



Resources for Teaching and Talking about ICE / Minnesota in Religious Schools

February 2026

*Curated and assembled by Joel Abramovitz, Director of the Wenger-Markowitz Family
Education Initiative at Reconstructing Judaism*

[Jewish Cross-Denominational Statement Against Violent Immigration
Enforcement](#)

[Words from Reconstructionist Leaders and Congregations](#)

[Jewish Texts + Suggested Educational Activities](#)

[Tzedakah Resources from Mayim Rabim, Reconstructionist Congregation
in Minneapolis](#)

Jewish Cross-Denominational Statement Against Violent Immigration Enforcement

Issued January 26, 2026

...Our sages taught that the Book of Deuteronomy's directive צדק צדק תרדף (Tzedek, tzedek tirdof), "Justice, justice shall you pursue" (16:20), implies that the law must be enforced through a fair process, and that one should pursue justice whether it would be to one's advantage or to one's loss.[i]

Immigrants are members of our congregations, our families, and people with whom we interact in our broader communities. American Jews cherish our own families' immigration stories. We recall that, like many being expelled from America today, we or our ancestors came to this country to escape oppression and find opportunity. That is why so many Jewish congregations, rabbis, cantors, and lay leaders have engaged in a variety of legal actions to protect immigrants in our midst. We grieve an American promise that seems to be no more.

We who lead the North American Reform, Conservative/Masorti, and Reconstructionist Jewish Movements stand with the members and leaders of Jewish communities in Minneapolis—and before that, in the Chicago area and other cities in the United States—who have confronted Immigration and Customs Enforcement nonviolently, legally, but resolutely. We fear that additional communities will need to be prepared to do the same in the months ahead...

[Read the full statement here](#)

Words from Reconstructionist Leaders and Congregations

"No One Is Getting Left Behind This Time," Rabbi Sharon Stiefelm of Mayim Rabim, Minneapolis, MN

February 2026

On January 22 and 23, I joined more than 650 clergy from across the country who traveled to Minneapolis. Less than a week earlier, a call had gone out inviting clergy to come learn about, witness, and protest ICE activity here. This gathering was organized by Multifaith Antiracism, Change, and Healing, known as MARCH, and was met with such enthusiasm that hundreds of clergy who wanted to attend were turned away due to limited space.

Together, we bore witness, attended workshops, strategized, sang and acted. I was buoyed by the number of rabbis who came, including twenty Reconstructionist rabbis. I was also grateful for the chance to spend time with Rabbi Renee Bauer, Mayim Rabim's former rabbi. Clergy came because they understand that what happens here will happen elsewhere, if it has not already, and they want to be prepared to resist in their own communities. We know we are in this for the long haul.

One of my strongest takeaways from the gathering was that the most effective resistance is not spontaneous. It must be learned, practiced, and sustained over time. It requires preparation, courage, and community, and it needs to move beyond single actions and moments. I attended a powerful session on media and storytelling that focused on countering the narratives being used to justify ICE activity. We discussed the importance of demanding truth and challenging propaganda - - claims that portray immigrants as "un-American invaders" who steal resources, defraud the system, and threaten housing and national security. To flip this false narrative of danger and invasion, we must be clear: we all want safe communities, but ICE's actions are not law enforcement that makes our communities safer. The real invaders are not our neighbors, but masked, armed agents entering our neighborhoods.

We were also reminded that this is not only about immigrant communities.

What is happening here effects all of us. The erosion of rights and freedoms for one group places the rights and freedoms of all Americans at risk.

An interfaith service at Temple Israel reenforced our shared commitments. Nearly 600 people gathered, including elected officials and more than 100 clergy from a wide range of faith traditions. The service was a powerful reminder of the strength of people of faith standing together. Judaism, along with other faith traditions, calls on us to recognize the sanctity of life and to insist on dignity for every human being. One of the songs we sang captured that commitment with the refrain: "No one is getting left behind this time."

We carry this intention as we remember Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Renee Good was killed prior to the gathering, and Alex Pretti was killed after it. We remember their lives with care and sorrow. May their memories be a blessing, as we honor the sacredness of every human life.

I came away feeling proud of my colleagues and deeply grateful for my community. I came away with a renewed appreciation for neighbors taking care of one another. I hear from so many Mayim Rabim members about their involvement, and I see from Mayim Rabim members, from my neighbors, and from our broader community a willingness to stand together, to show up, and to refuse to leave anyone behind.

And that, perhaps, is the most hopeful message of all.

