

# ***Shema*: Listening to Jewish Youth**

Nancy Leffert, Ph.D.  
Search Institute  
and

Rabbi Hayim Herring  
Minneapolis Jewish Federation

Adolescent Task Force Youth Survey Report

Prepared for  
The Commission on Identity and Continuity  
Minneapolis Jewish Federation  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## **Shema: Listening to Jewish Youth**

Nancy Leffert, Ph.D., and Rabbi Hayim Herring

Copyright © 1998 by Search Institute

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever, mechanical or electronic, without prior permission from the publisher except in brief quotations or summaries in articles or reviews, or as individual charts or graphs for educational use. For additional permission, contact Permissions at Search Institute.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

ISBN: 1-57482-124-5



Search Institute  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)  
Telephone: 612-376-8955  
Toll free: 800-888-7828  
Fax: 612-376-8956  
E-mail: [search@search-institute.org](mailto:search@search-institute.org)

A groundbreaking study on Jewish adolescents,  
with critical, useful information for any formal or  
informal educational institution that works with teens.

*Jonathan S. Woocher, Executive Vice-President  
JESNA—Jewish Education Service of North America*



## Acknowledgments

A number of people have participated in this project. Without the invaluable contributions of the members of the Adolescent Survey Committee—Anat Bar-Cohen, Lydia Roth-Laube, Barbara Rubin, and Marjorie Wasserman—the survey would never have been developed. The Adolescent Task Force of the Commission on Identity and Continuity of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation also provided assistance in the form of discussion of plans for the analyses of the data. Bernard Goldblatt and Marjorie Ostrov provided a great deal of guidance and feedback during all phases of this project. Joy Stoller and Eunice Schutt helped with many details, particularly during data collection. Finally, many thanks to Dr. Leffert's colleagues at Search Institute, particularly to Candyce Kroenke for help with survey development, data collection, and the preparation of this report; and to Dale A. Blyth, Ph.D., Craig Deville, Ph.D., Marilyn Erickson, Rick Gordon, Anu R. Sharma, Ph.D., and Jean Wachs, who helped make this project possible.



## Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	Introduction .....	1
<b>Chapter 2</b>	Methods .....	4
<b>Chapter 3</b>	What Jewish Youth Think About.....	9
<b>Chapter 4</b>	The Observance of Jewish Rituals and Traditions.....	13
<b>Chapter 5</b>	Formal Jewish Education.....	18
<b>Chapter 6</b>	How Jewish Youth Spend Their Time.....	23
<b>Chapter 7</b>	The Meaning of Activities .....	39
<b>Chapter 8</b>	Predicting Future Identity and Continuity .....	52
<b>Chapter 9</b>	Reflections on Key Findings and Programmatic Implications .....	58
<b>References</b>	.....	67
<b>Appendixes</b>	.....	69





## Chapter I Introduction

Allow interaction between different sects of Judaism so that we can all learn from each other and experience aspects of Judaism we never knew existed. We can't segregate ourselves from each other and expect to have a real community.

*17-year-old boy*

### Background

There is a long-standing and strong commitment to youth in the Minneapolis Jewish community. This commitment has guided the Jewish community leadership for decades. Many financial and human resources are dedicated to Jewish children in the areas of education, youth group and camping experiences, and more recently, educational trips to Israel. The Talmud Torah of Minneapolis—once the only community Jewish school for children—recently celebrated its centennial, and Torah Academy (one of two parochial Jewish schools in Minneapolis) has existed for more than 50 years. United Synagogue Youth (USY), the international youth movement of the Conservative movement, originated at Beth El Synagogue in Minneapolis.

Clearly, the Minneapolis Jewish community has a rich history of caring for youth. It was on this strong foundation that the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, the central planning body of the Jewish community, in 1995 created an Adolescent Task Force through its Department of Identity and Continuity.

Jewish continuity was defined by Rabbi Hayim Herring, the federation's director of identity and continuity, as "a dynamic process that enables Jews to take personal responsibility for their Jewish life, by helping them to develop a connection to their spiritual and ethical tradition, their people, and their local and global Jewish community." The Commission on Identity and Continuity was made up of several task forces, each with its own mission statement and objectives. Each task force was then divided into several subcommittees. The objective of the Adolescent Survey Committee<sup>1</sup> was to plan how best to determine what Jewish youth in Minnea-

---

<sup>1</sup> The Adolescent Survey Committee, a committee of the Adolescent Task Force, was made up of Nancy Leffert, Anat Bar-Cohen, Lydia Roth-Laube, Barbara Rubin, and Marjorie Wasserman.

polis were feeling, thinking, and doing with respect to participation, or lack of participation, in Jewish-sponsored activities.

The immediate goals as delineated by the committee were to

1. hold focus groups of Jewish youth to address questions that would assist in the development of a survey instrument to assess participation of youth in Jewish-sponsored activities; and
2. develop, administer, and analyze a survey addressed to a wider sample of Jewish youth.

This project is unique, both in the Minneapolis Jewish community and in the United States. No other Jewish community has undertaken such a serious or intentional task of deepening its understanding of the thoughts, needs, and feelings of its adolescent population. The Adolescent Task Force and the Commission on Identity and Continuity should be applauded for their wise decision making on this issue and for their support of this project.

The focus groups and the survey represent important tools that institutions serving Jewish youth can use, both to maintain the high quality of activities already available to adolescents in the community and to plan future activities. These tools were not intended to provide a qualitative judgment of any particular institution, but to provide the Minneapolis Jewish community with an analysis of what it can do to be responsive to the needs of its young people and to encourage affiliation and continuity in the future.

Any presentation of such data is bound to have both negative and positive aspects. A great deal of thought went into how to present aspects of these data as well as the consequences of how potentially negative findings about particular institutions might be interpreted. The purposes of this report are to recognize what many institutions in the community are already doing well and to think “communally” about what can be improved to better meet the needs of Jewish adolescents in Minneapolis.

## The Challenge of This Project

The challenge of writing this report to the Minneapolis Jewish Federation, and to the Jewish community as a whole, lay in making the report both honest and constructive within a context of data that were not entirely positive. Synagogues and other institutions serving Jewish youth face very real difficulties in trying to provide accessible and meaningful opportunities for youth. Synagogues lack adequate resources, and although educators and youth workers are generally highly committed and motivated, there is a national shortage of *trained* youth educators and youth workers. In addition, adolescents are a heterogeneous population—they have many individual differences that require unique learning and socialization experiences.

The reader is advised also to take into account the realities of supplemental (i.e., afternoon) school education. Because formal Jewish education will most likely always be dominated by supplemental (afternoon) rather than *day* school (parochial school) experiences, Jewish supplementary educational institutions will always face the difficulties inherent in educating children and adolescents outside of the “normal” school day. For example, no matter what the age or developmental stage (i.e., elementary or secondary school age), children and adolescents are tired at the end of the normal school day; they are not at their “best” in terms of their ability or willingness to learn. These data must be interpreted in the context of the challenges of this teaching and learning environment.

## What You Will Find in This Report

This report is organized into nine chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the background of the project, the challenges faced in writing the report, and a description of the report's contents. Chapter 2 focuses on the process and methods of the project, including a description of the sample and the family characteristics of the survey respondents. This chapter also highlights points important to keep in mind while reading the report.

The first data chapter, chapter 3, focuses on the thoughts and concerns of Jewish youth. This chapter leads the discussion of the survey data and informs the other aspects of the data in important ways. Chapter 4 focuses on Jewish adolescents' observance of Jewish rituals, including a discussion of adolescents' viewpoints on the importance of observance and difficulties adolescents perceive in participating fully in Jewish life. Chapter 5 describes the perceptions of youth regarding their formal Jewish education, including their perceptions of how well they have learned pertinent Jewish subjects and their thoughts about classes that they may be interested in taking in the future. Chapter 6 describes how Jewish youth spend their time, during the school year and during the summer months. This chapter also includes a description of camp and Israel experiences. Chapter 7 focuses on why youth participate in certain activities, what activities are meaningful to youth, and why adolescents find certain activities meaningful. This chapter also describes adolescents' perceptions of the barriers to their participation in Jewish-sponsored activities and suggests the kinds of activities in which Jewish youth may be likely to participate in the future. The final two chapters focus on analyses pertaining to influences on future identity and continuity of Jewish adolescents (chapter 8) and reflections on the key findings in the report and their programmatic implications (chapter 9).

## Chapter 2 Methods

The Minneapolis Jewish Federation contracted with Search Institute to develop a database and the survey instrument, administer the survey, analyze survey data, and write a report based on the data. The sample was drawn from a compilation of the federation's youth commission database and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah lists from the Minneapolis synagogues. Search Institute developed a database that enabled the creation of mailing labels and sample tracking.

Passive consent letters describing the survey were mailed to parents, who were asked to contact Search Institute if they did not want their adolescents to receive the survey. The survey was mailed in mid-August 1996. The mailed survey was followed by two mailed reminder cards (see Appendix A for a copy of the survey).

### How to Read This Report

Percentages often are reported by adolescents' grade, gender, affiliation (i.e., Conservative, Reform, or Orthodox movements), or type of formal Jewish education (i.e., educational program at a Reform or Conservative synagogue). Although the purpose of this report is to encourage lay and professional leaders to think "communally" about adolescents, dividing the sample by key variables provides a deeper understanding of adolescents' perceptions and how they might be affected by group differences.

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number; totals may in some places equal more than 100 percent because of rounding error. Very few Orthodox adolescents responded to the survey (only 2 percent of the total sample). Consequently, because of insufficient cell sizes, analyses comparing affiliation did not include Orthodox youth. The tables described in each chapter are each labeled with a table number corresponding to their placement in the chapter text.

In some cases, tables and figures in this report show percentage differences between groups. The statistical significance of percentage differences can be definitively established only through specific scientific tests.<sup>1</sup> Without these tests, apparent differences may not be

---

<sup>1</sup> The statistical tests that were performed to examine group differences on these data were either *t*-tests or Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

meaningful. A legend appears at the bottom of the table or figure in cases where statistical tests were performed. This legend describes the level of significance (i.e., probability,  $p$ ) of the findings. If an asterisk follows a particular question or statement on the table, the group differences were significant. Where more than two groups were tested for significant differences (e.g., early, mid-, and late adolescents), letters follow the percentages on the table (e.g., A, B, C). If the percentages are significantly different from one another, the letters following the percentages are different. For example, the letter “A” after a percentage is significantly different from a percentage listed with the letter “B”; two percentages that both are followed by “A” are not significantly different from one another. If one percentage has an “A,” another a “B,” and another an “AB,” “A” and “B” are different from each other, but “AB” is not different from either “A” or “B.”<sup>2</sup>

The data are presented in aggregate form only; no individual names are used. Direct quotations from the open-ended survey question are woven into the quantitative report as a means of deepening or amplifying the understanding of quantitative findings. No names are attached to these quotations, but the subjects’ ages and genders are specified.

## Sample

Table 1 describes the sample characteristics. Of the database of 1,165 names, correct addresses could not be found for 26; 10 adolescents no longer lived in Minneapolis or surrounding suburbs; 10 subjects were out of range for age; and 5 were excluded for other reasons. The remaining 1,114 names were available for the final data set. Of the 1,114 names in the data set, 414 young people—or 37 percent—returned surveys. This percentage is considered acceptable for a mailed survey that offers respondents no reward. The 13–17-year-old population of Jewish youth in Minneapolis was estimated to number approximately 3,900, including unaffiliated youth, by a population study done in 1994 (Project Research, 1994).

The 414 returned surveys thus represent somewhat more than 10 percent of the total age group of interest. This percentage is thought to be large enough to generalize to the entire Jewish youth population in Minneapolis, including those who are unaffiliated.

As illustrated by Table 1, more females than males responded to the survey (56 percent versus 44 percent). This is not surprising as females tend to be more likely than males to complete paper-and-pencil surveys. The sample was predominantly 13–18-year-olds (79 percent of the total sample), with only 13 percent of the respondents between ages 11 and 12 and 8 percent of the respondents age 19 or older. Consistent with the sample’s age range, most respondents were in grades 7 through 12 (83 percent). Five percent of the sample were in either 5th or 6th grades, 13 percent were in college, and 1 percent of the sample described themselves as “not in school.”

More than three-quarters of the sample attended public schools, almost 20 percent attended private schools, and only 1 percent attended Jewish day school. This age group is, by definition, in either middle or secondary school (i.e., junior or senior high school). The low percentage of day school students in the sample is not surprising given the limited secondary day school opportunities available in the Twin Cities. The low day school percentage reflects

---

<sup>2</sup> Tukey’s HSD procedure was used as the follow-up test of group differences.

**Table I. Sample Characteristics**

	<b>Sample size [n]*</b>	<b>Percentage [%] of sample*</b>
<b>Total</b>	414	100
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	182	44
Female	231	56
<b>Age</b>		
11–12	55	13
13–15	219	53
16–18	105	26
19 or older	31	8
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Black	1	<1
White	403	99
Hispanic	4	1
<b>Grade as of September 1996</b>		
5th	2	1
6th	15	4
7th	46	11
8th	70	17
9th	76	19
10th	72	18
11th	45	11
12th	30	7
College	53	13
Not in school	2	1
<b>Type of school attended</b>		
Public	325	81
Jewish day school	5	1
Other private school	73	18
<b>Do you consider yourself . . . ?</b>		
Orthodox	6	2
Conservative	210	52
Reform	152	37
Just Jewish	30	7
Not sure	9	2
<b>Formal Jewish education</b>		
Talmud Torah (TT)	158	49
Program at Reform temple	134	41
Jewish day school and TT	30	9
Orthodox cheder	2	1

\* *N* may not equal 414 because of missing data. Percentages may not equal 100 percent because of rounding error and missing data.

availability, not necessarily the choices families would make if secondary day school options existed at the time the survey was administered.

More than one-half of the respondents described themselves as affiliated with the Conservative movement; 37 percent of the respondents described themselves as affiliated with the Re-

form movement. Almost 10 percent of the sample described themselves as either “Just Jewish”<sup>3</sup> or “Not sure,” and 2 percent reported that they were Orthodox.

Almost one-half of the sample reported that they attended or had attended Talmud Torah for their formal Jewish education; 41 percent of the sample attended or had attended educational programs at a Reform synagogue. Another 9 percent of the sample said they had attended a Jewish day school and then went on to Talmud Torah, and 1 percent reported that they attended an Orthodox school.<sup>4</sup>

## Family Characteristics

The family characteristics of the survey sample are represented in Table 2. Only 13 percent of males and 17 percent of females described their parents as divorced or separated. This percentage is somewhat higher than the 1994 population study estimates (Project Research, 1994), which described 5 percent of the Jewish adult population as single parents with minor children in the home. This is still considerably below national averages. The current survey asked only whether the respondent’s parents were divorced, not whether the parents were single (i.e., not remarried or otherwise living with another adult).

The majority of survey respondents described their parents as highly educated. Almost all adolescents described their fathers as having a level of postsecondary education ranging from completion of some college to completion of graduate school (96 percent of males and 95 percent of females). Over one-half of the sample described their fathers as having graduate or professional school education.

Similar findings are true of survey respondents’ mothers. Ninety-six percent of males’ and females’ mothers have a level of postsecondary education ranging from completion of some college to completion of graduate or profession school. Forty percent of males’ and one-third of females’ mothers were described as having graduate or professional school education.

Ninety percent of males’ fathers were described as born Jewish, with an additional 5 percent described as “converted to Judaism.” Similarly, 88 percent of females’ fathers were described as born Jewish, with 6 percent described as “converted to Judaism.” Furthermore, similar percentages were observed for subjects’ mothers. Ninety-four percent of males’ and 96 percent of females’ mothers were described as either born Jewish or converted.

Almost all respondents in the sample reported that they belonged to a synagogue. (See Table 2 for complete breakdown of synagogue affiliation.) One-quarter of the sample also belonged to the Minneapolis Jewish Community Center (JCC).

---

<sup>3</sup> The survey offered the option to choose “Just Jewish” to describe affiliation with a movement. The survey question did not ask what “Just Jewish” meant to the adolescent. However, the majority of adolescents who described themselves as “Just Jewish” also described themselves as belonging to a synagogue in the Twin Cities.

<sup>4</sup> Most Conservative synagogues in Minneapolis do not have their own individual Hebrew or religious schools past grade 2. After that, children and adolescents receive their supplemental Jewish education at the Minneapolis Talmud Torah. However, for adolescents affiliated with Conservative synagogues, Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction occurs primarily within the Conservative synagogues on Saturday mornings. Reform synagogues have their own religious schools, which include Bar and Bat Mitzvah training, beginning in kindergarten and continuing through confirmation, with more limited formal educational opportunities in grades 11 and 12.

**Table 2. Family Characteristics**

	<b>Males [%]*</b>	<b>Females [%]*</b>
<b>Parents' marital status</b>		
Parents divorced or separated	13	17
<b>Father's education</b>		
Grade school	<1	1
Some high school to high school graduate	2	2
Some college to college graduate	40	44
Graduate or professional school	56	51
Don't know	2	3
<b>Mother's education</b>		
Grade school	0	0
Some high school to high school graduate	3	2
Some college to college graduate	56	63
Graduate or professional school	40	33
Don't know	1	1
<b>Father's religion</b>		
Born Jewish	90	88
Converted to Judaism	5	6
Christian	3	2
Other	3	4
<b>Mother's religion</b>		
Born Jewish	87	84
Converted to Judaism	7	12
Christian	4	3
Other	2	1
<b>Synagogue membership</b>		
Yes	99	99
No	1	1
<b>To which synagogue/temple do you belong?</b>		
Adath Jeshuran	20	25
Bet Shalom	7	7
Beth El	20	27
B'Nai Emet	10	9
Temple Israel	38	30
Other	5	3
<b>JCC membership</b>		
Yes	25	25
No	75	75

\* Percentages may not equal 100 percent because of rounding error.



## Chapter 3

# What Jewish Youth Think About

### What Is Important to Jewish Youth

Tables 3A and 3B describe the importance of certain values, skills, abilities, and rituals by gender. The list is fairly extensive and is divided into those variables that are directly relevant to Judaism and Jewish practices (Table 3A) and those that generally are considered “secular” (Table 3B).<sup>1</sup>

Almost all adolescents feel that being Jewish is important (a view held by 91 percent of males and 93 percent of females). The majority of Jewish youth also believe that it is important to have knowledge of Jewish life and Jewish history (81 percent of males and 88 percent of females) and to observe the Jewish holidays (80 percent of males and 91 percent of females).

Approximately three-quarters of Jewish youth believe that it is important to have a connection to Israel and to donate to Jewish causes. At the same time, only 37 percent of males and 47 percent of females think it is important to date only a Jewish person, and 19 percent of males and 36 percent of females think it is important to keep kosher.

### What Jewish Youth Are Concerned About

Tables 4A and 4B focus on what Jewish youth are concerned about, by gender. Adolescent females usually are more concerned about Jewish issues than are adolescent males (see Table 4A). For example, almost three-quarters of females reported being concerned about anti-Semitism, as compared with somewhat more than one-half of males. More than one-half of females reported being concerned about intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, as compared with slightly more than one-third of males. Three-quarters of both males and females indicated that they were concerned about peace in the Middle East. Similarly, all adolescents re-

---

<sup>1</sup> The “secular” distinction was made during the analyses; it was not a distinction made directly by the young people who were surveyed. However, this distinction represents an illustration of the challenge facing Jewish educators today in that the religious/spiritual domain can encompass more than what one might generally think. Jewish tradition addresses all of these issues. It remains a challenge to draw on the wisdom of tradition to illuminate contemporary issues that are the concern of many communities.

**Table 3A. Jewish Values That Are Important to Youth**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>How important is each of the following to you in your life? (very or somewhat)</b>		
Being Jewish	91	93
Having knowledge of Jewish life and Jewish history	81	88
Having a connection to Israel	71	84
Volunteering in the Jewish community	53	66
Participating in the Jewish community	64	81
Observing the Jewish holidays	80	91
Keeping kosher	19	36
Attending synagogue/temple services	62	73
Wearing a Star of David, mezuzah, or other symbol indicating that I am Jewish	49	69
Dating only a Jewish person	37	47
Marrying someone who is Jewish	66	74
Donating money to Jewish causes	72	81
Keeping informed about current events that affect Israel and world Jewry	77	82
Raising my children Jewish	88	91

**Table 3B. “Secular” Values and Skills That Are Important to Youth**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>How important is each of the following to you in your life? (very or somewhat)</b>		
Making lots of money	87	73
Being physically attractive	82	84
Helping others or making the community a better place	75	87
Developing skills and abilities	91	92
Improving health or staying healthy	93	95
Being a leader	78	83
Spending time with friends	98	>99
Having children	82	86

ported being concerned about safety for Israel and Jewish refugees.

