

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

**High School of Jewish Studies  
2008-2009 Spring Semester  
Building Bridges Elective**

**Session 1: Building Bridges - A Shared Vision – March 4, 2009**

**Group discussion:**

What was it about this course and Cantor Wehle that led you to sign up? What did Cantor Wehle mean by "Building Bridges"? Do you know local people or groups that are trying to building bridges like this?

What types of groups contain people different from you? Do you know anyone who has strong opinions about other religions, ethnic groups, or other people who are "different"?

What is a bridge? Why do we build bridges? Where do we build bridges? How do we know if the bridge is working the way it should? When is it time to expand or tear down an old bridge and build a new one?

How can we make these classes "doings" instead of just "meetings"? How can we continue the shared vision of Cantor Susan Wehle and Mrs. Aasiya Hassan? How can we set an example for others trying to "build bridges"?

**Define:**

Bridge

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Judaism

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Israel

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Torah

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Islam

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Jihad

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Qu'ran

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Christianity

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New Testament

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## Homework:

Choose one organization, investigate how it is trying to build bridges, try to estimate how many people it is reaching. Presentations and discussion next week.

### ***Listing of American Organizations Promoting Interreligious Dialogue between Jews and Muslims***

(from ISNA Children of Abraham interfaith guidebook)

#### **Abraham's Vision**

[www.abrahamsvision.org](http://www.abrahamsvision.org)

Abraham's Vision is a conflict transformation organization that explores group and individual identities through experiential and political education. Examining social relations within and between the Jewish, Muslim, Israeli, and Palestinian communities, we empower participants to practice just alternatives to the status quo.

#### **Auburn Seminary for Multifaith Education**

<http://www.auburnsem.org/multifaith/about.asp?nsect=ionid=4&pageid=1>

Drawing people from a wide spectrum of religious traditions, the Center gives participants - both devout and secular - an opportunity to learn with dynamic teachers, engage sacred texts, discuss challenging issues, and experience the thriving ritual life in New York City. Working with groups including attorneys and judges, healthcare professionals, business executives, women, and young leaders, the Center sponsors forums where leaders gain insight into a range of religious perspectives and reach out across traditional boundaries to turn ethical convictions into social action.

#### **Boston Dialogue Foundation**

<http://www.bostondialogue.org/>

The Boston Dialogue Foundation is a non-profit organization that was founded in April 2000 by a group of volunteers comprising business people, academics and students. One of the goals of the Boston Dialogue Foundation is to organize various religious, cultural and social activities, and conferences among all types of religious and ethnic groups to support and advance the harmony and cooperation among religions and faith traditions.

#### **Buxton Initiative**

[www.buxtoninitiative.org](http://www.buxtoninitiative.org)

The Buxton Initiative is a nonprofit organization seeking to build bridges between Abrahamic faith communities through friendship and dialogue.

#### **Center for Jewish Muslim Relations**

<http://www.jewishmuslim.org/>

The Center for Jewish Muslim Relations hopes to move relations between Muslims and Jews beyond political conflict. The Center's primary goal is to foster a common agenda on how to maintain strong religious and social identities in the pluralistic society of the United States and remove stigmatizing and negative stereotypes of the other.

#### **Children of Abraham**

<http://children-of-abraham.org/>

The Children of Abraham is a non-profit organization working to restore a more comprehensive relationship between these two ancient peoples and honor their common heritage, reaffirming the essential principles that lie at the heart of both of their faiths.

#### **Common Ground**

[www.cg.org](http://www.cg.org)

Common Ground is a center for inquiry, study, and dialogue. Their primary concern is the human quest for understanding and the human pursuit of significance. While their endeavor began with the study of world religions and the commitment to inter-faith dialogue, their range of program offerings has been greatly expanded over the past several years.

#### **Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions**

[www.cpwr.net](http://www.cpwr.net)

The mission of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions is to cultivate harmony among the world's religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its other guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

#### **Face to Face, Faith to Faith**

<http://www.s-c-g.org/facetoface/>

Face to Face - Faith to Faith is a multifaith youth leadership program founded by Auburn Theological Seminary, a leader in multifaith programming, and Seeking Common Ground, a grassroots peace organization with programs for young people. The program goal is to inform participants about how their own religion calls them to engage in public and world issues; nurture an advanced understanding of other religions, cultures and people; and increase their ability to collaborate along lines of religion, culture, class and ethnicity to make a better world.

