even) that?” The Prophet said finally: “Then he should perform good deeds and keep away from evil deeds, and that will be regarded as charitable deeds.” Sahih Al-Bukhari, Volume 2, Hadith 524.¹⁰

The Prophet said, “Charity is obligatory everyday on every joint of a human being. If one helps a person in matters concerning his riding animal by helping him to ride it or by lifting his luggage on to it, all this will be regarded charity. A good word, and every step one takes to offer the compulsory Congregational prayer, is regarded as charity; and guiding somebody on the road is regarded as charity.” Abu Huraira, Volume 4, Book 52, Hadith 4:141

The rabbis distinguished between tzedakah and gemilut hasadim [acts of loving kindness]. “In three respects loving kindness exceeds charity. Charity represents giving of alms; loving-kindness is both alms and personal service. Charity is meant for the poor, loving kindness is for the rich as well as for the poor; charity aims to help the living; loving kindness is shown to both the living and the dead.” Benevolence in the fullest sense of the term comprised feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, tending the sick, burying the dead, comforting the mourner, ransoming the captive, educating the orphan, and providing a dowry for the needy bride. While the practice of charity fills the world with love, its true value depends upon the loving spirit which prompts it.¹¹

DIALOGUE

What does Prophet Muhammad’s (P.B.U.H.) opinion of non-financial means of fulfilling charity suggest about a hierarchy of how one contributes to charity? Do you think there should be a hierarchy?

How can performing good deeds and staying away from evil be understood as charitable work? What does this say about the effects of our actions? What are some examples of when a good

¹⁰ Hadith are oral traditions relating to the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad. Hadith collections are regarded as important tools for determining the Sunnah, or Muslim way of life, by all traditional schools of jurisprudence.

¹¹ Samuel Cohen, *Judaism, A Way of Life*, (New York: UAHC Press, 1962).

deed is charitable?

In the Jewish tradition, what is the difference between charity and acts of loving-kindness? Is one better than the other or do they complement one another? How so?

Based on the previous discussion, how are the Jewish and Muslims conceptions of charity versus good deeds similar? How do they differ?

CONFRONTING INJUSTICE

PURPOSE

Show how Islamic and Jewish scriptures provide evidence on the need to confront injustice

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To establish that caring for the other is of paramount importance for both faiths To expose participants to text To demonstrate the commonalities based on the commitment of both faiths for social justice and caring for the “other”

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Welcome Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to study text to demonstrate the necessity to stand up to injustice and to protect the stranger

Pass out text for participants to read and have a different person read each one.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH):

“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself”[Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim]

Hillel Maxim

“What is hateful to yourself, do not do to your neighbors”

From the Torah

“You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” [Exodus 22:21]

“It is to share your bread with the hungry; And to take the wretched poor into your home; When you see the naked, to clothe him, And not to ignore your own kin.” [Isaiah 58:7]

From the Qur'an and Sunnah:

“Those who have been driven from their homelands against all right for no other reason than their saying ‘Our Sustainer is God!’ For, if God had not enabled people to defend themselves against one another, all] monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques-in [all of] which God’s name is abundantly extolled-would surely have been destroyed [ere now]. And God will most certainly succor him who succours His cause: for, verily, God is most powerful, almighty.” [The Qur'an, Surrah Al- Hajj, 22:40]

Prophet Muhammad [PBUH] on People of the Book:

“He who wrongs a Jew or Christian will have myself as his accuser on the Day of Judgment.”
[Al- Bukhari]

From the Constitution of Madinah that Prophet Muhammad created to regulate the relationship between people of the Book around Madinah, where Islam was growing: *“Whoever judges the signatories of this scripture would be entitled to our help and would not be subject to any injustice, nor should the Muslims cooperate against them. The children of Ouf (a Jewish tribe) are a community of believers. The people of the scriptures are allowed to follow their religion as much as the Muslims are allowed to follow theirs, and so are their allies except the one who commits injustice or sin, for he does not harm but himself...The signatories of the document are entitled to mutual advice, sincerity and assistance rather than fighting each other...”*

DIALOGUE

- Which of these do you relate most to? Why?
- How familiar do you think the public is with these texts?
- What can be done to communicate the shared principle of caring for the other?

GETTING RID OF THE “OTHER”

PURPOSE

Increase the awareness of feelings of the “other” in our daily life

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To establish that caring for the other is of critical To expose participants to how easy it is for all of us to fall into the “other” trap To demonstrate how a change in mindset is critical

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism

- Explain story telling and how this is the key to full dialogue and communication
- Explain the connections between interfaith dialogue and sharing our stories of religious pluralism. Tied into this story is the belief that dialogue is about listening and speaking. In listening to and taking in the story of another we are participating in an act of compassion.

DIALOGUE

- What is the story that most represents when you felt like the “other”?
- What impact did this have on you?
- What is the story that most represents when you felt that someone else was the “other”?
- What triggered this?
- How can you rewrite this story to make these feelings absent?

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN OUR LIVES

PURPOSE

To understand how our faith influences our decisions

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To understand how we each define “faith” and to learn from each other how faith has influenced our beliefs and practice

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism

- Explain that we are a faith based organization yet, so many have different opinions as to the role that faith plays in their life
- This meeting will allow us to each learn from one another the role that faith plays in our life and how faith has shaped who we are today.

DIALOGUE

- What role does your faith play in your life?
- How often do you stop to think about faith?
- What is the biggest influence that your faith has on your everyday life?
- How does faith factor into making everyday decisions? Are there moments when you are more conscious of your faith than others? What are they?
- What is an example of a time when your faith had a big influence on an important life decision?
- What is the biggest challenge that you have had in being guided by your faith?
- What values, rituals, and practices are central to your living of your the teachings of your tradition?
- What do you do to ensure that you continue to be guided by your faith?

SHARING OUR STORIES

PURPOSE

Introduce personal narratives, or story telling, and increase comfort levels with incorporating into communication

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

- To understand the role of personal stories/narratives in our lives
- To expose participants to the approach of story telling
- To reinforce the significance of personal narratives to identity formation, to strengthen one's personal identity, sense of belonging to a community, and to focus on mutual commonalities and shared values

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host Welcome and introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism

- Explain story telling and how this is the key to full dialogue and communication
- Explain the connections between interfaith dialogue and sharing our stories of religious pluralism. Tied into this story is the belief that dialogue is about listening and speaking. In listening to and taking in the story of another we are participating in an act of compassion.

DIALOGUE

- What is the story that most represents what your faith means to you?
- Tell a story that has transformed your life
- How can each of your personal narratives be intertwined to form the narrative of our new community?

TRADITIONS

PURPOSE

To reflect on traditions in the context of how our life today

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To understand how traditions have shaped our approach to faith

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of family influence on our personal faith practice

Bring in a photo of your family (this can include your family from when you were a child and your family today)

DIALOGUE

- How much influence has your family had on the way you live your life today?
- Who in your family has had the greatest influence?
- How has this evolved over time?
- What family practices/traditions, if any, have had the greatest impact on you, and why?
- What practices/traditions, if any, from when you were growing up, or your family, have you incorporated into your personal faith practices?
- Are there any practice/traditions that you have embraced that have influenced your family and their personal faith practices?
- Have you created any new practices that you want to pass on to others as new traditions? What are the significance of these?

BRINGING UP CHILDREN TO MAINTAIN CULTURE/FAITH PRACTICES WHILE LIVING IN A DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

PURPOSE

To share our stories and learn from one another as to what we have done to maintain our cultural authenticity

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

The struggle to maintain our cultural authenticity living in a diverse society

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism

- Explain story telling and how this is the key to full dialogue and communication
- Explain the connections between interfaith dialogue and sharing our stories of religious pluralism. Tied into this story is the belief that dialogue is about listening and speaking. In listening to and taking in the story of another we are participating in an act of compassion.

DIALOGUE

- What do you and/or what has your family done to keep your children within our respective cultures and faiths while living in a diverse environment?
- What did your family do, if anything, as you were growing up to help you maintain your respective cultural and faith practices? Did you find this easy or a challenge? Did you learn anything from how others were handling this?
- Do you think it has gotten more difficult for the youth within your faith community of today?
- What is your story as to how you were able to maintain your culture and/or your faith practices living in a diverse environment?
- What advice would you give to others? Should there be a focus on maintaining cultural practices/faith practices? Should we allow our children to figure it out on their own and to find their own comfort zone?

FREEDOM OF CHOICE OF EXPRESSION

PURPOSE

To gain insights on our personal experiences regarding freedom of choice of expression

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To share personal stories about what influences our appearance

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism

- Explain story-telling and how this is the key to full dialogue and communication.
- Explain the connections between interfaith dialogue and sharing stories of religious pluralism. Tied into this story is the belief that dialogue is about listening and speaking. In listening to and taking in the story of another, we are participating in an act of compassion.
- It would be interesting to mention the Burkini ban that took place in France during the summer of 2016 for perspective and a starting point for dialogue. Suggest that you watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jwj4HR8nqyA> and share the blog: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/manal-omar/ourchoicenotyours-the-burkini-ban_b_11997242.html

DIALOGUE

- How would you describe your look—the way you dress?
- Who and what has influenced how you currently dress?
- How has your look-your style of dress evolved over time?
- What significance does modesty play in your everyday life?
- What role would you like modesty to play in your everyday life?
- How much do you consciously think about your appearance? How does this vary by your surroundings (who you are with, where you are, type of event, etc.)?
- How have you arrived at the dress practice that you follow?
- How, if at all, has your faith practices influenced your personal practice of modesty?
- What is the one thing that you would like others to know about you regarding your decisions as to how you dress?

NAVIGATING DAILY LIFE WITHIN THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

PURPOSE

Understanding how we feel as women of faith within the political environment.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To express our feelings in terms of belonging or being marginalized as a result of political rhetoric and action

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, and explanation that this is an opportunity to share our stories regarding the impact of the political environment on our feelings (sense of belonging, feeling like an outcast, feeling proud, feeling scared, etc.) Please note that as a nonprofit organization (a 501c3), we are not permitted to take any political action in the name of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. Therefore, the Sisterhood does not take any political position.

DIALOGUE

- What role does your practice of faith play in the current political or societal environment?
How do you feel about this?
- How, if at all, has this affected you, your family, your friends and your faith community?
- What have you done and what can you do to respond to the political/societal climate?
- What have you seen others do that you consider to be effective?
- In what ways, if at all, does religion reinforce political legitimacy? How do you feel about this? What can be done to combat this?
- What else can you do as a woman of faith to respond to your feelings resulting from the political environment?

APPRECIATING OUR CONNECTEDNESS

PURPOSE

To enhance the values of inclusivity inherent in our faith traditions

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To encourage the women to examine, identify, and celebrate their individual as well as collective values of inclusivity, pluralism, unity, etc. and gain new information and insight on the positive sources of each religion.

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Members are encouraged to think about their beliefs and attitudes that bring inclusivity or encourage pluralism, in relations to other faith beliefs of other members in the group. Also each member is asked to bring an item or something that represent such values in their faith.

DIALOGUE

What values, beliefs, and rituals in my faith encourage me to reach out to other faith groups?
What positive features, characteristics, or beliefs does your faith attribute, teach or imply about the other faith group in the room? What are the rituals or stories that support such perceptions?

How are such religious beliefs or norms expressed in your daily live?