Table 4B focuses on the more secular concerns of Jewish youth. Adolescent females are consistently more concerned about social issues than adolescent males, particularly crime and violence, drug abuse, poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, and sexism. The only issue on which males reported being more concerned than females was population growth, by a small amount (45 percent versus 43 percent).

As can be seen in Table 5A, Conservative youth consistently reported being more concerned about Jewish issues than did Reform youth. The largest difference was regarding intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews (a concern for 56 percent of Conservative youth and 36 percent of Reform youth) and making Judaism meaningful to young people (a concern for

**Table 4A. Jewish Issues That Youth Are Concerned About, by Gender**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>How concerned are you about each of the following problems? (very or somewhat)</b>		
Anti-Semitism	59	72
Safety for Israel	82	87
Jewish refugees	57	62
Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews	38	54
Making Judaism meaningful to young people	62	75
Peace in the Middle East	78	80

**Table 4B. “Secular” Issues That Youth Think About, by Gender**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>How concerned are you about each of the following problems? (very or somewhat)</b>		
AIDS/HIV	66	72
Unemployment	44	46
Crime and violence	77	89
Destruction of natural resources	64	66
Drug abuse	65	77
Poverty	63	75
Pollution	68	76
Homelessness	63	77
Human rights violations	68	72
Illiteracy and poor education	57	67
Population growth	45	43
Race relations	69	73
Sexism and sexual harassment	53	77
Threat of nuclear destruction	38	40
Education	79	88
Health care	57	70
War	63	70

75 percent of Conservative youth and 64 percent of Reform youth). More than three-quarters of adolescents of all affiliations reported being concerned about safety for Israel and peace in the Middle East.

Respondents in general described being concerned about what are often considered secular issues (see Table 5B). As a group, Jewish youth are not widely concerned about unemployment, population growth, or the threat of nuclear destruction. Reform youth tend to be more concerned than are Conservative youth about a number of secular issues, such as AIDS/HIV, crime and violence, the destruction of natural resources, poverty, homelessness, and the threat of nuclear destruction.

**Table 5A. Jewish Issues That Youth Think About, by Affiliation**

	<b>Conservative [%]</b>	<b>Reform [%]</b>
<b>How concerned are you about each of the following problems? (very or somewhat)</b>		
Anti-Semitism	70	64
Safety for Israel	89	85
Jewish refugees	65	57
Intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews	56	36
Making Judaism meaningful to young people	75	64
Peace in the Middle East	83	79

**Table 5B. Secular Issues That Youth Think About, by Affiliation**

	<b>Conservative [%]</b>	<b>Reform [%]</b>
<b>How concerned are you about each of the following problems? (very or somewhat)</b>		
AIDS/HIV	67	76
Unemployment	47	44
Crime and violence	83	87
Destruction of natural resources	64	68
Drug abuse	73	75
Poverty	67	77
Pollution	74	74
Homelessness	67	76
Human rights violations	71	69
Illiteracy and poor education	63	64
Population growth	46	45
Race relations	72	73
Sexism and sexual harassment	68	70
Threat of nuclear destruction	38	41
Education	85	82
Health care	66	64
War	69	66

## Chapter 4

# The Observance of Jewish Rituals and Traditions

Table 6 shows respondents' observance of Jewish rituals and activities, by gender. All males and almost all females in the sample reported that they had had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or were planning to have one. In addition, more than three-quarters of males and females indicated that they attended religious services and some type of religious education classes. Two-thirds of females and almost three-quarters of males reported that they attended or participated in some type of synagogue youth group as well. At the same time, just over one-third of males and slightly less than one-half of females reported that they participated in youth service projects or volunteered in some way in their congregation.

Only a small percentage of males and females reported that they "never" attended synagogue services during the past year. More than half of both males and females indicated that they attended either only High Holiday services or High Holiday services and a few other services during the year. Better than one-third of males (37 percent) and females (41 percent) reported that they attended synagogue services at least two or three times a month or "weekly or more." Less than 10 percent of both males and females said they attended synagogue services once a month.

Table 7 reflects synagogue activities by respondents' reported affiliations with a Jewish movement. More than three-quarters of each group reported that they had attended religious services during the past year. Almost three-quarters of Conservative youth and somewhat more than one-half of Reform youth said they attended religious education classes. Almost three-quarters of both groups reported attending synagogue youth groups.

Fifty-nine percent of Conservative youth reported attending synagogue services from two to three times a month up to weekly or more, as compared with only 10 percent of Reform youth. The majority of Reform youth reported attending services either on the High Holidays alone or a few times a year in addition to the High Holidays.

Table 8 describes the observance of Jewish rituals by affiliation. Interestingly, almost all youth, regardless of affiliation, reported lighting candles during Hanukah and attending a seder during Passover. Compared with those adolescents who described themselves as Conservative or Reform, somewhat fewer adolescents who described themselves as "Just Jewish" reported that they attended a seder during Passover.

**Table 6. The Observance of Jewish Rituals, by Gender**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>Had or planning to have Bar/Bat Mitzvah?</b>		
Yes	100	96
No	0	4
<b>In which of the following activities do you participate?</b>		
Services	86	88
Religious education classes	74	73
Synagogue youth group	72	66
Youth service projects	39	45
Volunteer in congregation	37	43
<b>How often did you go to synagogue or temple services during the past year?</b>		
Never	2	<1
High Holiday only	11	10
High Holiday and a few times	43	43
Once per month	7	6
2–3 times per month	17	16
Weekly or more	20	25

Approximately two-thirds of Conservative youth reported participating in rituals pertaining to Shabbat; 63 percent reported lighting candles, 60 percent reported saying kiddush, and 68 percent reported having Shabbat dinner. Fewer Reform youth reported participating in these Shabbat rituals; less than one-half reported saying kiddush or having Shabbat dinner, and slightly more than half reported candle lighting. Only a small percentage of either Reform or Conservative youth reported participating in Havdalah to mark the close of the Sabbath (8 percent of Reform and 10 percent of Conservative respondents) or reported saying the blessing after meals (6 percent and 8 percent, respectively).

More than three-quarters of both Reform and Conservative youth reported fasting on Yom Kippur. One-half of Conservative adolescents reported eating in or visiting a Sukkah, as compared with one-third of Reform youth, while two-thirds of both groups reported engaging in prayer.

### How Important Are the Observances of Jewish Rituals to Youth?

Table 9 illustrates how adolescents of different ages view the importance of certain Jewish rituals and observances. Almost all adolescents, regardless of age, reported believing that it is important to know about the Holocaust. The majority of adolescents also said they believe that it is important to learn Hebrew.

Almost all mid- and late adolescents reported believing that acts of loving-kindness are very important; somewhat fewer young adolescents (87 percent) reported believing that they

**Table 7. The Observance of Jewish Rituals, by Affiliation**

	<b>Conservative</b> [%]	<b>Reform</b> [%]	<b>Just Jewish</b> [%]
<b>Had or planning to have Bar/Bat Mitzvah?</b>			
Yes	99	98	97
No	1	2	3
<b>In which of the following activities do you participate?</b>			
Services	87	76	88
Religious education classes	72	54	81
Synagogue youth group	74	70	63
Youth service projects	39	44	47
Volunteer in congregation	41	23	42
<b>How often did you go to synagogue or temple services during the past year?</b>			
Never	1	1	10
High Holiday only	7	12	24
High Holiday and a few times	27	68	31
Once per month	6	9	0
2–3 times per month	24	7	14
Weekly or more	35	3	21

**Table 8. Jewish Rituals, by Affiliation**

	<b>Conservative</b> [%]	<b>Reform</b> [%]	<b>Just Jewish</b> [%]
<b>Do you practice any of the following rituals on a regular basis? (yes)</b>			
Saying kiddush on Shabbat	60	41	25
Eating in or visiting a Sukkah	57	32	48
Lighting Shabbat candles	63	53	31
Shabbat dinner	68	48	21
Fasting on Yom Kippur	86	77	60
Havdalah	10	8	10
Lighting Hanukah candles	99	98	97
Saying Birkat Hamazon	8	6	11
Attending a Seder during Passover	99	96	86
Praying	70	66	52

Note: All Orthodox adolescents ( $n = 6$ ) responded that they did all of the above rituals.

are very important.<sup>1</sup> Almost all late adolescents (95 percent) and majorities of early and mid-adolescents (84 percent and 83 percent, respectively) agreed that going to Israel is very important. The following comments represent the opinions expressed by mid- and late adolescents reflecting the importance of their experiences in Israel:

<sup>1</sup> Early adolescents are described as 11–13 years of age, mid-adolescents are 14–16 years of age, and late adolescents are 17–19+ years of age.

Spending more time in Israel. The push is to send kids once but it should be more. Either going on a longer program or learning about Israel. I went on one last year—the best experience I ever had. I learned a lot about Judaism, the Jewish history, etc. It was so interesting. I loved it. . . . Judaism should be kept alive through Israel.

*17-year-old girl*

I am in college and I had an excellent experience as a Jewish teenager. I was very involved in NOFTY, I went to Israel, and Judaism is—will always be—important to me. It was great.

*18-year-old boy*

I am already very active in my Jewish youth community. I am on my temple youth board and I love to practice my Judaism. I don't think I would be so active if I never went to Israel (HSI).

*17-year-old boy*

I recently attended [an] Israel pilgrimage and it was wonderful.

*16-year-old girl*

Almost three-quarters of late adolescents and slightly less than two-thirds of early and mid-adolescents reported believing that it is important to participate in Jewish-sponsored activities. Approximately these same percentages of respondents report that doing service in the Jewish community is important to them. Conversely, compared with these high levels of participation, only one-third, or slightly more, of adolescents believe that attending weekly synagogue services is important.

## Difficulties Participating in Jewish Life

Jewish youth believe that a number of factors stand in the way of their participating fully in Jewish life, as reported on the survey. Table 10 illustrates these views, by age group. Respondents reported that the major barrier to their participation was their experience of anti-Semitism in the community. Significantly higher percentages of mid- and late adolescents reported having experienced anti-Semitism than did young adolescents. Somewhat less than one-half of both mid- and late adolescents reported these experiences, as compared with 20 percent of 11–13-year-olds.

Late adolescents reported significantly more often than did young adolescents that “Judaism separates me from my Christian friends” (27 percent of late adolescents versus 13 percent of young adolescents). Younger adolescents reported that Judaism isn't relevant to helping them succeed in life and also that Judaism “takes too much time” and is “boring.” Young adolescents' feeling that Judaism “takes too much time” is not surprising given that 11–13-year-olds are heavily involved in Bar/Bat Mitzvah training, which does consume large amounts of their time.



**Table 9. How Important Is . . . ?**

	Ages 11-13 [%]	Ages 14-16 [%]	Ages 17-19+ [%]
<b>How important is each of the following to you? (very or somewhat)</b>			
Attending weekly synagogue service	31	38	40
Learning Hebrew	83	63	79
Going to Israel	84	83	95
Knowing about the Holocaust	96	98	99
Doing acts of loving-kindness	87	93	98
Participating in Jewish-sponsored activities	64	65	73
Doing service in the Jewish community	62	62	79

**Table 10. What Makes It Difficult to Participate Fully in Jewish Life?**

	Ages 11-13 [%]	Ages 14-16 [%]	Ages 17-19+ [%]
<b>Are there things that make difficult, or stand in the way of, your participating fully in Jewish life? (strongly agree or agree)</b>			
I have experienced anti-Semitism in my community.****	20 (A)	42 (B)	46 (B)
My school does not accommodate Jewish traditions.	25	23	12
My parents push me to participate, but they don't participate themselves.****	13 (A)	24 (B)	7 (A)
I don't feel knowledgeable or competent about Jewish things.	8	11	15
Judaism is boring.****	8 (B)	5 (A)	5 (A)
Being Jewish takes too much time.****	16 (C)	6 (B)	2 (A)
Judaism separates me from my Christian friends.***	13 (A)	19 (AB)	27 (B)
Judaism isn't relevant to me or won't help me succeed in life.***	8 (B)	6 (B)	2 (A)

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

Mid-adolescents feel significantly more often than do younger or older adolescents that their parents push them to participate even if the parents don't participate themselves (24 percent of mid-adolescents feel this way versus 13 percent of young adolescents and 7 percent of late adolescents). One-quarter of young adolescents also believe that their schools do not accommodate Jewish traditions.

## Chapter 5

# Formal Jewish Education

Two different “systems” exist for Conservative and Reform supplemental education in Minneapolis.<sup>1</sup> Children from the Conservative synagogues may go to preschool through first or second grade in a Sunday school program in their synagogue. After 2nd grade, Conservative children attend Talmud Torah, which is the functional equivalent of a Conservative community school. No equivalent to a community school exists in the Reform synagogues.

Some Conservative youth experience points of exit and reentry in their formal Jewish education. For example, as of this writing, children and adolescents in kindergarten through 8th grade may obtain their formal Jewish education in a Jewish day school (i.e., parochial school). After day school, many will reenter the Conservative system in high school; others will remain in the Conservative system for their entire education. Also, for a period of time (during Bar/Bat Mitzvah training periods) young people are receiving education at Talmud Torah and in their synagogues (where they learn synagogue skills, prayers, and Torah reading). Although such exit and reentry points could be true of youth in the Reform movement as well, most of these young people receive their entire formal Jewish education in the Reform system.

### Jewish Adolescents’ Perceptions about Formal Jewish Education

Adolescents’ thoughts about their formal Jewish education are portrayed in Table 11. Respondents are categorized by affiliation with the Conservative or Reform movements or by having attended a Jewish day school and then reentered the Conservative program.<sup>2</sup> Adolescents in Reform synagogue programs reported significantly more often than other youth that they had “learned a lot” (reported by 56 percent of Reform, 37 percent of Conservative, and 47 percent of Jewish day school respondents). The Reform adolescents also report significantly more often than other youth that the “quality of teaching is high” (34 percent of Reform students versus 21 percent of Conservative students), that teachers and administrators care about students

---

<sup>1</sup> Because such a small number of Orthodox young people responded to the survey, analyses of this group were not possible.

<sup>2</sup> The response options on this survey question included Talmud Torah, a Reform temple program, an Orthodox school, or a Jewish day school and then Talmud Torah. The adolescents who responded that they went to a Jewish day school and then to Talmud Torah were not asked either how long they attended a day school prior to Talmud Torah or the reason they made a change from day school to Talmud Torah.

**Table 11. Adolescents' Opinions about Their Formal Jewish Education**

	Conservative [%]	Reform [%]	Jewish day school [%]
<b>How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience? (strongly agree or agree)</b>			
I haven't attended classes regularly.***	26 (B)	10 (A)	20 (AB)
I've learned a lot.***	37 (A)	56 (B)	47 (A)
It is not at all worthwhile and is boring.	34	18	37
The quality of teaching is high.****	21 (A)	34 (B)	30 (AB)
Classes are not well run or organized.****	62 (B)	36 (A)	43 (AB)
Students have a lot of respect for teachers.	8	11	13
The teachers and administration don't listen to kids.	38	32	40
The teachers and administration care about kids.***	49 (A)	63 (B)	47 (A)
The teachers know how to teach effectively.***	21 (A)	31 (B)	33 (AB)
My parents haven't cared if I've attended regularly.****	12 (B)	4 (A)	3 (A)
I don't care about what I've learned.	10	5	3
I care about attending regularly.	55	51	43
My parents have forced me to attend.	37	36	55
The kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced.***	60 (B)	38 (A)	47 (AB)

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

(63 percent of Reform students versus 49 percent of Conservative students and 47 percent of Jewish day school students), and that teachers teach effectively (31 percent of Reform students versus 21 percent of Conservative students).

Conversely, students in Conservative educational programs reported significantly more often that they haven't attended classes regularly (26 percent of Conservative students versus 10 percent of Reform students), that classes are not well run or organized (62 percent of Conservative students versus 36 percent of Reform students), that the "kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced" (60 percent of Conservative students versus 38 percent of Reform students), and that their parents have not cared about regular attendance (12 percent of Conservative students versus 4 percent of Reform students and 3 percent of Jewish day school students).

The perceptions of adolescents about the organization of their supplemental educational programs emerged on the open-ended survey question in various ways. A number of adolescents referred to the lack of enforcement of rules, the "rowdy" behavior of a few adolescents having a larger impact on the group as a whole, and the inability of teachers to handle this kind of behavior in the after-school hours. For example:

Most of the "teachers" there are the cause of most of the problem. They don't know how to handle kids. They think kids are just little things that listen to what they say, do what they tell them to do. The teachers insult kids if they don't understand. You think the kids don't have any respect for the teachers? Well, where do you think that comes from? It works both ways. The teachers don't respect the kids. These people are probably very smart, the teachers, but they aren't good at relaying the info to the kids. Once I took a

class where the teacher taught it like it was a college-level course (I was in 8th grade). I'm not saying the teachers are all bad, I can think of two good ones offhand, just most of them. Thanks for your time.

*15-year-old boy*

The main problem is that the staff and teachers have let the kids take charge and it's gone way overboard. . . . I think the teachers just have to take the curriculum that they have to teach and teach it.

*13-year-old girl*

Slightly less than half to somewhat more than one-half of all three groups reported caring about attending religious school regularly (the differences among the three groups were not significant). Interestingly, one-third of students of Reform synagogue programs and Conservative programs as well as more than one-half of students in Jewish day schools reported feeling that their attendance had been forced by their parents.

## Adolescent Perceptions of Learning Jewish Subjects

Table 12 reflects how well Jewish youth feel they have learned certain subjects in their formal Jewish educational settings. Almost all adolescents, regardless of where they received their formal Jewish education, reported having learned a lot about the Jewish holidays (90 percent of Conservative students, 91 percent of Reform students, and 83 percent of Jewish day school students) and the Holocaust (93 percent of youth in all three groups). More than three-quarters of all three groups also reported having learned about Jewish practices very well.

Adolescents who had attended a Jewish day school and then gone on to Conservative synagogue programs—as compared with those adolescents who had attended only Conservative or Reform synagogue educational programs—reported significantly more often having learned Hebrew language skills (80 percent of day school students versus 49 percent of Conservative and 59 percent of Reform students) and Mishnah (40 percent of day school students versus 15 percent of Conservative students and 12 percent of Reform students). Adolescents attending a Jewish day school also reported significantly more prayer skills than did Reform students (80 percent of day school students versus 65 percent of Reform students) and better knowledge of Jewish life-cycle events than did those students who had gone only to Conservative programs (70 percent of day school students versus 53 percent of Conservative students). Both Jewish day school students and Conservative students reported having learned Bible skills significantly more often than did students in Reform synagogue programs.

Interestingly, although the differences between the groups are not statistically significant, Reform students reported having learned more about ethics than did either the Conservative students or Jewish day school students (76 percent of Reform students versus 52 percent of Conservative students and 53 percent of day school students). Similar percentages of Reform synagogue students and Jewish day school students reported having learned a lot about contemporary events, as compared with their Conservative counterparts (49 percent of Reform, 47 percent of Jewish day school students, and 38 percent of Conservative students).

The following comment reflects the perceptions of students about the teaching they have experienced in their educational programs:

The teachers should all be licensed for the subject. Teachers should be able to teach the students and relate to them instead of being so noninteresting. They should also have an idea of what they are going to teach more than 5 minutes before class starts. They also [should enforce] rules so we respect them, not enforce rules after 5 or more years of attending.

*14-year-old boy*

## Classes in Which Jewish Youth Are Interested

Table 13 shows the educational subjects in which Jewish adolescents are interested, as reported on the survey. Interest level varies by age group in almost all of the subject areas, although a majority of all respondents reported interest in taking a class on the Holocaust (86 percent of young and mid-adolescents and a slightly lower proportion—78 percent—of late adolescents). As one 18-year-old girl remarked:

I would also like to see more education classes outside [of the formal educational setting], especially on Israel and the Holocaust.

Almost all (95 percent) of young adolescents reported interest in studying ethics, a percentage significantly higher than that reported by mid- or late adolescents for this subject. This is the only subject that younger adolescents are more interested in than are older adolescents.

