



# JEW FOR JESUS<sup>®</sup>

quarterly

FOR CHRISTIANS WHO  
**WANT TO KNOW ABOUT**  
**JEW & EVANGELISM**

## JOY TO JERUSALEM . . . by David Brickner, executive director

It's Christmastime and I feel somewhat ambivalent. Of course I'm eternally thankful that God sent His Son into the world. But it's also gut-wrenching. After all, it's not like Jesus came down to earth for a pleasant change of scenery. He left all that was most bright and beautiful to enter a broken world, darkened by sin—sin that would be the death of Him. As thankful as I am, it still pains me to know that my own sin played a part in it.

Still, I am joyful—and I hope you are too—but it's a joy that is out of sync with all the trappings of "the most wonderful time of the year." The glittering lights and presents and music don't erase the pain and suffering that many experience at this, or frankly any, time of year. Everywhere we see evidence of why Jesus had to be born, why He had to die. And all around us so many people are hoping for happy holidays that don't seem to be remotely connected to the birth of the Savior.

Most people today confuse joy with what might be called happiness, that is, feelings of satisfaction and personal well-being based on favorable circumstances or fun occasions. But circumstances quickly change and occasions often disappoint. Joy is different.

The promise of joy glimmered in Bethlehem at the birth of Jesus, but it was Jerusalem where that promise burst forth and was secured for all eternity. I know when I mention Jerusalem, many hearts begin to beat faster and eyes light

up at the name of that great city. I take great joy in thoughts of Jerusalem too, but as with the celebration of Jesus' birth, my joy might be out of sync with other peoples'.

Jerusalem is undeniably beautiful and yet it has been, and still can be, a very dark place. When we planned our Behold Your God Jerusalem outreach,\* we had to consider the high level of poverty, homelessness, and addiction there. Devoutly Orthodox women especially tend to be isolated, burdened, with many children to care for and little help or resources to make a difference. We are continuing to address these problems with practical care and the good news of Jesus, but frankly, it can feel like a drop in the bucket. Many of the most religious people there are still what Jesus referred to as "blind guides." If you go, not just to tour the famous sites, but to really see the city and its people, you will understand why Jesus wept over Jerusalem.

Yet, it's possible to find true joy this month in Jerusalem and all over the world. Jesus showed us exactly how to find true joy and He remains our example: *(continued on page 2)*

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DECEMBER 2018

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*(continued from page 1)* “. . . looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)

For the joy set before Him. What do you suppose that joy entailed? It had very little to do with His personal happiness on earth. Certainly, Jesus was looking past the shame of the cross to fully restored fellowship at the right hand of the Father. But that joy before Him also included the prospect of relationships He would enjoy with those who put their trust in Him. And I think He also had in mind the joy that His suffering would make possible for you and for me.

Jesus’ joy becomes ours when we trust in Him, and remains ours as we enjoy true fellowship with Him regardless of life’s circumstances. If you are seeking

*“. . . looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

Hebrews 12:2

happiness but instead are finding hardship and disappointment, don’t focus merely on a change of circumstances. Ask God to help you look for joy, the same joy that Jesus found on the other side of suffering and pain—joy that came through caring more about what the Father wanted than avoiding the hardship of the cross.

Jesus instructed His disciples to rejoice, not in their circumstances, but in the fact that their names were written in heaven (see Luke 10:20). Do you know that your name is written in heaven? However challenging your current circumstances might be, you can rejoice—all of us can rejoice, together with the angels—over each and every sinner that repents. If you’ve been keeping up with our communications, you know it’s been a momentous year

for Jews for Jesus in terms of outreach, and I still think the best is yet to come.

This month many followers of Jesus will enthusiastically sing, “Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her King.” Many don’t realize that song was not written about the birth of Jesus, but about His return. When you sing that carol will you be thinking about the little town of Bethlehem or about Jerusalem? There are only sixteen miles between those two cities, but for Jesus, that journey took a lifetime of endurance and suffering and death so that He could bring forth an eternity of joy and rejoicing.

