



# Program Guide

Sunday, September 7, 2025

# Today's Schedule

## Sunday, September 7, 2025

Start Time	End Time	Session
9:00AM	9:30 AM	Registration
9:30 AM	10:15 AM	Welcome & Keynote
10:15 AM	10:30 AM	Transition
10:30 AM	11:15 AM	Breakout Session 1
11:00 AM	1:00 PM	Lunch Available
11:15 AM	11:30 AM	Transition
11:30 AM	12:15 PM	Breakout Session 2
12:15 PM	12:30 PM	Transition
12:30 PM	1:15 PM	Breakout Session 3
1:15 PM	1:30 PM	Transition
1:30 PM	2:15 PM	Breakout Session 4

# Our Keynote:

## Understanding Modern Antisemitism

In this Keynote, we'll hear an overview of the historical and contemporary forms of antisemitism, exploring how anti-Jewish sentiments have persisted and evolved over time. We'll examine the role of stereotypes, conspiracy theories, and societal factors in shaping antisemitic attitudes today, and learn why we need education, an increase in awareness, and collective action to counteract this rising wave of hatred in the modern era.



Evan R. Bernstein is the Vice President of Community Relations for the Jewish Federations of North America. In his role, he leads a growing focus to strengthen and support Federations' community relations efforts across North America. His community relations team aims to help communities strengthen civic and interfaith engagement, counter rising antisemitism and hate, and advance the values, interests, and security of the Jewish community.



# Breakout Session 1 (10:30AM - 11:15 AM)



## A Strange Place Called Israel

The Land where Faith, History, Hope, and Pain all meet. A presentation on the deeper dimension of our eternal homeland.

Presenting Agency: Chabad of Boerne

Speaker: Rabbi Yossi Marrus



## Home Away From Home: Biblical Stories of Immigration

This session will explore powerful stories of immigration and displacement found throughout the Torah. From Abraham's journey to a new land, to the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, to Ruth's decision to follow Naomi into an unfamiliar culture, the Torah is filled with narratives of people on the move.

Presenting Agency: Young Adult Division of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio

Speaker: Rabbi Levi Teldon



## Introduction to Israeli Dancing

Don't know how to dance? Don't worry! Join us for a simple introduction to Israeli dancing. You'll leave knowing two new dances!

Presenting Agency: Barshop Jewish Community Center

Speaker: Raphi Sonsino

# Breakout Session 1 (10:30AM - 11:15 AM)



San Antonio Kollel

## The People of the Book: Keeping it Relevant in a Rapidly Evolving World

Join us as we explore 3 Mitzvot that at first glance feel antiquated, but are, in fact, at the cutting edge of ethics as defined by judeo-christo scholars.

Presenting Agency: San Antonio Kollel  
Speaker: Rabbi Yehudah Grossman



## Jewish Learning in Action: Create, Express, Engage

Join Dr. Orit Eylon as she shares all the ways she was able to create Jewish experiences in the community and in her academic circles through music, debate, food and collaborations. In this session, you'll get ideas you can use to take action and create your own Jewish cultural experiences.

Presenting Agency: Stronger Together  
Speaker: Dr. Orit Eylon



## Discover Your Inner Chagall!

Come work on your creative side and design a keychain to take home!

Presenting Agency: Stronger Together  
Speaker: Susan Butler

# Breakout Session 1 (10:30AM - 11:15 AM)



## A Midrashic Reading of Holocaust Poetry

Join us as we explore Holocaust poetry and the poetic "revision" of ancient texts as a mode of testimony and bearing witness to the atrocities of the Holocaust.

Presenting Agency: Stronger Together

Speaker: Dr. Victoria Aarons

# Breakout Session 2 (11:30 AM - 12:15 PM)



## Laughter is a Mitzvah: Comedy, Chutzpah, and Carrying On

From shtetl jokesters to stand-up comics, from Purim spiels to self-deprecating jokes, humor has always been a Jewish survival tool. Join this journey through the history, wisdom, and spiritual depth behind Jewish laughter, and discover how humor and joy are as Jewish as challah.

Presented by: Chabad of Downtown San Antonio  
Speaker: Rabbi Levi Teldon



## Jewish Student Resilience: Stories from San Antonio Campuses

What does it mean to be a Jewish college student today, in a post-October 7th world? Join current students and alumni from San Antonio campuses for a candid conversation about identity, community and resilience. We'll explore how Jewish life on campus has evolved, how students navigate today's challenges, and what continues to ground and inspire them on campus.

Presenting Agency: Hillel San Antonio  
Speakers: Natalie Steiner, Andrew Cabrera, and a student panel.

