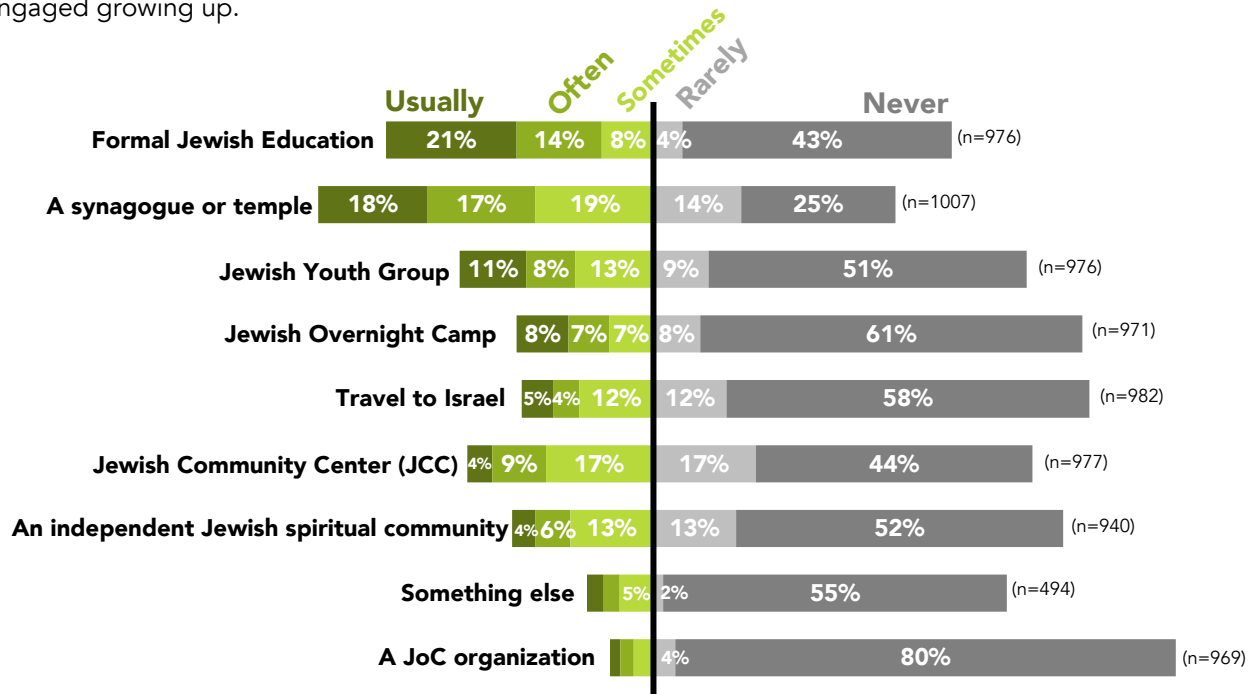


Jewish Experiences

Respondents who were raised Jewish or Jewish and something else participated in a wide variety of Jewish activities and organizations with varied frequencies. Most had multiple Jewish touchpoints growing up: 63% of respondents participated in two or more Jewish activities. Just 15% did not have any Jewish touchpoints. Formal Jewish education and synagogue/temple were the most prevalent ways they engaged growing up.



The experience of feeling like an outsider on the inside was pervasive for many interview participants, whose Jewish communities were predominantly white when they were growing up. Some spent years during their childhoods feeling like they were “outsiders” and “the only one.” Just 7% were involved in JoC organizations. Some met other JoC for the first time as adults.

Several interviewees described how their parents taught them to navigate predominantly white Jewish settings based on their own experiences of subtle and overt racism.

I was raised within a very white Jewish community where I stuck out very much. My dad and I were always two of the only people of color in the space. So I was always very aware of my not whiteness.

A Mexican and white woman in her 20s

My parents told me that there were going to be people who questioned me because I'm Chinese and that there were going to be people who are going to tell me that I'm not as Jewish because my mom converted. So I was never surprised when it came up. They equipped me with tools, sort of like a fire drill, early on.