We who have trusted Christ are still on that journey, navigating the in-between places where pain and suffering continue. But if we will only peer past the pain by faith, we too will see the joy set before us. Joy to the world comes ultimately when earth truly does receive her King, when He truly rules the world with truth and grace. Let that future reality be our foundation for true joy here and now. That will prevent us from having our gaze set on our current circumstances and will keep us from living our lives simply for our own satisfaction and personal happiness.

As we lift our eyes to the Author and Finisher of our faith, I am sure the angels will rejoice to see Him receive glory—and I think it will also give our heavenly Father great joy. Let’s help the party along by sharing our joy in Jesus with those who have yet to know Him. As you partner with us, may we share together the true and lasting joy of shining His light in any dark place on the planet—in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (see Acts 1:8).

*David Brickner is also an author, public speaker and avid hiker. Find out more about David, his writings, speaking schedule and possible availability to speak at your church at [jewsforjesus.org/david-brickner](http://jewsforjesus.org/david-brickner)*

*\*In case you missed our September quarterly, over 1,700 people gave their information asking for further contact and 63 Jewish people prayed with us to receive the Lord during our month-long Jerusalem outreach last May! We are fully engaged in follow-up and have established a continuing presence there.*

**JEWES F✪R JESUS** established 32 A.D., give or take a year  
**WE RELENTLESSLY PURSUE GOD’S PLAN FOR THE SALVATION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE.**

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About joy, here's something profound to ponder and prayerfully consider:

“Joy,  
which was the **SMALL** publicity of  
the pagan, is the **GIGANTIC**  
secret of the Christian.”

—G.K. Chesterton

**HANUKKAH**, the Feast of Dedication, is not “the Jewish Christmas” but a celebration of how God preserved the Jewish people during what is known as “the intertestamental period” (the gap between the writing of the Old and New Testaments). This year Hanukkah is December 3–10. Not sure if we spelled it correctly? See the cartoon!



**RECEIVE OUR MONTHLY NEWS ELECTRONICALLY, ALONG WITH BONUS STORIES, PRAYER REQUESTS AND BIBLE RESOURCES!**

Email: [jfj@jewsforjesus.org](mailto:jfj@jewsforjesus.org) and ask to hear from Jews for Jesus via email or go to [jewsforjesus.org/subscribe](http://jewsforjesus.org/subscribe) and make sure we have your email address.

**FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE**

The enclosed envelope is not a request, but a convenience for those who want to give. For those who want to give online, this URL makes it easy and secure:

[j4j.co/n11812](http://j4j.co/n11812)

## PRAYER PROMPTERS

**We need your prayers for:**

-  Jews for Jesus, and in fact all believers, to grow in the joy of the Lord that is our strength and that transcends all circumstances
-  fruitful interactions as we greet many holiday shoppers with a smile and an opportunity to think about the gospel, especially in some of our most wintery branches
-  Shabbat dinners now being held in many of our branches, that God will bless them as a safe and enjoyable place for people to experience being with believers and to explore important spiritual truth
-  Hanukkah events, which, like Shabbat dinners, are a great way to invite Jewish seekers to come and see
-  continued spiritual growth for Rachel in London
-  salvation for Lucy, Sam, Rita, Rachel's parents and her friend Aviva
-  courage and perseverance for Shmuly, as he struggles to continue following Yeshua (Jesus) which is, in many ways, more difficult because of his Orthodox upbringing
-  more laborers for the field
-  God's wisdom for some of our leaders as they transition into new ministry roles



# REJOICE, REJOICE: WHAT THE BIBLE AND JEWISH SAGES SAY ABOUT JOY AND REJOICING

DR. RICHARD ROBINSON, SENIOR RESEARCHER

## KEY PASSAGES ABOUT JOY: IN THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

### God's people are commanded to rejoice at festivals in response to what He has done:

"Then you shall keep the **Feast of Weeks** to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you. You shall **rejoice** before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide." Deuteronomy 16:10–11

"You shall observe the **Feast of Tabernacles** seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. And you shall **rejoice** in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates." Deuteronomy 16:13–14

"Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this day is holy* to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for **the joy of the LORD is your strength.**" (Nehemiah 8:10, when the exiles returned to Jerusalem and heard God's law read during the Feast of Trumpets)

### God's people rejoiced over His rule through His king, Solomon, son of David:

"Then Zadok the priest took a horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, and all the people said, 'Long live King Solomon!' And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and **rejoiced with great joy**, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound. (1 Kings 1:39–40)

"So it was, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he **rejoiced** greatly and said, 'Blessed be the LORD this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people!'" (1 Kings 5:7)

### The Psalms, written for corporate and individual worship, say much about joy in: trusting and loving God

But let all those **rejoice** who put their trust in You; let them ever shout for **joy**, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be **joyful** in You. (Psalm 5:11)

### God's salvation

But I have trusted in Your mercy; my heart shall **rejoice** in Your salvation. (Psalm 13:5) (See also Psalm 14:7; Isaiah 61:10)

### God's presence

In Your presence is fullness of **joy**; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11)

### God's Word

The statutes of the LORD are right, **rejoicing** the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. (Psalm 19:8)

I **rejoice** at Your word as one who finds great treasure. (Psalm 119:162)

### God's mercy, comfort and salvation that will prevail over pain and affliction

"For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but **joy** comes in the morning. (Psalm 30:5)

"Sing, O heavens! Be **joyful**, O earth! And break out in singing, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, and will have mercy on His afflicted. (Isaiah 49:13)

## KEY PASSAGES ABOUT JOY: IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### Joy is commanded as we focus on what we have in our relationship with God:

**Rejoice** in the Lord always. Again I will say, **rejoice!** (Philippians 4:4)

### Joy over the birth of Jesus who made that relationship possible:

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great **joy** which will be to all people. (Luke 2:10) (See also Matthew 2:10, Luke 1:44)

And you will have **joy** and gladness, and many will **rejoice** at his birth. (Luke 1:14)

### Joy over the Resurrection, which is the evidence of Jesus' successful mission:

And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "**Rejoice!**" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. (Matthew 28:9)

And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great **joy**. (Luke 24:52)

### Joy over sinners who repent:

I say to you that likewise there will be more **joy** in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. (Luke 15:7) (See also Luke 15:10)

"So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great **joy** to all the brethren." (Acts 15:3)

### Joy in suffering temporarily for Jesus, knowing our eternal reward awaits:

"Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for

**joy!** For indeed your reward is great in heaven" (Luke 6:22–23) (See also 1 Peter 4:13)

"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the **joy** that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2)

### Joy in trials that God uses to help us grow:

"My brethren, count it all **joy** when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:2–4) (See also 1 Peter 1:6)

*"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*  
Romans 15:13

### Joy as a result of belief/faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit:

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law." (Galatians 5:22–23)

"And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and **joy** of faith." (Philippians 1:25)

## TRADITIONAL JEWISH THOUGHTS ON JOY

*Sukkot*, the Feast of Tabernacles, is traditionally known as *zeman simchateinu*, the season of our rejoicing, based on, among other things, Deuteronomy 16:13–14. When Sukkot is completed, we embark on the holiday of *Simchat Torah*, Rejoicing in the Law (or in God's Word). Simchat Torah marks the end of the annual cycle of reading through the Torah (in Deuteronomy) and the recommencement of the cycle anew (in Genesis).

During the week-long festivals of Sukkot and Passover, Jews are commanded to rejoice! "Strenuous work is prohibited, and the Sages command that Jews must have fun and relax. On [the days between the first and last of these festivals] many Orthodox families go to amusement parks, the circus, the zoo, and engage in other recreational activities with friends . . ."