ART AS A TOOL FOR UNDERSTANDING

PURPOSE

To explore how we can use expressive art to deepen communication and understanding.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To encourage the women to learn about each other through creativity and the sharing of working together on an art project

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

Gather art supplies — these can be inexpensive children’s art supplies or a variety of materials, for example, clay, sticks, stones, colored paper and glue, berries, or beads. Paper can be scraps or reused office paper. Ask the group to select a theme for the activity. Some examples of themes are: personal spiritual experiences, religious teachers or teachings, metaphors (light, darkness), symbols, our story of creation or origin, how our lives reflect our understandings, our understanding of our relationship with the sacred, how different traditions use the hands in prayer. Divide the chapter into smaller groups of 2 or 4.

DIALOGUE

- Allow time for centering and reflection, and for getting comfortable with the idea that no one needs to be ‘an artist’ to do this exercise. Ask the teams to work with the materials in any manner they feel comfortable, to communicate through color, shape, design, collage, or other forms.
- Gallery Walk: When all are ready, gather around each work in turn, and ask each team to share on what they have created

WHY I LOVE BEING A JEWISH OR MUSLIM WOMAN

PURPOSE

To practice speaking about, and listening to, the teachings and perspectives of our sisters' religious and spiritual traditions with respect, openness, and appreciation.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To learn to listen with compassion and to build respect of each person's personal story.

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host. Ask each person to think of an experience they have had of open, respectful communication across religious boundaries, and ask them to share it with the group.

DIALOGUE

- Complete the phrase: "Why I love to be a _____" with whatever word or phrase most clearly describes their spiritual or religious identity, expression, path, or practice.
- What would you like others to teach about your faith as you live it?
- What key differences do you have from others in your tradition or in other traditions?
- How would you like others to speak and act around you in relation to your faith?
- What would you suggest that we do next time to create more trust, more understanding, and more creativity in our interfaith dialogue in this group?

OTHER THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

PURPOSE

Introduce ANY ONE of these themes for dialogue

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

- To understand the role/impact of that theme in our lives
- To expose participants to the different understandings of practice and belief
- To reinforce the significance of personal narratives to identity formation, to strengthen one's personal identity, sense of belonging to a community, and to focus on mutual commonalities and shared values

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host Welcome /Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism

- Explain the theme and how everyone is entitled to their own opinion
- Reinforce our goal of learning from each other and expanding our horizons. In listening to and taking in the story of another we are participating in an act of compassion.

CHOOSE ANY ONE TOPIC:

1. Discovery of the sacred/divine/formless/God/enlightenment/superior power How and where do you encounter the sacred/divine/formless/God? What sorts of experiences have you discovered to be part of this journey of encounter? Do you experience a call or movement to or yearning for intimacy with "God" or with the someone or some entity beyond ordinary human experience? In light of this, are you called to a specific spiritual path?

2. Prophets/sages/ancestors/saints Are such persons important in guiding you toward becoming who you are called to be? Do any such persons within the religious tradition offer inspiration for living life, care for the world, creating relationships of justice, peace? How do you relate to these prophets/sages/ancestors or spirits?

3. Revelation

What is the role, if any, of revelation in the embrace of your religious tradition? What are, for you, the main beliefs in your religious tradition? What do you experience as the basis for your beliefs? Are there intermediaries for revelation and for the interpretation of revelation?

4. Meaning of human life

What is the "creation story" – the story of how the world and all life began – in your religious

tradition? What does this story say to you about the meaning of human life? What does it say about how human life is to be lived? What is it that you sense humans hope for? What limitations do you find humans face as they strive/journey to attain that for which they hope?

5. Writings/oral traditions

What are the main scriptures or texts spoken of in your religious tradition? What importance do they have in your life? What is your ongoing relationship to the writings and oral traditions? How have your interpretations of these writings and oral traditions changed or matured over time?

6. Wrongdoing

What is your understanding of wrongdoing? If sin is a concept in your religious tradition, share your own understanding of it. What do you believe wrongdoing or sin is in relation to God/the sacred...? How do you see wrongdoing or sin in relation to yourself or others? How do you understand sin in relation to societal realities? How is one forgiven in light of sin or evil for which one is responsible?

7. Full life cycle-spend EACH MEETING ON ONE LIFE CYCLE COMPONENT: Pregnancy, Birth, Preschool, Commitment Ceremonies, Puberty, Engagement, Marriage, Divorce, OR Death What is the significance of each (XXX-for example pregnancy) for you as a member of your religious tradition? What specific practices/rituals do you follow? What is the meaning/background behind these practices/rituals? How do you participate in this? How did you learn of these practices?

8. Hope

What in your religious tradition gives and sustains your hope in the face of personal loss, oppression or rejection? And in the midst of chaos and evil in the world? To whom or what do you turn when you are overwhelmed? As a member of your religious tradition, what do you see as positive or hopeful in the world? How is the acknowledgement of a transcendent reality (sacred/divine/formless/God/superior power) related to movement toward a better situation for all people and all creation?

9. Role in the world

What is your experience of the world? What is your analysis of the state of the world in the light of your experience? What is your personal response to your experience and analysis? Do you believe that the actions of individuals matter? How do you regard the most vulnerable persons in your society and throughout the world? What is your relationship with them? How do you hope to ultimately attain salvation/paradise/enlightenment/nirvana...? What does your religious tradition promise you? What further personal growth do you hope for?

10. Community and relationships

With whom do you share community? What religious beliefs and/or practices contribute to the formation and sustaining of your community? Do you see your religious group as community? In

what sense? When differences or splits occur in your community or among communities, how are they reconciled? Do you see your community as separate from the world or as part of the whole? How do you perceive your religious community in relation to communities of other religions?

11. Structure and leadership in the faith/religious community

How is your community of believers organized? What and who “holds together the experience” of the people of your religious tradition as community and as a faith tradition (i.e. holding common beliefs, worship traditions, et cetera.) Who exercises power? What kind of power do they have? What is your role in your faith community? What is the significance of your role?

SHARING HOLIDAYS

SHARING A PASSOVER SEDER

PURPOSE

Share in the ritual of a Passover Seder that commemorates the misery of slavery and the universal struggle for liberation. Sing, engage, and discover the similarities in the ancestral heritage of Jews and Muslims, while sharing a traditional meal.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

Provide a shared experience of the Passover Seder among the members of chapter

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host

NOTE: Traditionally Jews don't taste matzah a month prior the start of Passover—discuss this with the members of your chapter—if this is an issue it can be accommodated

Welcome

Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss, share, and celebrate the holiday of Passover

- Explain the history of the holiday of Passover and describe the process of the Seder that will take place
- Describe the symbols that will be discussed and the variation in Passover customs and traditions by household

History

After many decades of slavery to the Egyptian pharaohs, during which time the Israelites were subjected to backbreaking labor and unbearable horrors, G-d saw the people's distress and sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: "Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me." But despite numerous warnings, Pharaoh refused to heed G-d's command. G-d then sent upon Egypt ten devastating plagues, afflicting them and destroying everything from their livestock to their crops. At the stroke of midnight of 15 Nissan in the year 2448 from creation (1313 BCE), G-d visited the last of the ten plagues on the Egyptians, killing all their firstborn. While doing so, G-d spared the Children of Israel, "passing over" their homes—hence the name of the holiday. Pharaoh's resistance was broken, and he virtually chased his former slaves out of the land. The Israelites left in such a hurry, in fact, that the bread they baked as provisions for the way did not have time to rise. Six hundred thousand adult males, plus many more women and children, left Egypt on that day, and began the trek to Mount Sinai and their birth as G-d's chosen people.

HOW TO HOST A PASSOVER SEDER

- Send out an **invitation** to the women in your chapter including the time, place, and any other logistical details you may want the women to know. Plan for this meeting to take place in the evening during the spring months (*ideally in the Hebrew month of Nissan*). This meeting will last about three hours, this includes the full meal if you should decide to do it, the reading of the Haggadah prior to the meal and after. It is customary to have a full meal; however, you may also just have select traditional foods.
- In preparing for the Passover Seder, you will **select a Haggadah** that reflects your values that will also match the theme of your Passover Seder. *Shalom Center* is a great resource that has an interfaith Seder Haggadah titled *Freedom Seder for the Earth*. Other options include *A Modern, Interfaith Family Passover Haggadah Written by Nancy Cronk*.
- Some different **themes** that are timely include: oppression, refugees, feeling like the other & stranger, gratitude, hope, grit.
- Planning the **menu** for your Passover Seder will be important. You will find recipes and suggestions on page five of *A Modern, Interfaith Family Passover Haggadah Written by Nancy Cronk* or in any Jewish, Kosher, or online cookbooks under “Passover recipes.” You may ask your guests to bring desserts and side dishes. Remember to be mindful of the dietary restrictions of all of your guests! Absolutely no wine!
- You may consider ahead of time suggesting that **everyone take part** in the reading throughout the Passover Seder to ensure that everyone at the table is as engaged as possible. If someone doesn’t feel comfortable doing something, they may pass on it. This is perfect for sections when reading the *Ten Plagues* and *Four Questions*. Definitely leave ample time for explaining and questions.
- In **setting the table** for your Passover Seder you can refer to page seven of *A Modern, Interfaith Family Passover Haggadah Written by Nancy Cronk* to help guide you.
Remember to encourage as much dialogue as possible to trigger the participants to ask questions and to relate the Seder to their own daily lives and experiences. Some potential questions to invite dialogue include:
 - *When dipping the Karpas into salt water:* Has anything ever happened to you which seemed bitter at the time but later turned out to be sweet?
 - *When breaking the middle matzah and hiding it for later:* What is a “hidden” aspiration that you have, i.e. something that you have postponed for later in life but you plan/aspire to one day get to?
 - *When speaking about the harsh slavery:* In our day-to-day lives, do we really love what we do or are we more like slaves to our work?
 - The word *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) resembles the Hebrew word for constriction. What is your personal *Mitzrayim*? What is holding you back the most?
 - *When speaking about the plagues:* Are there signs in our life pushing us to change that we are just refusing to see?

- Pharaoh Vs. Moses: What are the ingredients to be a great leader?
- *When speaking about jumping in the Red Sea*: What have you done recently to step out of your comfort zone?
- *When singing Dayneu*: What are the gifts in our life that make it all worth it?
- *When reciting Hallel*: If you could fully express gratitude to someone in your past who really made a difference in your life, who would it be?
- *When eating matzah*: If you could eradicate laziness from your life and live with complete discipline, what could you accomplish?

SHARING IN RAMADAN AND AN IFTAR

PURPOSE

Share in an iftar, the meal to break the fast during Ramadan

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

Provide a shared experience of an iftar among the members of chapter

PROCESS

Welcome and breaking of the fast

Prepare small starter dishes to begin the meal. Iftar meals often are divided into two parts. Immediately after sunset, many communities break their fasts with a small amount of food. Dates are a common food for breaking the fast; tradition holds that this is how the Prophet broke his fast during Ramadan. It is fun to serve several different date dishes. You can find recipes great recipes online. Nonalcoholic drinks such as milk, water or mango or other fruit juice often accompany this part of the meal. After this, the group performs the evening prayer before the main meal itself.

Place for Prayer

When you are hosting your party ensure that there is space for prayer The place should be laid out with the prayer mats or clean flat sheets in the direction of the khiblah. Qiblah or Kiblah is the direction that should be faced when a muslim prays. The Qiblah, for any point of reference on the Earth, is the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca. Many have a compass that can help you identify the correct location to face during prayer. There are many sites that you can find on google such as: <http://www.central-mosque.com/index.php/Acts-of-Worship/qiblah-direction-basics.html> Have extra scarves and shawls available for women to wear when reading their prayers.

