

Frequently Asked Questions About Conversion

If I convert with a Reform rabbi, will all rabbis consider me a Jew?

Reform, Reconstructionist and, under certain circumstances, Conservative rabbis recognize the validity of Reform conversions. Most Orthodox rabbis, however, do not recognize non-Orthodox conversions.

Who can answer my questions about conversion?

You can call the New Beginnings coordinator, Janice Gutfreund at 734-769-7388 or email mjg@tir.com. You can also speak directly with Rabbi Robert Levy or Devon Fitzig, Director of Congregational Services at 734-665-4744.

If I decide I want to become a Jew, what is my first step?

First, make an appointment with Rabbi Levy. He will help you explore the process and implications of becoming a Jew.

How long does it take to convert?

Generally, the conversion process allows each student to experience the full cycle of a Jewish year. However, the length of each individual's process varies according to his or her circumstances. Once you are well-established on your journey, and feel ready to commit to Jewish living and embracing your Jewish identity, you and Rabbi Levy will determine your time-line to conversion.

Do I need to be a Temple member to convert?

No. Being a member of the Temple is not a requirement; however, we do encourage Temple affiliation for support and community.

If I take a basic Judaism course will I be expected to convert?

No. These courses are open to anyone who wants to learn more about Judaism. There is no further expectation of people taking the course.

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Have you
ever
thought
about
being
Jewish?

**QUESTIONS ABOUT
CONVERSION**

Welcome!

Judaism is a vibrant and exciting religion that contrary to popular belief, does welcome seekers and converts. Even Abraham and Sarah, founders of Judaism, were Jews by choice. Temple Beth Emeth welcomes your interest in Judaism and hopes to be a partner with you on your journey.

Steps to Conversion:

1. Initial Contact

If you are interested in exploring the possibility of conversion, you should set up an initial appointment with Rabbi Levy by calling 734-665-4744. During this meeting you will share your religious background and discuss your motivations for conversion.

2. Study

You will work with the rabbi to determine an individualized course of study leading to conversion. Typically study begins with the Basic Judaism course offered at the Temple. Your course of study may also include other formal courses offered at Temple Beth Emeth as well as independent study with the rabbi.

3. New Beginnings Conversion Group

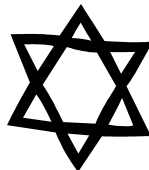
You will meet weekly with other conversion students and Janice Gutfreund, New Beginnings Coordinator, for five sessions to discuss issues related to conversion such as dealing with non-Jewish family members, creating a Jewish home and holiday issues.

Hands-on workshops and a group potluck Shabbat dinner as well as group attendance at services will be planned during the year.

4. Communal

Becoming a Jew involves developing your own relationship to God within a Jewish framework.

You are encouraged to participate in synagogue and general Jewish community life as much as possible. You should attend Shabbat services, High Holy Day services, Learner's services, Torah Study, and other religious, spiritual, educational, cultural and social offerings as often as you can in order to experience the breadth and variety of Jewish religious life.



5. Concluding Rituals and Ceremonies

The rituals of conversion allow you to enter the covenant of Judaism by proclaiming your faith and commitment to the Jewish people. The concluding ritual includes the following:

1. Bet Din—A panel of three clergy join with you to affirm your journey.
2. Mikveh—immersion in a ritual bath.
3. In addition, male converts undergo a symbolic circumcision. The rabbi will discuss this with you.

Converts are offered the opportunity to do an *aliyah* (bless the Torah) or bimah honor (lighting candles, etc.) during Shabbat or holiday services.

6. Follow-up

You are encouraged to maintain contact with the rabbi and Devon after your conversion. This ensures that any unforeseen issues will be addressed, and provides an opportunity for further study and for finding additional paths of involvement in the Jewish community.