# Breakout Session 2 (11:30 AM - 12:15 PM)



## Benefits of Breathing and Exercise for Quality of Life

Exercise, movement and breathing: not just good for your body, but also for your mind.

Presenting Agency: Jewish Family Service  
Speaker: Roberta Varela-Hein, MA, LPC-S



## How to Raise a Mensch

Turning to Judaism's ancient wisdom when raising children with seven parenting principles.

Presenting Agency: The Starr Family Jewish Day School  
Speaker: Sarah Endzweig



## How Texas Laws Impact Jewish Families in Schools, and What You Can Do About It!

A recap of legislation past by the Texas Legislature that skirts the issue of separation of Church and State, from Ten Commandments in the classroom to daily Bible Study and prayer. Why should Jewish families be concerned and what can we do?

Presenting Agency: National Council of Jewish Women, Jewish Community Relations Council  
Speaker: Hannah Cramer, Lisa Epstein, Ph.D., Rhonda Grimm

# Breakout Session 2 (11:30 AM - 12:15 PM)



## Volunteering in Israel: Opportunities with SAR-EL and JNF, WE ARE STILL NEEDED!

Join B'nai Brith to learn all about how you can get involved and support Israel through hands-on service with SAR-EL and the Jewish National Fund. This session will feature representatives from both organizations, who will share opportunities for involvement, information on their programs, and more.

**Presenting Agency:** Alamo Brandeis B'nai B'rith Lodge  
and Jewish National Fund

**Speaker:** Jeff Grossman and Andrew Max



## Jewish Wisdom for Everyday Life: Ritual, Ethics and Practice

Join us for an interactive session that explores the deep connection between Jewish ritual and ethical living. Through guided discussion and personal reflection, learners examine how practices like blessings, Shabbat, and tzedakah integrate sacred intention with daily action. The session concludes with an invitation to identify one ritual, one ethical act, and one unifying value to carry forward—encouraging a lived Judaism rooted in both heart and habit.

**Presenting Agency:** Temple Beth-El

**Speaker:** Paulette Gindler

# Breakout Session 3 (12:30 PM - 1:15 PM)



## How to Talk to Your Kid about Antisemitism

How do we teach one of the darkest parts of history to our children without overwhelming their hearts—but still lighting the spark of empathy, courage, and responsibility?

Join Perry Aguilar and ADL's Jackie Nirenberg for an inspiring and heartfelt conversation on educating children about antisemitism. Together, we'll explore age-appropriate ways to introduce history's hard truths, foster compassion, and empower the next generation to become upstanders against hate.

Presenting agency: PJ Library & PJ Our Way

Speaker: Perry Aguilar and Jackie Nirenberg



## Are all Scotch and Whiskey Kosher, and Why?

Not all whiskey is created equal—at least when it comes to kashrut. In this class, we'll explore what makes a scotch or whiskey kosher or not. From how it's made to what it's aged in and everything in between.

Presenting Agency: Vaad Hakashruth of San Antonio

Speaker: Rabbi Avraham Scheinberg

# Breakout Session 3 (12:30 PM - 1:15 PM)



## How Stories of the Past Can Shape Our Future

Join us as we hear from Robi Jalnos, who will be recounting his parent's survival story during WWII and the Holocaust. Together, we'll learn why we should tell survivor stories and ensure we never allow history to repeat itself, especially in this time of harsh worldwide antisemitism.

**Presenting Agency:** San Antonio Jewish Senior Service  
**Speaker:** Robi Jalnos

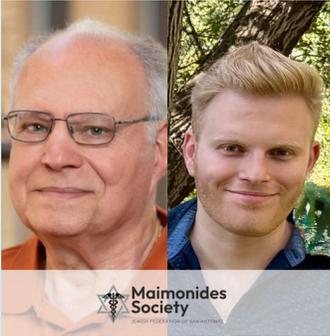


## The Virtue of Sin: a Jewish Take on Transgression and Transformation

While many faiths view sin as a stain or a fall from grace, Judaism offers a radically different lens—one that sees the potential for growth, return, and even holiness in the act of failure. Explore how Judaism reframes sin not as a dead end, but as a catalyst for spiritual elevation.

**Presenting Agency:** Chabad Center for Jewish Life and Learning  
**Speaker:** Rabbi Chaim Block

# Breakout Session 3 (12:30 PM - 1:15 PM)



## Pharmacy Benefit Managers: Friends or Foes?

Acting as middlemen overseeing prescriptions for over 200 million Americans, Pharmacy Benefit Managers negotiate with drug companies, pay pharmacies, and help decide which drugs patients can get at what price. While this is theoretically meant to result in lower prices, it frequently results in higher markups, hidden fees, and more expensive drugs. Join Dr. Saklad and Jared Saklad to answer the important question: are Pharmacy Benefit Managers friends or foes?