The Hasidic movement started in the 18th century as a movement marked by joy, in contrast to the perceived joylessness of Judaism up to that point in time. The founder of Hasidism, the Baal Shem Tov, said, "The ability to be joyous, by discerning the good and joyous within every experience, is considered by chasidim as a biblical command!"<sup>2</sup> The early Hasidim were sometimes known as "the happy ones." The Hasidic rabbi Aharon of Karlin, is said to have declared, "it is not a sin to be sad, but sadness can bring on the greatest sins."<sup>3</sup> About Hasid Levi-Yitzchak of Berditchev, the writer Elie Wiesel has said: "His smiles were fraught with greater meaning than his sermons."<sup>4</sup>

Joyous occasions such as bar and bat mitzvahs, engagements, or weddings, as well as other similar occasions, are known as *simchas*, literally, "joys." In Israel, Simcha is also a given name for boys (Ashkenazic tradition) or girls (Sephardic tradition).<sup>5</sup>

1. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/choi-hamoed-intermediary-days>

2. [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1211258/jewish/Perpetual-Joy.htm#footnote2a1211258](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1211258/jewish/Perpetual-Joy.htm#footnote2a1211258)

3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness\\_in\\_Judaism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Happiness_in_Judaism)

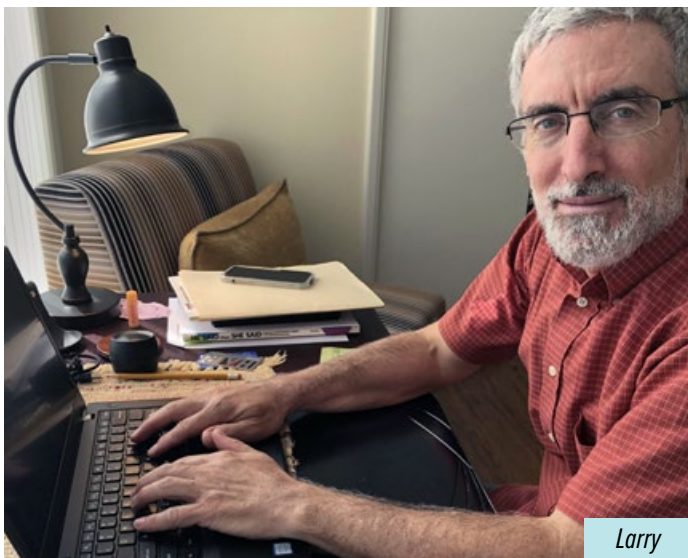
4. Elie Wiesel, *Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), p. 100.

5. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simcha>

*News from your missionaries in  
Florida/cyberspace, London, and Moscow*

# bits from the BRANCHES

Larry Dubin (who's on our **South Florida** team but reaches beyond through **LiveChat**) reports, "Shmuly, an Orthodox Jewish man, began visiting our website and interacting with our staff and volunteers through LiveChat in 2012. Sometimes he'd leave a question and wait eagerly for a response.



"My journey with Shmuly started in June 2018 when I began to answer several of his online questions. Before long, I emailed him my telephone number and asked if it would be okay for me to call. He responded and the conversation has been intense and almost nonstop ever since. We discussed several messianic passages from the Jewish Bible. Every conversation, email, and text created more questions that Shmuly and I needed to discuss.

"At the conclusion of a two-hour conversation in July, Shmuly acknowledged that Yeshua (Jesus) was the promised Messiah of Israel, the final atonement for sin and his King and Savior. He prayed to receive the free gift of salvation. It was an incredible moment!

"We decided to start reading the Gospel of John together. But, after only two lessons, he had so many questions and found it so difficult to continue following Yeshua that he decided to return to his Orthodox synagogue and

Judaism as he had known it before opening his heart to the Messiah.

"Yet, Shmuly struggled as he was still drawn to the Jews for Jesus website. He continued to speak with me by phone, text, and email. After three months of conversations, I had nothing else to share with Shmuly. I continued to remind him of previous interactions and suggested that he allow the God of Israel to speak to his heart.