By and large, where there are age-group differences, late adolescents are more interested in the subject matter than are either of the two younger groups, but the two younger groups do

**Table 12. Jewish Subjects Learned, by Type of School**

	Conservative [%]	Reform [%]	Jewish day school [%]
<b>How well do you feel you have learned each of the following subjects in your Jewish education? (very or somewhat)</b>			
Hebrew language***	49 (A)	59 (A)	80 (B)
Jewish history	64	75	67
Bible***	61 (B)	48 (A)	57 (B)
Mishnah****	15 (A)	12 (A)	40 (B)
Contemporary events	38	49	47
Jewish holidays	90	91	83
Jewish practices	78	86	77
Prayer skills**	73 (AB)	65 (A)	80 (B)
Israel	71	79	70
Jewish life-cycle events**	53 (A)	66 (AB)	70 (B)
Holocaust	93	93	93
Jewish and Christian relations****	43 (A)	65 (B)	43 (A)
Jewish identity	63	73	70
Ethics	52	56	53

\* =  $p < .05$     \*\* =  $p < .01$     \*\*\* =  $p < .001$     \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

**Table 13. Subjects in Which Jewish Youth Are Interested**

	<b>Ages 11–13 [%]</b>	<b>Ages 14–16 [%]</b>	<b>Ages 17–19+ [%]</b>
<b>If you had an opportunity to take a class, how interested would you be in the following subjects? (very or somewhat)</b>			
Hebrew language****	59 (A)	62 (A)	82 (B)
Jewish history****	50 (A)	64 (A)	78 (B)
Bible***	41 (A)	47 (A)	62 (B)
Mishnah****	23 (A)	29 (A)	48 (B)
Contemporary events****	37 (A)	50 (B)	78 (C)
Jewish holidays, practices, or life-cycle events*	45 (A)	56 (AB)	66 (B)
Prayer skills	44	47	45
Israel****	69 (A)	69 (A)	96 (B)
Holocaust	86	86	78
Jewish and Christian relations****	53 (A)	67 (A)	81 (B)
Ethics****	95 (A)	59 (B)	74 (B)

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

not statistically differ from each other. Although age-group differences exist, a large number of youth reported interest in taking a class in Hebrew language (82 percent of late adolescents, 59 percent of young adolescents, and 62 percent of mid-adolescents); on Israel (96 percent of late adolescents, 69 percent of early and mid-adolescents); and on Jewish history (78 percent of late adolescents, 50 percent of young adolescents, and 64 percent of mid-adolescents). Adolescents also reported interest in a class on Jewish-Christian relations (81 percent of late adolescents, 53 percent of young adolescents, and 67 percent of mid-adolescents). Conversely, adolescents in all age groups indicated little interest in further classes on prayer skills.

Adolescents clearly are interested in developing their Hebrew language skills, according to the survey results. Although adolescents' years of formal Jewish education have included Hebrew (at least in the form of prayer skills), a number of respondents expressed quite negative views about what they have learned during those years. The following remarks from a 14-year-old girl reflect this viewpoint:

For college we need to have taken a language for 4 years. [I] don't know any Hebrew. I've taken Spanish for one year and know a lot more. They teach us how to read Hebrew but not to understand it.

## Chapter 6

# How Jewish Youth Spend Their Time

The activities in which young people participate may communicate a great deal about what is important to them. In addition to identifying what is important to Jewish youth (see chapter 3), this survey also asked Jewish young people how they spend their time. The results indicate that notable differences exist in this regard between Conservative adolescents and Reform adolescents, especially in terms of Jewish-sponsored activities. Conservative youth are more likely than are Reform youth to spend time in Jewish-sponsored activities. Additionally, adolescent females are more likely than are males to spend their time in Jewish-sponsored activities.

Adolescents were asked to report on the number of hours they spend in a typical week in a variety of activities during the school year. Twelve of the 22 activities listed were secular activities (see Tables 14A and 14B) and 10 of them were Jewish-sponsored (see Tables 15A and 15B).<sup>1</sup>

### Secular Activities during the School Year

As can be seen in Table 14A, adolescents indicated that they spend a considerable amount of time—6 or more hours per week—studying or doing homework (59 percent), participating in secular sports or athletics (45 percent), watching television (40 percent), and exercising (31 percent).

Few differences are observable between Jewish male and female adolescents in reported time use. The differences that do show up are similar to the gender differences observed in other studies of youth time use (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1984). The greatest of these differences in the current study are that males are more likely than females to have played video games and females are more likely than males to have gone shopping regularly during the school year.

The few other observable gender differences are smaller. Based on respondents' reports, males are somewhat more likely than females to have participated in non-Jewish-sponsored

---

<sup>1</sup> Jewish-sponsored activities are defined here as being those activities that are in any way related to congregational life, Jewish youth groups, and family life pertaining to holiday celebrations or ritual observance. "Secular" activities are defined here as being those activities that are connected with the wider community of the child's public or private, but not parochial, school; extracurricular school activities; and social activities not connected with the Jewish community.

**Table 14A. How Youth Spend Their Time: “Secular” Activities during the School Year, by Gender**

	Males				Females				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying/doing homework	1	8	36	56	<1	8	29	62	1	8	32	59
Participating in social activities	7	16	42	35	2	13	35	50	4	14	38	44
Working for pay	45	23	15	16	44	17	17	23	44	20	16	19
Doing volunteer work outside of the Jewish community	69	24	6	0	67	21	8	4	68	23	7	2
Participating in non-Jewish-sponsored sports or athletics	15	14	26	45	25	13	18	44	21	13	21	45
Exercising	7	31	31	31	7	32	31	30	7	31	31	31
Reading for pleasure	27	46	17	10	27	36	23	14	27	40	20	12
Watching television	3	16	39	42	6	25	32	38	5	21	35	40
Using a computer	11	33	37	20	10	41	34	15	11	37	35	17
Playing video games	50	38	7	5	90	7	2	1	73	21	4	3
Shopping	39	49	11	2	14	47	31	8	25	48	22	5
Going to movies	25	51	22	2	27	48	22	3	26	50	22	3

sports or athletics. Although males and females are equally likely to have spent time reading for pleasure, females tended to spend more time, in general, engaged in this activity. Overall, males are slightly more likely than females to have spent time in technology-related activities (e.g., using a computer, playing video games, watching television), whereas females are slightly more likely than males to have engaged in social activities (e.g., participating in family celebrations). Females also spent more time in work-related activities (e.g., working for pay or volunteer work outside of the Jewish community).

These gender differences are perhaps better shown by the bar charts in Figures 1, 2, and 3. Figure 4 depicts, specifically, the differences between males and females in volunteer work in the Jewish community as well as outside of the Jewish community. Two-thirds to three-quarters of youth reported doing no volunteer work, either within or outside of the Jewish community. More females than males reported a lot of time (6 or more hours) in volunteer work outside of the Jewish community, while equal percentages of males and females—only 1 percent of both—reported spending 6 or more hours in volunteer work inside the Jewish community. Although these percentages are small, they contrast sharply with the high percentages of youth reporting interest in social causes (see chapter 3 for further discussion of these concerns).

As can be seen in Table 14B, Conservative and Reform youth generally spend similar amounts of time in secular activities; they responded virtually identically regarding participation in homework, social activities, working for pay, exercising, reading for pleasure, watching television, using a computer, and shopping. Reform youth were somewhat more likely than were Conservative youth, however, to report spending time in secular activities for which



**In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?**

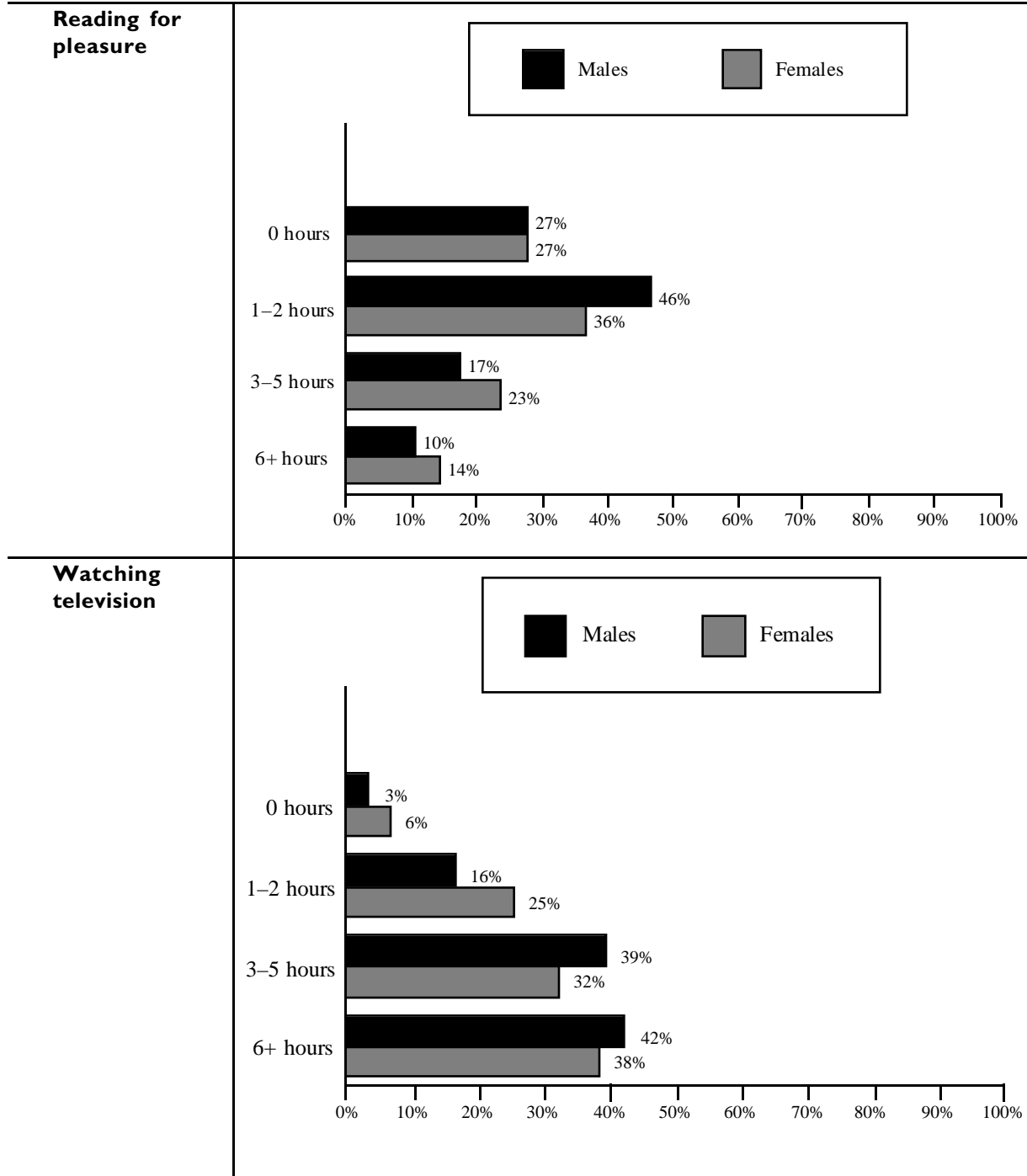


Figure 1. Reading and watching television during the school year

**In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?**

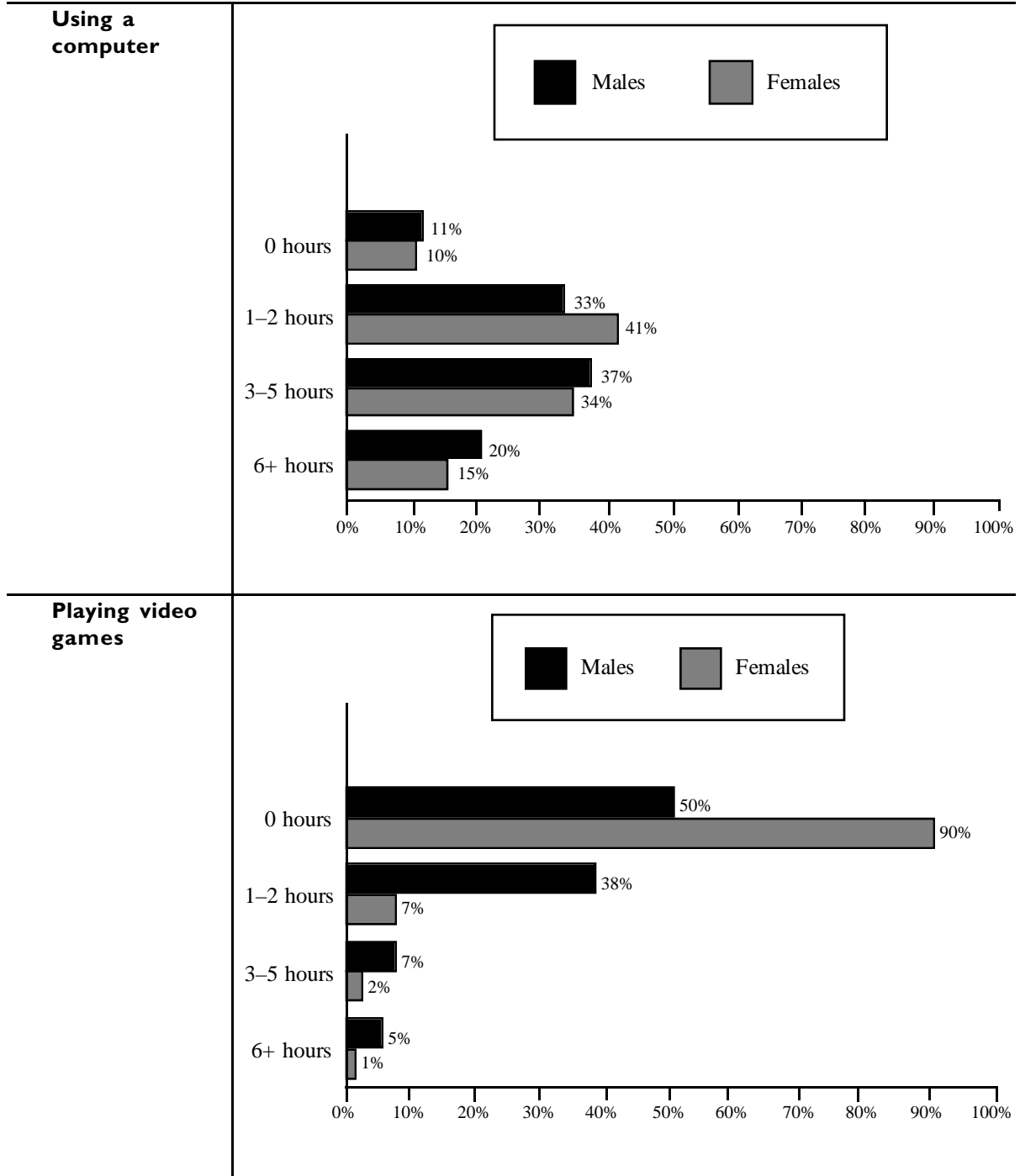


Figure 2. Using a computer and playing video games during the school year

**In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?**

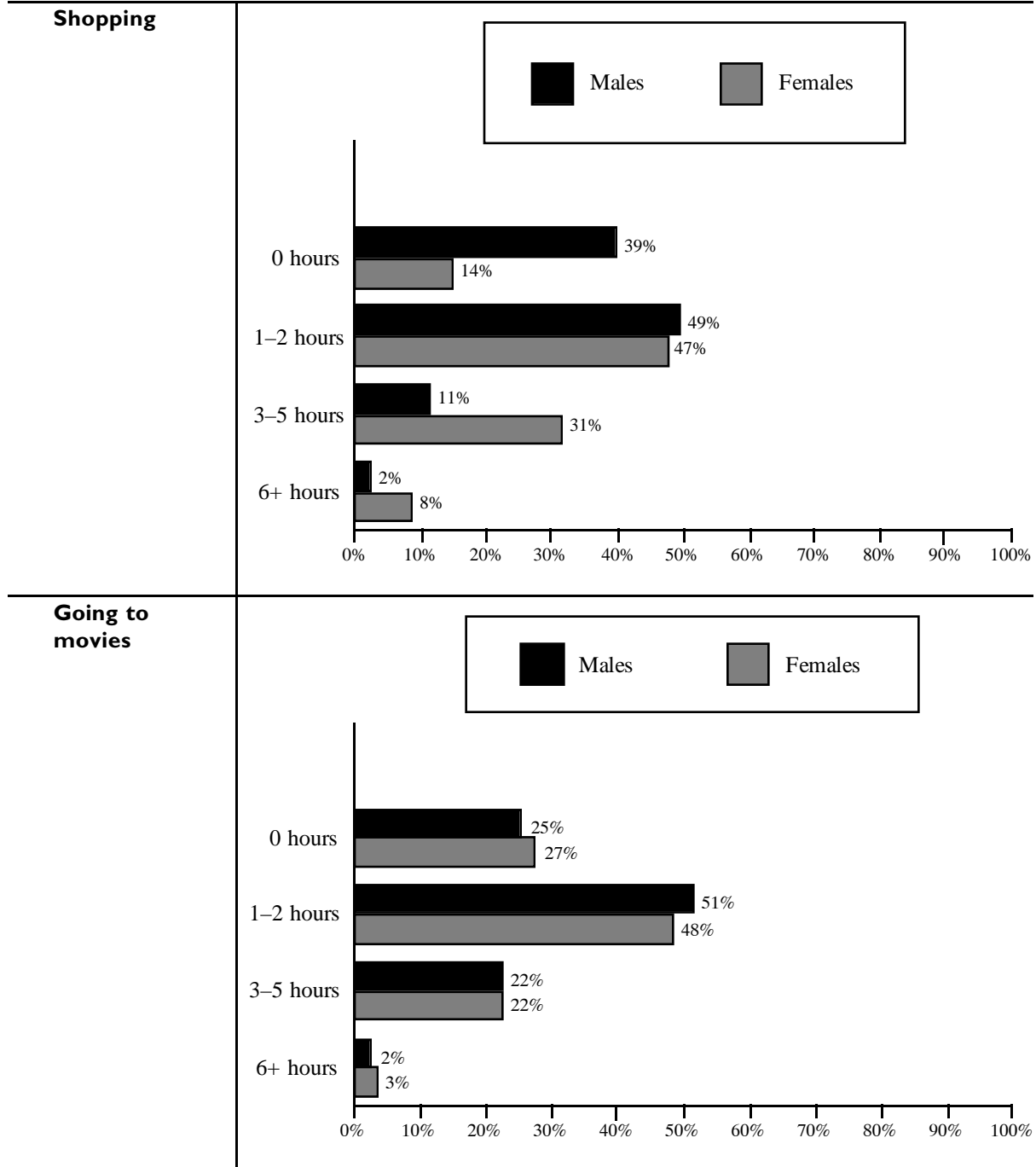


Figure 3. Shopping and going to the movies during the school year

**In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?**

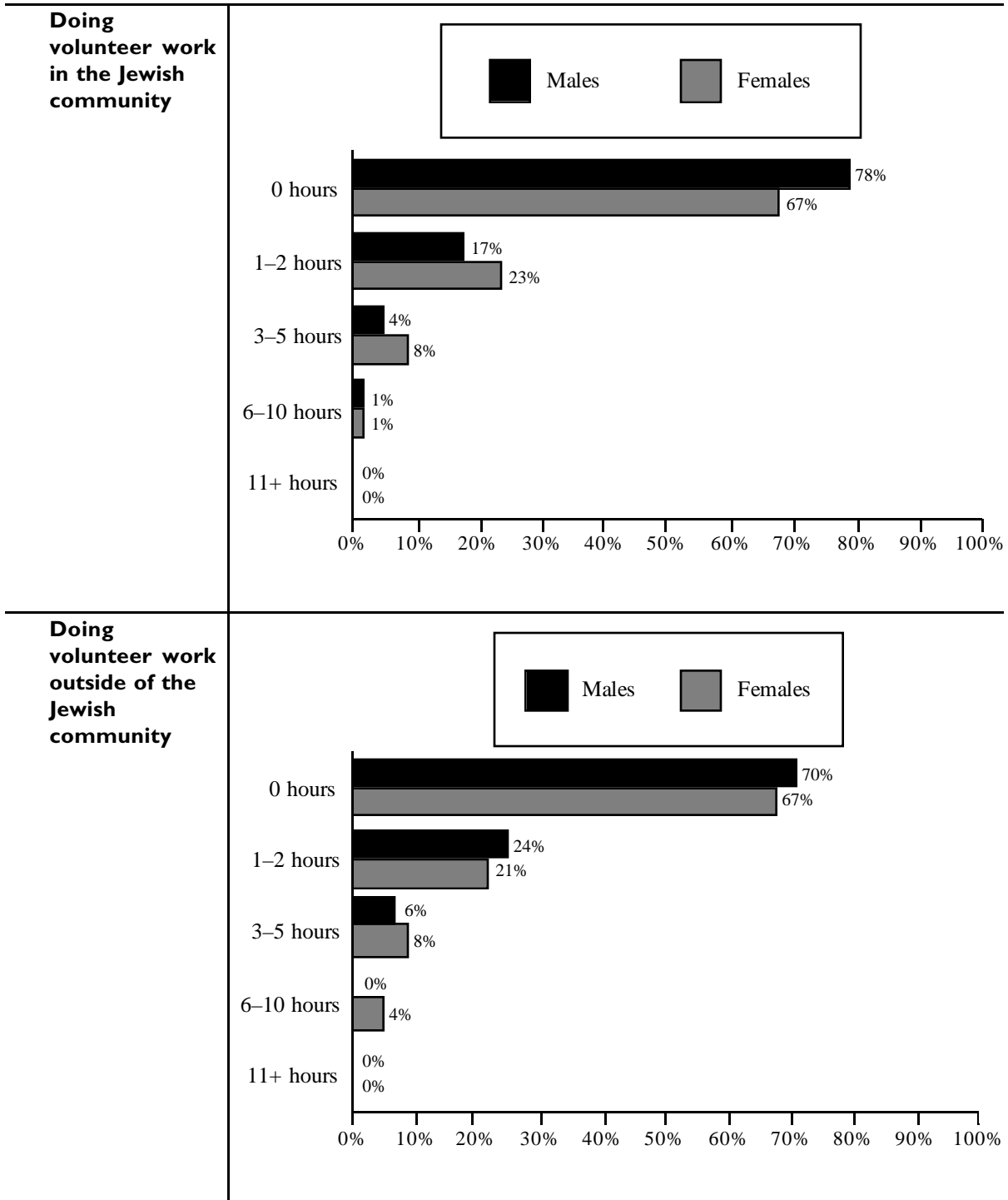


Figure 4. Volunteer work during the school year

**Table 14B. How Youth Spend Their Time: “Secular” Activities during the School Year, by Affiliation**

	Conservative				Reform				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying/doing homework	0	8	30	62	1	5	33	61	1	8	32	59
Participating in social activities	2	14	39	44	5	13	40	42	4	14	38	44
Working for pay	45	18	18	20	48	21	14	16	44	20	16	19
Doing volunteer work outside of the Jewish community	74	19	6	1	65	26	7	3	68	23	7	2
Participating in non-Jewish-sponsored sports or athletics	24	14	19	43	13	11	23	53	21	13	21	45
Exercising	8	34	32	27	7	27	29	37	7	31	31	31
Reading for pleasure	27	41	22	11	26	38	21	14	27	40	20	12
Watching television	5	20	33	42	5	20	36	39	5	21	35	40
Using a computer	10	38	34	18	11	34	39	16	11	37	35	17
Playing video games	77	16	3	3	68	24	5	3	73	21	4	3
Shopping	26	46	23	5	26	51	19	4	25	48	22	5
Going to movies	30	47	20	3	19	54	25	1	26	50	22	3

