



# Congregation Beth Am Adult Learning Survey 2006 Report v.6

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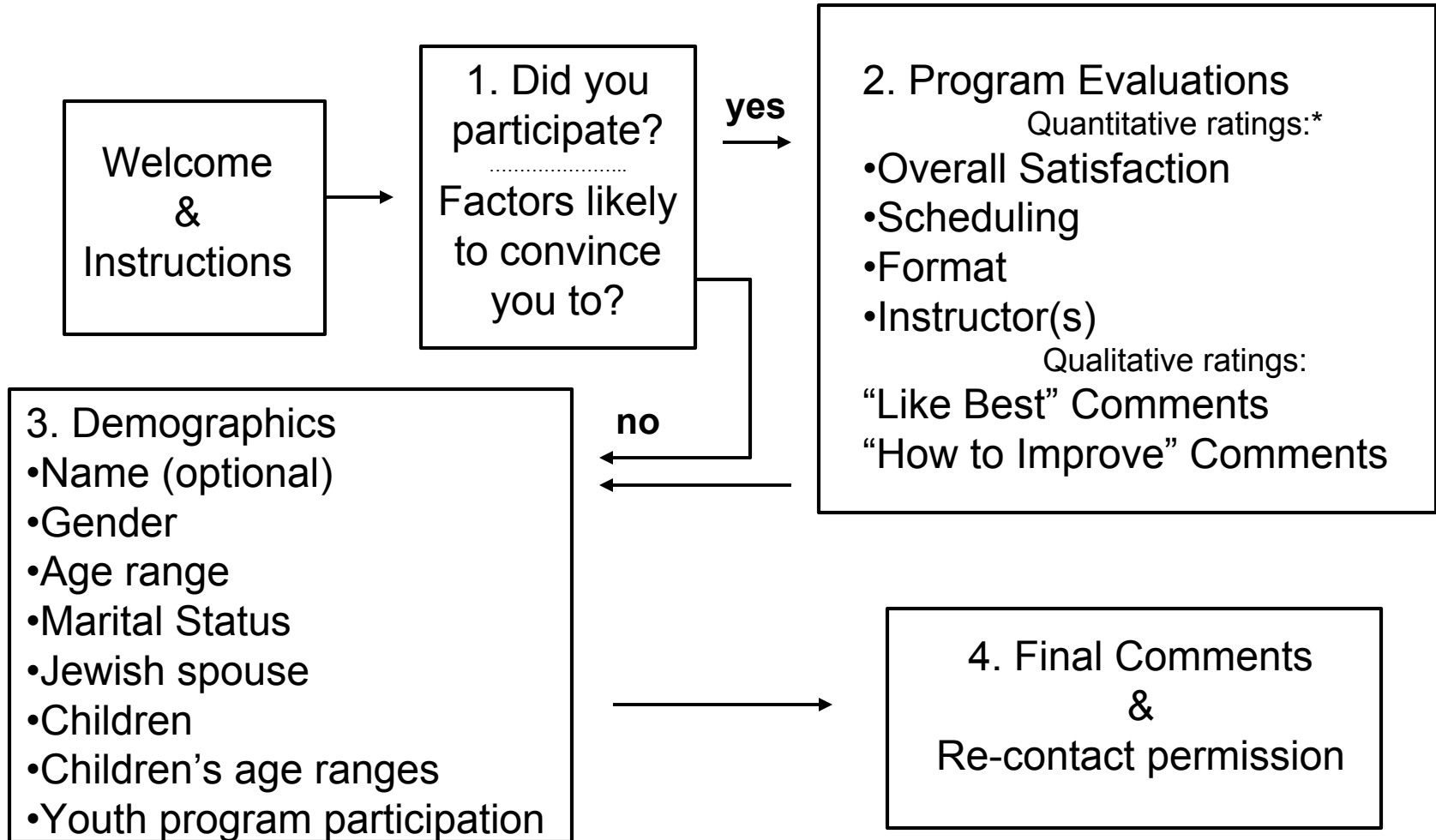
# Executive Summary

- Overall, the Adult Learning Program received outstanding ratings
  - Instructors are especially appreciated
- Many interesting suggestions regarding topics, scheduling, teachers, childcare, costs, etc.
- Energetic survey participation
  - 21% response rate
  - Respondents included both people who have taken Adult Learning programs and those who had not
  - Hundreds of thoughtful comments