A Cantonese and Ashkenazi woman in her 40s

I grew up in the American Jewish institutions, day school and camps and Hillel, and I feel like I have a particular perspective that's from the inside, but also always having felt just on the outside.

A mixed, Middle Eastern, Mizrahi, Arab, and Ashkenazi woman in her 30s

Influential People

When asked about significant influences, respondents mentioned how both Jewish and non-Jewish friends, family, and mentors have contributed to the development of their Jewish identities. In some cases, a non-Jewish parent was a driving force in the development of their Jewish sense of self. Some had Jewish families that were profoundly influential in both helpful and harmful ways. Many mentioned the strong impact their grandmothers had on their sense of self as Jews. Others have found Jewish role models outside of their families. Almost half of respondents (49%) indicated that about half or more of their closest friends are Jewish (n=1087).

I've talked with my mom about the fact that my dad's parents were against their marriage. My grandma always talks about how she wants me to date a Jewish person. And I'm like, 'if you're saying that to me, how did you feel about my [Chinese] mother dating your son?' I've grown up with my mom being really uncomfortable around my dad's family. That's been upsetting and hard to deal with.

🗨️ A white and Chinese woman in her 20s

My grandma was a huge role model to me. She was super Jewish and really exemplified Jewish values in such a positive, inspiring way. The fact that I came from her really made me feel Jewish, and help me combat feelings about not being a real Jew or only being a half Jew. I don't check all the boxes, but I descend from my grandma, who's the best Jew ever.

🗨️ A mixed Chinese and white Ashkenazi woman in her 20s

I'm from a mixed faith background. My mother was a secular Jew whose parents were also a mixed marriage. My father's not Jewish, but perhaps has been the most influential person in my relationship to Judaism.

🗨️ A Peruvian, Chilean American woman in her 30s

The first time I was with a group of more than one or two JoC, it was profoundly influential for me. One of the JoC women leaders I met has become such a profound auntie and mentor and warrior of liberation and equity. She has deeply guided my thinking in just the past several years.