similar Jewish activities are available. For example, 36 percent of Reform youth (compared with 26 percent of Conservative youth) reported they were more likely to spend time doing volunteer work outside of the Jewish community than inside the Jewish community, while 87 percent of Reform youth (compared with 76 percent of Conservative youth) reported participating in secular sports or athletics instead of similar Jewish-sponsored programs. Reform youth also reported spending more time in certain recreational activities (e.g., playing video games and going to the movies) than did Conservative youth. Although not shown in the table, Conservative youth reported spending more time participating in family celebrations than did Reform youth.

### Jewish Activities during the School Year

Of the Jewish-sponsored activities described in the survey, adolescents reported that they spent the most time studying Judaism and Israel (69 percent) and attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school (65 percent). (See Table 15A.) Of the ten Jewish-sponsored activities, however, youth reported that there were five in which they spent *no time* during the school year. These included doing volunteer work in the Jewish community (71 percent) (see Figure 4), teaching Saturday synagogue or temple programs (70 percent), attending retreats (70 percent), and attending Saturday school (62 percent).<sup>2</sup> Approximately half reported spending

<sup>2</sup> Seventy-one percent of the sample also reported that they spent no time preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. However, given the age distribution of the sample, this would follow; the majority of the sample were beyond

**Table 15A. How Youth Spend Their Time: Jewish Activities during the School Year, by Gender**

	Males				Females				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying Judaism and Israel	32	41	14	12	31	38	17	14	31	39	16	14
Attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school	33	31	20	16	37	19	16	29	35	24	18	23
Attending Saturday school	64	21	15	0	61	15	24	0	62	18	20	0
Teaching Saturday synagogue or temple programs	77	14	9	0	65	15	20	0	70	15	15	0
Attending religious services	51	39	10	2	48	36	16	<1	49	37	13	1
Preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah	70	10	12	8	72	9	14	5	71	10	13	6
Participating in family celebrations	23	62	12	4	26	49	23	5	25	55	18	2
Doing volunteer work in the Jewish community	78	17	4	1	67	23	8	1	71	21	7	1
Participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups	51	32	14	3	48	34	18	10	49	28	16	7
Attending retreats	72	16	4	7	69	9	9	14	70	12	7	11

some amount of time attending religious services (51 percent) and participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups (51 percent).

Significantly, approximately one-half of Jewish youth reported spending *no* time in Jewish-sponsored activities. Although the data reveal that the majority of Jewish adolescents participate in at least one Jewish-sponsored activity, a substantial group of young people are disconnected entirely from activities in the Jewish community.

As seen in Table 15A, males and females generally spend similar time in most Jewish-sponsored activities, based on respondents' reports. Females were more likely than males were to report spending some part of their weekly activities—albeit a small part—teaching Saturday synagogue programs (35 percent of females versus 23 percent of males) and doing volunteer work in the Jewish community (32 percent of females versus 22 percent of males). Compared with males, females also reported more time attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school. These gender differences can be seen in Figure 5. As can be seen in Figure 6, males were somewhat more likely than were females to report participating in secular sports or athletics, whereas females were somewhat more likely than males to report spending a lot of time in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups.

Although there were few differences observable between Conservative and Reform youth in the amount of time spent participating in secular activities, differences emerged with respect to Jewish activities. Table 15B highlights the time involved in Jewish activities by affiliation.

---

Bar/Bat Mitzvah age. It should also be noted that the 62 percent of young people who do not participate in Saturday school and the 70 percent who do not teach Saturday school are somewhat misleading given that the Reform synagogues do not have Saturday school.

**In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?**

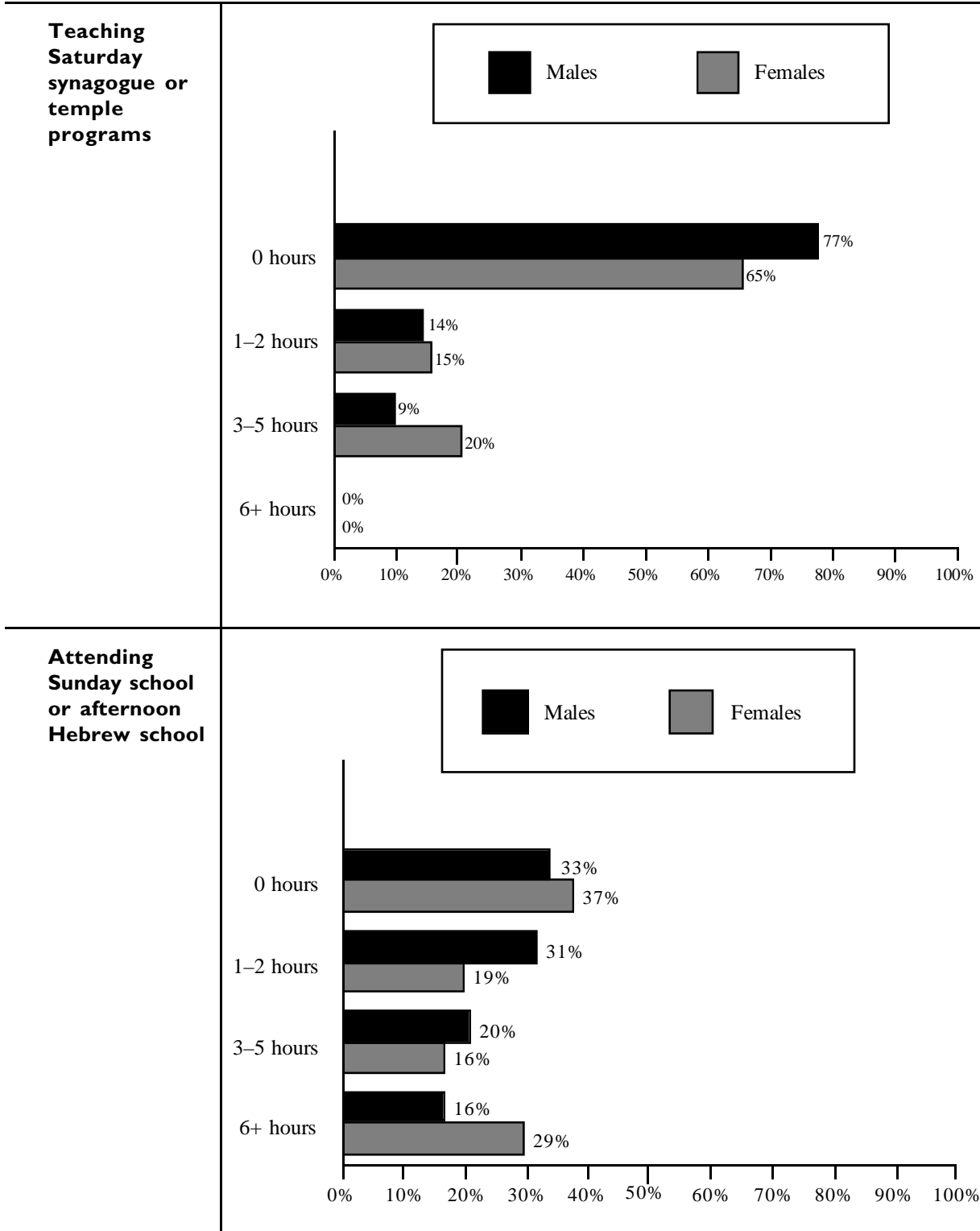


Figure 5. Synagogue programs and Hebrew school during the school year

**In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?**

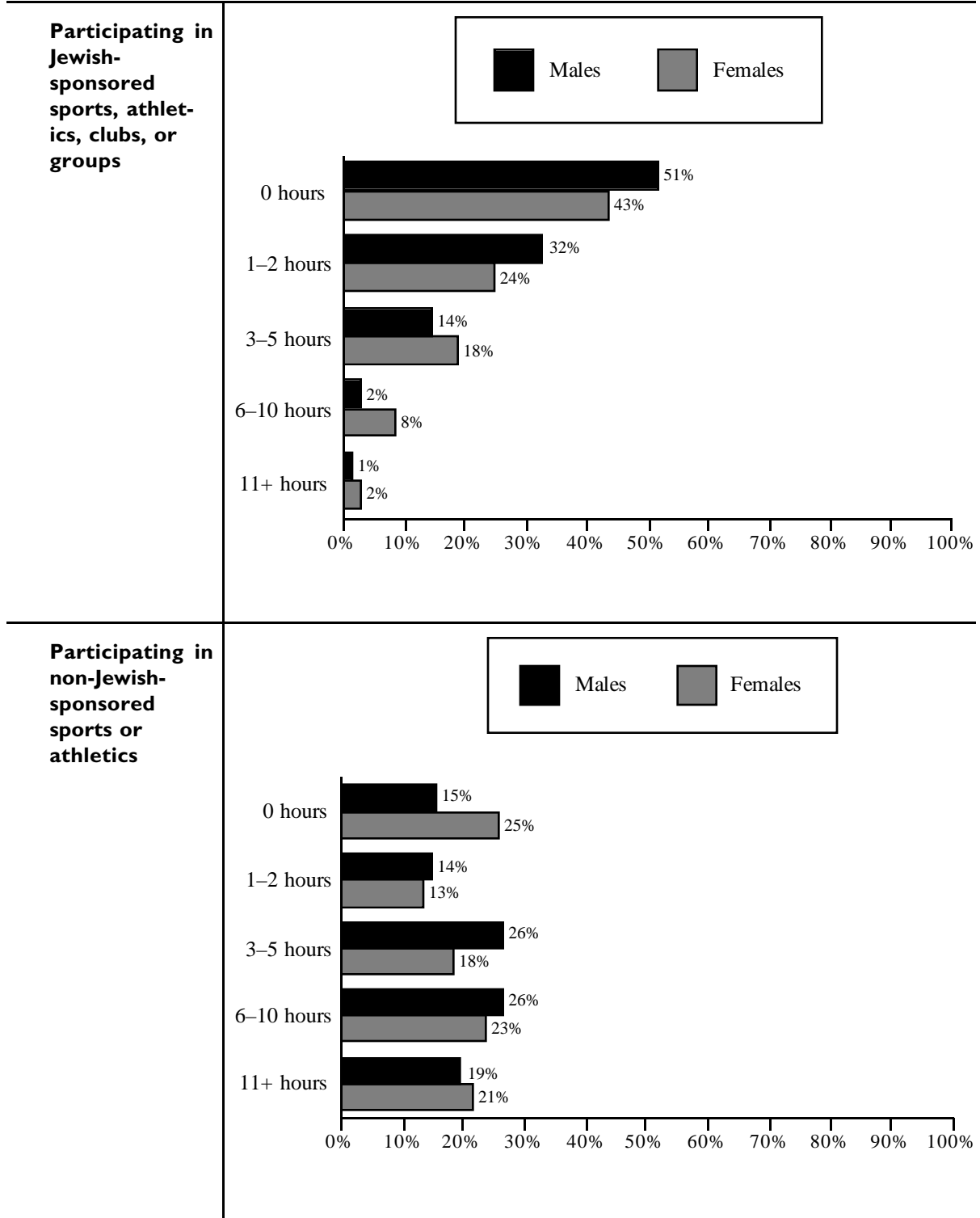


Figure 6. Jewish-sponsored sports, clubs, and groups during the school year



**Table 15B. How Youth Spend Their Time: Jewish Activities during the School Year, by Affiliation**

	Conservative				Reform				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying Judaism and Israel	27	31	20	21	34	51	13	3	31	39	16	14
Attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school	33	18	12	37	32	36	25	8	35	24	18	23
Attending Saturday school	41	25	34	0	89	8	3	0	62	18	20	0
Teaching Saturday synagogue or temple programs	57	19	24	0	86	11	3	0	70	15	15	0
Attending religious services	38	43	19	1	65	32	3	0	49	37	13	1
Preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah	77	7	11	6	63	14	17	5	71	10	13	6
Participating in family celebrations	22	53	24	2	30	60	8	1	25	55	18	2
Doing volunteer work in the Jewish community	71	20	9	0	73	22	3	2	71	21	7	1
Participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups	38	31	21	10	62	22	11	5	49	28	16	7
Attending retreats	64	12	7	16	75	13	6	6	70	12	7	11

Conservative youth reported spending more time than did Reform youth teaching Saturday synagogue or temple programs (43 percent of Conservative youth versus 14 percent of Reform youth), attending religious services (63 percent versus 35 percent of Reform youth), and participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or other groups (62 percent versus 38 percent of Reform youth).<sup>3</sup> Conservative youth also reported more time than did Reform youth in studying Judaism and Israel (72 percent versus 67 percent of Reform youth). Although Conservative and Reform youth both reported spending time attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school, Conservative youth reported investing considerably more hours than Reform youth in this activity. Both groups reported similar amounts of time volunteering in the Jewish community.

## Israel

Adolescents were also asked about their Israel experiences. Approximately one-quarter of the youth surveyed indicated that they had been to Israel at least once (see Table 16). As described in chapter 3, those adolescents who have had an experience in Israel feel very positive about their experience, in terms of both their connection to Israel directly and the development of their faith. Yet, not all adolescents can financially afford such a trip. As one adolescent wrote:

<sup>3</sup> As above, the difference in time for teaching Saturday school is misleading given that Reform synagogues do not have Saturday school.

I also think scholarship money is very important for Jewish retreats and trips to Israel. There are many teens who would like to go and should be able to but cannot afford to.

*18-year-old girl*

## Secular Activities during the Summer

Tables 17 through 18 illustrate the number of hours adolescents spend in Jewish and non-Jewish activities during the summer months.

As can be seen in Table 17A, adolescents reported spending a lot of time watching television and exercising during the summer (much as they do during the school year). As would be expected, however, they reported spending considerably less time in the summer—compared with the school year—studying and doing homework; they also reported spending less time working for pay during the summer compared with their school-year reports. In addition, a larger percentage of adolescents reported spending a great deal more time during the summer months engaged in social activities than they report spending during the school year. Their reported participation in secular sports and athletic activities also is substantially greater during the summer months than during the school year.<sup>4</sup> Summer generally appears to be a time for leisure for the adolescents in this sample.

As during the school year, males and females spend their time in the summer months in similar ways, although there are notable differences. Females generally were more likely than boys to report work-related activities (both for pay and volunteer work) during the summer months. Females also were more likely than males were to report spending time studying and doing homework, as well as attending or being a counselor at a non-Jewish day camp. Females reported reading for pleasure, shopping, and spending time in social activities during the summer more than males did, continuing the school-year pattern. Males were more likely than females to report spending their summer leisure time in secular sports or athletics, watching television, using a computer, playing video games, and going to movies.

**Table 16. Experience in Israel, by Age Group**

	<b>Ages 11–13 [%]</b>	<b>Ages 14–16 [%]</b>	<b>Ages 17–19+ [%]</b>
<b>How many times have you gone to Israel with your family?</b>			
Never	80	76	64
Once	13	21	25
Two times or more	7	3	11
<b>How many times have you gone to Israel through an organized program?</b>			
Never	99	90	20
Once	1	9	69
Two times or more	0	1	11

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that many of the Jewish-sponsored activities are not fully operational during summer months.

**Table 17A. How Youth Spend Their Time: “Secular” Activities during the Summer, by Gender**

	Males				Females				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the summer, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying/doing homework	86	12	2	2	79	14	4	3	82	13	3	2
Participating in social activities	7	14	20	59	4	8	17	71	5	11	19	66
Working for pay	43	13	8	35	35	12	13	39	39	13	11	38
Doing volunteer work outside of the Jewish community	83	11	4	2	75	19	4	2	79	16	4	2
Participating in non-Jewish-sponsored sports or athletics	32	14	18	36	52	11	14	24	43	12	16	29
Exercising	7	22	33	38	5	19	34	40	6	21	34	40
Attending or being a counselor at a non-Jewish day camp	94	1	1	3	87	1	1	10	90	1	2	7
Reading for pleasure	31	38	18	12	20	40	22	21	25	38	20	17
Watching television	6	16	31	47	17	15	31	36	12	16	31	41
Using a computer	23	31	24	22	37	34	19	10	30	33	21	16
Playing video games	51	27	13	9	90	7	2	1	73	16	7	4
Shopping	35	41	19	4	14	32	34	20	23	36	27	13
Going to movies	16	39	33	12	22	40	28	9	19	40	31	11

*Note:* 43 percent of adolescents spend 11 or more hours per week in social activities in the summer.

As is shown in Table 17B, Conservative and Reform youth spend time in secular activities during the summer months that is similar to their time in these activities during the school year, according to the data. Conservative youth were more likely than Reform youth to report participating in family celebrations during the summer, just as they are during the school year. Reform youth were more likely than Conservative youth to report going to the movies, shopping, using a computer, and watching television. They also reported participating in secular sports activities and in volunteer work outside of the Jewish community more than did Conservative youth. They were twice as likely as Conservative youth to report having attended a secular overnight camp.

### Jewish Activities during the Summer

Adolescents spend less time during the summer months in several Jewish-sponsored activities than they do during the school year (see Table 18A). The number of young people who report attending religious services is smaller, as are the number of youth reporting that they do volunteer work in the Jewish community, prepare for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and study Judaism and Israel. This probably reflects the fewer formal Jewish educational activities that are available during the summer months.

**Table 17B. How Youth Spend Their Time: “Secular” Activities during the Summer, by Affiliation**

	Conservative				Reform				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the summer, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying/doing homework	82	12	3	2	83	12	3	1	82	13	3	2
Participating in social activities	5	13	19	63	6	9	16	69	5	11	19	66
Working for pay	42	9	12	36	39	15	9	36	39	13	11	38
Doing volunteer work outside of the Jewish community	82	11	5	2	76	20	2	2	79	16	4	2
Participating in non-Jewish-sponsored sports or athletics	50	12	13	25	33	10	18	39	43	12	16	29
Exercising	6	22	33	39	4	20	35	41	6	21	34	40
Attending or being a counselor at a non-Jewish day camp	93	2	<1	4	87	1	3	10	90	1	2	7
Reading for pleasure	25	39	19	17	22	37	21	20	25	38	20	17
Watching television	15	19	26	40	9	13	36	42	12	16	31	41
Using a computer	34	31	21	15	26	34	24	15	30	33	21	16
Playing video games	76	13	7	4	71	18	8	3	73	16	7	4
Shopping	29	32	25	13	19	41	27	13	23	36	27	13
Going to movies	23	41	28	8	15	40	32	13	19	40	31	11

Note: 43 percent of adolescents spend 11 or more hours per week in social activities in the summer.