# Survey Objectives

- Survey both participants and non-participants in adult learning programs to identify
  1. Who attends which programs (demographics)
  2. Barriers to participation
  3. How to optimize program scheduling
  4. How people prefer to learn (format)
  5. Desired programs not currently being offered
  6. Successes and improvements that can be made
- Provide data in time for annual program planning

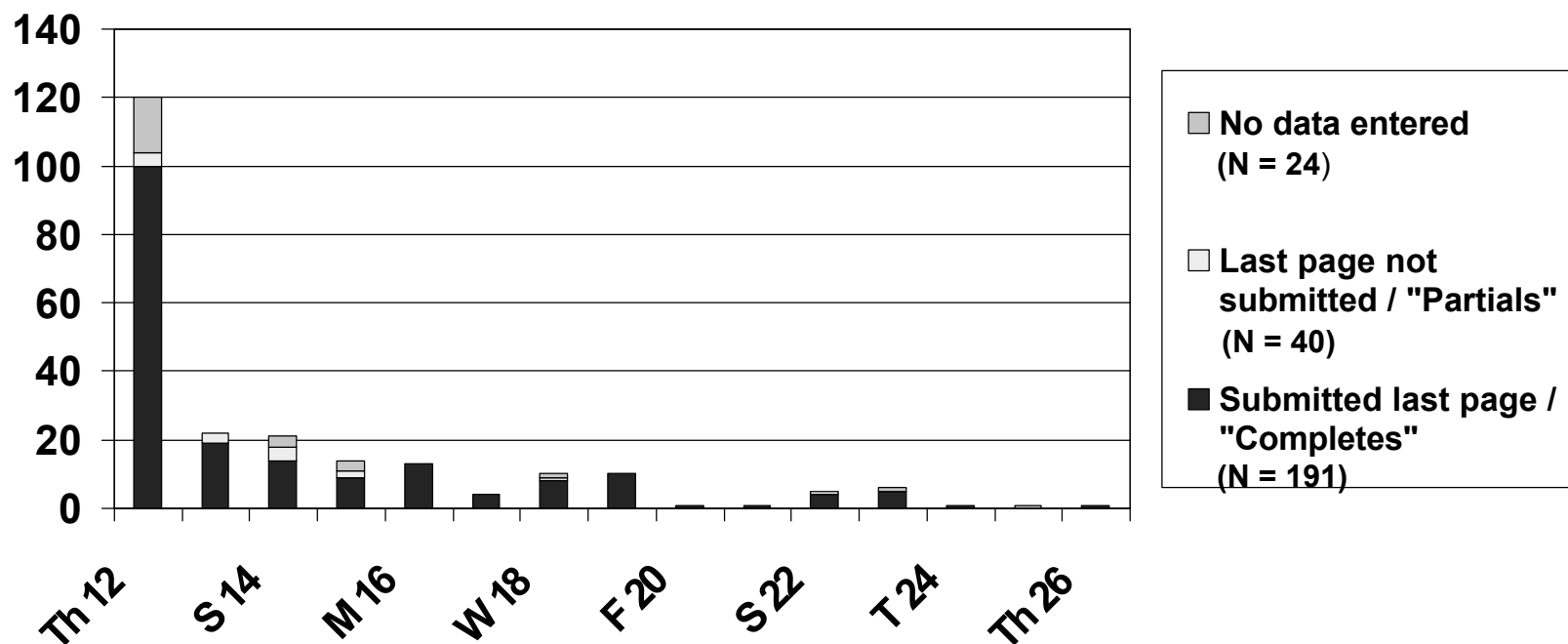
# Questionnaire Design



\* 10 point scale used to promote a broad distribution of responses since few highly negative ratings were expected.