Main Meal

Decorate your table so that it is festive. Many The Iftar is generally a large communal event so ensure that your Iftar dishes should be large enough for all the guests. Add a Ramadan Lantern to the table setting as a centerpiece. You can find decorative lanterns at most stores.

After the Meal

After the meal is finished, families or friends often spend time together relaxing, drinking tea and talking. This is an important period of bonding in the wake of the Ramadan fast. Many Muslims perform Tarawih, or night prayers, during Ramadan, and the approach of these prayers can be a signal for the end of the Iftar. In some cases, the family and guests may perform these prayers together.

MEETING THEME FOR AN IFTAR (ALSO APPROPRIATE DURING YOM KIPPUR): FASTING AS A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE

Increase the awareness of fasting as a spiritual experience in our life. This is designed to be used prior to or during Ramadan. It can also be revised to be used prior to Jewish fasting days

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

To understand how each of us observes fasting To expose participants to the different approaches to fasting and how to take it from a burdensome experience to a spiritual one To demonstrate how a change in mindset can occur after sharing each other's narratives

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host Welcome /Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss the significance of fasting in our life

- Explain that the holiday of Ramadan is approaching and provide an understanding of Ramadan
- Describe the requirements of fasting during Ramadan and what is allowed versus prohibited

DIALOGUE

- Why fast? What is the wisdom of fasting?
- What are the benefits? How can we use the fasting experience to better connect us to God?
- What have you done to make fasting a spiritual experience?
- How do you prepare yourself for fasting physically? Spiritually?
- What self restraint discipline does each of our religions teach us by decreeing the importance of fasting?
- What does the concept of fasting for penance help us to understand? Does this have relevance to you in your life?

SHARING IN SUKKOT

PURPOSE

Share in the holiday of Sukkot and experience being in a Sukkah, a temporary dwelling that is built during the holiday. Historically, Sukkot commemorates the forty-year period during which the children of Israel were wandering in the desert, living in temporary shelters. Agriculturally, Sukkot is a harvest festival and is sometimes referred to as Chag Ha-Asif, the Festival of Ingathering. Together the chapter will sing, engage, and discover the similarities in the ancestral heritage of Jews and Muslims, while spending time in a Sukkah.

PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES

Provide a shared experience of the holiday of Sukkot among the members of chapter

PROCESS

Welcome by co-leaders and host Introduction, sharing of good and welfare, purpose is to discuss, share, and celebrate the holiday of Sukkot

- Explain the history of the holiday of Sukkot and discuss the significance of Sukkot as the only holiday that is a full body experience
- Describe the symbolism and themes of the holiday of Sukkot

History

Sukkot, a Hebrew word meaning "booths" or "huts," refers to the Jewish festival of giving thanks for the fall harvest. It also commemorates the 40 years of Jewish wandering in the desert after the giving of the Torah atop Mt. Sinai. Sukkot is celebrated five days after Yom Kippur on the 15th of the month of Hebrew month of Tishrei, and is marked by several distinct traditions. One, which takes the commandment to dwell in booths literally, is to erect a sukkah, a small, temporary booth or hut. Sukkot (in this case, the plural of sukkah) are commonly used during the seven-day festival for eating, entertaining and even for sleeping. Sukkot also called Z'man Simchateinu (Season of Our Rejoicing), is the only festival associated with an explicit commandment to rejoice. A final name for Sukkot is Chag HaAsif, (Festival of the Ingathering), representing a time to give thanks for the bounty of the earth during the fall harvest.

HOW TO HOST GUESTS IN YOUR SUKKAH

- Send an **invitation** to the guests. Share with them that you are inviting them to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Sukkot.
- **Build** your Sukkah
- Obtain the **'Four Species'** *NOTE: If you are unable to obtain these items you are still able to have guests over to celebrate Sukkot. This is not a requirement, simply a holiday tradition.*

- Etrog: a citron
- Lulav: the frond of a date palm tree
- Hadas: myrtle boughs
- Aravah: branches from a willow tree **To understand the symbolism of the 'Four Species' you can read more [here](#).
- Decide on an **arts and crafts activity** that you and your guests can do together during this time to add to the decor of your Sukkah. You can find an abundance of ideas online.
- Create a **handout** of the blessings that are said in the Sukkah
 - **Shehecheyanu (the first time you wave the lulav):** *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*
 - Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this season.
 - **Blessing for Dwelling in the Sukkah:** *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu leishev basukkah.*
 - Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: You hallow us with Your mitzvot and command us to dwell in the sukkah.
 - **Blessing for the Lulav:** *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu al n'tilat lulav.*
 - Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: whose mitzvot teaches us holiness and who instructs us to take up the lulav.

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Sukkot offers a moment to think of a timely issue: refugees and the temporary status of their lives. What are you doing to erect a permanent roof over the heads of refugees? What else can you be doing?
- Sukkot is the only Jewish holiday that is a full body experience given that we build the Sukkah, we eat in the Sukkah, we brave elements in the Sukkah, we are even encouraged to sleep in the Sukkah. What is the significance of a full-bodied experience?
- The Sukkah is a temporary structure that reminds us of our homelessness. Did you ever have a time in your life when you felt like you were living in a temporary state? How did you deal with this? Did you find refuge in a particular structure or community?
- Sukkot reminds us of how fragile are our lives . When do you feel most fragile?
- The holiday of Sukkot was the foundation for the pilgrims creating Thanksgiving. Why do you think that the pilgrims picked Sukkot as the model for Thanksgiving?

TOOLKITS FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS

Rise and Respond

In the face of rising Islamophobia and anti-Semitism, the Sisterhood has created a step-by-step guide so chapters can both respond to incidents of hate and proactively create educational programs in the community. The Guide is available on our website: <https://sosspeace.org/rise-and-respond-guide-to-responding-to-islamophobia-and-anti-semitism/> - <https://sosspeace.org/rise-and-respond-guide-to-responding-to-islamophobia-and-anti-semitism/>. The Guide is instructive for every level of involvement, from behind-the-scenes writing cards to victims, to large-scale activism. It is a road map for how to join existing community efforts (recommended) and, where none exist, lays out concrete steps for action. We encourage you to download and read the Guide *before* an incident, so you will be prepared to respond quickly and effectively.

Earth Day Service Project

The first Earth Day took place in the US in 1970. Since then it has become a worldwide event that takes place every April. We all share the earth and we all live by grace of the gifts of clean air, clean water, and fertile soil. Our faiths teach us to appreciate these gifts, care for the Earth, and work to protect each other from the harms caused by environmental injustice. As awareness of climate change has grown, Earth Day has become more important than ever. We have created a Guide so that your chapter can plan and implement your own Earth Day Service Project. We recommend that you set aside two chapter meetings for this purpose - a planning meeting in February/March, and a service project in April.

In the guide you will find information, recommendations and suggestions regarding:

- I:** Spiritual Roots of Environmental Stewardship
- II:** Agenda for Feb/March Chapter Meeting for Inspiration and Planning
- III:** Planning an Earth Day Service Project
- IV:** Logistics
- V:** Outreach: Social Media & Press
- VI:** Tips for a Successful Day

You will find the Earth Day Service Project Guide at: <https://sosspeace.org/resources>.

These Guides are filled with interesting resources and concrete tools so that your chapter can plan events, programs, and projects in your community. If you choose to take part, we hope they will enhance your Sisterhood experience, creating additional value beyond your regular meetings.



Guide to Planning Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day

Overview

Dear Chapter Leaders,

The values and practices of service, social justice, and acts of loving-kindness run deep in the Muslim and Jewish traditions. Through joining together in service on or around December 25, the Sisterhood can support our Christian sisters and brothers as they celebrate Christmas in the U.S. and Canada. We welcome your participation in this important program and appreciate your leadership.

Many Jewish and Muslim communities hold annual days to encourage community service. For example, many American Jewish communities have Mitzvah Days on their communal calendars on an annual basis. We in the Sisterhood have gained inspiration from our sisters in the United Kingdom and their Sadaqah Day. You can learn more about their program from their website <http://mysadaqaday.org/> and their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sadaqaday/>.

We chose Christmas Day (December 25) for our Sisterhood of Salam Shalom Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day because of the increase in need for community service on this day. It is a time when staffing in social service organizations is lower and many people feel especially discouraged by being alone, homeless, hungry, or working and away from festivities. We are hopeful that our service addresses both actual needs, while expressing care, gratitude, and appreciation.

In this guide you will receive information, recommendations and suggestions regarding:

- Part I: Shared Language and Values: Teachings about the Islamic concept of Sadaqah and the Jewish concept of Tzedakah
- Part II: Decision-Making
- Part III: The Planning Process
- Part IV: Creating a Schedule

- Part V: Logistics
- Part VI: Social Media
- Part VII: Planning for Reflection
- Part VIII: Final Planning, Implementing & Wrapping Up

Please feel free to contact us with questions or consultation as you develop and plan your Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day activities.

Be inspired by these photos from previous Sadaqah-Tzedakah Days!



Part I: Shared Language and Values: Islamic Teaching about Sadaqah and Jewish Teaching about Tzedakah

Sadaqah / صدقة

In Islam, **Sadaqah** is voluntary charity and a virtuous deed. The word derives from the Arabic root *sadq*, meaning “truth.” Sadaqah is considered as a proof of one’s *eeman* (faith). *Sadaqah* differs from *Zakat*, which is like a religious tax or obligatory contribution based on wealth. In the Quran, in surah (chapter) Al-Baqarah, Allah describes “Those who spend their wealth (in Allah’s Cause) by night and day, in secret and in public, they shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.” (Quran 2:274)

Muhammad al-Bukhari was a Persian Islamic scholar born during the 9th Century of the Common Era in Buharia in what is known today as Uzbekistan. He authored the hadith collection (saying of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) known as Sahih al-Bukhari, regarded by Sunni Muslims as one of the most authentic of all hadith compilations. Here is one teaching about sadaqah:

Abu Musa narrated that the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) said, “Every Muslim has to give in sadaqah (voluntary charity).” The people asked, “O Allah’s Messenger (Peace Be Upon Him.)! If someone has nothing to give, what will he do?” He said, “He should **work with his hands and benefit himself and also give in charity** (from what he earns).” The people further asked, “If he cannot do even that?” He replied, “Then he should **help the needy who appeal for help.**”

Then the people asked, “If he cannot do that?” He replied, “Then he should **perform all that is good and keep away from all that is evil** and this will be regarded as charitable deeds.” (Bukhari Vol. 2, Book 24, Hadith 524)

Muslims also attribute to Bukhari recording the teaching from The Messenger of Allah (Peace Be Upon Him) that “**to smile in the company of your brother** is charity.”

Tzedakah / צדקה

In Judaism, the **tzedakah** derives from the Hebrew root tz/d/k and literally means “justice.” The word can refer both to obligatory giving and giving beyond the mandated level. One rabbi in the Talmud (a collection of rabbinic teachings from the years 200-500 CE), Rabbi Assi, considered that “Tzedakah is as important as all the other commandments combined.” (Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra 9a). Another Jewish concept closely associated with Tzedakah is **gemilut hasadim** (acts of loving-kindness). The Hebrew bible contains numerous statements commanding one to treat others with love and care:

- Love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18)
- Love the stranger, for you were strangers (Deuteronomy 10:19)
- Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

In an additional teaching in the Talmud about charitable giving, a rabbi and his wife pray for rain at a time of drought. The prayers are successful and it begins to rain. The rabbi is asked: “Why,

Master, did the clouds appear first in the corner where your wife stood and only afterwards in your corner?” He replied, “Because my wife stays at home and gives bread to the poor.” (Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 23).