**Table 18A. How Youth Spend Their Time: Jewish Activities during the Summer, by Gender**

	Males				Females				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the summer, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying Judaism and Israel	68	24	4	4	59	21	7	13	63	22	6	9
Attending religious services	69	17	9	4	52	22	10	16	60	20	10	11
Preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah	82	7	5	5	84	8	7	1	83	7	6	3
Participating in family celebrations	35	54	9	2	33	43	17	6	34	48	14	4
Doing volunteer work in the Jewish community	82	12	2	4	71	18	4	7	76	16	3	5
Participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups	72	14	7	7	67	16	10	8	69	15	8	8
Attending or being a counselor at a Jewish day camp	76	1	1	23	60	1	1	37	67	1	1	31

During the summer months, females continue to participate more than males do in Jewish-sponsored activities, according to the data (see Table 18A). Females were more likely than males to report continuing their Jewish studies; attending religious services; volunteering in the Jewish community; participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups; and attending or being a counselor at a Jewish day camp during the summer months.

The data also show that Conservative youth are generally more likely to spend time in Jewish activities than are Reform youth during the summer months, as is true during the school year (see Table 18B). Conservative youth in this study were more likely than were Reform youth to report attending religious services, participating in Jewish-sponsored sports or athletics, and studying Judaism and Israel. Conservative and Reform youth reported spending similar amounts of time engaged in two activities involving a contribution to the Jewish community: doing volunteer work in the Jewish community or attending or being a counselor at a Jewish day camp.

A substantial number of Jewish youth reported spending time at Jewish camps during the summer months. Almost one-third reported that they spend 6 or more hours per week at a Jewish day camp, while only 10 percent indicated that they spend time in secular camps during the summer. Jewish youth were much more likely to spend time at Jewish-sponsored rather than non-Jewish-sponsored camps. (See Tables 17A and 17B.)

Table 19 shows the camp activity of adolescents. Camp Herzl and Camp TEKO are the camps attended by most Jewish youth in Minneapolis, respondents' reports indicate. The majority of respondents reported having attended a Jewish overnight camp; moreover, they report having done so for three or more summers.

**Table 18B. How Youth Spend Their Time: Jewish Activities during the Summer, by Affiliation**

	Conservative				Reform				All			
	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+	0	1-2	3-5	6+
	[%]				[%]				[%]			
<b>In a typical week during the summer, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?</b>												
Studying Judaism and Israel	56	26	6	11	69	19	7	6	63	22	6	9
Attending religious services	50	21	13	16	70	19	3	7	60	20	10	11
Preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah	88	4	4	3	76	13	8	3	83	7	6	3
Participating in family celebrations	30	47	19	4	39	51	7	3	34	48	14	4
Doing volunteer work in the Jewish community	74	17	4	4	78	13	1	8	76	16	3	5
Participating in Jewish-sponsored sports, athletics, clubs, or groups	62	18	11	10	77	11	6	7	69	15	8	8
Attending or being a counselor at a Jewish day camp	64	0	1	35	69	1	1	30	67	1	1	31

**Table 19. Camp Participation, by Affiliation**

	<b>Conservative [%]</b>	<b>Reform [%]</b>	<b>Just Jewish [%]</b>
<b>Have you ever attended a Jewish over- night camp?</b>			
Yes	84	76	73
No	16	24	27
<b>Have you attended . . . ?</b>			
TEKO	36	58	40
Moshava	<1	0	0
Herzl	75	41	60
Ramah	20	2	3
Olin Sang Ruby	1	20	10
Other	13	9	20
<b>How many years/summers have you attended?</b>			
1	8	26	21
2	12	13	21
3 or more	80	61	58
<b>Have you ever attended a non-Jewish overnight camp?</b>			
Yes	34	66	41

## Chapter 7

# The Meaning of Activities

### What Jewish Youth Find Meaningful

Jewish-sponsored activities are significantly more meaningful to females than to males, according to respondents' reports in this study. For example, as can be seen in Table 20, females reported more than males did that attending afternoon Hebrew school, teaching synagogue programs, and attending religious services were meaningful. Of all the activities described in Table 20, family celebrations and social activities are described most often by both males and females as very meaningful (79 percent of males and 86 percent of females describe family celebrations as very meaningful, and 74 percent of males and 83 percent of females describe social activities as very meaningful). Although the gender difference is significant, almost two-thirds of males and three-quarters of females describe religious services as very meaningful.

Whereas Table 20 highlights gender differences in what Jewish youth find meaningful, Table 21 highlights age differences. Interestingly, significant age differences emerge in adolescents' reports of how meaningful they found Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school and preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Young adolescents reported these activities as more meaningful than did older adolescents. One explanation for this difference might be that young adolescents—who are in the midst of preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah—spend more time in these activities than older adolescents do. Great *involvement* in these activities would not necessarily cause young adolescents to describe these activities as *meaningful*, however. Another interpretation might be that upon reflection when they are older, adolescents do not think their Bar/Bat Mitzvah training was as meaningful as they thought at the time of the training.

As Table 22 shows, there are group differences in what activities Conservative and Reform adolescents find meaningful. Conservative youth reported significantly higher percentages of youth who found these Jewish-sponsored activities meaningful: camp (72 percent of Conservative youth versus 57 percent of Reform youth); teaching synagogue programs (47 percent versus 17 percent); religious services (75 percent versus 17 percent); social activities (85 percent versus 76 percent); sports, clubs, and groups (57 percent versus 36 percent); re-

**Table 20. Meaningful Activities, by Gender**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>How meaningful are each of the following Jewish activities to you? (very or somewhat)</b>		
Camp	57	70
Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school**	36	50
Saturday school	28	42
Teaching synagogue programs****	23	41
Religious services***	60	74
Preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah	59	61
Family celebrations**	79	86
Social activities**	74	83
Volunteer work in the Jewish community***	40	57
Jewish-sponsored sports, clubs, groups**	38	51
Retreats	42	50
Attend/be counselor at Jewish day camp***	34	46
Attending confirmation classes	39	48

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

**Table 21. Meaningful Activities, by Age Group**

	<b>Ages 11–13 [%]</b>	<b>Ages 14–16 [%]</b>	<b>Ages 17–19+ [%]</b>
<b>How meaningful are each of the following Jewish activities to you? (very or somewhat)</b>			
Camp	67	62	67
Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school***	55 (C)	40 (B)	40 (A)
Saturday school	38	37	29
Teaching synagogue programs****	16 (A)	40 (B)	40 (B)
Religious services**	59 (A)	68 (B)	51 (C)
Preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah****	78 (B)	55 (A)	49 (A)
Family celebrations	79	81	91
Social activities	75	81	80
Volunteer work in the Jewish community****	35 (A)	49 (B)	68 (C)
Jewish-sponsored sports, clubs, groups****	25 (A)	53 (B)	59 (B)
Retreats****	16 (A)	60 (B)	57 (B)
Attend/be counselor at Jewish day camp****	26 (A)	45 (B)	48 (B)
Attending confirmation classes****	28 (A)	54 (C)	43 (B)

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$



treats (56 percent versus 38 percent); and attending or counseling at a Jewish day camp (46 percent versus 33 percent).<sup>1</sup>

## Why Activities Are Meaningful to Jewish Youth

As can be seen in Table 23, almost all adolescents—regardless of gender, age, or affiliation—reported that they found Jewish-sponsored activities meaningful because they liked meeting new people (91 percent of males and 94 percent of females) and because they valued doing things with their friends (93 percent of both males and females). Most Jewish youth also reported finding activities meaningful because they felt welcome at the activities (82 percent of males and 80 percent of females) and because the activities were fun (81 percent of males and 85 percent of females).

The importance of the social domain—young people doing things with their friends and having fun—is reflected by the following comments by respondents:

The people in charge of the activities have to think to themselves, “What would Jewish kids want to do that is educational and is lots of fun?”

*13-year-old girl*

There are no activities that inherently need to be Jewish-sponsored other than learning about Judaism and meeting other Jews. Therefore, Jewish-sponsored activities should be more geared toward socializing than [toward] learning about Judaism.

*15-year-old boy*

**Table 22. Meaningful Activities, by Affiliation**

	Conservative [%]	Reform [%]
<b>How meaningful are each of the following Jewish activities to you? (very or somewhat)</b>		
Camp**	72	57
Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school	48	43
Saturday school****	54	12
Teaching synagogue programs****	47	17
Religious services**	75	17
Preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah	61	65
Family celebrations	89	80
Social activities**	85	76
Volunteer work in the Jewish community	53	46
Jewish-sponsored sports, clubs, groups****	57	36
Retreats****	56	38
Attend/be counselor at Jewish day camp***	46	33
Attending confirmation classes	44	50

\* =  $p < .05$     \*\* =  $p < .01$     \*\*\* =  $p < .001$     \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

<sup>1</sup> There were also significant group differences on attendance at Saturday school. However, Reform youth do not attend Saturday school; this difference is therefore not meaningful.

**Table 23. Why Activities Are Meaningful, by Gender**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>Of the Jewish activities that are meaningful, what is it about them that makes them meaningful? (yes)</b>		
I like making a difference	77	81
I like talking to other kids and sharing what we think and feel.*	70	83
These activities really help me to grow as a Jew.***	65	76
Doing things with my friends is important to me.	93	93
I like to meet new people.	91	94
I feel welcome.	82	80
They are fun.****	81	85
There are caring, enthusiastic adults and teachers.	64	67
They focus on helping me to be a good person.	59	61
I have input into planning and decision making.*	56	60
Activities are based on my interests.***	57	62
They are a part of passing down Jewish traditions.	61	70
They involve teaching others.	67	63
I learn more about myself.	55	69
They help me to become competent in my Jewish skills.	61	65
They help me to feel good about my Jewish identity.****	78	84

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

To me, the social aspect is most important. Make sure that the programs you organize allow time for kids to socialize and get to know one another, otherwise it's pointless.

*17-year-old girl*

Find out what kids like to do and take that into consideration. Then use that information and take it into action. Make the kids feel wanted and needed and make sure they are having fun.

*15-year-old girl*

Significantly more females than males reported that they found an activity meaningful because it was fun. Respondents' reports show that females more often than males find activities meaningful because they like talking to other young people and sharing "what we think and feel," because they value activities that help them to grow as Jews, because they have input into planning and decision making, because activities are based on their interests, and because activities help them feel good about their Jewish identity. The following represent some of the open-ended responses pertaining to the importance of adolescents being part of activity-related decision making:

Have the activities planned by Jewish teens instead of adults. Keep programs at a low cost. Get money from the Federation to pay for part of the programs. Have a variety of programs offered: sports, arts, dances, discussions, religious issues, community leadership,

and life as a teenager. Publicize a lot to get a lot of new and old Jewish teens there. Have a relaxed atmosphere so that it is not strict rules and just let people have fun.

*17-year-old girl*

Organize a group of young Jewish leaders to plan community-wide programs. Make the programs social/educational, but not religious. If religion is an element, people feel alienated because the service is done differently than they are used to. Stress mixers and fun programs. Try to have at least three community-wide events yearly. Also, many youth groups are short on funding and membership strategies. Packets on combating these issues would be helpful and would make Federation a better known resource.

*17-year-old boy*

Table 24 focuses on age-group differences pertaining to the reasons that adolescents find Jewish-sponsored activities meaningful. Where significant age differences appear, older adolescents state these reasons more often than younger adolescents. For example, late adolescents cite “talking to other kids and sharing what we think and feel” as the reason they find activities meaningful more often than either mid- or young adolescents (94 percent, 78 percent, and 64 percent, respectively).

There are other significant age-group findings. In some cases, mid-adolescents are observed as similar to older adolescents in how they ascribe meaning to activities, whereas in other cases, mid-adolescents are observed as not different from young adolescents. For example, based on respondents’ reports, the mid- and late-adolescent groups place similar value on activities because they involve “teaching others,” a factor that is significantly less important to the young adolescent group. This finding is not surprising, as it is the mid- and late-adolescent groups that are involved in teaching younger children in many synagogues in Minneapolis. At the same time, although a high percentage of late adolescents reported that they found it meaningful to learn more about themselves, significantly lower—and similar—percentages of mid-adolescents and young adolescents reported this as meaningful. This observation is consistent with a developmental perspective: identity development is a part of psychosocial development during adolescence, but it is particularly focused in late adolescence, when cognitive development and reasoning skills are more fully developed.

These developmental differences are highlighted in the following open-ended comments from respondents. As can be gleaned in the comments of the 12- and 14-year-old females, younger adolescents do not want their activities focused on their Jewish identity. Instead, they want to have fun and they don’t want to be labeled; they want to be treated like *all* adolescents:

Not reminding us that we are Jewish and make us pray like Jews. They should try to forget that we are Jews because then we are thinking that throughout our lives. They should make us feel like we are everyday people.

*12-year-old girl*

Not having them be so focused on the Jewish part of it. But recognizing that we’re all Jewish and should just try to all have fun and be friendly.

*14-year-old girl*

**Table 24. Why Activities Are Meaningful, by Age Group**

	<b>Ages 11-13</b> [%]	<b>Ages 14-16</b> [%]	<b>Ages 17-19+</b> [%]
<b>Of the Jewish activities that are meaningful, what is it about them that makes them meaningful? (yes)</b>			
I like making a difference	76	77	86
I like talking to other kids and sharing what we think and feel.****	64 (A)	78 (B)	94 (C)
These activities really help me to grow as a Jew.**	60 (A)	73 (B)	80 (B)
Doing things with my friends is important to me.	96	93	88
I like to meet new people.	89	95	90
I feel welcome.	79	81	82
They are fun.	81	84	86
There are caring, enthusiastic adults and teachers.	64	65	66
They focus on helping me to be a good person.	59	56	70
I have input into planning and decision making.	53	59	61
Activities are based on my interests.	57	61	59
They are a part of passing down Jewish traditions.***	57 (A)	65 (A)	82 (B)
They involve teaching others.***	52 (A)	66 (B)	78 (B)
I learn more about myself.****	50 (A)	59 (A)	89 (B)
They help me to become competent in my Jewish skills.**	52 (A)	65 (B)	72 (B)
They help me to feel good about my Jewish identity.***	70 (A)	85 (B)	90 (B)

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

Older adolescents describe their need for more religious identity and education:

Make activities more religious-based.

*17-year-old boy*

In the realm of Jewish education (e.g., Hebrew, Jewish history, etc.) it is extremely important that parents have respect for the institution and that . . . teachers and curriculum are sound and are able to provide students with an interesting and valuable education, not just a forum for the “students” to hang out with their Jewish friends.

*17-year-old boy*

As can be seen in Table 25, Conservative youth and Reform youth differ in three areas in terms of why they find activities meaningful. Conservative youth, as compared with Reform adolescents, report that an important part of Jewish-sponsored activities is that they “like talking to other kids and sharing what we think and feel” (85 percent of Conservative youth versus

**Table 25. Why Activities Are Meaningful, by Affiliation**

	Conservative [%]	Reform [%]
<b>Of the Jewish activities that are meaningful, what is it about them that makes them meaningful? (yes)</b>		
I like making a difference	80	80
I like talking to other kids and sharing what we think and feel.***	85	72
These activities really help me to grow as a Jew.**	80	62
Doing things with my friends is important to me.	95	90
I like to meet new people.	95	90
I feel welcome.	84	76
They are fun.	91	73
There are caring, enthusiastic adults and teachers.	70	59
They focus on helping me to be a good person.	64	55
I have input into planning and decision making.	63	49
Activities are based on my interests.	65	48
They are a part of passing down Jewish traditions.	72	61
They involve teaching others.	68	58
I learn more about myself.***	69	57
They help me to become competent in my Jewish skills.	67	60
They help me to feel good about my Jewish identity.	90	72

\* =  $p < .05$     \*\* =  $p < .01$     \*\*\* =  $p < .001$     \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

72 percent of Reform youth), that the activities help them to “grow as a Jew” (80 percent versus 62 percent), and that they learn more about themselves (69 percent versus 57 percent).

A theme that was evidenced repeatedly in the open-ended responses was adolescents’ desires to bring people together—from differing synagogues, geographic communities, and religious communities. Jewish adolescents want to meet people, and they think broadly about opportunities for this. Several themes emerged pertaining to this sense of community.

- Jewish youth want to bring Conservative, Reform, and Orthodox youth together.

To have the entire youth in the Jewish community attend social activities that are for all of them. It shouldn’t matter what temple you go to—just that everyone be together.

*11-year-old boy*

Get more people involved and combine Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform students.

*17-year-old boy*

I think there should be some activities connecting Reform teenagers with Conservative kids and unaffiliated kids. The strong separation between the two groups of youths only echoes the strong separation of Reform and Conservative adults and synagogues.

*17-year-old boy*

I believe all Jewish teens should be doing activities together. I don't like the separation and competition of Twin City youth groups USY, BBYO, NIFTY, etc.

*18-year-old girl*

Allow interaction between different sects of Judaism, so that we can all learn from each other and experience aspects of Judaism we never know existed. We can't segregate ourselves from each other and expect to have a real community.

*17-year-old boy*

- They want to involve their non-Jewish friends in their Jewish-sponsored activities.

Allow non-Jewish friends to come.

*12-year-old boy*

Let us bring non-Jewish friends to activities so that they could learn about Judaism.

*13-year-old girl*

- They want the community to be broader and more inclusive.

Some problems I have encountered are with how closed the community is. They are very closed to newcomers.

*14-year-old girl*

I would like to see more activities between different synagogues and other youth organizations during the school year. I feel that we as kids are at a loss, not getting as many opportunities to make other Jewish friends outside of our immediate Jewish friends.

*15-year-old girl*

My #1 problem has been the groups of kids that have done the activities forever and seemed to look on me as an outsider.

*18-year-old girl*

It seems that at all of the things I go to, all of the Orthodox kids look down upon me because I am Reform and they think they are better because they say they are more Jewish. . . . They also say you meet new kids, but I have been with the same jerks since preschool. What's the point?

*16-year-old boy*

## Why Activities Are *Not* Meaningful to Jewish Youth

By and large, adolescents in this study do not register strong beliefs that activities are *not* meaningful to them. This could be an artifact of the survey design; the list of reasons given on the survey does not incorporate *all possible* reasons why adolescents might not find activities

**Table 26. Why Activities Are Not Meaningful, by Gender**

	<b>Males [%]</b>	<b>Females [%]</b>
<b>Of the Jewish activities that are not meaningful, what is it about them that “turns you off”? (yes)</b>		
Classes or activities are repetitious.	68	60
There are cliques or snotty kids there.	58	67
My parents force me to do them.	23	19
Jewish activities keep me from participating in non-Jewish activities.	30	25
Jewish activities are boring.**	25	17
I don’t like the people or teachers leading activities.	29	30
It’s always the same people there.	47	43
They have hypocritical teachers or leaders who don’t really care about what’s right.	26	15
Jewish rules and traditions don’t mean anything to me.	8	4
They waste time and nothing is accomplished.	34	29
They pressure me to be more observant.	22	12
I don’t like so much religious structure.***	34	25
The kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced.	32	35
I can’t bring my non-Jewish friends.	24	23
Kids aren’t involved in decision making.	35	28
Nothing that is presently offered interests me.*	41	32

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

meaningful. Nonetheless, from somewhat more than one-half to more than two-thirds of both males and females describe classes or activities as repetitious (68 percent of males and 60 percent of females) and report that Jewish-sponsored activities involve “cliques or snotty kids” (58 percent of males and 67 percent of females). (See Table 26.)

Respondents’ criticisms of exclusivity in the Jewish community are reflected in the comment of one late adolescent:

When I attended [youth group], I found that it was a turnoff because only certain people were considered “cool” and most kids felt it was an elitist club. Also, a lot of people felt that Jews were superior and it felt like a Jewish country club for kids who didn’t practice keeping kosher, etc. But felt that they had a right to be snobs because they were born Jewish. I guess there is nothing I would change because the [youth group] director did her best to include everyone and do diverse activities. I wish people hadn’t given me such a poor view of the Jewish community in Mpls.

