

Women's League Education and Programming

Esther Racoosin
INR Region

Women's League

- Education Offerings
 - Religious: For self and for Sisterhood Chapter
 - Study
 - Training: For Sisterhood Chapter
 - Book Clubs, Personal Conversations

Education

- Religious Education
 - Listen, Pray, Think: A Journey through Mishnah Berakhot
 - 18 month study of the entire Tractate Masechet
 - WL members can register on website
 - ten live Zoom videoconferencing sessions taught by female scholars and rabbis
 - Next Program is on July 11, 2019 at 8 pm, presented by Rabbi Cheryl Peretz: *Chapter Two: Shema – Listen, Part Two*

Education

- Religious Education
 - Daytime Learning at Jewish Theological Seminary (formerly called Women's League Institute)
 - Takes place at Jewish Theological Seminary in NYC
 - Last presented in Spring 2019.
 - Classes offered were: Sacred Time: Hasidic Mystics on Shabbat and the Holidays, by Dr. Eitan Fishbane, Associate Professor of Jewish Thought, JTS
 - In Search of an Ethical Judaism: Rabbinic Sources that Challenge Our Hearts and Minds, by Dr. Marjorie Lehman, Associate Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, JTS

Education

- Religious Education
 - Divrei Nashim: Words of Our Women
 - Follow one theme, based on the Torah Fund pin slogan
 - This year is “Chesed”, meaning lovingkindness and devotion
 - Is a short, three-minute speech based on a text from the liturgy
 - Can be used as a starting point for a discussion before a Sisterhood meeting or gathering
 - Will be available later this summer

Education

- Religious Education
 - Women's League Shabbat Materials
 - Divrei Torah for Women's League Anniversary Shabbat
 - In 2019, was during Shabbat Beshalach, on the theme of "Atid", or, Future, the Torah Fund slogan
 - New materials will be on the WL website in August
- Kolot BiK'dushah and Nashim BiK'dushah
 - Lists of WLCJ women who read Torah and/or lead services. One can become a member by completing an application on the WL website.

Education

- Study
 - Study with Scholars: Features scholars of Judaic history or other fields
 - A call-in Zoom conference
 - Most recent event on May 21 featured a lecture by Dr. Pamela Nadell of American University in DC, about her new book, America's Jewish Women: A History from Colonial Times to Today
 - Masorti Days of Study
 - Sponsored by Women's League and the Schechter Institutes
 - Next event is June 21, 2019 in Jerusalem at the Schechter Institute

Education

- Training
 - Distance Workshops
 - Customized training on a variety of topics covering every area of Sisterhood business and leadership development.
 - Call-in Zoom conferences, pre-registration required
 - Held on weekday evenings at 8:30 pm, EST
 - Next event: Tuesday, June 18, “Sisterhood 101”

Education

- Women's League Reads Books
 - A worldwide conversation about books of interest to today's Jewish women
 - Features moderated online discussion group via Google Groups
 - Provides Study Guides
 - Online Author Interview
 - Next book: *The Last Watchman of Old Cairo*, by **Michael David Lukas**, winner of the 2018 Jewish Book Award and 2019 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature by the Jewish Book Council
 - Interview is Wed. July 17 at 8:30 pm EST

Education

- Personal Conversations
 - Provide a forum to address everyday issues through discussions about obstacles and opportunities
 - Consists of presentation by expert, followed by questions from participants
 - Uses conference calls and/or easy to access webinars
 - Most recent conversation was “Family Violence”, presented by Barbara Wettstein, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist at the Greater Los Angeles VA
 - Next conversation will be announced on WL website

Programming

- WL has four categories of Programming:
 - Program Resources
 - Jewish Family Living
 - Social Action
 - Fundraising

Programming

- USE Your WL Resources!! Options are limitless!
- 2017 Jewels in the Crown Awards Book
 - Women's League Jewels in the Crown Award was established to recognize our sisterhoods who have demonstrated excellence in education, programming, community service, world affairs and who exhibit a strong Women's League identity. These sisterhoods participate in Region events, the Torah Fund campaign, and are current with their per capita contribution to Women's League.

Programming

- From 2017 Jewels in the Crown Book; some examples:
 - Cultural Programs
 - Free Tech Café: This program offers one-on-one tech training for older adults by Sisterhood members and area teens. *B'nai Israel, Rockville, MD*
 - Social Action Programs
 - Mason Jar Purim Gift Program: Each participant made two meals in mason jars to give to a women's shelter. Meals could be lunch or dinner and some were breakfast items. *Beth El, Pittsburgh, PA*

Programming

- From 2017 Jewels in the Crown Book:
 - Jewish Living Programs
 - Passover Sederai Program: Congregants present information about their own personal Seder, Haggadot and Passover observance practices. *North Shore Jewish Center, Port Jefferson Station, NY*
 - Women's Health and Wellness Programs
 - “Dethroning Your Inner Critic”: Attendees learned tools and strategies to reverse negative thinking caused by our “inner critic” to gain freedom from self-doubt and self-judgment. *Beth Sholom, Cherry Hill, NJ*

Programming

- Recent Programs from Temple Beth-El, Ithaca NY
 - Hands-On Rosel-Making Workshop, Pickled Watermelon Workshop
 - “What are Your Pronouns?” Learning about Gender Identity

Programming

- Hands-On Rossel Making Workshop
 - Scientist Ruth Collins presents the method of preparing fermented vegetables
 - Participants learn about the biology of fermentation and why it is healthy to eat vegetables prepared in this way
 - Rossel-making workshop highlights a tradition of Ashkenazi Jews, to prepare “Rossel”, or the juice of fermented beets, for use as vinegar for Passover.
 - Participants are provided with materials and methods of preparing vegetables and set up jars of vegetables in the Temple social hall and kitchen.
 - Participants also get to sample pre-made fermented veggies

Hands-on Rossel Making Workshop

March 27th 1:30-3:30PM

As part of the Passover preparation, it was a tradition for Ashkenazi (East European Jews) to prepare rossel (fermented beets), to provide a sour note that is a kosher-for-Passover substitute for regular vinegar.

