

Be-True

DISCOVER MORE AT Be-True.ORG

A project of Jews For Judaism.

PRESERVING JEWISH IDENTITY FOR THE NEXT GENERATION, NOW.

RESOURCES

Check Out Our Website! WWW.BE-TRUE.ORG

Our website is filled with great resources that include FAQ's about Judaism, the differences between Judaism and Christianity, answers to missionary text challenges, in-depth information about Christian and Jewish texts, our ASK THE RABBI message board, materials for professionals who work with students, regularly updated events info, pamphlets, details about our Campus Rep Program, and so much more.

Want to Talk to Someone?

Jews for Judaism - Los Angeles Headquarters

PO Box 351235

Los Angeles, CA 90035

Phone: 1.310.556.3344

Fax: 310.556.3304

National Toll-Free Hotline: 1.800.477.6631

International Centers:

Los Angeles, California • Baltimore, Maryland • Toronto, Canada
Jerusalem, Israel • Johannesburg, South Africa • Sydney, Australia

* Disclaimer: Unless otherwise indicated, the phrase "Jews for Jesus," found anywhere in this publication, is used in a generic sense.

OVERVIEW

Be-True is a community initiative to empower Jewish youth with vital information and invaluable tools designed to refute and repel the current missionary onslaught.

In the past, missionaries utilized tactics that were primarily overt, such as distributing their literature on street corners and on college campuses. This in-your-face technique garnered them notoriety and converted many Jews.

Currently, a new missionary trend has begun to spread on campuses throughout the country. Evangelical Christian missionaries have expanded their efforts to include a covert and deceptive "peer-to-peer" proselytizing model that specifically targets Jewish high school and college students.

Working with a team of collaborating agencies that includes Hillel, JSU, LA Hebrew High and the Shalom Institute, the Be-True initiative has developed several resources to help students and community agencies across the country respond effectively to this critical issue.

In addition to our Annual Student Leadership Training Conference, we are developing a state-of-the-art website, comprehensive student prep-kit, interactive DVD, specialized training for Jewish professionals, and Campus Representative program.

ABOUT JEWS FOR JUDAISM

The Be-True initiative is a project of Jews for Judaism, an international organization that works in partnership with Jewish educational and community organizations spanning the spectrum of Jewish observance.

Jews for Judaism provides educational programs and resources to reinforce and enrich Jewish identity, providing a wide variety of counseling services, along with education and outreach programs that enable Jews of all ages to rediscover and strengthen their Jewish heritage.

Jews for Judaism was established in 1985 and has since become the Jewish community's leading response to the multi-million dollar efforts of cults and evangelical Christians who target Jews for conversion. With the help of generous seed grants from the Los Angeles Community Foundation and the Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund, Jews for Judaism launched the Be-True initiative in 2008.

THE CHALLENGE

A major challenge facing Jewish youth today is simply being able to recognize when someone is attempting to proselytize. The tactics they use are often subtle and misleading. Discerning someone's true intentions can be difficult. A missionary can be anyone from a professional missionary, to a close friend or even a teacher.

Here are the various types of proselytizers and their methods.

Proselytizers	Who They Might Be	Methods	Groups Typically Using Methods
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stranger on a street corner • Missionary on your campus • Neighbor • Door-to-door 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preaching • Lecturing • Leafletting • Pamphlet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proselytizing groups on campus • Hebrew-Christian groups
Peer-to-Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close friend • Neighbor • Teammate • Random person • Teacher/professor/TA/RA • Coach/camp counselor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft-sell approach • Leaflets/brochures/magazines/websites • Social events • Study group/class • Social dialogue • Lecture • Invitations to events/church • Regular, daily dialogue • Internet sites/email • Blogs/virtual social • Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proselytizing groups on campus • Hebrew-Christian groups

QUICK ANSWERS

Q: What is Deceptive Proselytizing?

