



Jewish Reconstructionist Communities
In Association with the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Jewish-Muslim Relations in America Today: How to Be an Ally

Educate yourself.

This is step number one. It is absolutely exhausting for Muslims to have to personally educate each non-Muslim they meet. (Jews in largely non Jewish areas complain of the same problem vis a vis Christians.) It is not terrible to ask an openhearted, curious question of a Muslim that is really “google-able,” but when it comes to the common misunderstandings, it is better to do some of our own work *first*.

1. Familiarize yourself with [the 10 things most Americans “know” about Islam that are not true.](#)
2. Follow young Muslim thought leaders (e.g. Haroon Moghul, Abdullah Antepi, Reza Aslan, Wajahat Ali, Rabia Chaudrey, Homayra Ziad, Najeeba Syeed) on their blogs, Twitter or Facebook pages.
3. Read! You can start with Rabbi Reuven Firestone’s [An Introduction to Islam for Jews](#). Other good introductions include [No god but God](#) by Reza Aslan and [Memories of Muhammad](#) by Omid Safi.
4. After learning a bit about Islam, a next step would be to familiarize yourself with issues between Muslims and Jews in our country. [Muslims and Jews in America](#) edited by Reza Aslan and Aaron Hahn Tapper is a great start, especially the article by Rabbi Amy Eilberg.
5. **Essential Reading: Center for American Progress’ report on the roots of the Islamophobia network in America, [Fear, Inc.](#)**
6. To gain understanding of the Muslim American realities today, read a few novels or plays by Muslim Americans (e.g. Wajahat Ali’s [Domestic Crusaders](#), Mohja Kahf’s [Girl in the Tangerine Scarf](#)) or memoirs (e.g. [The Butterfly Mosque](#) by Willow Wilson or [Acts of Faith](#) by Eboo Patel) or watch films (e.g. [New Muslim Cool](#) or [Unmosqued](#))

Build Relationships

This is the essential next step, where the education comes to life and you can begin to really grow your understanding.

1. Befriend local Muslims, through local mosques or college/university MSA’s.
2. Join or Start a [Daughters of Abraham Women’s Interfaith Book Group](#) or a chapter of [Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom](#) (or create male equivalents)
3. Help to start an interfaith program for teens and let the teens’ friendships lead to relationships on the adult level. Check out [Walking the Walk](#) as a model.
4. Get ideas for relationship building from the resource guide [Sharing the Well](#), available as a pdf [online](#).

Be an Agent of Cultural Change

1. Invite local Muslim leaders or scholars to come and teach your folks about Islam.
2. Introduce connections and narrative migration between Islamic and Jewish cultures in your teaching (e.g. [Stories of Joseph: Narrative Migrations between Judaism and Islam](#))
3. Attend fundraisers for [CAIR](#) or local mosques with interested congregants.
4. Help create interfaith events (e.g. [concerts](#), [peace walks](#), [Spread Humus not Hate](#)), [world travel](#))
5. Work on long term issues of concern for both communities through Multifaith organizations engaged in justice work (e.g. PECO).

Take Action

1. Find out about flashpoint causes of concern to Muslims when they arise in your community (e.g. bus ads, zoning battles, surveillance issues). Call your friends (see #2) and ask how you can help.
2. Write letters to the editor to the Jewish and general press
3. Show up for rallies; bring other Jews with you.
4. For guidance on best practices, contact the [Shoulder-to-Shoulder Campaign](#) of the Islamic Society of North America or [T'ruah](#) –the Rabbinic Call for Human Rights -- or [New Ground: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership of Change](#)

Author: [Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer](#)

Topics: [Interfaith](#), [Tikkun Olam](#)

Type: *Article*