

RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF AMERICA – MONTREAL REGION
CONVERSION PROGRAMME

Geirut Committee:
Rabbi Sidney Shoham
Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz
Rabbi Moshe Jablon
Rabbi Michael Whitman

Administrator:
Edward Shostak

REQUIRED JEWISH LIBRARY AND READING

Artscroll Tannach
Artscroll Siddur and Machzor (Interlinear?)
Handbook of Jewish Thought, 2 volumes, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan
Maimonides Principles, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan
Living Each Week, Rabbi Abraham Twerski
Triumph of Jewish History, Rabbi Berel Wein
To Be a Jew, Rabbi Halevi Donin
To Pray as a Jew, Rabbi Halevi Donin
To Raise a Jewish Child, Rabbi Halevi Donin
Shemirat Shabbat, Rav Yehoshua Y. Neuwirth (English, 2 volumes)
The Sabbath, Dayan Grunfeld
Practical Guide to Kashrut, Rabbi S. Wagschal
The Book of our Heritage, Eliyahu Kitov
The Secret of Jewish Femininity, Tehilla Abramov
The Holocaust, Martin Gilbert

GEIRUT STUDY CURRICULUM

Theology and Beliefs

- Basic Theology, Nature of and Belief in God
- Fundamental Principles of Belief

Reading: Kaplan's Maimonides Principles and Handbook to Jewish Thought

Survey of Tannach

- Survey of major events and personalities in Tannach
- Process of Torah interpretation, Midrash vs. literal meaning

Reading: Artscroll Tannach, Living Each Week

Experience: Read weekly Parshah

Survey of Jewish History

- Major periods, movements, and personalities
- Picture of contemporary Jewish world

- Traditional ideologies
- Organizations
- Challenges
 - Assimilation, Inter-marriage
 - Jewish Education
 - Modern Anti-Semitism

Reading: Triumph of Jewish History, Rabbi Berel Wein; The Holocaust, Martin Gilbert

Israel and Zionism

- Place of Israel within Jewish thought
- History of Zionism
- Contemporary Picture of Israel
- Cities and sites
- Aliyah

Experience: Visit Israel, if possible

Halachic Process

- Structure and methodology
 - Written and Oral Torah
 - Biblical and Rabbinical laws
 - Minhag
 - Differing opinions within Halacha
 - Majority
 - Precedent
 - Extraordinary circumstances
 - Stringencies and leniencies
 - Role of a Rabbi
 - Accepting a Rabbi upon oneself
 - Asking a shailah
 - Personal matters
 - Talmud, Shulchan Aruch, Responsa
- Maintaining spirituality amid details of observance

Experience: Meet and discuss Halachic issues with sponsoring Rabbi

Prayer

- Philosophy
 - Why pray?
 - Do prayers affect God?
 - Response to prayer
- How to pray?
- Structure of service
- Selected prayers
 - Bircat HaShachar, Shema, Shemonei Esrei, Aleinu, etc.
- Kavanah
- Individual vs. communal prayer
- Spontaneous prayer

- Berachot for food and various
- Tallit, tefilin, tzitzit, head covering (men and woman)
- Hebrew (or outside the program)

Reading: To Pray as a Jew, Artscroll Siddur and Machzor

Experience: Regular synagogue attendance, daily prayer

Shabbat

- Meaning and Philosophy
- Positive Mitzvot of Shabbat (candles, kiddush, bircat habanim, etc...)
- 39 Melachot

Reading: Shemirat Shabbat, Rav Yehoshua Y. Neuwirth; The Sabbath, Dayan Grunfeld

Experience: Practice Shabbat, leaving out one detail

Chagim - Taught as they occur

- Meaning and Philosophy
- Positive Mitzvot
- Practical Observance

Reading: Book of Our Heritage

Experience: Practice Chagim

Kashrut

- Ethics and Spirituality
- Principles
- Practical Observance
- When to ask a question
- Staying informed
 - VAAD Mailing list, etc.

Reading: Practical Guide to Kashrut, Rabbi S. Wagschal

Experience: Implement practice of laws as they are learned, Tour a supermarket

Gender Issues

- Differentiation of men's and women's roles in Jewish life

Family Purity

- Tzniut
- Dating
- Marriage
- Intimacy
- Romance
- Shalom Bayit

Reading: The Secret of Jewish Femininity

Experience: Visit to a Mikveh

Ethics

- Business Ethics

- Medical Ethics
- Middot Tovot – Positive personality traits
- Slander, Gossip
- Confidentiality
- Law of the Land
- Modesty
 - Dress
 - Behaviour
- Honouring Parents
- Raising Children
- Gemilut Chassadim
 - Tzedakah
- Human Rights
- Kiddush HaShem

Experience: Put into practice as they are learned

Life Cycle Events

- Details and significance of each

Experience: Attend at least one of each life cycle event