Presenting Agency: Maimonides Society of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio

Speakers: Jared and Steve Saklad



## Dealing with Demons in the Ancient World

The Babylonian Talmud is filled with stories about demons, and laws that regulate how humans and demons should interact. But what are all those demons even doing in the Talmud? Together we'll examine how demons are constructed in the Talmud, and explore medieval and modern resistances to the presence of demons in Judaism. Using demons as our lens, we'll think through what looking at the wacky and the weird tells us about late antique Jewish culture and theology.

Presenting Agency: Stronger Together

Speaker: Sara Ronis

## Breakout Session 3 (12:30 PM - 1:15 PM)



### **Devil in the Details: Understanding the Controversy over Definitions of Antisemitism**

In this session, we'll take a close look at a variety of proposed definitions of antisemitism and their relationships with proposed definitions of Zionism / anti-Zionism. We will expose the differences between proposed definitions, so that we may articulate more clearly what makes a definition of antisemitism adequate and why. Then, in small groups, we will consider some candidate definitions and discuss their strengths and weaknesses. We will conclude by sharing ideas that emerged in each group.

**Presenting Agency: Stronger Together**  
**Speaker: Ronni Gura Sadovsky**

# Breakout Session 4 (1:30PM - 2:15PM)



## The Final Kindness: Tradition and Autonomy in Our Last Farewell

Join Rabbi Yergin and Barbara Powell for a thoughtful and engaging session on the topic of cremation, examining it through the compassionate and modern lens of Reform Judaism. Then we will highlight the rich symbolism and meaning behind taharah, ritual purification for burial. This session will be guided by the principles found in a key Reform Responsum (rabbinic opinion), which honors individual conscience and informed choice. Our goal is not to provide a single answer, but to offer a respectful space for learning, reflection, and understanding the different paths available within a Jewish framework.

**Presenting Agency: Stronger Together**

**Speakers: Rabbi Marina Yergin & Barbara Powell**



## Advocating for Holocaust Education in Your Child's School

Join us for a workshop designed to empower parents to advocate for Holocaust education in their child's schools. Here, you'll learn how to approach educators and administrators, understand state curriculum standards, and access age-appropriate resources that ensure accurate, meaningful Holocaust instruction, and make a lasting impact in your school community.

**Presenting Agency: Holocaust Memorial Museum of San Antonio**

**Speaker: Sarah Ettinger**

# Breakout Session 4 (1:30PM - 2:15PM)



## Ashkenazi vs. Sephardic Traditions: Who, What, When, Where and Why?

Join Rabbi Avraham Scheinberg as he traces and explores the religious and historical distinctions between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish traditions.

Presenting Agency: Congregation Rodfei Sholom  
Speaker: Rabbi Avraham Scheinberg



## Stepping Up and Stepping Back: Leadership, Humility, and Disagreement for the Sake of Heaven

How does a person show leadership? Is it through bold action and certainty in their position, or through humility and flexibility? We'll explore a section of the Talmud and a Midrash that deals with these questions, deepening our understanding of what being a leader requires.

Presenting Agency: Congregation Agudas Achim  
Speakers: Rabbi Jonathan Hodson and Rabbi David Kaplinsky

# Breakout Session 4 (1:30PM - 2:15PM)



## Mind, Body and Yoga

Come join us for a yoga session where you'll quiet your mind, focus on your breath, and learn a bit about Hadassah.

**Presenting Agency:** Hadassah Evolve in San Antonio, Aviva Group

**Speaker:** Adrienne Rodriguez



## The Role of Financial Literacy and Planning for a Successful Future

Join the Hebrew Free Loan Association of San Antonio and find out what you can do to live a more satisfying and stress-free life financially.

**Presenting Agency:** Hebrew Free Loan Association of San Antonio

**Speaker:** Steven Butler, CPA

# Breakout Session 4 (1:30PM - 2:15PM)



## A History of Israel Through Song

Explore Israeli history through songs from four key periods. Participants will listen to analyze iconic songs to understand how music both reflects and shapes national identity. Through musical analysis and historical context, students will discover how Israeli songs document everything from pioneering optimism and wartime sacrifice to cultural diversity and peace aspiration, making history accessible through the universal language of music.

**Presenting agency: Congregation Shalom of San Antonio**

**Speaker: Rabbi Lisa Goldstein**