#### **Faith Beyond Walls**

[www.faithbeyondwalls.org](http://www.faithbeyondwalls.org)

Faith Beyond Walls — founded in 1999 by Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis and the St. Louis Clergy Coalition along with St. Louis 2004 — creates opportunities for faith communities to have a meaningful and measurable impact on their quality of life.

#### **The Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington**

<http://www.ifcmw.org/>

The Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington brings together 11 historic faith communities to advance justice, nurture understanding and build community. IFC members are the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jain, Jewish, Latterday Saints, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Sikh and Zoroastrian faith communities.

## **Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)**

[www.ifyc.org](http://www.ifyc.org)

There are millions of religious young people in the world interacting with greater frequency. That interaction tends either toward conflict or cooperation. Where so many of these interactions tend toward conflict, the Interfaith Youth Core aims to introduce a new relationship, one that is about mutual respect and religious pluralism. Instead of focusing a dialogue in political or theological differences, they build relationships on the values that religions share, such as hospitality and caring for the Earth, and how different religious groups can live out those values together to contribute to the betterment of their communities. The Interfaith Youth Core is creating these relationships across the world by inspiring, networking, and resourcing young people, who are the leaders of this movement. IFYC provides young people and the institutions that support them with leadership training, project resources and a connection to a broader movement.

## **New Ground Project**

<http://www.newgroundproject.org/>

New Ground is a joint Progressive Jewish Alliance and Muslim Public Affairs Council program that engages diverse groups of Muslims and Jews in an innovative community-building process of intra- and inter-faith education and reflection, leadership training and civic engagement. The program utilizes a creative and dynamic new approach to Muslim-Jewish community-building, and is the result of extensive research of previous Muslim-Jewish dialogue efforts conducted in Los Angeles and throughout the country.

## **North American Interfaith Network (NAIN)**

[www.nain.org](http://www.nain.org)

The North American Interfaith Network is a nonprofit association of interfaith organizations and agencies in Canada, Mexico and the United States. NAIN's programs seek to build communication and mutual understanding among interfaith organizations and diverse religious groups throughout North America. Through its annual conference, newsletter, Web site, member organizations, board and supportive participants, NAIN offers networking opportunities to people of many religious traditions and numerous interfaith organizations. NAIN affirms humanity's diverse and historic spiritual resources, bringing these to bear on contemporary global, national, regional and local issues.

## **Religions for Peace USA**

<http://www.rfpusa.org/>

Religions for Peace - USA gathers representatives of religious communities in the U.S.; promotes multi-religious cooperation for peace and justice; builds on the spiritual, human, and institutional resources of its communities; enhances mutual understanding; and acts for the common good.

## **Reuniting the Children of Abraham**

[www.thechildrenofabrahamproject.org](http://www.thechildrenofabrahamproject.org)

Reuniting the Children of Abraham is a multi-media

toolkit for peace. The first part of the tool kit is a Power Point presentation developed with The University of Michigan of the shared historical roots of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and how prejudice and stereotyping contribute to violence in our world. The second part is a documentary presented by a facilitator of the inspiring story of how Christian, Muslim and Jewish teens replaced ignorance, fear and hate with understanding through a four-step healing process. The documentary is followed by interactive dialogue with audiences on the Power Point and documentary. Also included in the tool kit are support materials on how to organize a community event and information regarding the opportunity to engage in additional workshops.

## **United Religions Initiative**

[www.uri.org](http://www.uri.org)

United Religions Initiative (URI) was founded in 2000 by an extraordinary global community committed to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation and to ending religiously motivated violence. Today the URI includes thousands of members in more than 65 countries representing more than 100 religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions.

## **Other Interfaith Resources**

### **Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) Office of Interfaith and Community Alliances**

<http://www.isna.net/interfaith/default.aspx>

Through community outreach and interfaith programs, the ISNA Office for Interfaith and Community Alliances (IOICA) strengthens ties between ISNA and local grassroots organizations. The office also functions as an outreach resource for those engaged in politics and government. Such contacts allow ISNA to promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims to the nation's political leaders.

### **Tikkun**

<http://www.tikkun.org/index.php>

We seek to create that alternative. We are a community of people from many faiths and traditions, called together by TIKKUN magazine and its vision of healing and transforming our world. We include in this call both the outer transformation needed to achieve social justice, ecological sanity, and world peace, and the inner healing needed to foster loving relationships, a generous attitude toward the world and toward others unimpeded by the distortions of our egos. Our movement will encourage a habit of generosity and trust, and the ability to respond to the grandeur of creation with awe, wonder and radical amazement.

### **Facebook**

### **MySpace**

### **YouTube**

### **Other web sites**

### **Non-Internet resources**