# Excellent Response Rate

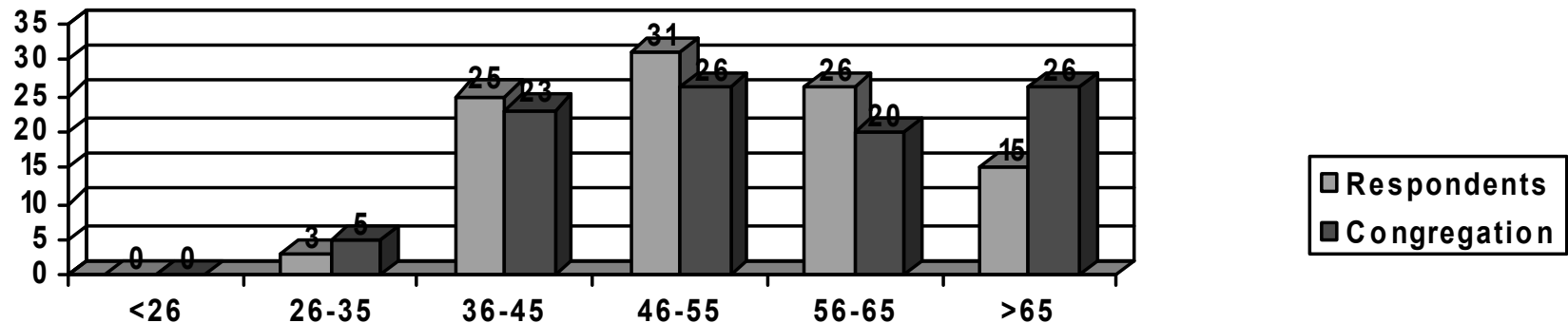
- 231 people responded to online survey
- Invitations e-mailed on Wed. Jan. 11 directly by Rabbi Josh
- Announcements made in Dec. Builder and Menchlink (twice in Jan.)
  - 21% response rate (1120 households on distribution list)
  - Most responses came in the first day; few after 1 week
  - No paper surveys were requested (offer made in Builder)
- Responses reflect Internet-using congregants only (80% of households)



# Who Were the Respondents?

- Adult Learners: Yes 133 (64%); No Participation 74 (36%)
- Gender: 51 (27%) male; 136 (73%) female
- Marital status: 21 (11%) single, 157 (84% married); 9 (5%) in committed relationship
  - Jewish spouse: yes 135 (75%); no 30 (17%); n/a 15 (8%)
- Children: 72% have kids.
  - 44% under 13; 41% 13-20; 35% over 20 years old
- Age: Comparable to Congregation (based on 2005 planning data), except fewer people over 65

Age Ranges (Percentages for comparison)



# 1. Who takes which programs?

- Females constitute two-thirds to three-quarters of participants in all programs, excepting
  - Yom Yippur Study Sessions (closer to 50-50)
  - Adult B’Nai Mitzvah (almost all women)
- Chai School & Toledot attract the greatest proportion of adults under 56 years, while Talmud and Spirituality had the highest proportions of people over 65
- Adult learners are vastly more likely to be married than not, except in Spirituality (a small group, nearly half of which are single)
- Reflecting the congregation as a whole, the vast majority of program participants have children. Asilomar is the exception with an even split between parents and non-parents.