By contrast, the English word “**charity**” is derived from the Latin root *caritas*, meaning love, dearness and “**philanthropy**” comes from a combination of two Greek roots, *philia*, meaning love, and *anthropos*, meaning humanity. A more in-depth comparison between Sadaqah and Tzedakah can be found at

<http://www.judaism-islam.com/tzedakah-zakah-sadaqah-the-laws-of-charity-in-islam-and-judaism/>

Part II: Decision-Making

Focus on Your Chapter and Your Community

When you begin to organize for your event, start by thinking about your chapter and your community. Has your chapter engaged in community service before? What did you learn from that experience? What are the needs of your local community? What are feasible projects?

Hold a brainstorming meeting with your chapter members and identify potential projects. As chapter leaders, it will be helpful for you to do preparatory research and bring some recommendations to the group. You can also invite community activists to your meeting to discuss community needs and answer questions about what your chapter’s project could look like. You might reach consensus and make a decision about your project during your first meeting or follow-up research might be helpful.

If you don’t already have contacts with a community service organization, it will be important to make a personal connection and possibly conduct a site visit. You will want to learn as much about the logistics of the project in order to determine if it is a good match for your chapter and what you will need to do to prepare. **A core value in community service is to provide service that not only is meaningful to the volunteers but that also addresses a real need and desired contribution.**

Some ideas:

1. Cook and / or serve meals at a shelter or soup kitchen
2. Conduct a food drive and donate to a local soup kitchen
3. Conduct a drive for food, clothing, books, toys, or toiletries and donate to an appropriate organization
4. Bake cookies or prepare food for staff working at a local hospital
5. Prepare food for family members of hospital or hospice patients
6. Assemble toiletries packages with supplies already purchased

A few words of advice:

- You will most likely not be able to visit patients in the hospital due to strict policies hospitals have nowadays for patient privacy (based on the HIPAA law) and clearances procedures for volunteers. That said, hospital staff and families can be under-supported and under-appreciated, so if you'd like to visit patients, be sure to check guidelines at a local hospital or nursing home before you begin planning.
- If you want to donate items that you collect, purchase or make, it is important that you contact the organization ahead of time to make sure that they can use the items and that they approve. It would be a shame to go through all of the effort and not be able to donate them.
- Some Latino communities exchange gifts on January 6th, El Día de los Reyes (literally, "The Day of the Kings,""). It's also known as The Epiphany and the 12th Day of Christmas. You can organize an activity (e.g. a toy drive) on the Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day on Dec. 25 in anticipation of this holiday and celebration.

Who will you invite to participate?

Discuss and decide as a chapter if your activity will be done solely by the members of your chapter or if it will include family members or other members from your broader Muslim and Jewish communities. Some chapters include teen members. If you decide to do multiple activities, you can also decide if you want the programs to be intergenerational or want a specific program for the teens.

How many projects?

Make sure your project can accommodate the number of people who want to participate. It can be stressful if you don't have enough participants. Conversely, make sure everyone can participate in a meaningful way. You don't want people to show up and have nothing to do!

Location(s):

Some projects will take place at the site of a community organization (e.g. a soup kitchen), and others can take place in the home of a Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom chapter member (e.g. baking cookies or making sandwiches to donate). If you have multiple activities taking place at multiple locations, we recommend designating one central location for the Opening and the Closing. Gathering together as one group, at the beginning and the end, promotes relationship building within your chapter, and if others are involved, between our Muslim and Jewish communities. It also allows you to consider the significance of community service as a reflection of the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom.

Decide if you will want to include time for prayer

You will want to assess the religious needs and desires of your participants for the day. They will be determined by the time of day of your program, as well as the practices of your participants.

Decide what you want to do to make sure that you have a component of fun and celebration for the chapter members (as well as other members of the Muslim and Jewish community if you involve them).

Once you have decided what activity (ies) your chapter will do, **email Samantha (samantha@sosspeace.org) with the details.** She will share photos and projects through our social media channels.

Part III: The Planning Process

Create a Timeline for Your Planning Process

Task	Person(s)	Deadline	Check When Completed
Participate in Co-Leaders' Conference Call	Co-Leaders	November	
Discuss Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day and brainstorm ideas with chapter members			
Contact relevant community/organizational leaders to coordinate			
Finalize activity			
Let the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom office know your activity(ies)			
Confirm participation of volunteers			
Fundraise (if appropriate)			
Assign roles			
Purchase necessary items			
Contact the media			
Send reminder to volunteers			

Assign Roles for Participants

Identify the action items you'll need to complete to have a successful event. For example, if you are volunteering at a soup kitchen, there will be roles for set-up, purchasing ingredients, cooking, serving, and clean-up. In addition to the roles that are specific for your event, if your event is open to the public, consider the following additional roles.

List of Roles

Greeters: If your event includes family members or community members, have greeters welcome them as they arrive and direct them to registration.	
Registration: For a larger event, set up a table and have at least one person checking people in, telling them their role and where to go, and asking them to make a name tag.	
M.C.: Most likely one or more co- leaders will play the role of M.C./announcer. Welcome everyone, give a brief orientation to the Sisterhood, and set the tone for the day.	
Photographer/Social Media: Designate at least one person to take pictures and also to post to the Facebook page.	
Debriefer: Designate a person to facilitate a conversation and share personal experiences at the end of the day.	
Optional: organizers/leader for Muslim Prayer	
Optional: organizer/leader of Hanukkah Candle Lighting	
Clean Up: Sometimes organizers designate this as a role in advance and sometimes they let everyone know to expect to stay and clean up together.	
<i>Fill in Specific Role</i>	
<i>Fill in Specific Role</i>	
<i>Fill in Specific Role</i>	
<i>Fill in Specific Role</i>	

Volunteer Registration Sheet

Create a registration sheet organized alphabetically by the volunteers' name so you can easily sign them in.

#	Name	Phone #	Email	Role
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				

Part IV: Creating a Schedule

Create a schedule for the day that is realistic for the activity you are planning. If you are working with a community organization or other group, make sure to get their input. Here is a sample schedule:

- 4:00 Meet at central location (such as a chapter member's home, or Soup Kitchen),
Have participants register and make name tags
Do a group Welcome, Introductions and Orientation led by the M.C.

If you are volunteering at a social service organization (e.g. soup kitchen), ask if a member of their staff would also like to speak.

- 4:15 Set tables and prepare food
- 5:00 Serve food to Soup Kitchen guests
- 6:00 Clean-up
- 6:30 Hold evening prayers/Hanukkah celebration
- 7:00 Debrief event: what went well; what can we learn for next year

Part V: Logistics

- **Assess and plan for the dietary needs of your participants.**
- **Assess and plan for prayer needs of your participants.**
- **Confirm location(s).**
- **Confirm Point Person from Organization** (for the planning process and for the day of the event).
- **Develop Contingency Plan** in case of inclement weather.
- **Secure Resources.**
- **Make a list and plan for all items that need to be brought or purchased.**
- **Raise funds or receive donations of products and services** (if appropriate).
- **Plan Giveaways:** Each chapter can decide on its own if it would like to develop any giveaways (T-shirts, stickers, etc.). Remember to include the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom logo on all giveaways and the hashtag **#[year]GivingDay**.
- **Take Safety Precautions** (If you are concerned about safety, contact your local police department).
- **Media** – see next sections!

Part VI: Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day Media Guidelines

Social Media

Social media is a great way to let people know about the work being done by the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We hope everyone will share their photos, videos and stories of Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. For all your social media posts, please use the hashtag: **#[fill in year]GivingDay**

If you post on any of the platforms where the Sisterhood has a presence, please tag us when you post your Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day updates:

- facebook.com/sisterhoodsalaamshalom
- twitter.com/sosspeace

We will be collecting photos to share on the Sisterhood website. If you have photos to share, please send them to samantha@sosspeace.org.

IMPORTANT: Please remember to get permission and signed media releases before you post photos of anyone in your group online (see attachment).

Local Media (Television, Radio, Newspaper)

Christmas Day tends to be uneventful for news, so local television, radio and newspaper reporters are often on the lookout for interesting stories to cover. This is a great opportunity to share the project being done by your chapter.

We recommend contacting local media no more than one week in advance of your project. Write a formal press release that outlines the location and details of your activities. A customizable press release form has been included in this guide.

Any and all questions about the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom as an organization should be directed to the Central Office at sisterhood@sosspeace.org.

If your group receives any local news coverage, send an email with a link to the media to: nadia@sosspeace.org.



Media Release Form

Date: _____

I authorize the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom to use my name, statements and likeness, without charge, for promotional purposes on the organization's official website, and in promotional messages using video, web, new media, or other formats.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Home Address: _____

If you are under the age of 18, your parent or legal guardian must also sign:

Parent or Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____



Press Release Boilerplate

Fill out the sections of this press release with the specific information about your group and your project.

Contact Information:

Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom

[Group co-leader names]

[Contact phone and email]

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Presents **Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day (fill in year)!**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[City, State] – The local chapter of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom will be taking part in a national event that is happening in dozens of cities across the United States and Canada. In a show of solidarity, American Jews and Muslims are joining together to perform acts of kindness together on Christmas Day.

Our local chapter has selected [project name] as our project for this year's event. On December 25th, our chapter members will be joined by family and other members of our faith communities to [describe your project including location].

The Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom [Chapter Location] was formed in [date] and is comprised of [number of members] Muslim and Jewish women. We meet together regularly with the aim of building bridges across religious and cultural lines, to explore one another's faith traditions, to form relationships and to work together to put an end to acts of hate.

Our chapter is part of a U.S. and Canadian movement of Muslim and Jewish women, co-founded by Sheryl Olitzky and Atiya Aftab.

Women navigate the world through relationships. The relationships that are built by bringing together Muslim and Jewish women, who share so many practices and beliefs, are life-changing and can help put an end to anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish sentiment. We influence family, friends and the general public about our strength in coming together to build bridges and fight hate, negative stereotyping and prejudice. We are changing the world, one Muslim and one Jewish woman at a time!

Contact: sisterhood@sosspeace.org

Part VII: Planning for Reflecting

It is helpful and meaningful for participants and organizers to have a reflection session at the end of the event. This gives you the opportunity to: (1) recognize and thank participants; (2) process your individual and collective experience; (3) link the day to the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom; (4) provide feedback for future programs; (5) learn what was successful and what can be improved for future Sadaqah-Tzedakah Days; and (6) evaluate whether you achieved your goals.

The experience of reflection can build solidarity within your chapter and cultivate emotional connection and empathy. It's an opportunity for your sisters to know and be known by one another. By serving others, you help promote our core values of cultivating understanding and building pluralistic community.

Individuals often have different ways that they like to process. Some like to talk, and others like to write or express themselves artistically. Here are some guidelines on how to design and implement a processing session.

Sample Opening Statement: “Now we have the opportunity to reflect upon and share our thoughts, feelings, and stories from the day. Instead of talking about the people we served today and the larger social issues, now we can focus on our own experiences. Simply stated, it's a time for us to use “I” statements.”

Individuals often have different ways that they like to process. Some people are talkers and some aren't. Some like group discussion, others like writing, and others like artistic expression. Whichever method you use allows you to create space for each person's voice and expression of an aspect of her experience and story. You may have a sense of the personalities of your chapter members already and can plan a reflection model that suits them, though also keeping in mind that groups often have a mixture. Whether through discussion or artistic expression, below are some prompts for reflection:

- Describe what you did for Sadaqah-Tzedakah.
- If there were multiple activities offered: Why did you pick this activity?
- Who did you meet or get to know better today?
- What did you like most about the work you did?
- What surprised you today?
- What did you learn today?
- If Sadaqah-Tzedakah is an act of faith, in what way does the work you did help serve as an act of your faith?
- How would you apply what you learned or experienced today to your life going forward? Or to your chapter?
- What else would you like to do in the future for Sadaqah-Tzedakah work?