Letter from Minnesota Jewish Clergy

...We hope that in the days ahead, chesed, kindness, will define the way we interact with each other. We know that all people are created in the image of God, regardless of immigration status. As we move ahead, we pray for comfort from the grief we are experiencing, courage to witness pain even when it is uncomfortable, and the resolve to take action toward building the world we want to see. We pray:

Ribbono Shel Olam,

Protect our cities and our state. Spread a canopy of peace and protection over all those wrongfully targeted by ICE at this moment. Strengthen those who stand beside them.

Grant sound judgment, integrity, and compassion to all who are entrusted with the responsibility of keeping our communities safe. Help us uphold our sacred duty to care for one another, for the stranger and the needy among us. And may our cities and State be a place where people of every background and beliefs know safety, dignity, and peace.

[Read the full letter here](#)

Community Message from Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrman, at Society for the Advancement of Judaism, NY

Alex Pretti's death haunts me. The fact that powerful people attempt to tell us what we see is not true and further, that they smear the memory of a U.S. citizen and upstander as a "domestic terrorist" before even knowing his name or background is deeply disturbing to say the least.

As horrific as what we are witnessing is, we have to also remember that this is not a short term fight. This is a struggle for the soul of our country which will take years, even decades, to win and decades to undo what has been unleashed.

So, how do we respond to what is happening while also sustaining ourselves for the journey ahead and for the discernment to consider what we, with our limitations, can do?

Community Message from Rabbi Aliza Schwartz at Temple Hillel B'nai Torah, MA

It is my deep belief that as we face our current world moment, we need to be nourishing our souls. HBT is a place that gives us the emotional and spiritual resilience - the soul nourishment - to both be and work in the world. Now is an exceptionally wonderful time to come to our sanctuary, whether you've been coming every week or haven't been in a while. Invite a friend or two too - it's a great privilege to sing together with special musicians, including our HBT Band, and I encourage everyone to share the wealth!

Jewish Texts + Suggested Educational Activities

Texts about immigrant safety:

Exodus 12:49

תורה אחת יהיה לאזרח ולגר הגר בתוככם

There shall be one law for the native and the immigrant who lives among you.

Exodus 23:9

וגר לא תלחץ ואתם ידעתם את-גפוש הגר כי-גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים

Do not oppress a migrant, for you know the feelings of the migrant, having yourselves been migrants in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:16

לא תעמד על-ידם רעה אני יהוה

You shall not stand idly by while your neighbor is bleeding.

Leviticus 19:33-34

וכי-יגור אתך גר בארצכם לא תונו אותו: באזרח מקם יהיה לכם הגר | הגר אתכם ואהבת לך כמוך כי-גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים אני יי אלהיכם

When an immigrant resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. The immigrant who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were migrants in the land of Egypt: I Adonai am your God

Deuteronomy 10:19

ואהבתם את-הגר כי-גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים:

You too must love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 24:14, 17

לא-תעשק שכיר עני ואביון מאת־יד או מגר־אשר בארצך בשעריך...
לא תטה משפט גר יתום ולא תחבל בגד אלמנה:

You shall not abuse a needy and destitute laborer, a fellow countryman or a migrant, in one of the communities of your land... You shall not subvert the rights of the migrant or the fatherless; you shall not take a widow's garment in pawn.

Civil Disobedience: The Hebrew Midwives - Exodus 1:7-22

But the Israelites were fertile and prolific; they multiplied and increased very greatly, so that the land was filled with them. And a new king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph. And he said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are much too numerous for us. Let us deal shrewdly with them, so that they may not increase; otherwise in the event of war they may join our enemies in fighting against us and rise from the ground."

So they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor; and they built garrison cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Raamses. But the more they were oppressed, the more they increased and spread out, so that the [Egyptians] came to dread the Israelites. The Egyptians ruthlessly imposed upon the Israelites the various labors that they made them perform. Ruthlessly they made life bitter for them with harsh labor at mortar and bricks and with all sorts of tasks in the field.

The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shifrah and the other Puah, saying, "When you deliver the Hebrew women, look at the birthstool: if it is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live." The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.

So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, letting the boys live?"

The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women: they are vigorous. Before the midwife can come to them, they have given birth." And God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and increased greatly. And because the midwives feared God, God established households for them.

Then Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every boy that is born you shall throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

Resisting Oppressive Government: The Rabbis: Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 33b

Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Yossi and Rabbi Shimon [bar Yohai] were sitting, and Yehuda ben Gerim was sitting beside them. Rabbi Yehuda opened the conversation and said: "How pleasant are the acts of this nation: They established markets! They established bathhouses! They established bridges!"

Rabbi Yossi was silent.