# Barriers to Adult Learning Program Participation – Quantitative View

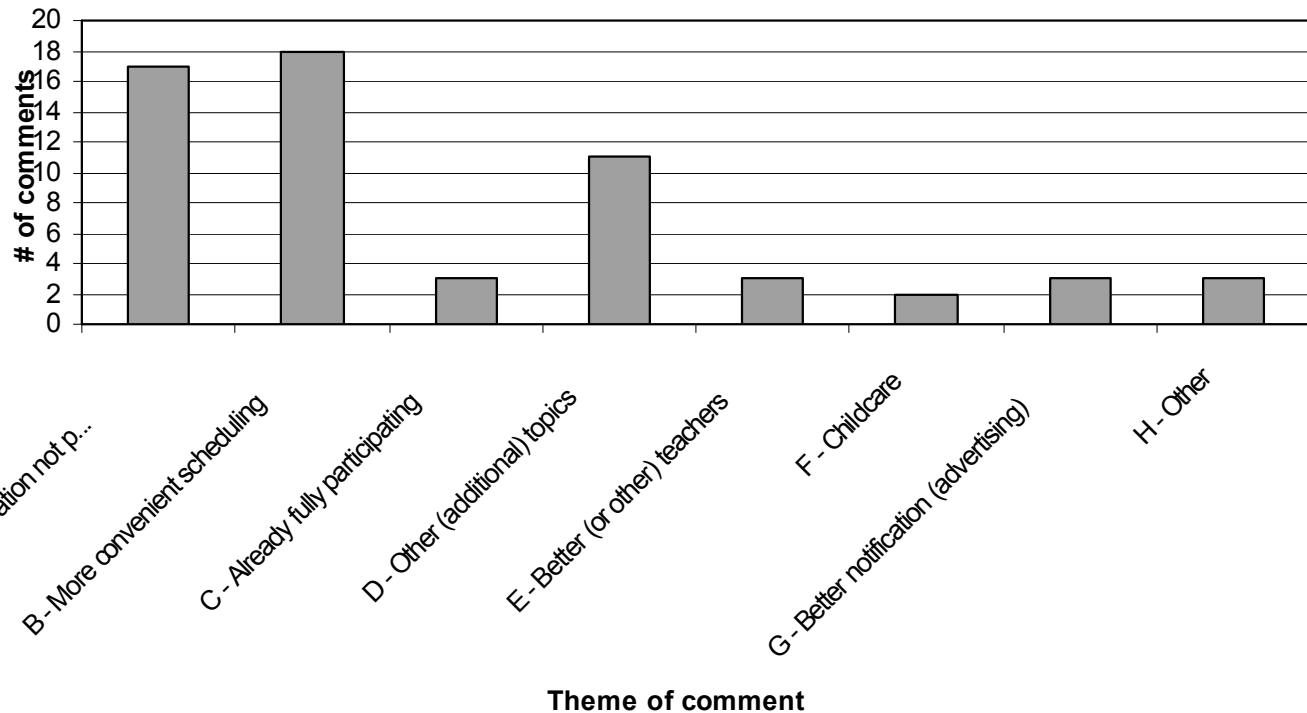
Factor likely to convince you to participate:	Total	Prior Participation	
		YES	NO
More convenient scheduling (please explain)	17	6	11
Transportation to class	1	0	1
Childcare	11	3	8
Lower fees	10	5	5
More advanced subjects (please explain)	9	3	6
More simple subjects (please explain)	3	1	2
If I had more free time available	56	19	37
Can't think of anything at this time	13	5	8
Other (please explain)	10	4	6
Total	93	30	63

- Respondents who said they DID participate were instructed to skip this question, but 30 responded anyway, presumably to indicate what prevented them from participating more.
- Lack of free time is the most frequently select barrier to participation for both groups.
- Respondents who answered survey via Internet generally do not have transportation problems.
- “More advanced subjects,” “Childcare,” and “Scheduling” represent opportunities for increasing participation.

# Participation Barriers & Inducements: Themes from the Comments

## Comment Question # 3

Explain what factors would convince you to participate more going forward.



## 2. Conclusions on Barriers

- **Scheduling has biggest potential, but needs vary**
  - More convenient when I'm not working
  - More convenient when kids are in school or childcare is available
  - More convenient during the day when I'm free
- **Other topics is second biggest opportunity**
  - More basic courses (Jewish 101, Yiddish, Mah Yong, Jewish Baking 101)
  - More advanced classes (ancient & modern Jewish philosophers, etc.)
  - Spiritual development, practical ethics & morals

### 3. Scheduling Insights

- Congregation has multiple constituencies
  - People who work during the day
  - People who don't work
  - People with childcare responsibilities
- Schedule should reflect needs of target audience

## 4. Learning Styles: Format Evaluations

- Overall satisfaction with current formats
- Suggestions reflect the diversity of views, e.g.,
  - Spend more time hearing the Rabbi or instructor teach, and
  - Encourage active discussions by participants

# 5. Suggested Programming

## TOPICS:

- Weekly Torah portion
- Biblical Hebrew for Torah readers
- Single parenting
- Interfaith parenting
- Introduction to Yiddish
- Jewish literature & poetry
- Jewish views on contemporary secular issues
- Spirituality
- Great Jewish women
- Jewish Baking

## STRUCTURE:

- Repeat Yom Kippur study sessions on a week night
- 1 day Asilomar-like retreat
- Study with Jews of all kinds
- Scholar in Residence Program
- More Lehrhaus courses
- More guest speakers
- More single or 2-session courses
- Courses targeted to 20-30 year olds