"During Rosh Hashanah 5779 (2018) Shmuly celebrated with his religious community. Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he and I exchanged a few texts and a phone call. Then on Yom Kippur, the most holy day on the religious Jewish calendar, I received a text from Shmuly. 'I got it,' he said. He then explained that he'd been meditating upon the blood-atonement rituals of Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16) as well as Isaiah 53. He contrasted that with the Orthodox ritual that utilizes the blood of a chicken as an atonement. 'The chicken is not sufficient,' Shmuly admitted. 'Yeshua was the sacrifice that Moses and Isaiah wrote about.' He reaffirmed that Jesus is his Messiah, Savior, and King.

"Shmuly and I intend to read and study the Gospel of John together. Please pray that God will give him the grace to stay on the path, and that he will grow in his faith."

From **London**, Julia Pascoe has an update on someone we've asked you to pray for: "Remember Rachel? She came to faith two years ago, and we began by studying the discipleship book *Following Yeshua* by Ruth Rosen. Rachel is now a member of a local church and was baptized earlier this year! I continue to meet with Rachel regularly for Bible study, prayer, and spiritual encouragement.

"Rachel handed out tracts with us and helped me serve iced water to people in Hendon during this year's heatwave. She's also introduced me to her unbelieving parents, her close friend Aviva, and her next door neighbors, Sam and Rita. After praying for God to show her how He wants her to serve, Rachel also felt the Lord calling her to host a Messianic Shabbat meal in her home.

"We partnered with Rachel to help her get started; five Jewish believers and one Jewish seeker, Martin, have been attending her dinners. We are always praying about whom to invite. I recently reconnected with Lucy, a Jewish lady I used to visit years ago. I invited her to Rachel's Shabbat dinner—and she joined us!



“Lucy isn’t particularly open to deep discussion about Yeshua just yet, but she enjoyed the evening and we hope she will return. Shabbat dinner is a great place for a small community of Jewish believers to provide a way for other Jewish people to experience Yeshua’s love.

“Rachel’s elderly Jewish neighbors, Sam and Rita, have been very skeptical about her faith. They don’t believe in God, but hold close to their Jewish identity. Rachel now wants to invite them to Shabbat dinner. Pray that they’ll come. But most importantly, pray that God will reveal His goodness and salvation to them, to Lucy, and others. Please also pray that Rachel will continue growing in the Lord as she serves Him.”

Also from **London**: Ziggy Rogoff reports, “In the beginning of December, we will be reaching out to the Jewish community with the gospel in a special way during the holiday of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. Since it is going to be cold, on top of everything else we will be doing, we will also be handing out hot drinks (*brews for Jesus*) outside the shop.



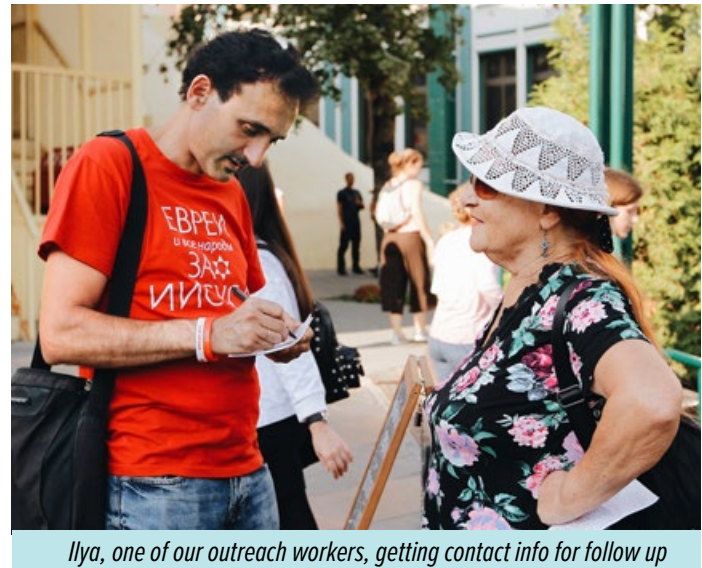
Ziggy

“Please pray that we build a team equipped to share the gospel in cold weather, that we rejoice together in gospel partnership, and that God draws those whom He is calling into the light.”



