

World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

Teacher Name: Douglas Hammerling Humanities Discipline: American History

Teaching Module Title: Jewish Religious Traditions in America Part II

Teaching Module Goals:

- 1-Introduce students to the history of the Jewish life in the United States.
- 2-Explore the history of the Jewish working class and the Jewish middle class in the United States.
- 3-Understand how U.S. laws and political structures have had an impact on Jewish American cultures.

Assigned Readings and Websites:

Hasia R. Diner **A New Promised Land A History of Jews in America.**

PBS Websites: The Jewish Americans www.pbs.org/jewishamericans

You Tube: PBS series The Jewish Americans (Documentary)

Holocaust Museum in Washington DC www.ushmm.org

<http://www.candleholocaustmuseum.org/> **CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center**

Study Questions and or Discussion Prompts for Students:

- 1-How were the Jewish immigrants received in the colonies? How did they practice their religion? Did they build synagogues? Did they have rabbis? Where did the American Jewish communities obtain their basic needs? How much were their lives intertwined with those of their Christian neighbors?
- 2-What effect did the American Revolution have on the Jewish community? What was Article six, section three of the Constitution? How did the First Amendment impact the Jewish community? How did the U.S. Revolution change Jewish congregations?
- 3-On page 19 of Diner's book, the author makes an important observation about the direction of Jews in America. What was it?
- 4-Discuss the various occupations of early Jewish immigrants to the United States. Why did they become peddlers? Were peddlers able to observe Jewish traditions? What was life like for a Jewish peddler?
- 5-On page 33, how did the Jewish and Protestant communities interact? What was the typical Christian evangelical view of Jewish religion?

6-What was the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in New York? What was the impact of the tragic fire on the Jewish community? How did it further the development of Jewish involvement with labor unions?

7-How did filmmaking shape the Jewish community? Why were so many Jewish immigrants drawn to the industry? Why was music important to the culture? Who was Irving Berlin? Who was Benny Goodman?

8-On page 71-73, why was education so central to the Jewish culture? What did education enable them to do?

9-In the post-World War II period, how did the rise of the suburbs shape or alter the Jewish religious practice?

10-How did Jewish Americans react to the Shoah, or Holocaust? How do they commemorate the Shoah today? For Jewish America, what was the importance of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.?

11-According to pp. 129-132, how does contemporary American culture influence Jewish American religious practices?

Written Assignment:

Essay: Select the 18th, 19th, or 20th century and describe what life was like for the Jewish community in the United States. Some of the topics to cover are the following: What were Jewish Americans able to achieve in America? How did they adapt to American life? How were they able to practice their religion? How did American laws change, challenge, sustain, or encourage Jewish religious practices? How did the Jewish American preserve their identity in the 18th, 19th, or 20th century? What prejudices and obstacles did they face? How did Jewish Americans deal with these obstacles?