*19-year-old girl*

Adolescent males consistently reported higher percentages of reasons, compared with females, that they did not think Jewish-sponsored activities were meaningful. Significantly more males than females reported that activities were “boring” (25 percent of males versus 17 percent of females), that they disliked “so much religious structure” (34 percent versus 25 percent), and that “nothing that is presently offered interests me” (41 percent versus 32 percent).

**Table 27. Why Activities Are Not Meaningful, by Age Group**

	Ages 11-13 [%]	Ages 14-16 [%]	Ages 17-19+ [%]
<b>Of the Jewish activities that are not meaningful, what is it about them that “turns you off”? (yes)</b>			
Classes or activities are repetitious.***	53 (A)	73 (B)	58 (A)
There are cliques or snotty kids there.	55	67	66
My parents force me to do them.	24	22	14
Jewish activities keep me from participating in non-Jewish activities.	35	26	20
Jewish activities are boring.****	36 (B)	15 (A)	11 (A)
I don’t like the people or teachers leading activities.	28	34	20
It’s always the same people there.	47	45	39
They have hypocritical teachers or leaders who don’t really care about what’s right.	19	24	11
Jewish rules and traditions don’t mean anything to me.	6	5	4
They waste time and nothing is accomplished.	30	36	23
They pressure me to be more observant.**	25 (B)	14 (A)	10 (A)
I don’t like so much religious structure.	34	28	23
The kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced.**	44 (B)	31 (A)	25 (A)
I can’t bring my non-Jewish friends.**	30 (B)	23 (B)	13 (A)
Kids aren’t involved in decision making.***	44 (B)	29 (A)	20 (A)
Nothing that is presently offered interests me.	41	37	26

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

As can be seen in Table 27, to a large extent it was the young adolescents, more than mid- or late adolescents, who reported that Jewish activities were not meaningful. Young adolescents were significantly more likely to have reported that activities were “boring” (36 percent of young adolescents, 15 percent of mid-adolescents, and 11 percent of late adolescents), that they were being pressured to be more observant (25 percent, 14 percent, and 10 percent, respectively), that kids were “rowdy” and rules “not enforced” (44 percent, 31 percent, and 25 percent), that they were not allowed to bring their non-Jewish friends (30 percent, 23 percent, and 13 percent), and that they were not involved in decision making (44 percent, 29 percent, and 20 percent). At the same time, mid-adolescents reported significantly more than did either early

or late adolescents that classes or activities were repetitious (73 percent of mid-adolescents, compared with a statistically similar 53 percent of young adolescents and 58 percent of late adolescents).

Although Conservative adolescents were more likely than Reform youth to have reported higher percentages on factors that are meaningful to them, Conservative youth were also significantly more likely than their Reform counterparts to report that their activities have



**Table 28. Why Activities Are Not Meaningful, by Affiliation**

	Conservative [%]	Reform [%]
<b>Of the Jewish activities that are not meaningful, what is it about them that “turns you off”? (yes)</b>		
Classes or activities are repetitious.	61	70
There are cliques or snotty kids there.	65	63
My parents force me to do them.	20	23
Jewish activities keep me from participating in non-Jewish activities.	22	33
Jewish activities are boring.	15	27
I don’t like the people or teachers leading activities.	28	28
It’s always the same people there.	42	48
They have hypocritical teachers or leaders who don’t really care about what’s right.***	21	16
Jewish rules and traditions don’t mean anything to me.	3	5
They waste time and nothing is accomplished.	32	29
They pressure me to be more observant.	15	15
I don’t like so much religious structure.**	19	38
The kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced.	38	34
I can’t bring my non-Jewish friends.	17	24
Kids aren’t involved in decision making.	28	35
Nothing that is presently offered interests me.	29	44

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

“hypocritical teachers or leaders who don’t really care about what’s right” (21 percent of Conservative youth versus 16 percent of Reform youth). (See Table 28.) In contrast, Reform adolescents report significantly more than Conservative youth that they don’t like “so much religious structure” (38 percent of Reform youth versus 19 percent of Conservative youth).

### Barriers to Participation

Some adolescents reported difficulties in participating in Jewish-sponsored activities. Table 29 describes those barriers. Adolescents most commonly reported the following two barriers to participation: “Other school activities take my time” and “I need to spend time on my homework.”

Adolescents also reported that they didn’t know what programs existed and that they were afraid that they didn’t know anyone involved in the activities. They suggested that the Minneapolis Jewish Federation take some part in publicizing activities and doing outreach to get more adolescents involved. They also suggest involving adolescent leaders in planning *community-wide* events:

Organize a group of young Jewish leaders to plan community-wide programs. Make the programs social/educational, but not religious.

*17-year-old boy*

Only a minority of the sample respondents cited cost as a barrier to their participation in Jewish-sponsored activities. For some, however, it is a substantial barrier. In this regard, one respondent suggests:

Having more financial help from youth groups. Get the Federation [to pay for] events and bus costs because a lot of the Jewish youth are being turned away by paying a lot of money to hang out with friends which they could do in a nonorganized setting for free.

*16-year-old boy*

## Things Adolescents Are Likely to Participate In

Based on respondents' reports, Table 30 shows activities that adolescents would be likely to participate in if the things that "turn them off" didn't exist, categorized by age group. It is important to note that, regardless of age group, the majority of adolescents want to "just hang out with friends" (84 percent of young adolescents, 88 percent of mid-adolescents, and 85 percent of late adolescents). This is clearly the one activity in which a preponderance of adolescents would participate at any age.

There are, however, age-group differences pertaining to a number of different activities. Mid-adolescents are more likely than young adolescents to have reported participating in a Jewish-sponsored sports team or league (58 percent of mid-adolescents versus 40 percent of young adolescents) or other recreation activities (68 percent versus 55 percent). In both these activities, however, late adolescents' preferences do not differ significantly from those of either young or mid-adolescents.

**Table 29. Barriers to Participation in Jewish-Sponsored Activities, by Age Group**

	Ages 11–13 [%]	Ages 14–16 [%]	Ages 17–19+ [%]
<b>Do any of the following reasons make it difficult for you to participate in Jewish-sponsored activities? (yes)</b>			
I have transportation problems or can't get there.*	15 (AB)	21 (B)	9 (A)
The location is too far away.	16	19	10
The programs cost too much.	11	19	20
I'm afraid I won't know anyone.	41	38	29
I'm too busy with chores at home.	6	13	11
I have to watch my younger brothers and sisters.*	14 (B)	8 (AB)	4 (A)
I need to spend time on my homework.***	47 (A)	66 (B)	49 (A)
I don't know what programs exist.*	35 (B)	22 (A)	28 (AB)
My parents do not sign me up.*	13 (A)	8 (AB)	2 (B)
Other school activities take my time.	54	60	49
I do a lot with my non-Jewish friends and I don't have time for making friends in the Jewish community.	22	24	14
I have no reason to be there.	16	13	17

\* =  $p < .05$

\*\* =  $p < .01$

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$

\*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

Late adolescents are significantly more likely than either young or mid-adolescents to have reported participating in “a group that provides service for other people or that focuses on volunteering in the Jewish community” (67 percent of late adolescents, 54 percent of mid-adolescents, and 38 percent of young adolescents), in an activity that “included quality Jewish education” (67 percent of late adolescents, 36 percent of mid-adolescents, and 32 percent of young adolescents), or in a group “where I can talk with others about things that matter to me or that are bothering me” (56 percent of late adolescents, 39 percent of mid-adolescents, and 33 percent of young adolescents).

**Table 30. Things in Which Adolescents Are Likely to Participate, by Age Group**

	<b>Ages 11–13</b> [%]	<b>Ages 14–16</b> [%]	<b>Ages 17–19+</b> [%]
<b>If the following activities were offered, and the things that “turn you off” didn’t exist, how likely would you be to participate? (very or somewhat)</b>			
Jewish-sponsored sports team or league***	40 (A)	58 (B)	55 (AB)
Recreation activities*	55 (A)	68 (B)	64 (AB)
A group that provides service for other people or that focuses on volunteering in the Jewish community****	38 (A)	54 (B)	67 (C)
A group where I can talk with others about things that matter to me or that are bothering me***	33 (A)	39 (A)	56 (B)
Lessons in something I’d like to be better at	56	48	58
Learning and studying something	45	31	41
An activity with an adult I can trust and who respects me	46	47	54
Dances***	48 (A)	66 (B)	52 (A)
Just hanging out with friends	84	88	85
An activity where kids get to be leaders and make decisions and plans	67	67	67
Free time in a gym or rec center**	60 (AB)	59 (B)	41 (A)
An activity in which an older teenager or adult teaches me something	38	43	42
An activity in which I could earn money	82	76	62
An activity that included my parents/guardians***	31 (AB)	20 (A)	36 (B)
An activity that included quality Jewish education****	32 (A)	36 (B)	67 (C)

\* =  $p < .05$       \*\* =  $p < .01$       \*\*\* =  $p < .001$       \*\*\*\* =  $p < .0001$

## Chapter 8

# Predicting Future Identity and Continuity

The future identity and continuity of Jewish youth are a preoccupation of the adult Jewish community. The development and maintenance of a Jewish identity and the continuity of connection to the Jewish community into adulthood are perhaps the major issues of importance to the Jewish community as it relates to its adolescents. Parents, Jewish educators and leaders, and rabbis all have expressed their concern that young people remain involved only through Bar/Bat Mitzvah age and then tend to drift away from involvement in their congregations, youth groups, and formal education.

In order to examine these issues, scales were developed from the survey that served as indicators of many of the factors thought to be associated with Jewish identity and future continuity.<sup>1</sup> The scales represent a means of measuring aspects of involvement in Jewish activities. The scales (see Appendix B for a complete list of survey items included in each scale and subscale and their reliabilities) developed for these analyses were:

1. **Involvement in Jewish-sponsored community activities/organizations.** This scale includes both formal and informal programs, encompassing adolescents' participation in Jewish-sponsored sports, clubs, and groups, as well as retreats. It also takes into account how adolescents liked the activities that are available in Jewish-sponsored activities.
2. **Meaning of social aspects of activities.** This scale relates to the social aspects of activities such as Jewish-sponsored sports, clubs, or groups; retreats, camps; meeting new people; and having fun. The scale is similar to Scale 1, but is exclusively related to the social aspects of activities, whereas Scale 1 also includes other aspects that may affect involvement.
3. **Positive feelings/perceptions about formal Jewish education.** This scale measures adolescents' feelings of having learned a lot in the Jewish educational setting, including learning certain skills well (such as Hebrew language and Jewish practices) and mastering certain content areas (such as Jewish history).

---

<sup>1</sup> A factor analysis using varimax rotation was run on the Youth Survey. It yielded seven factors or scales. Three subscales were developed based on that factor structure; a total of 10 scales were used in these analyses. The reliability of the scales ranged from  $r = .74$  to  $.94$ . These reliabilities are considered sufficiently high for social science research.

4. **Meaning level of Jewish educational activities.** This scale pertains to adolescents' finding educational activities highly meaningful, including attending Sunday school and Hebrew school, teaching Sunday school, and attending a Jewish camp.
5. **Importance of Jewish rituals, continuity, and learning.** This scale includes the importance adolescents assign to attending synagogue services, saying Kiddush, lighting Shabbat candles, learning Hebrew, and going to Israel.
6. **Importance of Jewish continuity.** This scale is a subscale of Scale 5 and measures the importance to adolescents of volunteering in the Jewish community, feeling that Judaism is relevant, being concerned about intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, having a connection to Israel, and feeling that it is important to date only a Jewish person.
7. **Importance of Jewish learning.** This scale is a subscale of Scale 5 and incorporates aspects such as adolescents spending a lot of time studying Judaism and Israel and feeling that it is important to have knowledge of Jewish life and Jewish history.
8. **Concern for social issues.** This scale measures adolescents' concern about issues pertaining to Jewish social issues as well as those relating to "secular" social issues such as drug abuse, poverty, safety for Israel, homelessness, sexism, and human rights violations.
9. **Concern for Jewish social issues.** This scale is a subscale of Scale 8 and relates to adolescents' specific concern about issues pertaining to Jews, such as anti-Semitism and peace in the Middle East.
10. **Volunteer activities.** This scale measures adolescents' feelings that acts of loving-kindness are important and that it is important to help others to make the community a better place, as well as their participation in service in or outside of the Jewish community.

These scales were used in analyses to explore the feasibility of predicting future identity and continuity. The overarching questions were:

- Is it possible to predict an adolescent's involvement in Jewish activities?
- Is it possible to predict an adolescent's future concern for Jewish social issues?
- Is it possible to predict future continuity?
- Is it possible to increase the likelihood that young people will be involved based on factors that can be *influenced* directly?

Another way of thinking about these questions is: Can outcomes be changed based on the program opportunities that are offered to young people? The analyses in this chapter address these questions through the specific themes of Jewish observance, voluntary or service activities, and Israel and Jewish camp experiences and their impact on adolescent identity and continuity.

## The Impact of Jewish Observance

In addition to the scales described above, a scale was constructed that included all the behavioral indicators of observance that were independent of the other scales (i.e., not used in the construction of any of the other scales). This scale consisted of such behaviors as going to

services, fasting on Yom Kippur, attending a Seder, doing acts of loving-kindness, and attending Sunday or afternoon Hebrew school. The scale focused on *doing* and *attending* activities as opposed to thinking these activities are important but not necessarily engaging in them.

The behavioral indications of Jewish observance are highly predictive of many aspects pertaining to identity and continuity. Thus, the more that a given adolescent engages in certain behaviors of Jewish observance, the more likely it is that he or she will maintain a Jewish identity and continuity consistent with being Jewish. These behavioral indicators were observed to be highly predictive of:

- Participation in Jewish-sponsored activities<sup>2</sup>
- Concern for secular social issues<sup>3</sup> as well as concern for issues specific to Judaism<sup>4</sup> and the development of prosocial identity<sup>5</sup>
- The importance of Judaism in adolescents' lives<sup>6</sup>
- The level of meaning adolescents derive from Jewish-sponsored activities<sup>7</sup>
- The importance of the social aspect<sup>8</sup> of Jewish-sponsored activities
- Future continuity<sup>9</sup>

In addition, females, in general, tend to report that Jewish learning is more important to them than males do. Both males and females, however, report that the importance they assign to Jewish learning is affected by the extent to which they are involved in behaviors associated with Jewish identity. In other words, the more behavioral indicators they have, the more likely they are to think Jewish learning is important. This relation also seems to be affected by the age of the adolescent; behavioral indicators are more powerful for older adolescents. Thus, late adolescents who maintain involvement in the behaviors associated with being Jewish are more likely than any age group to feel that Jewish learning is important.

It should be noted that the particular aspects of identity and continuity that are directly related to the behavioral indicators of being Jewish may appear to be a somewhat tautological relation.<sup>10</sup> The more that adolescents are involved with being Jewish, the more likely they are to continue the behaviors thought to be related with being Jewish. As much as this argument may seem circular, it is important from a programmatic standpoint. If adolescent involvement can be *increased* through programmatic changes, the likelihood that this involvement will be self-sustaining is increased.

---

<sup>2</sup>  $F(2,275) = 35.29, p = .0001$

<sup>3</sup>  $F(2,284) = 3.78, p = .02$

<sup>4</sup>  $F(2,295) = 14.27, p = .0001$

<sup>5</sup>  $F(2,289) = 22.42, p = .0001$

<sup>6</sup>  $F(2,275) = 51.97, p = .0001$

<sup>7</sup>  $F(2,282) = 8.08, p = .0004$

<sup>8</sup>  $F(2,291) = 25.29, p = .0001$

<sup>9</sup>  $F(2,291) = 38.38, p = .0001$

<sup>10</sup> This is not meant in terms of the measurements that were used in these analyses, as the measures were independent of one another.

## The Impact of Volunteer Experiences

Volunteer experiences were also observed to be powerful predictors of adolescents' involvement in Jewish activities. Adolescents who volunteer report significantly:

- higher levels of involvement in Jewish-sponsored activities,<sup>11</sup> including social activities;<sup>12</sup>
- higher levels of concern<sup>13</sup> as well as concern for specifically Jewish social causes<sup>14</sup> and higher prosocial identity;<sup>15</sup>
- higher levels of ritual observance;<sup>16</sup>
- more feelings that Judaism<sup>17</sup> and a Jewish education<sup>18</sup> are important and meaningful;<sup>19</sup> and
- higher degrees of the importance of continuity in their lives.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, volunteer experiences seem to have a differential effect on whether adolescents report that Jewish learning is important; this relation is dependent on the age of the adolescent. As discussed in chapter 6, females tend to be more involved in volunteer activities than are males. In general, older adolescents tend to feel that Jewish learning is important, but late-adolescent males who do little, if any, volunteer or service activities are the least likely of any age group, of either gender, to think that Jewish learning is important. Early-adolescent females who do little or no volunteer work also feel that Jewish learning is not important. This finding suggests that if young people can be involved in volunteer or service activities, there is increased likelihood that they will feel that Jewish learning is an important part of their life and identity as they reach late adolescence and make the transition into early adulthood.

## The Impact of Experiences in Israel

Some analyses focused on whether aspects thought to be related to identity and continuity can be affected by an adolescent's experience in Israel. Analyses revealed that adolescents who have been to Israel, as compared with those adolescents who have not been to Israel, are significantly

- more involved in Jewish-sponsored activities;<sup>21</sup>
- more concerned about Jewish social causes (but not more globally in terms of secular social issues);<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>  $F(2,321) = 14.87, p = .0001$

<sup>12</sup>  $F(2,360) = 17.16, p = .0001$

<sup>13</sup>  $F(2,357) = 29.6, p = .0001$

<sup>14</sup>  $F(2,372) = 43.24, p = .0001$

<sup>15</sup>  $F(2,357) = 60.03, p = .0001$

<sup>16</sup>  $F(2,367) = 14.81, p = .0001$

<sup>17</sup>  $F(2,339) = 46.63, p = .0001$

<sup>18</sup>  $F(2,339) = 16.57, p = .0001$

<sup>19</sup>  $F(2,349) = 10.31, p = .0001$

<sup>20</sup>  $F(2,370) = 44.33, p = .0001$

<sup>21</sup>  $F(1,328) = 8.53, p = .00$

<sup>22</sup>  $F(1,387) = 6.76, p = .01$

- more likely to describe higher levels of religious meaning;<sup>23</sup> and
- more likely to demonstrate behaviors related to continuity.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, females generally demonstrate higher levels of continuity as compared with males. There were also significant differences among all three age groups in terms of their desire for continuity, with late adolescents describing the highest levels of continuity.

## The Impact of Jewish Camp Experiences

Adolescents who have had a Jewish camp experience are significantly more likely than adolescents who have not been to Jewish camp to

- be involved in Jewish-sponsored activities;<sup>25</sup> and
- report that religious experiences are more meaningful to them.<sup>26</sup>

These findings are consistent with a recent study on Jewish camp experiences (Reisman, 1990). There is also an interesting relation between the age of a particular adolescent, whether or not the adolescent has been to a Jewish camp, and her/his desire for continuity. Several points should be made pertaining to this observed relation. First, the older an adolescent is, the more likely it is that she/he is interested in continuity. This is true for all adolescents, except for males who have not had a Jewish camp experience; late-adolescent males who have not been to a Jewish camp describe the *least* interest in continuity.<sup>27</sup> This relation is demonstrated in Figure 7. As can be seen as well, the impact of camp on continuity is particularly striking for females.

---

<sup>23</sup>  $F(1,393) = 4.44, p = .04$

<sup>24</sup>  $F(1,379) = 18.93, p = .0001$

<sup>25</sup>  $F(1,328) = 20.47, p = .0001$

<sup>26</sup>  $F(1,394) = 10.9, p = .001$

<sup>27</sup> This relation was expressed as a significant Gender  $\times$  Age Group  $\times$  Camp interaction,  $F(2,381) = 3.83, p = .02$ .