🗨️ A multiracial, Black and Indigenous woman in her 30s

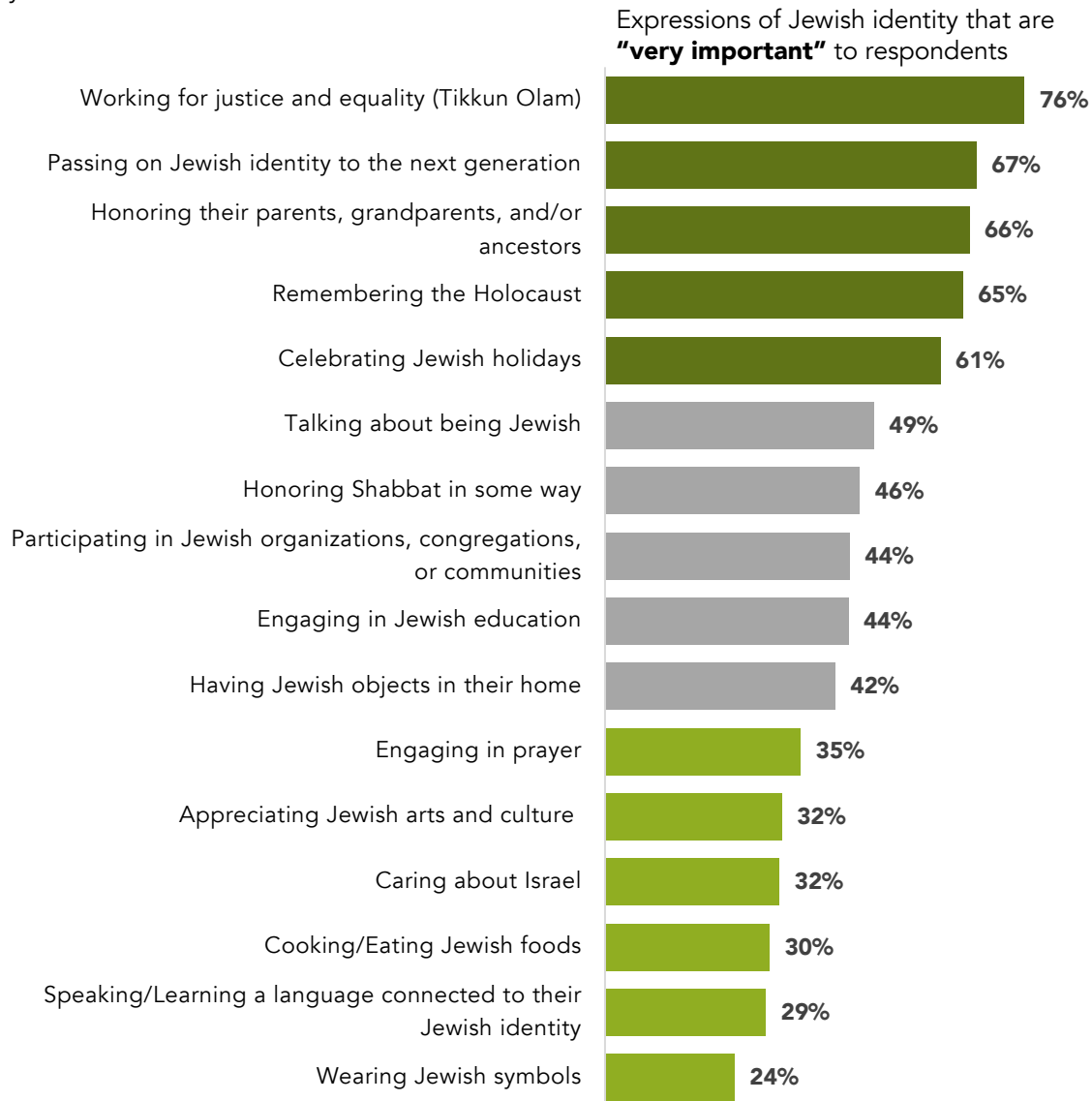
Almost half of respondents (49%) indicated that at least half of their closest friends are Jewish.

What proportion of your close friends would you say identify as Jewish?



(n=1087)

Respondents' expressions of Jewishness are most frequently connected to a sense of justice and connection with the past and the future. The five most popular expressions are focused on collective memory and values.



As adults, respondents have actively expressed their Jewishness in numerous ways. Working for justice and equality is the most common expression of Jewish identity. They described their connections with a wide variety of social justice, environmental, spiritual, and educational Jewish organizations and communities. More than half of respondents (60%) said they are currently (29%) or have previously (31%) been a regular volunteer at a Jewish organization or

synagogue. About one-third have contributed to Jewish organizations as professionals: 36% of respondents said they are currently (16%) or have previously (20%) been employed by a Jewish organization or synagogue.

Respondents' most common expressions of Jewish identity were focused on preserving collective memory and Jewish values across generations.

Rituals and Traditions

Respondents' observance of Jewish rituals and traditions varies. Some are continuing family traditions while others are inventing new ways to connect Jewishly. Some strictly follow Jewish law, some are more flexibly and creatively observant, and some engage in Jewish traditions with no connection to Jewish law. Their relationships with God are similarly varied.

Moving to the South was an interesting change. Keeping kosher at first was so hard because folks don't really understand it and kind of equate it to Halal. There's nothing wrong with Halal, but it's just not the same.

🗨️ An Indian, Indian-American, and South Asian woman in her 20s

I read a lot about Jewish history and I cook. Also honoring my ancestors and leaving my descendants a legacy is important. When I go outside, if there's wind rustling the leaves or I see birds or animals.... Nature grounds me that there's a creator responsible for all of this.