In your closing statement, remember to connect the day to the mission of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. We are creating relationships and building community between Muslim and

Jewish women, and through our engagement, promoting peace. This day is one example of us actualizing our mission through community service within the broader American and Canadian communities.

Part VIII: Final Planning, Implementing and Wrapping Up

A week before Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day, you should:

1. *Communicate with volunteers.*
 - Details of the day (when and where to meet, etc.).
 - Remind about modest dress that is standard for Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom program.
 - Double-check about dietary and prayer needs.
2. *Confirm details with your point person/people from other organizations, if any.*
3. *Contact the media (see above).*

The Day of:

It's the morning of Sadaqah-Tzedakah Day!

- If the program is starting off with a hectic feeling, don't worry, this is often the case.
- Have a clear plan. It helps reduce stress at the beginning of the program. Create a sense of order and calm by welcoming guests when they arrive. Invite them to make a nametag and mingle.
- Ask one person to keep track of time, so that you can start and end promptly.
- Make sure to post on the Facebook page.
- Don't forget to enjoy the day yourself. It is truly extraordinary what you are doing!
- If you have direct contact with the recipients of your service (such as guests at a soup kitchen or staff at a hospital), wish them well as seems appropriate. You can thank staff for working on a holiday, you can wish Merry Christmas to those who are celebrating, etc.

Wrapping Up Your Project:

- Give ample time for reflection and celebration as a chapter
- Make sure to thank your planning team, the participants, the point people from the organizations
- Make sure you have others involved in cleanup
- From the reflection, gather feed-back and send it to the Central Office

Conclusion Checklist

Task	Person	Deadline	Check When Completed
Send photos and videos to Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom office			
Send brief summary of your event (description of activity, number of people participating, relevant data, memorable quotes, etc.) to Nadia (nadia@sosspeace.org)			
Send thank-you email to Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom participants			
Send thank-you email to community organizations and leaders			

GUIDELINES FOR ENDORSEMENTS/MEDIA COVERAGE/SOCIAL MEDIA

Sisterhood of Salaam-Shalom Facebook Group Policy

Goals

- To facilitate healthy conversation and engagement between American Jewish and American Muslim women and their supporters
- To share news and information about Jewish-Muslim engagement in the U.S. and around the world
- To educate one another about the individual and communal aspects of being Jewish and Muslim women
- To demonstrate the kind of interfaith community that we want to see in our society

Posting Guidelines

Group administrators are responsible for approving posts before they go live in the group. If multiple posts containing the same link/news story are submitted, we will approve the first one only.

Additionally, this group is comprised of people across a broad spectrum of religious, social, political and ethnic identities. We encourage you to consider this before posting things or making comments that are politically or religiously exclusionary. Healthy disagreements are part of any community, but they should always happen in a respectful and productive manner.

Posts We Accept

- Personal experiences/stories/blogs about Jewish-Muslim interfaith work
- Photos of Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom events
- News articles about issues affecting Jews and Muslims in America
- Art and Music from Jewish & Muslim artists
- Recipes
- Information about Muslim and Jewish holidays and observances

Posts We Do Not Accept

- Promotion of businesses or professional services
- Fundraising for organizations/businesses other than the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom
- Posts or articles that attack individuals – even if they are public figures.
- Posts about Israel-Palestine. We have an organizational policy that conversation around this topic should take place in an intimate setting after interpersonal relationships have been established. This Facebook Group is not the forum for discussing this topic. Should you wish to broach the subject in your local group, we have developed a set of guidelines that you can use to facilitate the conversation.

We also have resources for creating private groups for individual chapters. Should this be of interest to your chapter, please contact Samantha at samantha@sosspeace.org. We'll help you set up your own chapter-based Facebook group. The preceding guidelines still apply. Thank you!

Media Coverage, Sponsorships, and Endorsements

As technology plays an increasingly large role in our lives, we recognize that your involvement with your Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom may, at one point or another, intersect with requests for coverage, social media usage or some other outlet. Please use the following guidelines when representing the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom to the wider community.

- As a non-profit organization, the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom cannot partner with another organization without approval from the central office. This includes partnerships that would require use of the Sisterhood name, logo, or other identifying characteristics.
- Similarly, all requests for press or media coverage must come through the central office.
- As a non-profit organization, the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom cannot engage in activities or endorsement of a particular political party or candidate at any time.

For all questions, concerns, or future requests, please contact the Central Office at sisterhood@sosspeace.org.

RESOURCES

General Etiquette for Entering a Jewish or Muslim Home

- Remove your shoes when you enter a Muslim home. There is usually a special place reserved just outside the door or in the entryway for shoes. It is fine to enter the home wearing socks.
- Bringing a gift to your Muslim or Jewish host is a nice touch. So, what should you bring? If you are invited for tea, coffee or a meal, dessert is a highly appropriate gift. Be sure to ask about any dietary restrictions before bringing food into a home. Other appropriate gifts include flowers, vases, and housewares. Never bring a bottle of wine or other alcohol to a Muslim home.
- Whether you are bringing food to your host's home, or you are the host, dietary guidelines should be followed. Ensure that no food products are made with alcohol, lard, gelatin, or any pork product. If you are going to a Jewish home, be sure the product is marked Kosher, unless you have been told that non-Kosher products are allowed to be brought into the household. Alcohol of any kind should never be served. If there is a need for the Jewish blessing over wine, use grape juice instead. Do not serve a dish or bring a dish that mixes dairy products with meat products and do not serve or bring a dish that contains shellfish.
- Attire is important. Shorts, sleeveless tops, short dresses/skirts and anything that is too revealing is inappropriate. Pants or a long skirt are totally acceptable.
- Avoid scheduling a get-together over the Jewish Sabbath (Friday an hour before sundown through Saturday night when 3 stars are present). Check the calendar to learn which Muslim and Jewish holidays should be avoided for meeting. This is a great group learning discussion!
- Lock up dogs/cats during any get-together in your home. The saliva from animals, especially dogs, can make one unclean for prayer. In addition, many people are frightened of animals and/or are allergic to them.

NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR OVERALL OBJECTIVE: BUILD TRUST, RESPECT AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR MUSLIM AND JEWISH SISTERS!

Common Phrases and Expressions

It is nice to be able to use appropriate vocabulary when meeting someone of another culture or faith. If you are ever unsure of a word, phrase or expression, do not use it. Instead, ask for pronunciation or an appropriate phrase to use, or, rely on generic language you're comfortable using. Avoid using insider language that would leave others out of the conversation.

Common Islamic phrases

When starting to do something: "Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem." (In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.)

When mentioning something that will be done in the future: "Insha'llah." (If Allah wills.)

When praising something say: "Subhanullah." (Glory to Allah.)

When in pain or distress: "Ya Allah." (O Allah.)

When appreciating something say: "Masha-Allah." (As Allah willed.)

When thanking someone: "Jazakullah khair." (Allah reward you.)

When you see something bad: "Nowthdhubillah." (Allah protect us.)

After sneezing or when you're happy about something: "Alhumdulillah." (Praise Allah.)

When meeting someone: "Assalamu 'alaykum." (Peace be upon you.). When replying to the above greeting: "Wa 'alaykum assalam." (And upon you be peace.)

When hearing about a death or tragedy: "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajiun." (To Allah we belong and to Him we return.)

When taking an oath: "Wallah." (I Swear to Allah.)

If someone sneezes and they say: "alhumdulillah," you reply with: "Yarhamakullah." (Allah have mercy upon you.) The sneezer will reply back: "Yehdikumullah" which means, "Allah guide you."

Common Islamic Holiday Greetings:

Muslims observe two major holidays: Eid al-Fitr (at the end of the annual fasting month of [Ramadan](#)), and Eid al-Adha (at the end of the annual [pilgrimage](#) to Mecca). During these

holidays the most traditional or common Arabic greetings are:

- "Kul 'am wa enta bi-khair!" ("May every year find you in good health!")
- "Eid Mubarak!" –This can be used for the majority of Islamic holidays, even the minor ones ("Blessed Eid!")
- "Eid Saeed!" ("Happy Eid!")
- "Taqabbala Allahu minna wa minkum." ("May Allah accept from us, and from you.")

Common Jewish Expressions:

Sabbath-Related Greetings

Shabbat Shalom (shah-BAHT shah-LOHM) Hebrew. Literally, Sabbath peace or peaceful Sabbath. This is an appropriate greeting at any time on [Shabbat](#), although it is most commonly used at the end of a shabbat [service](#).

Gut Shabbes (GUT SHAH-biss; gut rhymes with put) Yiddish. Literally, good Sabbath. Like Shabbat shalom, this is a general, all-purpose Shabbat greeting. In my experience, gut Shabbes is more likely to be used in general conversation or when greeting people, while Shabbat shalom is more commonly used at the conclusion of a service.

Shavua Tov (shah-VOO-ah TOHV) Hebrew. Literally, good week. This greeting is used after [Havdalah](#) (the ceremony marking the conclusion of Shabbat), to wish someone a good forthcoming week.

Common Jewish Holiday Greetings

Chag Sameach (KHAHG sah-MEHY-ahkh) Hebrew. Literally, joyous festival. This is an appropriate greeting for just about any holiday, but it's especially appropriate for [Sukkot](#), [Shavu'ot](#) and [Pesach \(Passover\)](#), which are technically the only festivals (the other holidays are holidays, not festivals).

Gut Yontiff (GUT YAHN-tiff; gut rhymes with put) Yiddish. Literally, good holiday. This greeting can be used for any holiday, not necessarily a festival.

L'Shanah Tovah (li-SHAH-nuh TOH-vuh; li-shah-NAH toh-VAH) Hebrew. Lit. for a good year. A common greeting during [Rosh Hashanah](#) and [Days of Awe](#). It is an abbreviation of L'shanah tovah tikatev v'taihatem (May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year).

Have an easy fast

This is the proper way to wish someone well for [Yom Kippur](#). Please, don't wish people a Happy Yom Kippur; it's not a happy holiday.

Other Expressions

Shalom (shah-LOHM) Hebrew. Literally, peace. A way of saying "hello" or "goodbye."

Shalom Aleikhem (shah-LOHM ah-ley-KHEM) or **Sholem Aleikhem** (SHOH-lehm ah-LEH-khem) Hebrew and Yiddish. Peace upon you. A traditional greeting. The second version (the Yiddish version) is more common, at least in America. It is related to the common Arabic greeting, salaam alaikum (not surprising, because Hebrew and Arabic are in the same family of languages). The traditional response to the greeting is Aleikhem Shalom (and upon you, peace).

Mazel Tov (MAH-zl TAWV) Yiddish/Hebrew. Literally, good luck. This is the traditional way of expressing congratulations.

Yasher koach (YAH-shehyr KOH-ahkh) Hebrew. Literally, straight strength. Figuratively, may you have strength, or may your strength be increased. A way of congratulating someone for performing a [mitzvah](#) or other good deed. In essence, you are wishing this person the strength to continue doing this good thing, and you are also recognizing the effort that the person put into doing this good thing. It is most commonly used in [synagogue](#), to congratulate someone after he or she has participated in some aspect of the [service](#). Strictly speaking, this is a masculine form. Some people use the feminine form when expressing the same sentiment for a woman, but that is unusual.

Gesundheit (g'-SUND-hahyt) Yiddish. Literally, health. This is the normal response when somebody sneezes.