A: Deceptive proselytizing is an attempt to convert people through devious and false means and methods. Although not all missionaries are deceptive, when you are challenged by any of them, it's important to use critical thinking and not take their arguments at face value. A person can come to your home, or leave missionary literature at your door. An invitation to an event can be mailed directly to you. A friend, classmate or neighbor can invite you to a casual social gathering.

Q: What is Jews for Jesus?

A: Jews for Jesus is an Evangelical Christian group that uses Jewish culture and practice to entice Jews - even though the belief that Jesus is the Messiah is totally inconsistent with the fundamental beliefs of Judaism.

Q: How Jewish Are Groups Such As Jews for Jesus?

A: While some of their members may, in fact, be Jewish, others are Christians who deceptively adopt Jewish names and practices to appear Jewish. Their Jewishness is a façade because these groups accept traditional Christian teachings and reject authentic Jewish teachings in all the areas where the two religions differ.

Q: What Are Some Tell-Tale Signs of These Groups?

A: One obvious sign is when someone talks about being a messianic or completed Jew, or claims that a Jew can accept Yeshua (Jesus) without giving up their Judaism.

Q: Do All Christian Individuals and Organizations Support Groups Such As Jews for Jesus?

A: No. Many sensitive Christians have condemned the deceptive behavior of these groups, while others continue to support them. If you see a growing problem on your campus, please bring it to the immediate attention of Jews for Judaism or Be-True.

Q: Are Missionaries Sincere?

A: Most missionaries are very sincere in their conviction that only people who believe as they do will go to heaven - all others will go to hell for eternity! Because they believe this so sincerely, some missionaries will resort to various tricks and deceptions to persuade you to believe as they do. It is a mistake to assume that sincerity - in and of itself - is always a good thing.

Q: What Are the Chances that I'll Be Approached by a Missionary?

A: 68% of teens and 85% of college students have been approached by someone who tried to share another religion with them. These findings are based on a Jews for Judaism survey of more than 2,000 Jewish students from all denominations in the Greater Los Angeles area. In a recent survey conducted at UCLA, over 80% of Jewish students surveyed, affiliated and unaffiliated, stated that they had been approached by proselytizers, and often more than once!

Q: Why Do They Want to Convert Me?

A: A political commentator stated that Jews must accept Jesus and become perfected. Shocking? Absolutely! But she was merely voicing what millions of Evangelical Christians around the world truly believe. Jews must be converted to Christianity and only then... will they become completed, saved and perfected. Also, many fundamentalist Christians believe that the conversion of Jews is the key to bringing about the Second Coming of Jesus and salvation to all mankind.

THE DEFENSE

Knowledge is the best defense. In addition to learning how to think critically for yourself, the more you know, the more you can help others. It is essential to learn and understand the tactics missionaries use when they attempt to proselytize.

Here is an introduction to some of the many tactics used by missionary groups. While their tactics may vary from group to group, their strategies should always be kept in mind.

1. Camouflage

Missionaries may not divulge their own religious affiliations. Some Jews for Jesus-type missionaries try to develop a quick rapport with their targets by wearing external signs of Jewishness, such as a Chai or a Star of David necklace. To make Jews feel more comfortable and make the missionaries appear less Christian, they are coached by their superiors to avoid using words such as Christ, saved or baptized so they don't arouse suspicion.

2. Assuming Superiority

When talking to a Jewish person about religion, a missionary can try to make you say, "I don't know," as many times as possible in order to establish his superiority in matters of religion. Do not allow yourself to be intimidated!

Remember, the missionary has studied Jewish beliefs for the sole purpose of leading you to Christianity. He is not speaking with you to exchange ideas, but rather, to take you away from your Judaism. If you want to learn more about the Jewish Bible, do it with someone who has no hidden agenda. You're in control, not the missionary. Whenever you want to end the conversation... just walk away!

