

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

“A Jewish View of Love, Sex and Relationships”

“A Jewish View of Love, Sex and Relationships” provides opportunities for students to obtain clear and accurate information about human sexuality, to develop positive and healthy approaches to their own sexuality and relationships, to learn valuable information that will help them make responsible decisions and to understand Judaism’s approach to sex and sexuality. In addition the program will provide parents with information, resources and tools to begin or continue a discussion of sex and sexuality with their children.

The goals of this program are:

- Provide a forum through which parents and teens can better communicate their concerns and questions regarding human sexuality.
- Sensitize our students to the different terminology related to gender and sexuality, and learn how words inform our actions and influence our decisions.
- Inform our students regarding the biological issues surrounding their sexuality, including safer sex practices, anatomical functions and sexually transmitted infections.
- Heighten our students’ awareness of our sexuality’s role in destructive practices, such as date rape and sexual harassment, and provide strategies for reducing the likelihood that date rape and sexual harassment will occur in our society.
- Present to our students the range of human sexuality and intimate sexual expression that occurs beyond sexual intercourse.
- Give a Jewish context and values system to the thought process and decision making that students will employ in their present and future encounters with sexuality and sexual activity.

The structure and content of the proposed program is three fold:

Part I is a two-hour Parent Session to take place on Wednesday, November 13, 2019, led by Dr. Charles Miron and Amy Miron, M.S at Temple Judea. This program will introduce parents to the subject matter and give them the information that will subsequently be relayed to their children about sex and sexuality on the retreat. The program will also address their fears, concerns, reservations, hopes and goals for the forthcoming teen retreat and how to continue the dialogue after the retreat.

Part II is a weekend retreat for 9th through 12th graders, November 15th-17th 2019, at American Jewish University. This retreat will be jointly facilitated by the Miron and staff, including clergy and educators such as Rabbi Rosenstein. It is our intention that this retreat, and the safe and supportive environment created by this program, will encourage honest answers to all questions and provide our teenagers with an opportunity to develop healthy attitudes and values not only by providing a Jewish context within which they can openly and honestly voice their concerns, but also by presenting resources to help them think through their questions.

Part III is a two-hour Parent-Teen Dialogue Session to take place at camp on the Sunday, November 17th, at AJU. Led by Dr. Charles Miron and Amy Miron, M.S., the session will focus on communicating what the teens learned and giving both parents and teens tools to continue or begin the conversation at home and in the context of their family’s values.

Why this Program:

While all 50 states mandate sex education in public schools, many public and private school teachers find themselves facilitating activities and initiating sensitive discussions in an area in which they have little or no professional training. Furthermore, these discussions and the information they contain are presented in the highly charged and emotionally unsupportive place of the high school classroom; where it is difficult for teens to share and discuss their feelings openly and safely without fear of peer embarrassment or subjugation. While schools must continue to provide this critical information about sex and sexuality to students, we at Temple Judea believe that the synagogue can and must lend its safe, supportive and sensitive voice to the process of educating teens about sex and sexuality.

Recent studies by leading demographers and sociologists indicate that we are at a critical juncture in the need for effective, clear and responsible sex education for our teens. Teens are becoming sexually active at younger and younger ages. They are bombarded by the media and the internet with sexually charged and sexually explicit information at nearly every turn but given fewer and fewer tools to learn to deal with and process the information. Add to these factors, the rise of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Infections (STDs/STIs), the fact that people under 25 are estimated to make up half of all new HIV infections occurring in the U.S. and that HIV/AIDS remains a leading cause of death among young people and the moral and religious imperative of our tradition to respond and help is without question.

Therefore, we – the clergy, staff and lay leaders of Temple Judea - view sex education of young people to be a matter of *pikkuach nefesh* - the Jewish mandate to do whatever is necessary to save a life. Furthermore, we believe that the synagogue, perhaps more than any other institution, serves as an appropriate context for an exploration of a values based discussion of human sexuality because of the honest and comprehensive approach through which Judaism addresses our roles as sexual human beings.

About the Staff and Program:

"A Jewish View of Love, Sex and Relationships" has its roots as a program developed more than 20 years ago by the Unitarian Universalist Church and Washington Hebrew Congregation. Over the years, the program has been adopted and modified by a handful of Jewish congregations (primarily on the East Coast) and overseen by Dr. Charles Miron and Amy Miron, M.S.

Amy and Charles Miron are a Baltimore-based husband and wife team of sexuality and relationship educators and AASECT certified Diplomates in sex therapy, who have been working in the field of sexuality for more than three decades. They are the co-authors of [How To Talk With Teens About Love, Relationships](#), and [S-E-X: A Guide for Parents](#) (published by Free Spirit, 2002 and distributed by JLM Distributors), the creators of Sex Ed Bingo (JLM Distributors, LLC), and the student workbook [Human Sexuality](#) (Prentice Hall, 1992).

In addition "A Jewish View of Love, Sex and Marriage" will be coordinated and co-facilitated by Rabbi Eric Rosenstein from Temple Judea and Cathy Gordon, the Religious School Director at WBT (whom I brought to WBT from Temple Judea). Their years of dedication and work with Jewish teens and parents and their established track records of innovation and accomplishment are well known within the Los Angeles Jewish community and stand as testament to the high level of commitment and professionalism dedicated to this project.

Wilshire Boulevard Temple is handling all of the administration of this weekend. To participate, click on the link provided [HERE](#) and register your child.