© Copyright 5760-5771 (1999-2011), Tracey R Rich

Descriptions of Common Holidays

(Written in alphabetical order, green text represents Islamic holidays and blue text represents Jewish holidays)

For an updated holiday calendar, [please visit the Resources section](#) of our website.

A

Al-Hijra/Muharram – New Year

Al-Hijra - the Islamic New Year - is celebrated on the first day of Muharram, the month in which Muhammad emigrated from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE (known as the Hijra). The holiday is also known simply as Muharram. Unlike the important holidays of Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha, there are few rituals associated with Islamic New Year. There are no prescribed religious observances. Most Muslims regard the day as a time for reflection on the Hijra and on the year to come. In modern times, some Muslims exchange greeting cards to celebrate the holiday.

(<http://www.religionfacts.com/al-hijra>)

Ashura

Ashura is celebrated on the ninth and tenth day of Muharram in the Islamic Calendar. Ashura is an Arabic word meaning "ten", and it is a day of optional fasting. This is the day on which God saved Moses and the Israelites from Pharaoh in Egypt as he

crossed the Red Sea (the Exodus day). Jews in the city of Madina fasted only one day (on Yom Kippur)

so the Prophet Muhammad would fast two. According to Islamic tradition Prophet Muhammad recommended fasting on the 9th and 10th of Muharram.

This is also the day on which Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Hussain ibn Ali, was martyred by the forces of a corrupt and cruel governor in the Battle of Karbala. For both Sunni and Shia Muslims, 10th of Muharram marks a day of remembrance of Hussain's martyrdom. For Shia Muslims in particular, this is a day of mourning, expressed in a more dramatic fashion than the Sunnis.

(<http://www.ciogc.org/index.php/aboutislam/islam-101/67-muslim-celebrations>)

E-H

Eid ul-Adha

Eid ul-Adha, which occurs approximately seventy days after Eid-ul-Fitr, commemorates the Prophet Ibrahim's (Abraham's) willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail (Ishmael) for Allah. Eid ul-Adha celebrations continue for three days. The day it begins is the day after the pilgrims in Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia by Muslims worldwide, descend from Mount

Arafat. Like Eid ul-Fitr, Eid ul-Adha begins with a short prayer followed by a sermon (Khutba). Men, women, and children are expected to dress in their finest clothing. Muslims, who can afford to, sacrifice their best domestic animals (usually sheep, but also camels, cows, and goats) as a symbol of Prophet Ibrahim's (Abraham's) sacrifice. This sacrificial act and the meat are called "Udhiya" or "Qurbani". A large portion of the meat is given to the poor and hungry so they can all join in the feast. The remainder is cooked for the celebrations in which relatives and friends participate. The spirit of giving and charitable gestures in the Muslim community is heightened during Eid ul-Adha as Muslims ensure that no impoverished person is left without sacrificial food during this period.

(<http://www.ciogc.org/index.php/aboutislam/islam-101/67-muslim-celebrations>)

Eid ul-Fitr

Eid-ul-Fitr is an Islamic holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Fitr means "to break the fast" and therefore symbolizes the breaking of the fasting period. On the day of Eid-ul-Fitr, which is the first day of the month of Shawwal, a typical Muslim family is awake very early. After praying the daily morning (Fajr) prayer, they enjoy a light breakfast, symbolizing the end of Ramadan.

Many Muslims dress in fancy traditional clothes early in the morning and then head to special prayers in congregation held only on this occasion in mosques or in large open areas, stadiums or arenas. The prayer is generally short and is followed by a sermon (Khutba). Worshippers greet and embrace each other in a spirit of peace and love after the congregational prayer. Festivities then follow that involve visiting the homes of relatives and friends.

On Eid ul-Fitr, Muslims celebrate the achievement of enhanced piety. It is a day of forgiveness, moral victory, brotherhood, fellowship, and unity. Muslims celebrate not only the end of fasting, but also thank God for the strength He gave them throughout the month of Ramadan to help them practice self-control. It is a time of giving and sharing.

(<http://www.ciogc.org/index.php/aboutislam/islam-101/67-muslim-celebrations>)

Hanukkah

Hanukkah (alternately spelled Chanukah), meaning "dedication" in Hebrew, refers to the joyous eight-day celebration during which Jews commemorate the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and "rededication" of the Temple in Jerusalem. The modern home celebration of Hanukkah centers around the lighting of the hanukkiyah, a 9-branched candelabra or oil lamp. One candle is lit first every night, and is then used to light the number of candles corresponding to the night of the holiday, with an additional candle lit each night. Foods prepared in oil including *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts) are eaten, and special songs and games are played.

(<http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/hanukkah>)

L

Lag B'Omer

Lag B'Omer is a minor holiday celebrated on the 33rd day of the *omer*. The *omer* is the 49-day period in between Passover and Shavuot. The *omer* is a period of time in which some mourning practices are traditionally observed, such as not cutting one's hair. Lag B'Omer, though, is a festive day, and is often celebrated with a bonfire. One explanation for the mourning during the *omer* and the celebrations on Lag B'Omer is that students of Rabbi Akiva, a great Jewish leader during the 1st-2nd century, were struck by a plague during the *omer* period, but the plague ended on the 33rd day of the *omer*, Lag B'Omer.

Lailat ul Bara'ah

Lailat ul Bara'h (Night of Forgiveness) takes place two weeks before Ramadan. It is the time when Muslims seek forgiveness for their sins and believe that on this night one's destiny is fixed for the year ahead. On this night, Muslims pray and ask God for forgiveness either at the mosque or at home. Many spend the entire night praying. Muslims may also visit the graves of relatives, and giving to charity is traditional.

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/holydays/lailatulbarah.shtml>)

Lailat ul Kadr

Lailat ul Kadr is considered the holiest night of the year for Muslims, and is traditionally celebrated on the 27th day of Ramadan. It is known as the “Night of Power,” and commemorates the night that the Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, beginning with the exhortation, “Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists),” in Surat Al-Alaq (Muhsin Khan translation).

Muslims observe this occasion with study, devotional readings, and prayer, as the night's holiness is believed to make it a very good time for prayers to be answered. The last ten days of Ramadan are considered a particularly spiritually important time, as any of the days may be Lailat ul Kadr, and thus worshippers strive to be especially observant during this period. Some Muslims participate in a spiritual retreat called *itikaf*, where they spend all ten days in the mosque reading the Quran and praying.

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/what-is-laylat-al-qadr-the-night-of-power_us_55a3d9c9e4b0ecec71bc7069)

Lailat al Miraj

Lailat al Miraj commemorates the Prophet Muhammad's nighttime journey from Mecca to the ‘Farthest Mosque’ in Jerusalem where he ascended to heaven, was purified, and given the instruction for Muslims to pray five times daily.

Today Lailat al Miraj is observed by Muslims as one of the most important events in the history of Islam. Muslims may attend special prayer services at a mosque, or they may commemorate

the holiday privately at home by telling the story to children or reciting special nighttime prayers.

(http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/05/lailat-al-miraj_n_885922.html)

M-P

Mawlid an Nabi

Mawlid an-Nabi (also known as Milad an-Nabi) celebrates Prophet Muhammad's birthday. This occasion was not celebrated in the early times of Islam and is therefore unevenly celebrated today, with great and festive celebrations in many Muslim countries (e.g. Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey) and none in others (e.g. Saudi Arabia). Poetry in praise of God and the Prophet are recited with love and devotion. Since the early Muslim community didn't celebrate the birthday of the Prophet, many scholars consider these festivities as Bid'ah (innovation). Other scholars justify it as it is an opportunity to bring Muslims together and highlight the message, mission, character, and life of Prophet Muhammad.

(<http://www.ciogc.org/index.php/aboutislam/islam-101/67-muslim-celebrations>)

Pesach/Passover

Pesach, or Passover, is the first of the three major festivals with both historical and agricultural significance (the other two are Shavuot and Sukkot). Passover celebrates the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt after 400 years of slavery. Agriculturally, it represents the beginning of the harvest season in Israel. Passover lasts for seven days (eight days outside of Israel). The first and last days of the holiday (first two days and last two days in communities outside of Israel) are days on which traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work. Work is permitted on the intermediate days.

Throughout Passover, Jews eat *matzah* -- flat, cracker-like unleavened bread made from only flour and water, and cooked very quickly -- and they refrain from eating *chametz*, or leavened grain products like typical bread. Many clean their homes thoroughly before the holiday begins, to completely remove all chametz from their possession. The removal of *chametz* and the eating of *matzah* commemorate that the Jews left Egypt in a hurry and did not have time to let their bread rise.

On the first night of Passover (first two nights in communities outside Israel), Jews have a *seder*, a festive meal that involves eating symbolic foods and reading texts to tell and discuss the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The *seder* is one of the most widely observed Jewish rituals.

(<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidaya.html>)

R

Ramadan

Ramadan is celebrated during the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. Fasting for the month of

Ramadan is one of the 5 pillars of the Islamic faith. Ramadan is regarded as a commemoration of the Prophet Mohammed's (peace be upon him) first revelation of the Qur'an. The Muslim calendar is a lunar calendar, which means that Ramadan shifts by about 10 days every year. During Ramadan, observing Muslims refrain from food, drink and intimate relations from dawn until dusk. During Ramadan, Muslims are encouraged to increase their worship, spirituality, volunteering, compassion, charity, and gift giving.

The daily life of a Muslim in Ramadan involves waking up before dawn to eat, prepare for the fast and make morning prayers. While the sun is up, Muslims refrain from eating, drinking, and sexual relations. Throughout the day, Muslims continue to worship as much as possible while fulfilling their daily obligations like work. Reading the Qur'an every day during Ramadan is a big part of worship for most Muslims. After sunset, the evening prayers are recited and the fast is broken in a meal known as iftar. Communal iftar meals are often held.

(<http://www.ciogc.org/index.php/aboutislam/ramadan>)

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year, is both a time of rejoicing and of serious introspection, a time to celebrate the completion of another year while also taking stock of one's life. Families often gather for festive meals on Rosh Hashanah. Many go to synagogue in the mornings, and some in the evenings as well, for prayer services that include special liturgy. The *shofar*, a ram's horn that makes a trumpet-like sound, is blown during Rosh Hashanah morning services as a wake-up call to introspect and repent. Rosh Hashanah is portrayed in traditional liturgy as the day in which God examines one's deeds and inscribes one's fate for the upcoming year. Another traditional theme of Rosh Hashanah is God's sovereignty. Traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work on Rosh Hashanah. The two days of Rosh Hashanah usher in the Ten Days of Repentance, also known as the Days of Awe, which culminate in the major fast day of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

(<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/rosh-hashanah-101/>)

S

Shavuot

Shavuot is the Hebrew word for "weeks" and refers to the Jewish festival marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, which occurs seven weeks after Passover. Shavuot, like many other Jewish holidays, began as an ancient agricultural festival that marked the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat harvest. In ancient times, Shavuot, along with Pesach and Sukkot, was a pilgrimage festival during which Israelites brought crop offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem. Today, it is a celebration of Torah, education, and actively choosing to participate in Jewish life. Traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work on Shavuot. Many go to synagogue in the mornings, and some in the evenings as well, for prayer services. It is traditional to eat dairy foods on Shavuot. Another common Shavuot practice is to stay up all night on the first night of the holiday studying Torah.

<http://www.reformjudaism.org/shavuot>)

Shemini Atzeret

Shemini Atzeret takes place on the eighth day after the beginning of Sukkot, and is a day on which traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work and travel. In synagogue services, Jews recite a prayer for rain on Shemini Atzeret.