3. Deception

The missionary can tell you that he, or a Christian friend or acquaintance, was once an Orthodox Jew, had a solid Jewish education, came from a traditional Jewish family, and more. This is a common deception! The hidden message he's trying to convey is that he came to believe in Jesus even after acquiring so much Jewish knowledge and overcoming all the Jewish objections.

During the conversation, he can drop a few Yiddish or Hebrew words or phrases, or recall special memories from his traditional Jewish upbringing to give more weight to his

story. In reality, these methods are often the result of careful coaching from a professional missionary.

Ask him to describe a few intimate details of Jewish life that an observant Jewish child could describe in a second, and see how he responds. In many cases, when he starts to fudge about the extent of his Jewish background and knowledge, his dishonesty becomes evident.

The missionary can tell you that he knows all the Jewish objections to his arguments and then, he can show you why these objections are wrong. Don't expect to hear the valid Jewish response from such a source.

4. Loving Us to Death

Don't be taken in by the classic good cop - bad cop routine that goes like this: The bad cop threatens a person and the good cop protects the person from the bad cop. The threatened person is so grateful to the good cop, and so worried about possibly losing this protection, that he invariably shows his appreciation by telling the good cop everything he wants to hear. In similar fashion, the good Christian talks about how much he loves the Jews, Israel, bagels, lox, and more... while denouncing the bad Christian who hates and persecutes the Jews. A Jew with even minimal knowledge of Christian anti-Semitism can feel so grateful to the good cop that he'll automatically judge him to be a good friend and reliable ally. Watch out for hidden motives behind these loving friendship routines.

5. Cover Up

Initially, the missionary may not tell you he believes that Jesus is the messiah. Often, only after they've joined a Hebrew-Christian group do many Jews discover the missionary's fundamental belief. Any previous talk about the messiah or son of G-d was merely a cover-up for this core principle, basic to fundamentalist Christianity and Hebrew-Christians. However, because this belief is repugnant to most Jews, missionaries gloss over it as much as possible when initially speaking to Jews.

6. The Numbers Racket

Don't be impressed when missionaries claim they have 50... or 100... or 300 proofs from the Jewish Bible that they are truly correct in their claims about Jesus. As proof after proof is shown to be meaningless, the missionary begins to hide behind his numbers, as if to say, "Well... we have so many more proofs. What's the big deal if you can disprove some of them?"

THE DEFENSE (CONTINUED)

He'll even attempt to split the difference with you by saying, "Well... even if half of our proofs do prove nothing, we've still got another 25 or 50 or 150 to go."

But all of their proofs can be shown to be invalid. So, keep in mind that their flawed proofs are worth nothing. Zero is zero!

7. Circular Reasoning

Very often, Christian missionaries use circular reasoning. In other words, their proof can only point to Jesus if you believe in Jesus in the first place. Therefore, it's no proof at all!

As an example, let's take the words of Isaiah 11:2, "And the spirit of the L-rd will rest upon him (the messiah), the spirit of wisdom and understanding...". This verse refers to the messiah, but it does not identify him. The followers of Jesus chose to attribute this verse to him and, subsequently, it became one of the proof-texts to support the claims of Christianity. Here's one way to test such verses. Choose a person that neither you nor the missionary believes to be the messiah, such as George Washington, Reverend Moon, or your great-grandfather! Then determine if the prophecy can point to this person to be the messiah in the eyes of anyone who believes him to be the messiah. If the prophecy can be used in this way, then obviously the verse proves nothing.

8. Mistranslation

Be aware of the problem of mistranslation. A person who is unfamiliar with Hebrew or the Hebrew text of the Bible can be convinced to accept a mistranslation that puts a Christian spin on a verse that never had this meaning in the original. If you can't check the verse for yourself, speak to a reliable and knowledgeable person who can. It's not a coincidence that Jews of previous generations who were extremely well-versed in the original Hebrew Bible had no problem refuting bogus missionary arguments.

9. Quoting Out of Context

Often, a missionary will quote a verse that has been taken entirely out of context. When you read the entire chapter that contains this verse, it becomes clearly evident that the verse is not a messianic prophecy, and/or the prophecy cannot refer to Jesus.