# Non-Jewish Spouses – an opportunity?

Participation	Jewish spouse	Non-Jewish	N/A	Total
Yes	92 (67.2%)	13 (43.3%)	7 (46.7%)	133 (63.3%)
No	45 (32.8%)	17 (56.7%)	8 (53.3%)	76 (36.7%)
Total	137 (100%)	30 (100%)	15 (100%)	209 (100%)

- About 14% of respondents reported having a non-Jewish spouse
- Respondents with a Jewish spouse are over 50% more likely to participate in Adult Learning programs than respondents with a non-Jewish spouse
- One Toledot respondent wanted more options for interfaith couples
- Another recommended programs on interfaith parenting

## 6. Suggestions for Improving Survey Process

- Shorten survey fielding period from 2 weeks to 7 to 10 days
- Ask if respondent is Jewish
- Delete Q1 (duplicated by Q 4) and broaden Q2 to include barriers to participation or increased participation (i.e., make suitable for both participants and non-participants.) A table (Q2 by Q4) will allow a comparison of answers to see if there are important differences.
- Implement program-specific evaluations at end of courses (using a standard template)
  - Providing course-specific feedback for immediate use
- Change this survey to 'bigger picture' view and conduct every 2 to 3 years
  - Producing data for strategic planning

# Conclusions & Recommendations

- Survey participants overwhelmingly appreciate Beth Am's Adult Learning Program
- Diverse needs exist around scheduling – we recommend identifying a target audience for each program and scheduling to meet their specific needs
- ALC should assess congregants' specific programming suggestions for feasibility and interest levels

# Appendix

- Survey Design Change Recommendation
- Youth Program Participation
- Program-specific Evaluations

# Survey Design Change Recommendation

Evaluated Programs (Q4 - rows)	Q1. Program Participation YES	Q1. Program Participation NO	Total
Yes	132 (99.2%)	7 (9.2%)	139 (66.5%)
No (skip)	1 (.8%)	69 (90.8%)	70 (33.5%)
Total	133 (100%)	76 (100%)	209 (100%)

- Q 4 repeated Q1 (Did you participate in any programs?) to permit respondents who hadn't done so to skip to the evaluation section of the survey after answering the questions about barriers to participation.
- Only 1 respondent took this opportunity to skip the evaluation questions, indicating broad and sincere interest in giving input. Only Asilomar had more evaluators than attendees, suggesting that the 7 non-participant evaluators mostly paged through the evaluation section out of curiosity.
- Recommendation: In future, delete Q1 and broaden Q2 concerning barriers to participation to both people who have and have not participated. Create a simple table to verify there are no important differences between the two groups with respect to barriers to participation or increased participation. (None found in 2006.)

# Youth Program Participation Patterns

	Shabbaton	Sunday Program	Hebrew Program	Tuesday Night Pgm.	Peninsula Havurah H.
Shabbaton	X	7 (15%)	16 (35%)	14 (32%)	7 (22%)
Sunday Program	7 (28%)	X	33 (72%)	26 (59%)	13 (41%)
Hebrew Program	16 (64%)	33 (72%)	X	35 (80%)	16 (50%)
Tuesday Night Pgm.	14 (56%)	26 (57%)	35 (76%)	X	22 (69%)
Peninsula Havurah H.	7 (28%)	13 (28%)	16 (35%)	22 (50%)	X
Total 134	25 (100%)	46 (100%)	46 (100%)	44 (100%)	32 (100%)

- Great overlap exists between Hebrew, Sunday and Tuesday Night programs
- The majority of Havurah High participants attended Tuesday Night also
- Only 1 respondent indicated participation in all 5 programs

# Youth Programs & Adult Ed. Participation

Q4. Have you taken any Adult Education?	Q67. In which youth programs, if any, did your children participate...?		Row % Column %
	1 or more	None	total
<b>YES</b>	50 (59%) (68%)	34 (41%) (61%)	84 (100%) (65%)
<b>NO</b>	32 (64%) (32%)	18 (36%) (39%)	50 (100%) (35%)
Row % Column %	82 (61%) (100%)	52 (39%) (100%)	134 (100%) (100%)

- Participation in Adult Education Programs does not predict participation in youth programs, but it's possible the reverse could be true.
- Adult participants (59%) and non-participants (64%) are both likely to have kids who participate in youth programs, with the small difference favoring non-Adult learners
- Respondents whose kids do not participate in Youth Programs are slightly less likely (61%) to be Adult Learners than respondents whose kids do participate (68%).
- 134 respondents indicated they have children (all ages). If we could limit this chart to respondents with children of youth program age, more conclusive results might appear.

