

THE NACOEJ CURRICULUM:

ETHIOPIAN JEWS ARE MEMBERS OF THE WORLDWIDE JEWISH COMMUNITY

ABOUT THE NACOEJ CURRICULUM PROJECT

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry's (NACOEJ) curriculum project is designed to provide North American students, enrolled in Jewish and secular schools, with information about the Ethiopian Jewish community called Beta Israel. The curriculum addresses the Beta Israel community's origins and its struggles to maintain Jewish traditions and religious practices, which are similar but not identical to those of Jewish communities around the world. The curriculum committee includes Jewish and non-Jewish educators from elementary through college levels, as well as active members of NACOEJ.

At the outset of this project, key staff members of a number of Jewish educational organizations were interviewed. Samples of their excellent lessons were instructive in our search for an overall approach to the NACOEJ curriculum.

A student journal, called *My Journal: Journey toward Tzedakah*, and a *Knowledge Chart* may be used to help students become engaged in each lesson and help them to process what they learn about Ethiopian Jews, their place in the worldwide Jewish community and the Jewish value or concept exemplified in students' action on behalf of this ancient Jewish community.

The NACOEJ curriculum provides teachers and students with information necessary for each topic. The curriculum project's purpose is to enable students to gain understanding of Ethiopian Jewish history and culture, the Beta Israel community's 2,500 year commitment to Judaism, their return to Israel and their place in the worldwide Jewish community. In the course of such learning, students will have the opportunity to put Jewish values into action, and realize that helping Ethiopian Jews *is* a Jewish value.