

Charlotte Jewish Preschool Welcomes New Director



New Charlotte Jewish Preschool Director, Rebecca Shoniker.

The Board of Directors of the Charlotte Jewish Preschool welcomes Rebecca Shoniker as Director. Rebecca joins CJP in July.

Rebecca received her BS in

Elementary Education from State University of New York at Oswego. She has been teaching second and third grade in Union County. She has received numerous awards including Model Teacher for Union County Public Schools in 1999 and Jaycees Teacher of the Year in 1998. Most recently, Rebecca coordinated the annual "Read Across America" for Sardis Elementary School in Union County. Rebecca has also worked with Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

Rebecca's co-workers say she is a "visionary" educator and can truly make a difference in a child's educational journey. She loves children and helping them learn by experiencing all the joys and



The Charlotte Jewish Preschool

A joint venture of Temple Beth El and Temple Israel

wonders that school has to offer. Rebecca is very excited about using her skills and experience at CJP. Her enthusiasm, creativity and love for children will make Rebecca a welcome addition to the Charlotte Jewish Preschool family. ☆

Back to School Special

Liberal Jewish Schools Update Curriculum — by Adding Christianity

By Julie Wiener

New York (JTA) — At Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in suburban Washington, Jewish history courses cover the rise of Christianity and Church-sanctioned anti-Semitism, and then go on to teach how Jewish-Christian relations have improved in recent years.

Reconstructionist rabbinical students are required to take at least one course in Christianity, and also have the option of taking a course with Lutheran students on Christian-Jewish dialogue.

And the Jewish Theological Seminary is considering developing a required course on other religions.

Outside Orthodoxy — where interfaith studies and exchanges remain rare — Jewish learning about Christian tenets and history appears to be on the rise, reflecting a growing climate of trust between Jews and Christians in the United States.

Next week, 50 faculty members and administrators from 21 Christian and Jewish seminaries — including ones representing the Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform and traditional wings of Judaism — will gather in Baltimore for two days of discussions on how they teach future clergy about other faiths.

And at a meeting earlier this month, the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee, a group of top Catholic and Jewish leaders, issued a recommendation calling on both Catholics and Jews to make learning about the evolution of relations — particularly the Church's 1965 repudiation of the concept of Jewish guilt for Christ's death — a core part of the curriculum for new clergy.

According to the statement, Jewish institutions — due to difficulty overcoming "generational memories of anti-Semitic oppression" — have not made as great an effort as Catholic ones to revamp their teaching about the other in recent years.

Increasingly, however, liberal Jewish institutions are incorporating the history of Christianity into their curricula and are promoting exchanges with clergy of other faiths. Many also participate in exchanges in which rabbinical students study periodically with students in Christian seminaries, or share training in things such as chaplaincy.

While still rare, a growing number of Jewish day schools are integrating Christian history into the curriculum or participating in

exchanges with neighboring Christian schools.

In a pilot program jointly sponsored by the Archdiocese of Boston and the local Anti-Defamation League chapter, 13 students at the New Jewish High School of Greater Boston are taking an elective course on the development of Christianity, Catholic holidays and liturgical cycles.

The students met six times this year to study together and do joint social action projects with local Catholic students enrolled in a course on Judaism.

In a similar program, the American Jewish Committee's Catholic-Jewish Educational Enrichment Program, parallel courses are set up between Catholic schools and Jewish day schools. Jewish leaders teach in the Catholic schools and Catholic leaders teach in Jewish schools.

The 10-year-old project, known as C-JEEP, currently is in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and will expand to Pittsburgh next year.

Proponents of interfaith learning argue that it actually strengthens Jewish understanding of Judaism and prepares Jews to converse intelligently with Christian neighbors and colleagues.

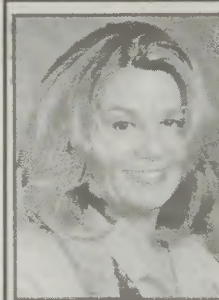
"From my own involvement with such conversations, I don't feel there's anything to fear from them," said Rabbi Allan Kensky, dean of the JTS rabbinical school. "My own sense of being anchored in Jewish tradition is enhanced by such conversations. I often gain a deeper understanding of my own tradition by seeing it in light of another."

A familiarity with Christianity also is useful to rabbis when counseling congregants who converted or, as is increasingly common, talking to Jews who are married to Christians.

"Most Jews are unbelievably ignorant about Christianity," said Rabbi Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer, director of religious studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in suburban Philadelphia.

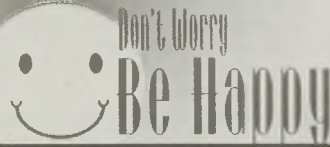
While many argue that Christianity pervades American culture, Fuchs-Kreimer said most of what Jews consider Christian is simply a "paganized" version of the religion, and few Jews know "the actual history of how these religions developed."

Her husband, she said, grew up thinking Christians believed that Jesus had come back to life as the Easter bunny.



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