Rabbi Shimon [bar Yohai] answered and said, "Everything they established, they established only for their own needs: They established markets - to place prostitutes there; bathhouses - to pamper themselves; bridges - to take tolls."

Yehuda ben Gerim went and retold their words, and it became known to the [Roman] government. They said: "Yehuda who extolled - let him be extolled. Yossi who was silent - let him be exiled to *Tzipori*. Shimon who disparaged - let him be killed." He [Rabbi Shimon] went with his son and hid in the Beit Midrash.

Suggested Activities:

For Pre-K-2nd

- Connect this moment to the Passover/Exodus story (however you teach it)
- Act out the Exodus story focusing on how it felt to be strangers, then how it felt to be welcomed (use simple props, scarves, costumes if you have them)
- Art ideas:
 - Create a class-wide mural showing ways we welcome people in this synagogue
 - Have each student trace their hands and write/draw inside "Ways my hands can help welcome people"
- Hold a simple discussion around "have you ever been the new kid at a school or group? How did it feel? What did you need to be welcomed?"

For 3rd - 5th

- Ask students if they know their own family's immigration story (and/or invite a few parents who you know have immigration stories, of their own or of their family, to be a guest speaker)
- Share some historical stories of Jewish immigrants (for example from the picture books Brave Girl by Michelle Markel or Emma's Poem by Linda Glaser) and potentially compare the stories to what the students know about current events about immigration
- Practice Hebrew reading of the above verses
- Drama: Act out the Exodus 1 passage in small groups, then discuss: "When Shifra and Puah lied to Pharaoh, was that okay? Why or why not?"
- In small groups, as students to read the above verses and determine what the values ("big ideas") are within these. Then as a whole group ask them how the synagogue does currently live out these values and make a collective plan to better live out these values

For 6th- 8th

- Surface from the students explicitly what they know and have been hearing about what's happening with ICE in Minnesota and nationally. Ask them how they think the congregation and their family should respond (and compare that with current responses).
- In chavruta or small groups look at the texts or words from Reconstructionist communities. Some potential guiding questions for them:
 - What risks did the characters take? What values might have animated them?
 - How is what the characters are doing similar to / different from today?

- Our tradition celebrates Shifrah/Puah and Rabbi Shimon as heroes. What might make them a hero? What makes a hero in your eyes?
- For the Verses about immigrant justice:
 - Why does the Torah keep reminding us that “you were strangers in Egypt”? What might be our takeaway today?
 - What is our neighbor? How do we decide who is from here and who is a foreigner?
- Brainstorm some collective actions they can take individually or collectively. Then ask them to commit to one or generate a plan there to fill them or do it then together (e.g. letter writing can easily be done on the spot). Some examples:
 - Letter writing to representatives
 - Learning about local immigrant support organizations
 - Creating educational materials for the congregation
 - Participating in appropriate advocacy
 - Raising tzedakah to donate to support organizations locally or in Minneapolis

For Adults/Parents

- Invite them to study one of the longer passages in chavruta or small groups
- Some possible questions for discussion/connection (depending on the text adjust the question)
 - What are the guiding principles of Shifra/Puah or the Rabbis?
 - What techniques or strategies do Shifra/Puah or the Rabbis use to respond to their respective governments?
 - How might Shifra/Puah or the Rabbis be models of how you see Minnesotans engaging with/resisting ICE today?
 - What possibilities for engaging yourself today does this text open up for you?
- Ask them to share in small groups how they are talking about this with their children – what’s working, what feels hard, what support do they need? Then hold a larger group discussion and brainstorm some collective pointers or ideas or resources

Tzedakah Resources from Mayim Rabim, Reconstructionist Congregation in Minneapolis

From Mayim Rabim:

“Many members of vulnerable communities are deeply afraid to be in public spaces. Many adults are missing work or losing hours as businesses reduce operations. These disruptions are leading directly to financial insecurity and housing instability. All organizations are seeing a sharp **increase in families requesting rental assistance** to keep families safely and stably housed. Supporting rental assistance has become an important priority to prevent evictions. Here are some options for donations.”

[PRISM Emergency Housing Assistance Housing Funds](#)

[Shir Tikvah Mutual Aid Fund Yesod Fund](#) | Learn, Support, Make a Difference

[Stand with Minnesota has a very long list of organizations taking donations](#), and there is a section specific to rent relief

This link offers a clearinghouse of mutual aid organizations [@mplsmutualaid | Linktree](#)

A list of a wide variety of ways to help and donate to those affected by the Ice surge:

[Minneapolis Community Response Reference Doc](#)