🗨️ A mixed, Black, white, Native, woman in her 40s

My parents really taught me a lot about how I want to have a Jewish life. We always had Shabbat dinner and I still do that. That's a tradition that I continue with my husband and two daughters.

🗨️ An Israeli/Iraqi American and Sephardi woman in her 40s

Many respondents described how they actively embrace the complexities of their identities. More than half (61%) agreed they have been able to find ways to connect to their Jewish identity that also honor their racial/ethnic identities. They integrate customs and traditions from various aspects of their racial, ethnic, and religious heritages. In addition to their Jewish identities, respondents have deeply rooted connections with Black, African, African American, Indigenous, Japanese, Chinese, Chicanx, Latinx, Filipinx, Christian, Catholic, and Muslim identities, among others. Some have been deeply connected to the identities inherited from their families throughout their lives and others are exploring formerly unexamined aspects of their identities for the first time. Still others have little connection with one or more parts of their background.

I'm blossoming right now in how I show up as my full self. I'm embracing Jewish and earth-based Indigenous traditions and Senegalese-based practices. I'm bringing together aspects of myself that were very siloed.

🗨️ A Black and mixed woman in her 30s

I'm finding a lot of ways to bring my Jewish identity together with my Asian and multicultural identities. Shabbat practice can really be a great way to bring together my community, and to talk about these kinds of things. Just last week I hosted a Bollywood themed Shabbat. That's something I definitely want to continue doing both for myself, for my future family and for my community

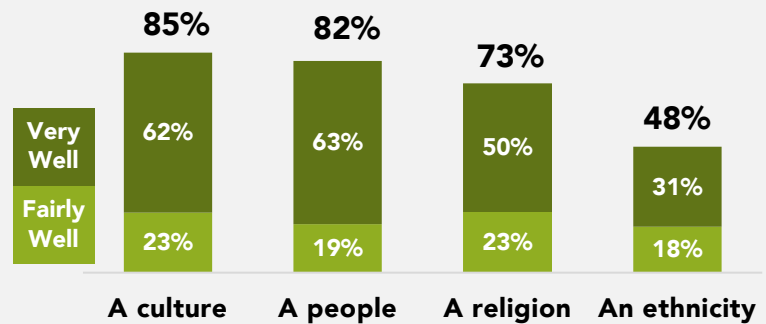
🗨️ An Asian-American woman in her 20s

Being Jewish

Respondents' Jewish values, as well as their thinking about what being Jewish means, are informed by their various identities. They widely acknowledged a deep sense of themselves as Jews and spoke of their powerful connections to ritual, family, values, and tradition.

Most respondents think of being Jewish as belonging to a culture and a people.

How well do each of the following terms describe what being Jewish means to you?



I feel compelled from inside to make things morally and ethically better. I'm wired with the belief that it doesn't matter what you think, it matters what you do. These are things that I just believe in my fiber. And when I learned that there is 6,000 years of tradition that also believed the same thing, I thought, 'Wow. I can root myself and tether myself to a religion, a tradition, and a community that supports and believes in the same things I do.' That was so incredibly powerful. It strengthens, magnifies, supports, reinforces, and codifies my beliefs. That's why I became Jewish.

A Korean American woman in her 50s

Growing up, my mom always tied a lot of Jewish values to human rights. I ask myself sometimes, 'Why am I doing this? For me, it's very much tied to the legacy of my family and that value system. I don't want Jews to stop being Jewish. I want Jews to be accountable, much in the way that Judaism prescribes. We are all responsible for one another. I hold that dear to my heart. I hold it dear to my soul.

A multiethnic and multiracial man in his 30s

My biggest passions, the things I love most are every day *davvening* in the morning, saying *brachas* before we eat, washing our hands. Those are the things that I just enjoy and that I get to easily share with my daughters by doing every day. My two year-old daughter already gets it. She started saying *Modi Ani* in the morning when she gets up.

A Hispanic, El Salvadoran, Native American man in his 30s