In this workshop each participant will learn how to prepare and use this unique healthful and delicious ingredient. Lacto-fermented vegetables provide many health and nutritional benefits and this is a great opportunity to combine our scientific understanding of the probiotic process together with creating a traditional Jewish seasonal food.

All equipment and ingredients will be provided. Each participant will toivel the jars and prepare both beets and red cabbage. Recipes will be provided to use the fermented vegetables in a traditional fleishig borscht, a vegetarian borscht with sour cream, a vegan version with plum and coriander, in addition to using the fermented beets to make a traditional chraine (horseradish).

The workshop will be taught by Ruth Collins, who learned many traditional Ashkenazi recipes from her grandmothers, and also creative approaches to Jewish cuisine with both grandmothers taking innovative approaches; one being vegetarian, way before vegetarian choices became mainstream and the other combining the Jewish food of her Russian childhood with influences from the cooking of her friends in the Pakistani immigrant community.

Programming

- Ruth Presents “Pickled Watermelon”
 - Workshop done with Religious School students features presentation of middle reader, “Pickled Watermelon”
 - Local author Esty Schachter talks about her book (a PJ library selection)
 - Ruth talks about how to make pickled (fermented) watermelon
 - Kids and teachers prepare it in jars



LACTOFERMENTED WATERMELON RIND PICKLE

Inspired by the young children's novel "Pickled Watermelon" from author Esty Schachter, turn a food item that normally gets discarded into something delicious. The process of lactofermentation requires waiting. However, the set-up time is minimal and totally worth it for that delicious sour dill garlic flavoring with crunch and healthy probiotics.

You will need:

6 cups water, boiled and cooled
1/4 cup kosher salt
1 baby watermelon
1-4 garlic cloves
1-2 bay leaves
Few sprigs of dill, washed
1 half-gallon or equivalent large wide-mouth glass jar with plastic lid
Smaller jar or glass that can fit into the larger jar to act as a weight
Food grade plastic disc or mesh to keep everything submerged

Directions

- Prepare the brine. In a non-reactive container (glass or ceramic), mixed the cooled boiled water with the salt, stirring until the salt is dissolved.
- With a vegetable peeler, remove the green outer part of the watermelon rind. Remove the watermelon flesh and save for eating (yum!). You should be left with the whitish, or inner part of the rind attached to a thin layer of red watermelon flesh .
- Slice up the rind into bite sized chunks.
- To the bottom of each jar, add a couple of cloves of garlic, 1 bay leaf and a small quantity of dill.
- Pack the watermelon rind pieces into the jars until about half full.
- Add sufficient brine to cover the jar contents.
- To make sure that the watermelon rind and spices stay completely submerged, cut a small circle of food-safe plastic that fits the inner diameter of the jar and place the smaller glass jar on top of this to weigh everything down.
- Tighten the lid firmly. Store upright at room temperature. The brine should turn cloudy in a few days and there will be bubbles. Give the jar a swirl once or twice a day to make sure nothing accumulates on the surface.
- After 6 days- 2 weeks, taste your pickles. The longer the fermentation, the more sour they will become. Refrigerate after opening.

Programming

- “What are Your Pronouns? Exploring Gender Identity”
 - Workshop presented by Johanna Zussman-Dobbins, former educator at Planned Parenthood of the Southern Tier and daughter of Sisterhood member
 - Presented information from SOJOURN, the Southern Jewish Resource Network for Gender and Sexual Diversity
 - Led discussion of “the six genders in classical Judaism”
 - Group talked about non-binary gender terms and pronouns

Programming

- “What are Your Pronouns? Exploring Gender Identity”
 - Group discussed together the handout, “Understanding Transgender Terminology”
 - Group discussed the handout, “Overview of Microaggressions and Discrimination Terms”
 - (both are from “The Teaching Transgender Toolkit”, from www.teachingtransgender.com)

Conclusions and Acknowledgements

- Education and Programming
 - All of this information is on the WL website!! You can access most of it at wlcj.org
 - To access WL resources, you must register as a member. Contact Razel Kessler at 212 870 1263 for more information
- Acknowledgements
 - Barbara Ezring, Ed/Prog Team Coordinator, Consultant, and other Ed/Prog team members, Ellen Bresnick, Rhonda Cohn, Renee Glazier, Rochelle Hirt, Judi Kenter, Faye Laveson, Vivian Leber, Barb Levin, Illene Rubin, Edna Schrank, Karen Seltzer, Marsha Strongin,
 - Margie Miller, WLCJ International President, Rabbi Ellen Wolintz-Fields, WLCJ Executive Director.
 - Dr. Ruth Collins, Esty Schachter, Johanna Zussman-Dobbins, Gail Zussman, Samantha Lesser, Julie Paige