

Temple Judea's Post Bar/Bat Mitzvah Students Visit Washington D. C.

Students from the seventh and eighth grades of Temple Judea of Manhasset went to Washington D.C. as part of their Holocaust Studies Program. The highlight of the outing was a visit to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. This was the culminating activity of a study program instituted at Temple Judea and the students viewed the exhibits with understanding and an insightfulness way above their years. Prior to this excursion, they spent 8 weeks intensely learning about the Holocaust under the auspices of the Temple's own Holocaust Resource Center. Its director, Irving Roth, a Holocaust survivor, incorporated film, guest speakers and discussions into the curriculum. The students told us that they found his stories to be amazing and personal since he lived through such a horrible tragedy. The studies "opened our eyes", they said, and allowed them to better understand what was being shown at the Museum.

In addition to the Holocaust Memorial, the students visited other national sights of interest such as the Vietnam Memorial, The World War II Memorial, The Air and Space Museum and Ford Theatre. They also saw a wonderfully funny show called *Sheer Madness* at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The weather was unseasonably warm and walking in front of the White House and Capital Building was a most delightful experience. Temple Judea's Rabbi, Todd Chizner, and its Educator, Ellen Gastwirth, joined the children on this extraordinary overnight to the Capital. It was a wonderful experience for the students to have time to bond with the Rabbi in a relaxed environment where they had the opportunity to chat with him at length about the things they were seeing or just about life in general.

All in all, the trip was a huge success, and was just the first of such overnights being planned for the future. "I think such trips allow the children an opportunity to be with friends, spend time with the Rabbi and learn a great deal in a casual, fun atmosphere", said Ellen Gastwirth. She is currently looking into future expeditions that may include Touro Synagogue in Rhode Island and the Jewish centers of Boston. The Rabbi has already set in motion a possible weekend trip back to Washington for his Confirmation Class. With such popular activities for the students flourishing at Temple Judea, can a demand by the parents for their own overnight trip be far away? Probably not.

Temple Judea of Manhasset, affiliated with the Union of Reform Judaism, is located at 333 Seasingtown Road, Manhasset. Please call (516) 621-8049 for further information and visit our website at **temple-judea.com**.