

NACOEJ Curriculum Project on Ethiopian Jewry



Why A Special Ethiopian Jewish Curriculum?

The question is asked, "Why do we need a special curriculum on Ethiopian Jews?"

The simple answer is that there is very little knowledge about Ethiopian Jews in the United States, and, indeed, in the Western World, especially among our young people. This lack of information leaves a gap in the education of our children, who need to understand the worldwide Jewish community of which they are a part.

In addition, the response of American Jews to the plight of Ethiopian Jews in our time has been, and continues to be, critical to their survival and to their future. Just as this remnant of an ancient Jewish community has needed the partnership of American Jews in their struggle to make aliyah, so too they need our support to become absorbed in Israeli society, a transition that is often not easy, due to the great gulf between the life they left behind in Ethiopia and the life they now face in Israel. To inspire our youth to take part in this effort, we must introduce them to the Ethiopian Jews and imbue in our youth a recognition of their importance to the Jewish world.

Finally, we must encourage our youngsters to understand and respect special cultural and religious heritages within the Jewish world. It is vital to the continuous mix of Jewish communities that we assist in the preservation of the traditions of Ethiopian Jewry as practiced in Ethiopia and as taught by their own religious leaders, the revered kessim. Recognizing the beauty of Jewish ways that are strange to us is essential to true Jewish continuity.

We hope that this curriculum will meet with your approval and that of your students.

*- Barbara Ribakove Gordon, Executive Director,
North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry*

**Please revisit this page in June 2006
for a full curriculum download**