THE ENCOUNTER

Try to disengage as quickly as possible:

- Who are you? What organization are you affiliated with? Does it have a religious designation?
- Thank you, but no thanks. I am already affiliated with (Jewish group name)

End your response with concluding statement:

- I appreciate your sincerity, but I am happy with my identity as it is. HAVE A GREAT DAY!

If challenge continues:

- Oh! You're Jewish. Did you know that many quotes from the Jewish Bible have been taken out of context or mistranslated?
- Have you ever read the Bible in its original text?
- Why don't you join me, and let's sit down and discuss this with my Rabbi. He is more knowledgeable about this than I am.
- Thank you, but I am happy with my identity as it is. I encourage you to respect the other students on this campus who have their own beliefs. I'm not pushing my views on you, so please respect us in the same way.

If the recruiter is a good friend:

- I appreciate that you want to share your thoughts with me, but you need to know that it makes me uncomfortable.
- We need to agree to disagree.
- I care about you, and respect your beliefs. If you really care about me, you need to respect mine.

If you're in an awkward situation (i.e., you are a guest at a party, your sorority has a Bible study, or your team has a pre-practice prayer circle, etc.)

- I'm very comfortable with my religion, and I would rather sit this one out. Let me know when you're done, and let's hang out later!

NOW...

You know the facts, and you've learned to think critically, *but what can you do now?* To begin with, you should take some preventative measures and share your knowledge with your friends and community. One of the best ways to do this is to get involved in our Campus Rep program! Read on below to learn more about this amazing opportunity.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY FROM INVOLVEMENT WITH THESE GROUPS?

Affiliation

Become part of the Jewish community, take a class, join a synagogue, attend a Jewish event, take advantage of the resources in our community, and strengthen your bond with your past and your people.

Jewish Education and Lifestyle Experiences

Know your faith in a dynamic and living way because people who do are rarely attracted to the deceptive substitute offered by the missionaries.

Open Communication

Encourage open communication in all areas, and develop a firm base of family support for times of transition and crisis.

Critical Thinking

Hone your skills of information sorting and critical evaluation, and be aware of the practices of deceptive conversionary groups.

Outreach

Reach out to family and friends. We must be aware of the pain and vulnerabilities in our midst and reach out to the lonely and vulnerable before the missionaries do.

Use the Proper Resources

Realize that most rabbis spend a great deal of their time studying the positive aspects of Judaism to teach to their congregants, and may not be familiar with the missionaries' curve-ball strategies. If you need advice about a missionary problem, contact people who are familiar with their tactics and know how to deal with them.

CAMPUS REP PROGRAM

What are **CAMPUS REPS**?

Campus Reps throughout the Greater Los Angeles Area will mobilize the hundreds of students who participate in Jewish life on their campuses. As well, Campus Reps will sensitize them to "peer-to-peer" missionary proselytizing and encourage them to spread the Be-True message and materials to their peers. The efforts of these Reps will greatly increase our outreach to high risk students.

The Impact of **CAMPUS REPS**

- Organize and promote campus programs
- Monitor proselytizing on campus
- Provide "first-contact" answers and support to students with questions
- Build relationships and network with other campus groups to raise awareness and ensure that the proselytizing issue is addressed
- Promote the Student Website
- Encourage students to participate in our Annual Conference
- Mentor students
- Refer students to the appropriate resources

Why should I be a **CAMPUS REP**?

As well as being involved in a vital cause, Jews for Judaism offers an exciting Incentive Program. All Campus Reps receive:

- Leadership training
- IPOD Give-Aways!
- \$500 funding for personal Jewish enrichment on local, national, and international levels
- Academic Credit: University internship & High School community service hours
- Experience in business, public relations and working with non-profits
- Excellent networking opportunities

Apply online at **WWW.BE-TRUE.ORG!**