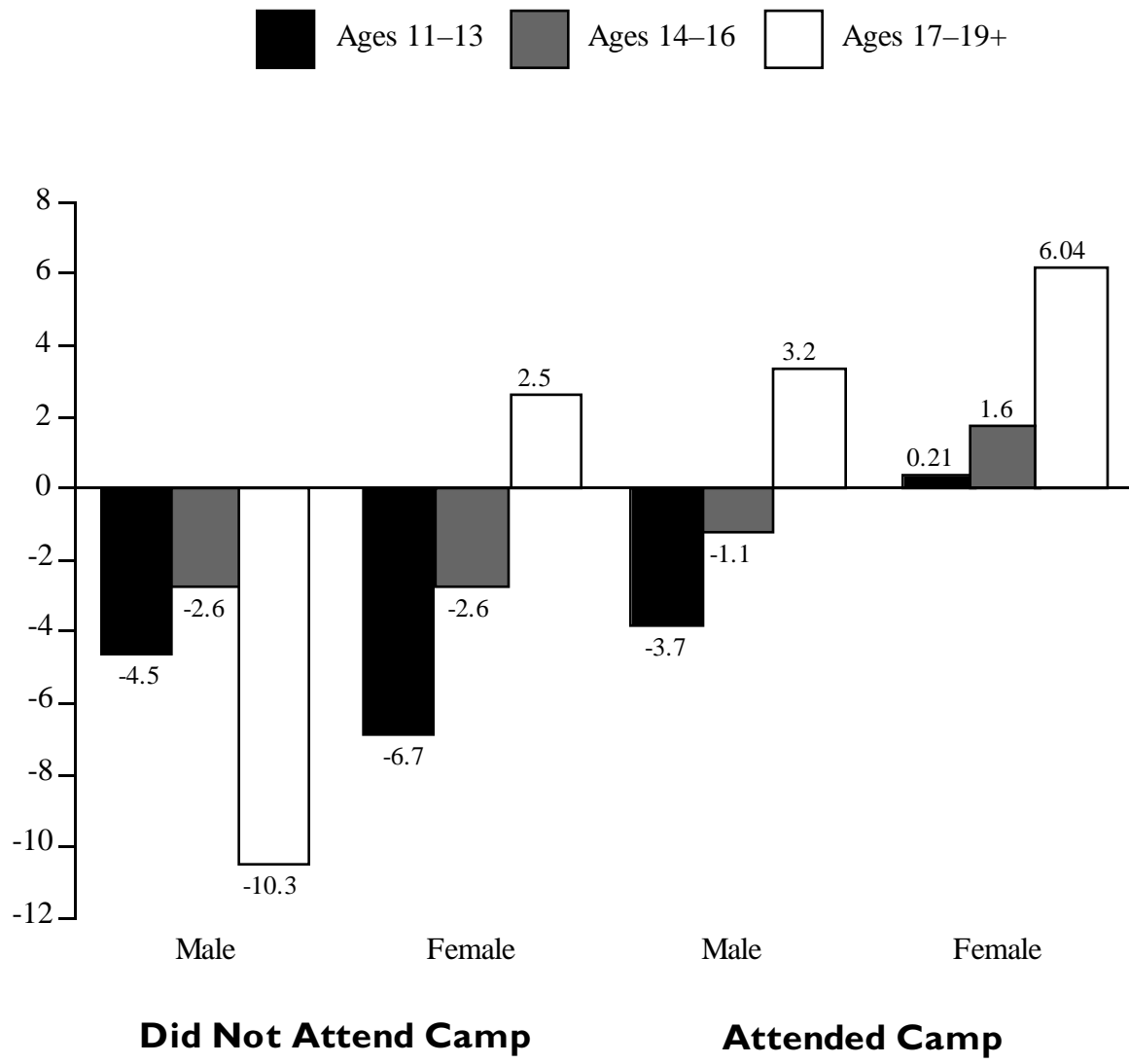


Figure 7. The effect of Jewish camp experiences on adolescent continuity

## Chapter 9

# Reflections on Key Findings and Programmatic Implications

A number of key findings emerge from these data on 414 Minneapolis Jewish youth. They are discussed here in terms of reflections on these findings, implications for programming, and recommendations. This chapter is structured to distill and reflect on each theme presented in this report. In addition, because significant gender differences were observed throughout the analyses, irrespective of theme, reflections on these differences will be included in this chapter as well.

### Reflections on Gender Differences

Although earlier chapters in this report addressed gender differences within a particular content area (e.g., education, activities), the report did not separately address these differences. Some of the observed gender differences are striking and have important programmatic implications.

It is interesting to note that fully 10 percent more females than males think it is important to date only a Jewish person. Males also don't think it is as important to keep kosher as females do. Females are consistently more concerned about social issues than adolescent males and they are also more concerned about specifically Jewish issues, such as intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews.

In general, there were few differences between males and females in time use; the differences that were observed hold to a fairly stereotypical sex-typed pattern of gender differences among adolescents—that is, males tend to play video games more than females do and females spend more time shopping than males do. Females spend more time reading than do males, and males generally spend more time than do females in technology-related activities. Males also spend more time than females do in secular sports. Females are slightly more likely than males to engage in social activities and in work-related activities both during the school year and during the summer (including working for pay and volunteer work).

Although both males and females report spending similar amounts of time in Jewish-sponsored activities, females are more likely to spend time teaching Saturday synagogue programs, attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school, and doing volunteer work in the Jewish community, but this difference is small. Interestingly, more males report attending or

participating in synagogue youth groups, but more females report participating in youth service projects or volunteer in their congregations.

Although males and females report similar amounts of time in Jewish-sponsored activities, females feel that these activities are significantly more meaningful than males do. Both males and females report that family celebrations and social activities are very meaningful. Although there are some gender differences, high percentages of males and females report that religious services are very meaningful. More females than males report that they find Jewish-sponsored activities meaningful because they are fun, because they like talking to other young people, and because they contribute in some way either to the growth of their faith or to their Jewish identity.

Conversely, more adolescent males than females report higher percentages of reasons that Jewish-sponsored activities are not meaningful. These included that they find the activities “boring,” that they don’t like a lot of religious structure, and that “nothing that is presently offered interests me.”

### Recommendations: Gender

The adult Jewish leadership is heavily dominated by females. The data presented here reveal interesting considerations in the light of the gender differences among adult leaders. One could speculate that the absence of adult male Jewish leaders is something that could be predicted from adolescent behaviors or attitudes. It is clear from respondents’ reports that adolescent males do not find the activities as meaningful as females do; males also list more reasons than females why they don’t find Jewish-sponsored activities meaningful. For a young person to stay involved in the Jewish community at the level that may be required to take on a community leadership role, he or she probably must find something about the experience that is meaningful.

To engage adolescent males in Jewish-sponsored activities in ways that they would find meaningful, strategies to increase their involvement must be developed. Males have reported that they prefer technology-related and social activities. If they find activities “boring” or uninteresting, they are unlikely to be involved. Specific recommendations are:

- Consider whether the current structure of Jewish-sponsored activities includes enough options for adolescent males.
- Using data from this survey, develop new strategies for programming that will more appropriately tap the interests of adolescent males.

### Reflections on Adolescents’ Thoughts and Concerns

**It is important to note how deeply adolescents feel about the importance of being Jewish and having a knowledge of Jewish life and history,** especially a history of the Holocaust. They describe a deep connection to Israel and a commitment to donate money and time to Jewish causes. One might observe a certain contradiction between, on the one hand, adolescents’ deep connection with their Jewish identity and on the other hand, their reports that it is not important either to date someone Jewish or to maintain some of the rituals tied so closely with a Jewish identity (e.g., keeping kosher).

Further, Jewish youth, especially females, express concern over social issues, including issues specifically relevant to Jews and secular social issues. Although all Jewish youth are concerned about safety for Israel and peace in the Middle East, Conservative and Reform adolescents differ in their interest in certain other issues. Conservative youth tend to be more concerned about issues pertaining to Jews specifically. The group differences relating to concern about intermarriage are particularly striking. Reform youth are more concerned about issues pertaining to *tikkun o'lam*, making the *world* a better place, *not* just a better place for Jews. This is not entirely surprising, given that the Reform movement emphasizes this more universal strand of Jewish theology.

Given the high levels of concern for such social issues, regardless of whether the issues are “Jewish” or “secular,” it is nonetheless surprising that Jewish youth do not follow this concern with social *action*. Few Jewish adolescents, regardless of affiliation, participate in youth service projects or volunteer in some way within their congregations.

## Reflections on Activities and How Adolescents Spend Their Time

Jewish adolescent females tend to find Jewish-sponsored activities more meaningful than adolescent males do. Jewish mid-adolescents tend to be particularly interested in sports and recreational activities, whereas late adolescents are interested in service activities, volunteering, and further education. Jewish adolescents as a whole enjoy *family* celebrations and *social* activities. The major reason for participating in an activity, adolescents report, is their desire to “hang out” with their friends. In addition, the other major factors influencing Jewish adolescents’ perceptions of an event or activity as meaningful are:

- They like meeting new people.
- They like doing things with their friends.
- They want to feel welcome.
- They like things that are fun.

Conversely, Jewish adolescents report that they are unlikely to find activities meaningful if they

- are repetitious and/or boring.
- involve cliques.
- have too much religious structure.

As was described in chapter 7, and as was a consistent theme throughout, Jewish youth want more contact across the traditional boundaries associated with the Conservative, Reform, and Orthodox movements. They would also like to feel that the boundaries separating their Jewish-sponsored activities from the rest of their lives are more fluid. For example, they would like the option of bringing their non-Jewish friends to some of their activities.

## Recommendations: Adolescents' Concerns and Activities

Adolescents have strong feelings about the activities that will either draw them in or “turn them off.” The recommendations made here have incorporated data from adolescents’ concerns (see preceding section of this chapter); the concerns that youth have are relevant to how activities could be made more meaningful. Specific recommendations are:

- Plan activities with consideration of the developmental differences of adolescents of different age groups.
- Involve adolescents in both planning and decision making for activities.
- Plan activities that take advantage of the reasons that adolescents participate in Jewish-sponsored activities, such as providing opportunities to “hang out” with friends, helping youth meet new people, and helping participants feel welcome; also encourage activities that are fun for both males and females.
- Plan activities that are community-wide (e.g., retreats, social events, plays), providing adolescents with opportunities to do away with the traditional boundaries that separate them.

## Reflections on Formal Jewish Education

Irrespective of where they have received their formal Jewish education, Jewish youth are similar in a number of ways. All Jewish youth indicate that they have learned about the holidays, the Holocaust, and Jewish practices in their formal Jewish educational experiences. Many adolescents also feel that their parents have forced them to attend their supplemental educational experiences. Perhaps most striking, Jewish adolescents feel that they have *not* learned Hebrew, despite their own stated motivation to do so and despite having committed years to Hebrew training.

To some extent, a supplemental educational experience may be difficult because of when in the adolescent’s day the school day begins, as was mentioned earlier in this report. This is no reason, however, not to control the “rowdy” few who are, from the adolescents’ viewpoint, ruining the experience for the majority of youth. Teachers should be well prepared, caring toward students, and in possession of the skills to teach effectively within the constraints inherent in any supplemental educational setting. The community must explore ways to deal with these issues, including allocating time and dollars to properly train teachers for the demands of effective supplemental education.

Despite their negative perceptions about parts of their education, Jewish youth are interested in further education, particularly in the study of the Holocaust, ethics, Hebrew language skills, Israel, and Jewish history. Late adolescents express more interest in these subject matters than younger adolescents; nonetheless, the supplemental education programs are losing these young people.

## Recommendations: Formal Education

The data presented here evidence serious issues pertaining to the process and outcome of formal supplemental Jewish education as it exists today. Undoubtedly, young people always have

felt ambivalent about their attendance in after-school educational programs. However, when the key educational institutions were founded, young people were growing up in a different world—without televisions; with more limited extracurricular activities; and, in general, with lives that made them less mobile, less scheduled, and less busy. One could speculate that with less frantic, scheduled lives, young people were better equipped to add a supplemental educational experience onto their day. It may be that supplemental educational experiences need to be reexamined in the light of a radically different world.

It is therefore recommended that the community:

- Address this important question: What does the community want young people to know and experience by a particular age?
- Consider educational formats that may work better than those presently used, given the changes in children and adolescents' lives during the past century.
- Ensure that formal educational programs are incorporated or blended with informal education, such as service learning. This would serve a dual purpose, providing youth with the opportunities to be involved in social causes, thus making the educational experience more meaningful to them. (Perhaps Jewish camps are successful because they do just that.)
- Given adolescents' reports of the importance of their family celebrations, consider incorporating a family educational component for this age group.<sup>1</sup>
- Initiate discussion to deal with time management issues that affect our young people.
- Generate the resources to provide training for teachers in techniques *specific* to a supplemental educational structure.
- Use modern language teaching methods to effectively teach spoken Hebrew.
- Ensure that teachers have knowledge of adolescent development.

## Reflections on Identity and Continuity

**It is important to note the power to predict continuity that is carried by involvement in Jewish observance, volunteer activities, Israel experiences, and camp experiences.** The *consistency* of these findings suggests that if these factors can be influenced in terms of changes in programming, there is strong likelihood that the identity and continuity of Jewish youth will be affected. Adolescents have reported that they have deep feelings about being Jewish, and they have a strong commitment to Jewish causes. But the majority do not feel that maintaining Jewish rituals (e.g., keeping kosher) or dating someone Jewish is particularly important. The findings presented here suggest that young people who are highly connected with the “activities” of being Jewish—who are not just *thinking or believing* things are important—are young people who are doing the very things that are thought to be connected with later continuity and a strong Jewish identity.

---

<sup>1</sup> Family education is something that is used commonly with younger ages, but has not been tried with adolescents in the community.

One way of looking at this issue is to note that a small group of Jewish adolescents are highly involved and that it is probable that they will remain involved over the long term. These data show, for example, that the late adolescents who have maintained involvement are the same ones who think that Jewish learning is important. These data also suggest that a substantial number of youth are completely *uninvolved* in Jewish-sponsored activities.

Another way of looking at this is to ask the question: Should the focus be on those highly involved youth or should the focus be shifted to involve youth who are either less involved or even *unaffiliated*? If focus is to be directed to those adolescents who are less involved, then Jewish observance must be made more appealing and engaging to them. Involvement can be increased by using data from this study about adolescent interests and concerns to inform programming changes. It is likely that self-sustained youth involvement will be increased in this way.

This analysis challenges the notion that strengthening the core (i.e., those who are already highly involved) is the way to reach those on the periphery (i.e., those who are less involved or unaffiliated). The analyses presented here suggest that the Jewish community must do both; it is not an either/or decision. By focusing on strengthening the core, only the core is strengthened.

Another important area of consideration pertains to what might be described as a “profile” of the typical Jewish adolescent at the close of the twentieth century. As discussed earlier, adolescents report that they feel deeply about being Jewish and they have a strong commitment to Jewish causes, but at the same time, they do not feel that maintaining Jewish rituals (e.g., keeping kosher) or dating someone Jewish is highly important. One might speculate that this is perhaps a new profile of Jewish identity. It may be a pattern that provides a glimpse into what Jewish identity will be in the twenty-first century. If so, it is a profile of an individual who, as an adult, might intermarry, might feel deeply committed to Jewish causes, and might participate minimally in ritual behavior. Does this mean that the traditional boundaries of what it means to be Jewish must be expanded?

Adult leaders of the Jewish community may need to consider the following questions in deciding how to alter programming for young people:

1. Is this “new” identity something the community is prepared to live with, or, alternatively, should an attempt be made to maintain old boundaries?
2. What programmatic interventions must be developed to ensure that people with this “new” identity do not feel isolated from the Jewish community? Or, should interventions be created and aimed at maintaining a more traditional identity for our youth?

The behavioral indicators of Jewish observance are not the only powerful predictors of identity and continuity. Exposure to, and experience in, volunteer and service activities also have been demonstrated to affect adolescents. For instance, the reports of adolescents who are involved in voluntary activities make clear that those young people have higher levels of ritual observance, social concern, and continuity.

High percentages of adolescents have also reported that social issues (both Jewish and secular) are important to them (see chapter 3) and that they care about acts of loving-kindness. Yet, despite these high percentages, only a minority of adolescents actually spend any time engaged in volunteer activities (see chapter 6). Based on these findings, it is clear that if adoles-

cents can find *meaningful roles* in giving something to other people or to the community, their involvement will increase, as will the many other factors that may predict future continuity.

Adolescents want to have fun, they want to see their friends, and they want to meet new people—these are all reasons they give for finding activities meaningful. Conversely, activities that are boring and repetitious, or have too much religious structure, keep young people away. This makes clear the importance of altering youth programming to develop meaningful service activities and to provide youth with opportunities to see friends, have fun, and meet new people. This is a feasible task, and one that may also do away with the “cliques” some adolescents cite as another reason for staying away from Jewish-sponsored activities.

Experiences in Israel are also very important predictors of a strong Jewish identity and future continuity. Yet, only a small proportion of the Jewish adolescent population engages in these experiences. Given that adolescents must continue in some type of supplemental educational program to obtain scholarships for an Israel experience, it is possible that only youth who are already highly involved are being targeted for these experiences.

### Recommendations: Identity and Continuity

The community must:

- Find ways to reach out to adolescents who are either peripherally involved or unaffiliated, as well as to continue programming that is meaningful to those youth who are highly involved.
- Develop ways of encouraging involvement in ritual behaviors that would be meaningful to those youth peripherally involved or unaffiliated.
- Develop youth programming that incorporates meaningful service opportunities that are also places to see their friends, have fun, and meet new people.
- Develop new scholarship funding strategies that would make Israel experiences available to less involved or even unaffiliated youth. Similar strategies should be used as well to encourage less involved youth to have a Jewish camp experience.

### The Future

Four hundred and fourteen Jewish adolescents in the Minneapolis community have entrusted the community with a searching look into their thoughts, concerns, and information about their experiences. This study explores how Jewish youth spend their time, their thoughts about what activities they find meaningful or not meaningful and why, their thoughts about both the content and the process of their formal Jewish education, and a glimpse at how they see the future. This report reflects a summary of the voices of these young people.

The adolescents’ responses to the open-ended question on the survey are articulate and thoughtful, representing many of the themes that came up in the quantitative parts of this report. One girl affixed a note to her survey asking that we please inform her of the results. Many others left messages by telephone or note saying that they would like to help, that they would like follow-up, and that they appreciated being asked about their opinions.



The community must not take lightly the wealth of information this group of adolescents has provided. The community must begin the next steps to make this valuable information a starting point for real change. Their futures, and that of the Jewish community, depend on it.

It shouldn't matter what temple you go to—just that everyone be together.

*11-year-old boy*



## References

- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi, and Larson, Reed. *Being Adolescent: Growth and Conflict in the Teenage Years* (New York: Basic, 1984).
- Project Research, Inc. *Community Profile* (Minneapolis: 1994).
- Reisman, B. *Informal Jewish Education in North America*. Report submitted to the Commission on Jewish Education in North America (Cleveland, Ohio: Mandel Associated Foundations, 1990).



## Appendix A Youth Survey

### Youth Survey

You have been selected as one of over 1,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 18 in Minneapolis to participate in the Youth Survey, a project of the Minneapolis Federation for Jewish Service. The survey is intended to ask about your participation in Jewish-sponsored activities and to get important information about what you think and feel about these activities. The survey will provide direction to the community in making these activities a better experience for all people your age. It will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Your answers on this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. **DO NOT** put your name on this form. The Minneapolis Federation for Jewish Service will receive a report that combines all answers together. No one will be able to connect your answers with your name.

This is not a test. You are just being asked to tell about yourself and your experiences. Please be honest.

#### Important Directions:

1. Use a black pencil (#2 or softer lead) or a ballpoint pen (blue or black; no felt-tip).
2. Make heavy black marks that completely fill in the circle.
3. For the question that asks for a written response, question number 47, write only **inside** the box provided.
4. Please do not fold the survey. Slip it into the large return envelope provided when you have completed it.