Simchat Torah

On Simchat Torah, which immediately follows Shemini Atzeret, Jews celebrate the completion of the annual cycle of reading the Torah publically in synagogues, and begin the cycle anew. As part of the celebration, the Torah scrolls are taken from the ark where they are stored, and carried around the synagogue seven times as congregants dance and sing around them. This is done both in the evening and the morning of the holiday. During prayer services on Simchat Torah morning, the concluding section of the Torah, from the book of Deuteronomy, is chanted, and immediately following, the opening section of the Torah, from the book of Genesis, is chanted. Simchat Torah is a day on which traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work.

<http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/simchat-torah-and-shmini-atzeret>)

Sukkot

Sukkot, a Hebrew word meaning "booths" or "huts," commemorates the 40 years that the Israelites wandered in the desert after the giving of the Torah atop Mt. Sinai, and is also an agricultural festival to give thanks for the fall harvest. Prior to Sukkot, Jews erect a *sukkah*, a small, temporary booth or hut, in which they eat festive meals and sometimes sleep in during the holiday. Dwelling in these temporary structures is reminiscent of the temporary dwellings used while wandering through the desert. Inviting guests to meals in one's *sukkah* is a common practice. Sukkot is the only Jewish festival associated with an explicit commandment to rejoice. During the first two days of Sukkot (first day only in Israel), traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work and travel. Many attend synagogue services in the mornings that involve special festival prayers, including rituals in which four plant species—three kinds of leaves, and a citron fruit – are held and shaken together. This ritual act is performed each day of the holiday, and is often seen as symbolic of fertility and of unity.

www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/sukkot)

T

Tisha B'Av

Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning and a fast day, which primarily commemorates the destruction of the first and second ancient Temples in Jerusalem, which were the focal points of Jewish life

until their destructions. Both were destroyed on the ninth day of the Hebrew calendar month of Av, the first by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., and the second by the Romans in 70 C.E. The book of Lamentations is chanted in synagogues on the evening of Tisha B'Av.

(<http://www.jewfaq.org/holidayd.htm>)

Tu B'Shvat

Tu B'Shvat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th (*tu*) of the Hebrew month of Sh'vat. Scholars believe that originally Tu B'Shvat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. In the 17th century, Kabbalists (Jewish mystics) created a ritual for Tu B'Shvat known as a Tu B'Shvat *seder*, which involves eating symbolic foods and reading and discussing texts, similar to a Passover *seder*. Today, many Jews hold a modern version of the Tu B'Shvat *seder* each year. The holiday also has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones and friends.

(<http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/tu-bishvat>)

W

Waqf al Arafat – Hajj Day

This day is the culminating event of the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Day of Arafat falls on the 2nd day of pilgrimage rituals. At dawn of this day, nearly 2 million Muslim pilgrims will make their way from Mecca to a nearby hillside and plain called Mount Arafat and the Plain of Arafat. It was from this site that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, gave his famous Farewell Sermon in his final year of life.

During the entire day, from dawn until sunset, Muslim pilgrims stand in earnest supplication and devotion, praying for God's abundant forgiveness. Tears are shed readily as those who gather make repentance and seek God's mercy, recite words of prayer and remembrance, and gather together as equals before their Lord. Muslims around the world who are not participating in the pilgrimage often spend this day in fasting and devotion.

(<http://islam.about.com/cs/hajj/f/dayofarafat.htm>)

Y

Yom Kippur means "Day of Atonement" and refers to the annual Jewish observance of fasting, prayer and repentance. Part of the High Holidays, which also includes Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. Fasting on Yom Kippur enables one

to put aside their physical desires to concentrate on spiritual needs through prayer, repentance and self-improvement. In the days leading up to Yom Kippur, Jews ask forgiveness from those whom they have wronged throughout the past year. Yom Kippur is a time dedicated to reconciliation with God, fellow human beings, and oneself. Many attend prayer services on the evening of Yom Kippur, and during the entire next day of Yom Kippur. Prayer services conclude with a blast of the *shofar*, or ram's horn, at sundown at the end of the holiday. Traditionally-observant Jews refrain from work on Yom Kippur.

(<http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/yom-kippur-day-atonement>)

Yom Hashoa

Yom Hashoa, Holocaust Remembrance Day, is dedicated to memorializing Holocaust victims and remembering the atrocities of the Holocaust. It falls on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Many Jewish communities hold commemorative programs.

Twelve Keys of Spiritual Activism¹²

Humanity Healing's Twelve Keys of Spiritual Activism

The embrace of the path of Spiritual Activism enables individuals or groups to develop the noble qualities of compassion, wisdom, and gratitude. It is in itself a Path of Transformation - a Spiritual Blueprint for living. We can shift our perspectives of reality through seeking service beyond self by practicing the Gifts of Service. The core dynamics behind the Spiritual Keys of Activism are creativity, adaptability, understanding and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin." ~ Mother Theresa

The 12 Keys of Spiritual Activism

1. All Action *MUST* be based on Compassion.

When championing a cause, the mindset must be altruistic, and the motivating emotion must be positive. Spiritual Activism is an action for the benefit of something, not against something.

"When you have a pro-peace rally, I will be there." ~Mother Teresa's response to a question about why she did not attend an anti-war rally.

2. Compassion flows from the understanding of the connection between all living beings.

We are all connected through our shared humanity. When you learn to see that our differences are superficial and our similarities manifest, sympathy (or worse, pity) gives way to compassion. Our actions shift from one of "us helping them" to one of "for the good of All." We become one.

"The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another." ~Thomas Merton

3. Compassion must be applied with wisdom.

There are more causes that exist than an individual or group can be involved with. It is important to choose your causes carefully. Learn to act instead of react.

"That is true wisdom, to know how to alter one's mind when the occasion demands it." ~Terence

4. Apply synergy and teamwork to accomplish goals.

¹² Humanity Healing – permission to reprint granted. <http://humanityhealing.net/guiding-principles/12-keys-spiritual-activism/>

Synergy is the process where two or more actions combine to produce an effect greater than the sum of its individual parts. Like ripples in a pond, spiritual actions combine and build on each other to magnify an effect beyond what each could do individually. Whenever possible, team up with others to acquire a multifaceted and more holistic approach.

"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." ~Unknown

5. Spiritual Activism is the pursuit of service for the good of all, not for the advancement or benefit of individuals or selected communities

The mindset behind your actions must be noble, holistic, universal and non-partisan. Be mindful that ego and self-service have no place in Spiritual Activism.

"Common folk, not statesmen, nor generals nor great men of affairs, but just simple plain men and women, can do something to build a better, peaceful world. The future hope of peace lies with such personal service." ~Henry Cadbury

"Reverence for Life affords me my fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, assisting, and enhancing life and that to destroy, harm, or to hinder life is evil. Affirmation of the world -- that is an affirmation of the will to live, which appears in phenomenal forms all around me -- is only possible for me in that I give myself out for other life." ~Albert Schweitzer

6. Pursue Integrity, Honesty and Dignity in the conduct of your Actions

Embrace mindfulness in the application of your activities and be aware of how your actions may be perceived by others. Machiavelli's "The ends justify the means" has no place in Spiritual Activism. If our methods are not noble, our results will not be either. Practice Spiritual Transparency, allowing negative energies to bypass your system without harming it.

"Integrity is doing the right thing even if no one is watching." ~Unknown

7. Do not defame your detractors or those who doubt you

A confrontational approach leads to a defensive reaction. Approach others with openness and compassion in your heart. Build on the commonalities between you instead of focusing on the differences. As much as possible, detach yourself from the results of your actions. Aspire to always be a peacemaker.

"Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress." ~Mahatma Gandhi

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." ~Mahatma Gandhi

8. Raising another up raises you up as well

Helping another becomes a form of self-love as well as an expression of outward love. This becomes an upwardly spiraling cycle of increasing awareness, connection, compassion, involvement, capacity, and back to increasing awareness.

“Oh, Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; To be understood, as to understand; To be loved, as to love; For it is in giving that we receive, It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.” ~Saint Francis Prayer

“Compassionate action involves working with ourselves as much as working with others.” ~ Pema Chodron

9. Learn to listen to your heart and not your mind

You mind may only see the problem. Your heart will always feel the solution. Learn to act with Faith and cultivate a loving perception when facing collective problems.

“Faith is taking the first step, even when you don't see the whole staircase.” ~Martin Luther King, Jr.

10. Search out viable and sustainable solutions

Seek out solutions that maintain or restore the dignity of individual humans and their communities. The goal of Spiritual Activism is to raise another up, not make them dependent.

“Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he eats for a lifetime.” ~Jesus

“We have not inherited the world from our forefathers. We have borrowed it from our children.” ~Kashmiri proverb

11. Do not judge yourself simply by the results of your actions

Maintain a sense of detachment as to overall results. Embrace mindfulness as you intentionally diminish a judging attitude while keeping watchfulness on the gates of your heart. The ultimate goal of Spiritual Activism is to unconditionally raise the understanding and support of Humanity, with no exceptions. This achievement is larger than any individual. While individual projects can be completed, the sum is so much greater than its parts. Learn to see yourself not on where you have reached, but on the Path; you are traveling. There is real fulfillment in just being called to serve humanitarian and spiritual causes.

“The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.” ~Thich Nhat Hanh

12. Let Metta be the motivation for your Actions

If you cultivate Metta (the practice of loving-kindness) in your heart, you will succeed. The intention that is the motivating force behind your actions is paramount. Start from a position of pure and altruistic love.

*“A positive future cannot emerge from the mind of anger or despair” ~HH, the Dalai Lama
“Kindness in giving creates Love.” ~Lao Tzu*

Suggested Readings on Interfaith Dialogue

- Aslen, Reza and HahnTapper, Aaron J. *Muslims and Jews in America*. PALGRAVE MACMILLIAN, 2011. A book that contains case examples in Muslim & Jewish relationship building programs.
- Michelle LeBaron. *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for A Changing World*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Michelle LeBaron and Venashri Pillay. *Conflict Across Cultures: A Unique Experience of Bridging Differences*. Intercultural Press, 2006.
- Roger A. Lohmann & Jon Van Til. *Resolving Community Conflicts and Problems. Public Deliberation and Sustained Dialogue*. Columbia University Press, 2011.
- Lisa Schirch & David Campt. *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects. A Practical, Hands-On Guide*. Good Books, 2007.
- Anderson, Leona M and Pamela Dickey Young. *Women & Religious Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. A text that examines the world's major religious traditions from the perspective of women. Includes nine chapters and four case studies. An excellent study resource for women's groups.
- Eck Diana & The Pluralism Project. *On Common Ground: World Religions in America*. 3RD Edition. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2008. This CD-ROM provides the history, beliefs, and current practices of 15 religious traditions. Includes an anthology of documents for further study, as well as a geographic protract of the American religious landscape.
- Hackman, Bud and Rori Picker Neiss. *Interactive Faith. The Essential Interreligious Community-Building Handbook*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths, 2008. A practical guide to the methods and resources of the interfaith movement.
- Lonsdale, Akasha. *Do I Kneel or Do I Bow?* London: Kuperard, 2010. Ideal for those who visit houses of worship or travelers, this book is a guide to interfaith etiquette that gives concise information on values, customs, and beliefs, as well as the cultural practices of various religious traditions.
- MacKenzie, Don, Ted Falcon, and Jamal Rahman. *Getting to the Heart of Interfaith*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths, 2009. From the perspective of their own faith commitment, a pastor, a rabbi, and a sheikh, explore their differences and interfaith cooperation.
- Mays, Rebecca Kratz, ed. *Interfaith Dialogue at the Grass Roots*. Philadelphia: Ecumenical Press, 2008. This book is a practical handbook on interfaith dialogue for congregations. Each section has reflection questions and offers further resources.