# Chai School Program Participants

<b>Participants: 26</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Ratio (multiple answers OK)</b>
Building Blocks of Judaism	6	26%
Facing History & Ourselves	1	4%
That's Entertainment	4	17%
Beginning Prayerbook / Biblical Hebrew	8	35%
Int. Biblical Hebrew	6	26%
Beginning Modern Hebrew	3	13%
Int. Modern Hebrew	3	13%
Adv Modern Hebrew	2	9%
Total	33	

- Programs were evaluated as a group to reduce survey length
- Recommendation: implement class-specific evaluations so instructors can review participant feedback in a timely way

# Chai School Evaluation

<b>Participants: 26</b> <b>Satisfaction Raters: 24 max</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Lowest (1)</b>	<b>Highest (10)</b>
Overall Satisfaction	8.63	1	10
Scheduling	8.42	5	10
Format (lecture)	8.75	1	10
Instructor(s)	8.96	1	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Outstanding instructors
- Learning environment
- Getting in touch with Jewish roots

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Scheduling
- Offer more often
- More interaction
- Provide childcare
- Offer more advanced topics

# Toledot Program Participants

<b>Participants: 46</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Ratio (multiple answers OK)</b>
Middot Jewish Values	6	14%
Short Singer: Selected Short Stories of I. B. Singer	5	12%
The Many Faces of Biblical Lit.	1	2%
Seasons of a Jewish Life	25	58%
Israel: The Story of a People, a Land and a Nation	13	30%
Hebrew	6	30%
Total	56	

- Programs were evaluated as a group to reduce survey length
- Recommendation: implement class-specific evaluations so instructors can review participant feedback in a timely way

# Toledot Program Evaluation

<b>Participants: 46</b> <b>Satisfaction Raters: 45 max</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Lowest (1)</b>	<b>Highest (10)</b>
Overall Satisfaction	8.36	1	10
Scheduling	8.27	1	10
Format (lecture)	8.41	1	10
Instructor(s)	8.88	1	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Content
- Instructors
- Sense of community
- Schedule

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Schedule more frequent classes
- Provide homework, prepare for class
- Offer more course options
- Reduce class size
- Increase class size
- Match setting to class size
- Lower cost

# Torah Study

<b>Participants: 69</b> <b>Satisfaction Raters: 69 max</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Lowest (1)</b>	<b>Highest (10)</b>
Overall Satisfaction	8.48	3	10
Scheduling	8.62	1	10
Format (lecture)	8.15	2	10
Instructor(s)	9.65	5	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Rabbi’s skill & teaching style
- Content
- Wide-ranging discussions
- Sense of community
- Consistent scheduling

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Shorter introductions
- Better use of microphone
- Let the Rabbi talk more
- Post materials on-line
- Multiple smaller classes (increase face time with the Rabbi)

# Talmud Study

<b>Participants: 17</b> <b>Satisfaction Raters: 16 max</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Lowest (1)</b>	<b>Highest (10)</b>
Overall Satisfaction	9.00	5	10
Scheduling	8.31	1	10
Format (lecture)	8.88	6	10
Instructor(s)	9.56	7	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Rabbi’s teaching skills
- Group discussion & interpretation
- Content
- Schedule
- Class size

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Make class longer
- More discussion
- Study one issue through time
- Change the topic
- Read more Talmud
- Change the schedule
- Have Rabbis Marder or Citrin substitute

# Jewish Spirituality

Participants: 9 Satisfaction Raters: 8 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	8.88	7	10
Scheduling	9.38	8	10
Format (lecture)	9.13	8	10
Instructor(s)	9.63	8	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Teaching skills of the Cantor
- Open and wide discussion
- Depth of subject matter covered

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Use books more to liking of class
- Discuss comparative spirituality
- Have invited guests occasionally
- Advertise the class more

