

Frequently Asked Questions About Conversion:

I'm not sure that I want to convert and don't feel ready to meet with a clergy member. Are there other ways to explore Judaism?

You are welcome to attend any Beth Am worship services, programs or classes – all are open to any interested member of the community.

Is the Building Blocks of Judaism class only for those who are planning to convert?

You may enroll in Building Blocks of Judaism whether or not you intend to convert. If you are contemplating marriage to someone who is Jewish, we encourage both of you to take the course together.

This course is for anyone who wishes to learn (or re-learn) more about Judaism. All are welcome: non-Jews, Jews, interfaith couples or those considering conversion. Students will learn the basics of Judaism in a friendly and informal atmosphere. We'll explore fundamental aspects of Jewish practices, such as holiday observance and life-cycle celebrations. We'll also discuss Jewish understandings of God and religious beliefs, important Jewish texts, Jewish history, music and literature, and the significance of Israel in Judaism today.

How long does the conversion process take?

Typically it takes about a year, so that the conversion student can experience the full cycle of Jewish holidays and a year of Torah study. Those who have a substantial background of Jewish study and practice may complete the process in less time.

I'm not sure if I believe in God. Does this disqualify me from conversion?

Judaism is a big tent, and embraces those whose faith is strong as well as those who struggle with matters of belief. We recognize that there are many ways of defining God, and our tradition encompasses a wide spectrum of beliefs. Jews are asked to study, learn and seek the Holy One throughout our lives. We believe that the journey towards God may take many years, and that each of us should try to grow spiritually and deepen our connection with the Divine. Most important is a commitment to practice and live by the teachings of Judaism.

I'm a little nervous about coming to services, since I've never been to a synagogue before. Can someone help?

Yes! Contact Rabbi Sarah Weissman at Rabbi_Weissman@betham.org, and she can connect you with a Beth Am member who will be happy to sit with you at Shabbat services, answer your questions and act as your guide.