- McCarthy, Kate. *Interfaith Encounters in America*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007. The chapters in this book explore the many ways people in the United States experience interfaith encounter, through faith communities, families, community groups, online discussions, etc.
- Patel, Eboo. *Acts of Faith. The Story of an American Muslim. The Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007. The spiritual autobiography of the founder of the Interfaith Youth Core, and a leading visionary of religious pluralism.
- Sacks, Jonathan. *The Dignity of Difference. How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. London: Continuum, 2002. Now a classic, this book is one of the first major statements by a Jewish leader on the ethics of globalization. A bold statement for supporting the need to make a space for difference; even--and especially--at the heart of the monotheistic imagination.
- Swidler, Leonard, Khalid Duran, Rueven Fire-stone. *Triologue. Jews, Christians and Muslims in Dialogue*. New London: Twenty-Third Publications, 2007. Christian, Jewish, and Muslim professors present the challenges of interfaith dialogue from their perspectives.

Workbooks

- **For One Great Peace Study Guide** abrahamicfaithspeacemaking.com/.../For-One-Great-Peace-Study-Guide
http://www.academia.edu/2713616/For_One_Great_Peace_Study_Guide_A_Peacemaking_Curriculum_from_the_Perspective_of_the_Abrahamic_Faiths
- **For Encountering Other Faiths** An Introduction to the Art of
<http://www.interfaithcenterpa.org/documents/workbook.pdf>
- **Children of Abraham** Jews and Muslims in Conversation-A dialogue curriculum prepared in partnership by the Union for Reform Judaism and the Islamic Society of North America http://www.isna.net/uploads/1/5/7/4/15744382/children_of_abraham.pdf
- **Dialogues Across Divides** <https://whatisessential.org/resource/fostering-dialogue-across-divides-nuts-and-bolts-guide-essential-partners>
- **Speak Up! Southern Poverty Law Center Guide**
http://www.riseupandcallhername.com/wp-content/uploads/splcspeak_up_handbook_0.pdf
- **Speak Up at School! Southern Poverty Law Center**
<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/speak-up-at-school>

Suggested Books on Religious Themes

- Ali, Tariq. *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree*
- Nafisi, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*
- Abdul-Ghafur, Saleemah *Living Islam Out Loud*
- Zobair, Jennifer *Painted Hands-A Novel*
- Wilsom. G. Willow *The Butterfly Mosque: A Young American Women's Journey to Love and Islam*
- Rehman, Sabeeha *Threading my Prayer Rug*
- Pogrebin, Letty Cottin *Deborah, Golda and Me*
- Steinberg, Milton *As a Driven Leaf*
- Diamant, Anita *The Red Tent*
- Potok, Chaim *The Chosen*
- Kates, Judith *Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a Sacred Story*
- Idliby, Ranya Tabari *The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew—Three Women Search for Understanding*
- Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck *Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*
- Feiler, Bruce *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*
- Dysert Zobair, Levin: *Faithfully Feminist: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Feminists on Why We Stay*

Films

Chapters interested in showing films for public educational purposes need to check out the licensing requirements in advance. Special rules and pricing may apply. Your faith community may already be part of a licensing agreement through conferences, jurisdictions, dioceses, affiliated organizations, or some other organizational structure.

- **Amreeka**. Directed by Cherien Dabis. National Geographic Society, Virgil Films, 2009. 96 minutes. Life in America from the perspective of Palestinian immigrants; a single mother and her teenage son.
- **America's New Religious Landscape**, Bob Abernathy, Executive Producer. Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2003. 60 minutes. Through stories, interviews, and images, this documentary showcases the “new religious landscape” of the United States, including communities of Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Hasidim.
- **Arranged**. Diane Crespo & Stefan Schaefer, Directors. Film Movement, 2007. 89 minutes. This film enters on the friendship between an Orthodox Jewish woman and a Muslim woman who meet as first-year teachers at a public school in Brooklyn. Over the course of the year they learn they share much in common - not least of which is that they are both going through the process of arranged marriages. Available at www.filmmovement.com
- **Elie Wiesel**, Produced and directed by Robert Gardner. Lives and Legacies Films, 2002. 60 minutes. Elie Wiesel reflects on his life, work, and the future of humanity in this film that re-visits many of his experiences, including the horrors of the Holocaust.
- **Fremont U.S.A.**, Produced and directed by Rachel Antell and Elinor Pierce. Narrated by Diana L. Eck. The Pluralism Project, 2002. 57 minutes. This film documents civic engagement and interfaith action in the city of Fremont, California; a city where the religious landscape was transformed through immigration.
- **The Imam & the Pastor**. Directed by Alan Channer. FLTfilms, 2006. 40 minutes. The moving story of the peace-building efforts between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria, this film depicts the commitment of religious men to end killing and bring healing to their communities, village by village.
- **The Jewish People: A Story of Survival**. Directed by Andrew Goldberg. Two Cats Productions, 2008. 60 minutes. The story of the survival of the Jewish people from slavery to the loss of their homeland; from exile to anti-Semitism.
- **Little Mosque on the Prairie**. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), 2006...present. This CBC comedy television series focuses on the relationships between

the Muslim and Christian communities in the fictional town of Mercy, Saskatchewan. A humorous look at relationships, faith, values, family, and love in a local community. Available from the CBC shop: www.cbeshop.ca or on the show's website, www.cbc.ca/littlemosque.

- **New Muslim Cool.** Film by Jennifer Maytorena Taylor. Specific Pictures, 2009. 83 minutes. A film centered around the life of Puerto-Rican American Muslim hip-hop star Hamza Perez, as he reaches for a deeper understanding of his faith and confronts the realities of the post 9/11 world. His spiritual journey unfolds as he builds a family, works as a prison chaplain, and finds way to serve his community.
- **The Power of Forgiveness.** A Film by Martin Doblmeier. Journey Films, 2007. 78 minutes. A documentary on the process of forgiveness and reconciliation featuring Elie Wiesel, Thich Nhat Hahn, Thomas Moore,
- **Desmond Tutu, and other religious leaders from a variety of traditions.** The film follows people who testify to the personal and spiritual transformation (and the challenges) that accompany true forgiveness at Ground Zero, Northern Island, the Amish countryside, and in other contexts.
- **Renewal. Stories from America's Religious-Environmental Movement.** Produced by Marty Ostrow and Terry Kay Rockefeller, Fine Cut Productions, for the Renewal Project, 2007. 110 Minutes. A film featuring 9 different stories about religious environmental action and stewardship. It is possible to show one, several or all of the stories. The film is designed to engage people of faith in dialogue about environmental action and break down the barriers between secular activists and people of faith. Available from the Renewal Project: www.renewalproject.net.
- **A Son's Sacrifice.** A film by Yoni Brook and Musa Syeed. Foment Films, 2006. 26 minutes. The story of a young American Muslim who struggles to take over his father's slaughterhouse in New York City. The young man must confront his mixed heritage and his father's traditional community.
- **Stand Up: Muslim American Comics Come of Age - America At A Crossroads.** Produced by Jeff Bierber and Dalton Delan. WETA Washington, 2007. 1 hour. The film explores the emergence of Muslim American and Arab American comedians and how they use humor to take on stereotypes about religion and politics.
- **Standing Together.** The Christian-Muslim Consultative Group of Southern California, 2009. This manual and DVD program provides a comprehensive program on Muslim-Christian dialogue for local communities. The kit has easy to follow facilitator instructions. Available from www.thecmcg.org.
- **Three Faiths, One God. Judaism, Christianity, Islam.** A documentary by Gerald Krell & Meyer Odze. Auteur Productions, LTD, 2005. 120 minutes. A poignant documentary that discusses the differences and similarities of the Abrahamic faith traditions. Scenes include different voices from each faith group, as well as settings. Includes a study guide.

- **Ties That Bind.** Ann E. Feldman, creator and executive producer. Artistic Circles, 2006. 59 minutes. This documentary and outreach curriculum features seven women spiritual leaders from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions who reach across the boundaries of faith, race and nationality. The film also addresses the emerging role of women in interfaith dialogue. The package includes a detailed study guide for use with local groups. Contact artisticcircles@aol.com.
- **Welcome to Shelbyville.** Kim Snyder, Director and Producer. Be.BeCause Foundation ACTIVE VOICE, 2010. 67 minutes. The film offers a glimpse of America at a crossroads. In one town in the heart of the bible belt, a community grapples with rapidly changing demographics. Longtime African-American and White residents are challenged with how to integrate with a growing Latino population and the more recent arrival of hundreds of Somali refugees of Muslim faith. Through the vibrant and colorful characters of Shelbyville, the film explores the immigrant integration and the interplay between race, religion and identity. Ultimately, the story is an intimate portrayal of a community's struggle to understand what it means to be American.

Suggested Websites

There are many websites related to interfaith dialogue. Those listed here are a few of those most commonly cited.

- 9/11 Unity Walk, www.911UnityWalk.org
- Auburn Theological Seminary, www.auburnseminary.org
- Beyond Tolerance, www.BeyondTolerance.org
- Center for Interfaith Inquiry, www.centerforinquiry.org
- Center for Interfaith Relations, www.interfaith.org
- Center for the Study of Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations, www.merrimack.edu/JCM
- Center for World Thanksgiving, www.thanksgiving.org
- Claremont School of Theology, www.cst.edu
- The Dialogue Project, www.thedialogueproject.org
- Essential Partners, <https://www.whatisessential.org>
- Facing History, www.facinghistory.org
- Faith House, www.faithhousemanhattan.org
- Family Promise (formerly the Interfaith Hospitality Network), www.familypromise.org
- Hartford Institution for Religion Research, www.hirr.hartsem.edu
- Intercultural & Interfaith Calendar (Developed by a Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Member), <https://www.interfaith-calendar.org/index.htm>
- The Interfaith Alliance, www.interfaithalliance.org
- Interfaith Center at the Presidio, www.interfaith-presidio.org
- Interfaith Center of New York, www.interfaithcenter.org
- Interfaith Youth Core, www.ifyc.org
- The Islamic Center of North America, www.isna.net
- Judaism 101, www.jewfaq.org

- Kaleidoscope Institute, www.kscopeinstitute.org
- Multifaith Action Society, www.multifaithaction.org
- Multifaith Calendar, <https://multifaithaction.jimdo.com/multifaith-calendar/>
- Museum of World Religions, Taiwan, https://www.mwr.org.tw/mwr_en
- National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, www.ncdd.org
- North American Interfaith Network, www.nain.org
- PBS Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics
- Pluralism Project, www.pluralism.org
- Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, <https://acmcu.georgetown.edu>
- Public Conversations Project, <https://civicus.org>
- Religions for Peace, www.rfp.org
- Sacred Space International, <https://sacredspace.world>
- Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, www.sosspeace.org
- State of Formation, www.stateofformation.org
- Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, www.tanenbaum.org
- Teaching Tolerance, www.tolerance.org
- Temple of Understanding, www.templeofunderstanding.org
- United Communities of Spirit, www.origin.org
- United Religions Initiative, www.uri.org
- United States Conference of the World Council of Churches, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/north-america/united-states-of-america>
- United States Institute of Peace, www.usip.org
- World Congress of Faiths, www.worldfaiths.org

Be sure to become part of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom Facebook group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/516079245151121/>