# Congregant-Facilitated Learning

<b>Participants: 10</b> <b>Satisfaction Raters: 9 max</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Lowest (1)</b>	<b>Highest (10)</b>
Overall Satisfaction	8.00	6	10
Scheduling	8.50	6	10
Format (lecture)	8.13	6	10
Instructor(s)	7.17	1	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Course content
- Free and open discussion
- Convenient schedule

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Instructors
- Class preparation

## Suggested Future Topics

- History
- Spirituality

# Selichot Evaluation

Participants: 34 Satisfaction Raters: 31 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	8.19	5	10
Scheduling	8.89	6	10
Format (lecture)	8.13	2	10
Instructor(s)	8.27	5	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Preparing the spirit
- Movie choice
- Spirituality & ‘feeling’, music
- Community & tradition
- Format of 2005 program
- Discussion

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- More time for discussion
- Eliminate the movie
- Prepare by studying beforehand
- Change to an earlier time
- Program into late hours
- Explain purpose of the service
- Focus on one topic
- More study options

# Yom Kippur Study Sessions

Participants: 65 Satisfaction Raters: 64 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	7.95	5	10
Scheduling	8.52	5	10
Format (lecture)	8.20	5	10
Instructor(s)	7.94	5	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Broad menu of topics
- Good activity for the afternoon
- Excellent instructors
- Opportunity to study
- A particular course
- Builds community
- Intimate setting for reflection

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Better classrooms, more room
- More and more interesting subjects
- Make sure instructors are prepared & coached on logistics
- Careful choice of topics & lecturers (esp. controversial ones)
- Schedule, lengthen class by 15 min
- Advanced sign-up
- Always have 1 session for teens
- Provide childcare

# Tikkun Leil Shavot

Participants: 13 Satisfaction Raters: 11 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	8.36	6	10
Scheduling	7.80	7	10
Format (lecture)	8.80	7	10
Instructor(s)	8.90	7	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Greater Jewish community involvement
- Exciting format
- Another opportunity to learn
- Great instructors & topics

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- More programming into night – for all-nighters
- Longer sessions so instructors less rushed

# Feast of Jewish Learning

Participants: 53 Satisfaction Raters: 51 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	8.20	5	10
Scheduling	8.44	5	10
Format (lecture)	8.44	6	10
Instructor(s)	8.24	4	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Learning from a diverse ‘visiting’ staff
- Content is interesting, varied & fun
- Community beyond Beth Am attends
- Community-building, sharing Havdalah
- Rabbi Marder’s sessions

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Make sessions longer; cut Havdalah
- Keep & encourage variety
- Make sure instructors are prepared
- Encourage intellectual content vs. ‘touchy feely’ activities
- More parking, bigger rooms for larger sessions, help finding classrooms
- Advertise better
- Better program for children
- Provide better for late arrivals

# Adult B'nai Mitzvah

Participants: 13 Satisfaction Raters: 13 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	8.46	5	10
Scheduling	8.33	6	10
Format (lecture)	7.08	4	10
Instructor(s)	7.83	4	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Community, sharing among participants
- Teachers
- Subject matter, learning to chant Torah, to lead the service
- Spiritual experience, rebirth
- Diversity of student backgrounds

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> year format is better than 1<sup>st</sup> year
- Need more time – schedule more or longer sessions
- Instructor preparation
- Coordinate the two courses better – show the linkages in content
- Offer classes in daytime
- Simplify luncheon logistics – have class pay for typical community luncheon

# Asilomar: 35 Jews – 36 Opinions

Participants: 35 Satisfaction Raters: 36 max	Average	Lowest (1)	Highest (10)
Overall Satisfaction	8.75	4	10
Scheduling	8.33	5	10
Format (lecture)	8.67	4	10
Instructor(s)	8.92	4	10

## Themes from “Like Best” Comments:

- Sense of community
- Relaxation, informality
- Interacting with professional staff
- Campfire
- Prayer
- Study sessions/ content

## Themes from “Improve” Comments:

- Reduce costs
- Better location (food, rooms, cost)
- Provide childcare
- Offer 1 day session for families
- Less campfire; more Dylan music
- More prayer & serious study
- More free time
- Publish program details in time to motivate attendance
- Encourage younger participants