## ABOUT ME

1. How old are you?
 

<input type="radio"/> 11 or younger	<input type="radio"/> 16
<input type="radio"/> 12	<input type="radio"/> 17
<input type="radio"/> 13	<input type="radio"/> 18
<input type="radio"/> 14	<input type="radio"/> 19 or older
<input type="radio"/> 15	
  
2. What grade will you be entering in September, 1996?
 

<input type="radio"/> 5th	<input type="radio"/> 10th
<input type="radio"/> 6th	<input type="radio"/> 11th
<input type="radio"/> 7th	<input type="radio"/> 12th
<input type="radio"/> 8th	<input type="radio"/> College or university
<input type="radio"/> 9th	<input type="radio"/> Will not be attending school
  
3. What is your zip code? Write the last three numbers of your zip code in the boxes and fill in the circle to the right of each number.  
 My zip code is 55 \_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_:  

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
  
4. What is your sex?
 

<input type="radio"/> Male	<input type="radio"/> Female
----------------------------	------------------------------
  
5. How do you describe yourself?
  - Asian American
  - Black or African American
  - White
  - Hispanic American
  - Native American
  
6. Are your parents divorced or separated?
 

<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not sure
---------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------
  
7. With whom do you live?
  - Mother only
  - Mother and father
  - Father only
  - Mother and other partner
  - Father and other partner
  - I live part-time with both my mother and father in separate homes.
  - Other family/guardian
  
8. What is the highest level of schooling your father has completed?
  - Completed grade school or less
  - Some high school
  - Completed high school
  - Some college
  - Completed college
  - Graduate or professional school after college
  - Don't know, or does not apply
  
9. What is the highest level of schooling your mother has completed?
  - Completed grade school or less
  - Some high school
  - Completed high school
  - Some college
  - Completed college
  - Graduate or professional school after college
  - Don't know, or does not apply
  
10. What is the religion of your father, stepfather, or mother's partner (whomever you live with)?
  - Born Jewish
  - Converted to Judaism
  - Christian
  - Other religion
  - None
  - Don't know
  - Don't live with father, stepfather, or mother's partner
  
11. What is the religion of your mother, stepmother, or father's partner (whomever you live with)?
  - Born Jewish
  - Converted to Judaism
  - Christian
  - Other religion
  - None
  - Don't know
  - Don't live with mother, stepmother, or father's partner
  
12. Do you consider yourself:
  - Orthodox
  - Conservative
  - Reform
  - Reconstructionist
  - Just Jewish
  - Not sure

## MY JEWISH FAITH AND IDENTITY

13. Does your family currently belong to a synagogue?
  - Yes
  - No—SKIP TO QUESTION 16

14. To which synagogue/temple do you belong?

- Beth El                       Keneseth Israel  
 Temple Israel               Temple of Aaron  
 Adath Jeshuran           Beth Jacob  
 B’Nai Emet                 Bais Yisrael  
 Bet Shalom                 Mayim Rabim  
 Sharei Chesed           Mount Zion  
 Shir Tikvah

15. If you belong to a synagogue, in which of the following activities do you participate? Please mark “yes” or “no” for each item.

- |                                     | Yes                   | No                    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Religious services               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Religious education classes      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Synagogue youth group            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Youth service projects           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Volunteering in the congregation | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

16. How often did you go to synagogue or temple services during the past year?

- Never  
 Only on the High Holidays  
 A few times during the year in addition to the High Holidays  
 About once a month  
 Two to three times a month  
 Weekly  
 Several times a week or more

17. Do you practice any of the following rituals on a regular basis? Please mark “yes” or “no” for each of the following items.

- |   | Yes                   | No                    |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Saying kiddush on Shabbat                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Eating in or visiting a Sukkah               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Lighting Shabbat candles                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Shabbat dinner                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Fasting on Yom Kippur                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Havdalah                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. Lighting Hanukah candles                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. Saying Birkat Hamazon (blessing after meals) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. Attending a Seder                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. Praying                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

18. Are you or your family a member of the Jewish Community Center (JCC)?

- Yes  
 No

19. What type of school will you attend this fall?

- Public school  
 Jewish day school  
 Other private school

20. Do you participate or have you participated in any of the following types of Jewish education during after-school hours?

- |                             | Yes                   | No                    |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Talmud Torah             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Synagogue/temple classes | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Private tutoring         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

21. Did you, or are you planning to, have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

- Yes  
 No—SKIP TO QUESTION 23

22. What year did you have or will you have your Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

- 1990 or before               1995  
 1991                               1996  
 1992                               1997  
 1993                               1998 or after  
 1994

23. How many times have you gone to Israel with your family?

- Never  
 Once  
 Two times or more

24. How many times have you gone to Israel through an organized program (e.g., Alexander Muss High School, USY, NFTY, Masada, JCC, etc.)?

- Never  
 Once  
 Two times or more

25. If you have not been to Israel, do you plan to go in the future?

- Yes  
 No  
 Not sure

26. How important are each of the following to you? Choose one answer for each.

- |   | Very                  | Some-<br>what         | A<br>little           | Not<br>at<br>all      | Not<br>sure           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Attending weekly synagogue service           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Learning Hebrew                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. Going to Israel                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Knowing about the Holocaust                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Doing acts of loving-kindness                | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Participating in Jewish-sponsored activities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



Not  
 at  
 Very    Some-    A    all    Not  
       Very    what    little       sure

g. Doing service in the Jewish community      ○      ○      ○      ○      ○

27. Some young people feel it is difficult to be Jewish, although others do not. Are there things that make it difficult, or stand in the way, of you participating fully in Jewish life? Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

KEY:      SA = Strongly Agree  
           A = Agree  
           NS = Not Sure  
           D = Disagree  
           SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	NS	D	SD
a. I have felt or experienced anti-Semitism in my community.	○	○	○	○	○
b. My school does not accommodate Jewish traditions (e.g., change a test day or allow a makeup because of a Jewish holiday).	○	○	○	○	○
c. My parents push me to participate, but they don't participate themselves.	○	○	○	○	○
d. I don't feel knowledgeable or competent about Jewish things (e.g., prayer skills, holidays)	○	○	○	○	○
e. Judaism is boring.	○	○	○	○	○
f. Being Jewish takes too much time.	○	○	○	○	○
g. Judaism separates me from my Christian friends.	○	○	○	○	○
h. Judaism isn't relevant to me or won't help me succeed in life.	○	○	○	○	○

## MY ACTIVITIES

### During the School Year

28. In a typical week during the school year, how many hours do you spend in the following activities? Choose one answer for each.

	HOURS PER WEEK				
	0	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+
a. Studying/doing homework	○	○	○	○	○
b. Studying Judaism and Israel	○	○	○	○	○
c. Attending Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school	○	○	○	○	○
d. Attending Saturday school (e.g., Saturday morning program)	○	○	○	○	○
e. Teaching Saturday synagogue or temple programs	○	○	○	○	○
f. Attending religious services	○	○	○	○	○
g. Preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah	○	○	○	○	○
h. Participating in family celebrations (e.g., Shabbat, holidays)	○	○	○	○	○
i. Participating in social activities	○	○	○	○	○
j. Working for pay	○	○	○	○	○
k. Doing volunteer work <u>in the Jewish community</u>	○	○	○	○	○
l. Doing volunteer work <u>outside of the Jewish community</u>	○	○	○	○	○
m. Participating in <u>Jewish-sponsored</u> sports, athletics, clubs or groups (including USY, NOFTY)	○	○	○	○	○

	<u>HOURS PER WEEK</u>				
	0	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+
n. Participating in <u>non-Jewish-sponsored</u> sports or athletics (including school athletics)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Exercising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Attending retreats (e.g., CMT, Conclave, Kinnus)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Reading for pleasure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Watching television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. Using a computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. Playing video games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
v. Going to movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

During the Summer

29. In a typical week during the summer, how many hours do you spend in the following activities?

	<u>HOURS PER WEEK</u>				
	0	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+
a. Studying/doing homework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Studying Judaism and Israel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Attending religious services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Preparing for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Participating in family celebrations (e.g., Shabbat, holidays)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Participating in social activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Working for pay	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Doing volunteer work <u>in the Jewish community</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Doing volunteer work <u>outside of the Jewish community</u>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	<u>HOURS PER WEEK</u>				
	0	1-2	3-5	6-10	11+
j. Participating in <u>Jewish-sponsored</u> sports, athletics, clubs or groups (including USY, NOFTY)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Participating in <u>non-Jewish-sponsored</u> sports or athletics (including school athletics)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Exercising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Attending or being a counselor at a <u>Jewish</u> day camp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Attending or being a counselor at a <u>non-Jewish</u> day camp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Reading for pleasure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Watching television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Using a computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Playing video games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. Shopping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. Going to movies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. Have you ever attended a Jewish overnight camp?

- Yes
- No—SKIP TO QUESTION 33

31. Have you attended...? Mark all that apply.

- a.  TEKO
- b.  Moshava
- c.  Herzl
- d.  Ramah
- e.  Olin Sang Ruby
- f.  Other

32. How many years/summers have you attended?

- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

33. Have you ever attended a non-Jewish overnight camp?

- Yes
- No

## ABOUT MY ACTIVITIES

34. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your involvement in Jewish-sponsored activities. Choose one response for each statement.

KEY: SA = Strongly Agree  
 A = Agree  
 NS = Not Sure  
 D = Disagree  
 SD = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	NS	D	SD
a. My parents pressure me or force me to participate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I like the activities that are available.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. They're challenging.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. They're fun.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I see my friends there.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. I like connecting with other Jewish kids.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. It's part of being a "good" Jew.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. A Rabbi suggested that I participate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. How many of your closest friends are Jewish (not including your camp friends)?

- None
- A few
- Many
- Almost all
- All

36. How meaningful are each of the following Jewish activities to you? Please choose one response for each.

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not all	Does not apply
a. Camp (e.g., Ramah, Olin Sang Ruby, JCC, Herzl, Moshava, TEKO)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Sunday school or afternoon Hebrew school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not all	Does not apply
c. Saturday school (e.g., Saturday morning program)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Teaching Saturday/Sunday synagogue or temple programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Religious services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Family celebrations (e.g., Shabbat, holidays)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Social activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Volunteer work in the Jewish community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. <u>Jewish-sponsored</u> sports, athletics, clubs or groups (e.g., USY, NOFTY)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Retreats (e.g., CMT, Conclave, Kinnus)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Attending or being a counselor at a Jewish day camp	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Attending confirmation classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. Think about just the Jewish activities that you find meaningful, what is it about them that makes them meaningful? Please mark "yes" or "no" for each of the following statements.

They are meaningful to me because . . .

	Yes	No
a. I like making a difference.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I like talking to other kids and sharing what we think and feel.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. These activities really help me grow as a Jew.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Doing things with my friends is important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. I like to meet new people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. I feel welcome.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. They are fun.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- |  | Yes                   | No                    |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| h. There are caring, enthusiastic adults and teachers.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. They focus on helping me to be a good person.         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. I have input into planning and decision making.       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. Activities are based on my interests.                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. They are part of passing down Jewish traditions.      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| m. They involve teaching others.                         | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| n. I learn more about myself.                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| o. They help me to become competent in my Jewish skills. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| p. They help me to feel good about my Jewish identity.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

38. Of the Jewish activities that you don't find meaningful, what is it about them that "turns you off"? Please mark "yes" or "no" for each of the following statements.

They are not meaningful to me because . . .

- |   | Yes                   | No                    |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Classes or activities are repetitious.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. There are cliques or snotty kids there.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. My parents force me to do them.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. Jewish activities keep me from participating in non-Jewish activities.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Jewish activities are boring.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. I don't like the people or teachers leading activities.                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. It's always the same people there.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. They have hypocritical teachers or leaders who don't really care about what's right. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. Jewish rules and traditions don't mean anything to me.                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. They waste time and nothing is accomplished.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. They pressure me to be more observant (e.g., fast on Yom Kippur, keep kosher).       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. I don't like so much religious structure.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| m. The kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced.                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| n. I can't bring my non-Jewish friends.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| o. Kids aren't involved in decision making.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| p. Nothing that is presently offered interests me.                                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

39. If the following activities were offered, and the things that "turn you off" didn't exist, how likely would you be to participate? Mark one for each.

- |   | Very                  | Some-<br>what         | A<br>little           | Not<br>at<br>all      | Not<br>sure           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Jewish-sponsored sports team or league   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. Recreation activities  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. A group that provides service for other people or that focuses on volunteering in the Jewish community | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. A group where I can talk with others about things that matter to me or that are bothering me           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Lessons in something I'd like to be better at (like swimming, art)                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Learning and studying something (like computers, science)  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. An activity with an adult I can trust and who respects me  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. Dances   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. Just hanging out with friends  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. An activity where kids get to be leaders and make decisions and plans                                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. Free time in a gym or rec center   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. An activity in which an older teenager or adult teaches me something                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| m. An activity in which I could earn money  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- |   | Very                  | Some-<br>what         | A<br>little           | Not<br>at<br>all      | Not<br>sure           |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| n. An activity that included my parents/guardians     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| o. An activity that included quality Jewish education | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
40. Some people feel that it is difficult for them to attend Jewish-sponsored activities. Do any of the following reasons make it difficult for you to participate? Please mark "yes" or "no" for each.
- |  | Yes                   | No                    |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. I have transportation problems or can't get there.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. The location is too far away.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. The programs cost too much.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. I'm afraid I won't know anyone.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. I'm too busy with chores at home.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. I have to watch my younger brothers and sisters.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. I need to spend time on my homework.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. I don't know what programs exist.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. My parents do not sign me up.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. Other school activities take my time.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. I do a lot with my non-Jewish friends and I don't have time for making friends in the Jewish community. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. I have no reason to be there.   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## ABOUT MY JEWISH EDUCATION

The following questions are about your formal Jewish education in the after-school hours.

If you do not attend (or if you have never attended) a Jewish education program in the after-school hours, PLEASE SKIP TO QUESTION 43. Otherwise, answer the following questions.

41. Do you attend or have you ever attended:
- Talmud Torah
  - A religious school program at a reform temple
  - An orthodox cheder
  - I attended a Jewish Day School and then went to Talmud Torah

42. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience. Choose one response for each.

- KEY: SA = Strongly Agree  
A = Agree  
NS = Not Sure  
D = Disagree  
SD = Strongly Disagree
- |  | SA                    | A                     | NS                    | D                     | SD                    |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. I haven't attended classes regularly.                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. I've learned a lot.                                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. It is <u>not at all</u> worthwhile and is boring.     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. The quality of teaching is high.                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. Classes are <u>not</u> well run nor organized.        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. Students have a lot of respect for teachers.          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. The teachers and administration don't listen to kids. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. The teachers and administration care about kids.      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. The teachers know how to teach effectively.           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. My parents haven't cared if I've attended regularly.  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. I don't care about what I've learned                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. I care about attending regularly.                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| m. My parents have forced me to attend.                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| n. The kids are rowdy and the rules are not enforced.    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

43. How well do you feel you have learned each of the following subjects in your Jewish education? Please choose one response for each.

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not at all	Not sure
a. Hebrew language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Jewish history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Bible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Mishnah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Contemporary events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Jewish holidays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Jewish practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Prayer skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Israel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Jewish life-cycle events (e.g., Brit milah, wedding, death)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Holocaust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Jewish and Christian relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Jewish identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### THINGS I THINK ABOUT

44. The following items are issues and concerns that teenagers may think about. How concerned are you about each of the following problems? Mark one response for each.

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not at all	Not sure
a. AIDS/HIV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Unemployment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Anti-Semitism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Crime and violence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Destruction of natural resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Drug abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Poverty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Safety for Israel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Pollution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Human rights violations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Illiteracy and poor education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Jewish refugees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Population growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Race relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Sexism and sexual harassment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

q. Threat of nuclear destruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Inter-marriage between Jews and Christians	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. Making Judaism meaningful to young people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. Health care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
v. War	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
w. Peace in the Middle East	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

45. How important is each of the following to you in your life? Mark one response for each.

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not at all	Not sure
a. Making lots of money	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Being Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Being physically attractive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Having knowledge of Jewish life and Jewish history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Having a connection to Israel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Helping others or making the community a better place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Volunteering in the Jewish community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Developing skills and abilities (e.g., sports, arts, technology)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Participating in the Jewish community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Improving health or staying healthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Being a leader (at school, camp, youth group or other organization)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How important is . . .

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not at all	Not sure
l. Observing the Jewish holidays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Keeping kosher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Spending time with friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Attending synagogue/temple services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Wearing a Star of David, mezuzah, or other symbol indicating that I am Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Dating only a Jewish person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Marrying someone who is Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. Donating money to Jewish causes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. Keeping informed about current events that affect Israel and world Jewry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. Having children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
v. Raising my children Jewish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. If you had an opportunity to take a class, how interested would you be in the following subjects? Please choose one response for each.

	Very	Some- what	A little	Not at all	Not sure
a. Hebrew language	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Jewish history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Bible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Mishnah	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Contemporary events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Jewish holidays, practices, or life-cycle events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Prayer skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Israel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Holocaust	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Jewish and Christian relations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47. What advice would you give that would help make Jewish-sponsored activities better for you? Write your response only **inside** the box below.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey! Your input will make a difference.

Copyright © 1996 by Search Institute  
 For copyright information or permission to use the Youth Survey, contact Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415, 800-888-7828.





## Appendix B Scales Used in Analyses

The following list includes the survey item numbers that were included in each of the scales derived from the factor analysis of the Youth Survey, the reliability of each scale, and the factor loadings. The item numbers listed for each scale can be compared with the parallel number in the survey (see Appendix A).

### **Scale I. Involvement in Jewish-sponsored community activities/organizations**

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .88

Survey Item Number	Factor Loading
R-15C	.57
R-26F	.57
28M	.63
28P	.49
29J	.48
31C	.42
R-34B	.63
R-34D	.67
R-34F	.62
R-39A	.44
R-39B	.58
R-39I	.50
R-39J	.56
R-39K	.42
40D	.42
40L	.42

*Note:* Where an “R” appears in the column containing the survey item, the coding for the question was reversed.

## Scale 2. Meaning of social aspects of activities

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .82

Survey Item Number	Factor Loading
R-36A	.55
R-36H	.55
R-36J	.59
R-36K	.59
R-37B	.45
R-37D	.63
R-37E	.45
R-37F	.61
R-37G	.66
R-37K	.45

## Scale 3. Positive feelings/perceptions about formal Jewish education

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .88

Survey Item Number	Factor Loading
R-42B	.62
42C	.48
R-42D	.59
42E	.40
R-42F	.44
R-42H	.47
R-42I	.65
R-42L	.40
R-43A	.43
R-43B	.57
R-43F	.45
R-43G	.52
R-43H	.45
R-43I	.53
R-43J	.54
R-43M	.43
R-43N	.42

*Note:* Where an “R” appears in the column containing the survey item, the coding for the question was reversed.

#### **Scale 4. Meaning level of Jewish educational activities**

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .76

<b>Survey Item Number</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
R-36B	.57
R-36C	.60
R-36D	.64
R-36E	.50
R-36F	.40
R-36G	.44
R-36I	.37
R-36L	.46
R-36M	.52

*Note:* Where an “R” appears in the column containing the survey item, the coding for the question was reversed.

**Scale 5. Importance of Jewish rituals, continuity, and learning**

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .94

<b>Survey Item Number</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
16	.57
R-17A	.48
R-17C	.42
R-17D	.57
R-26A	.57
R-26B	.56
R-26C	.55
R-26G	.57
27E	.46
27F	.44
27H	.50
28B	.44
28F	.47
28H	.41
28K	.41
29E	.42
R-44R	.44
R-44T	.57
R-45B	.59
R-45D	.54
R-45E	.60
R-45G	.54
R-45I	.67
R-45L	.66
R-45M	.54
R-45O	.60
R-45Q	.53
R-45R	.65
R-45S	.51
R-45T	.50
R-45U	.43
R-45V	.63
R-46A	.48
R-46F	.52
R-46G	.44
R-46H	.46

*Note:* Where an “R” appears in the column containing the survey item, the coding for the question was reversed.

## **Scale 6. Importance of Jewish continuity**

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .86

---

### **Survey Item Number**

27H

28K

R-44R

R-44T

R-45E

R-45L

R-45M

R-45Q

R-45R

R-45S

R-45U

R-45V

---

*Note:* This scale is a sub-scale of Scale 5.

## **Scale 7. Importance of Jewish learning**

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .81

---

### **Survey Item Number**

R-26B

27E

28B

R-45D

R-45T

R-46F

R-46G

R-46H

---

*Note:* This scale is a sub-scale of Scale 5.

### Scale 8. Concern for social issues

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .93

<b>Survey Item Number</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>
R-39C	.49
R-44A	.48
R-44B	.55
R-44C	.59
R-44D	.68
R-44E	.52
R-44F	.55
R-44G	.71
R-44H	.60
R-44I	.59
R-44J	.70
R-44K	.59
R-44L	.62
R-44M	.60
R-44N	.56
R-44O	.52
R-44P	.60
R-44Q	.45
R-44S	.47
R-44U	.50
R-44V	.45
R-44W	.58
R-45F	.59
R-45H	.44
R-46B	.40
R-46E	.48
R-46J	.53
R-46K	.47

*Note:* Where an “R” appears in the column containing the survey item, the coding for the question was reversed.

### Scale 9. Concern for Jewish social issues

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .78

<b>Survey Item Number</b>
R-39C
R-44C
R-44H
R-44M
R-44W

*Note:* This scale is a subscale of Scale 8.

## **Scale 10. Volunteer activities**

Cronbach coefficient alpha = .80

---

### **Survey Item Number**

R-26E

R-26G

28K

28L

29H

29I

R-36I

R-39C

R-45F

R-45G

---

*Note:* Where an “R” appears in the column containing the survey item, the coding for the question was reversed.

This scale was created separately from the factor structure.

