

January 2016 Message from Rabbi Dubin

Considering the fact that at no time in the entirety of all American history has there ever been a moment when the Jewish population has exceeded 3% (today it hovers around 2¼%), it is somewhere between remarkable and miraculous to see just how influential and indispensable our People have been to the development of our national identity and civilization. This is a point that has not been lost to the students of the Mike Weiner School of Jewish Learning.

As I've described in previous newsletters, each Sunday we focus on a specific theme, which relates to the contributions of a different American Jew (or Jews) who was either born that week or had a particular milestone contribution that week. In the process, our children of the JCNWJ have come to appreciate that were it not for the Jews of America, our country – indeed our entire world – would no doubt be the lesser for their absence.

Here is a chart of some of the Americans we have studied, and the Jewish lessons we have extrapolated from their lives:

DATE	LANDMARK JEWISH-AMERICAN EVENT	EXTRAPOLATED JEWISH THEME
9/20	Hank Greenberg & Sandy Koufax choosing not to play baseball on Yom Kippur	Prioritizing Jewish observance.
10/11	Ralph Lauren (born: October 14, 1939) & Isaac Mizrahi (born: October 14, 1961)	History of Jews in the American Garment Industry.
10/25	Jonas Salk (born: October 28, 1914)	Bikkur Holim: Jewish mandate to provide care and visit the sick.
11/1	Statue of Liberty (dedicated: October 28, 1886)	Emma Lazarus's "The New Colossus" and the Jewish mandate to welcome the stranger.
11/15	Louis Brandeis (born: November 13, 1856) and Felix Frankfurter (born: November 15, 1882)	Judaism as a legal system
12/6	Ira Gershwin (born: December 6, 1896), Otto Preminger (born: December 5, 1905), & Sammy Davis, Jr. (born: December 8, 1925)	We studied Porgy & Bess (Gershwin wrote the lyrics, Preminger produced the movie, and Davis starred in the movie) as a springboard to discuss how fundamentally Jews understand how it feels to be on the periphery.

12/20	Captain America Comics #1 went on sale (December 20, 1940). Captain America was the creation of Joe Simon (born Hymie Simon) and Jack Kirby (born Jacob Kurtzberg)	We studied the overwhelming Jewish influences on the heroes of DC and Marvel Comics and the Jewish battles for justice they take on.
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I share these lessons with you for a reason: On January 31st, I will be offering the first in a series of Sunday Morning Adult Ed sessions on the same theme our children will be learning that week. Hopefully this list of previous themes will whet your appetite for what is to come.

Registration is not required, nor is regular attendance necessary, but RSVPs would be appreciated. More details (and invitations) will be distributed in mid-January. We hope to see you there!

Rabbi Dubin

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