Campaign leader Pavel standing between two teammates

This year in **Moscow** one of our younger leaders, Pavel, led what our colleagues call a “mini-campaign,” for Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year)—though it certainly did not seem “mini” to us. Three of our staff plus 17 volunteers took to the streets 22 times between August 27 and September 8. They handed out more than 51,000 gospel tracts (“New Year’s in September”) and prayed with 12 people (7 Jewish) to start new lives with Jesus! One hundred and three people gave their contact information



Ilya, one of our outreach workers, getting contact info for follow up

to hear more about Jesus, of whom 64 were Jewish. What a great way to start the Jewish New Year! Here are some photos from the outreach we hope you’ll enjoy.

*Editor: Many of our other teams are in cold (and colder) climates and will have similar opportunities and challenges as we love and serve people during this season.*

*Names are changed to protect privacy.*

All photos © Jews for Jesus

# To share or not share CHRISTMAS WITH JEWISH FRIENDS?

Below are some frequently asked questions we hear concerning the Christmas season and the Jewish people; we hope you'll find our responses helpful.

## What does Christmas mean to my Jewish friends?

Some Jewish people might be curious or adventurous. Don't be surprised if some of your Jewish friends participate in holiday festivities, as long as the festivities do not touch on personal beliefs. In fact, in Israel people are so curious about the holiday that last year we invited Israeli neighbors to the Moishe Rosen Center to bake Christmas cookies and had a great response.\*

Likewise, don't be surprised if some Jewish friends are aloof concerning Christmas. They might:

- be wary of public emphasis on Christ because of past persecutions perpetrated in His name
- find it uncomfortable or disloyal to participate in a non-Jewish holiday
- rather not think about Jesus being the Messiah because they fear it might be true. (Fortunately, confronting this fear has led many to investigate and accept the gospel.)

Don't assume any of the above, but ask sensitive questions and then be a good listener so Jewish friends know that you are interested in any thoughts they might care to share.

## Should I send Christmas cards to my Jewish friends?

Many Jewish people send Christmas

cards to Gentile friends and associates, choosing nonreligious motifs for their cards. The best way to reciprocate is not to send a Christmas card, but rather a greeting for Hanukkah. (This year Hanukkah falls before Christmas, but you don't have to wait to see if you get a card to send one.) Or you can send a card for the New Year.

## Should I give Christmas gifts to my Jewish friends?

Few people are offended by a kind gesture from a friend. Skip the babe-in-the-manger wrapping paper, but feel free to offer your gift as a way of expressing joy over what God has done for you. You might even say, "I just wanted to share the joy I feel over God's Christmas gift to me—the Messiah. But I totally understand if you'd rather consider this a late Hanukkah present."

## Should I invite my children's Jewish playmates to a Christmas party?

What could it hurt? Jewish people, children in particular, often feel left out at Christmastime. Most would probably welcome an invitation to a Christmas party if it is not centered on singing Christmas carols. While most Jewish people don't mind singing secular songs like "Jingle Bells," any unbeliever would feel uncomfortable singing words of worship or adoration of Jesus.

It would be important, in any case, to check with a child's parents before

extending such an invitation. Be sure to tell them what you will be doing and saying. If they would rather not have their child attend, they won't be in the awkward position of having to say no to their child.

## Should I invite my Jewish friends to our church's special Christmas program?

Again, what could it hurt? At the worst, you will receive a polite refusal. On the other hand, your Jewish friend might be curious to see the inside of a church and find out how Gentiles worship, and the message of the Christmas program might have a positive spiritual impact. And if you are friends with a couple in which there's a Jewish partner, that partner might be more open to going to church at this time of year in support of his or her significant other.

You could extend a less formal invitation and ask your Jewish friends and neighbors to join your family's Christmas dinner. (Be sure you ask about any food restrictions and don't plan on serving ham!) They might welcome the opportunity in the same way that you would welcome an invitation to a Jewish feast.



\*While it wasn't a gospel event, it promoted the atmosphere that is helping more and more Israelis in the neighborhood ask about what we believe.

*Adapted from a 1988 newsletter article by Jews for Jesus Founder, Moishe Rosen.*