

Federation, JOI Launch Mothers/Parents Circle

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington is partnering with the Jewish Outreach Institute (JOI) to launch the Mothers/Parents Circle in the Greater Washington area. The Mothers/Parents Circle program is an umbrella of free educational events and resources for parents raising Jewish children within the context of intermarriage or a committed relationship. The program -- which focuses on Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home -- includes regular meetings and group Shabbat and holiday observances.

"The Mothers Circle program has given me a safe, comfortable place to talk frankly about my concerns and feelings about living a Jewish life even though I am not Jewish," Lauren K. said of her program in Atlanta, which helped the Washington-area program with ideas. "The other participants give positive feedback about what I am doing [no matter how big or small a step] and that goes a long way to building confidence and a comfort level."

This fall, six local organizations will be hosting the pilot programs with support from The Jewish Federation.

Northern Virginia: Sha'are Shalom in Leesburg, Congregation Beth Emeth in Herndon, Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia in Fairfax.

Maryland: Bethesda Jewish Congregation and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington in Rockville.

You do not need to be a member of the participating organization to attend.

"I really think the most important thing about Mothers Circle to me was that I feel like someone cares about us as an interfaith family and wants to help us figure out how to make the best of it -- to make it work," participant Mary said of her experience. "Sort of like really big arms out there embracing us for what we have to contribute to the Jewish community and a really big shoulder to lean on as we muddle through bringing up children in an unfamiliar way."

If you, or anyone you know, would like to participate in the Mothers/Parents Circle, please contact the [Jewish Information and Referral Service](#) at (301) 770-4848 or (703) 978-3910. More information also is available at themotherscircle.org.