

### *Sample Booklist*

#### **Jewish:**

- Number Our Days, by Barbara Myerhoff. A study of aging through a portrait of elderly Jews in Venice California. Describes ethical Jewish culture through the lives of this mostly immigrant community.
- The Ritual Bath, by Faye Kellerman. Detective fiction with an orthodox Jewish woman and her policeman/love interest. Start with this book, then read the "Rina Lazarus" novels in order, so that you understand the development of the interfaith relationship between orthodox woman and the Baptist policeman.
- As a Driven Leaf, by Milton Steinberg. Historical fiction based on Judea in the time of the Roman occupation. Examines the tension between religious life and secular high culture.
- The Red Tent, by Anita Diamant. A retelling of the life of the Biblical character Dinah through her childhood, short marriage, and adulthood.
- At The Entrance To The Garden Of Eden, by Yossi Klein Halevi. Jewish Israeli journalist spends time getting to know and worshipping with Muslims and Christians.
- Tales of the Hasidim, by Martin Buber. Martin Buber has assembled and translated a comprehensive 2-volume set of stories from the early and late Hasidic masters. Organized by master, with historic introduction and reference material.
- Joy Comes in the Morning, by Jonathan Rosen Contemporary American tale of a woman who is a rabbi who falls in love with a secular Jewish man. Issues of faith, ethics, creating a Jewish home, observance of rituals, the balance of public, rabbinic life and family life.
- Rambam's Ladder by Julie Solomon. A study of the teachings of Maimonides about giving and how these principles can be practiced today.
- The Far Euphrates by Aryeh Lev Stollman. Post World War II/Holocaust childhood of a Jewish boy in Canada, told with Biblical and Kabbalistic language and imagery. It's about understanding life and death, intellect and finally faith.

- *A Tale of Love and Darkness* by Amos Oz. It covers the history of modern Israel from the vantage point of a participant.
- *Holy Days*, by Lis Harris. A secular Jewish writer spends a year with a Brooklyn Hasidic family.
- *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok. Fiction about a relationship between a secular and Orthodox Jewish young man set in New York in the 40s and 50s.

## **Christian:**

- *Cloister Walk*, by Kathleen Norris A married Protestant Christian woman spends two 9-month periods living with a celibate society of Benedictine monks. She discusses the life of having one's days lived in an environment of frequent, scheduled prayer and one's year marked by the saint days as well as other festivals. She also discusses celibacy and women's history through the stories of the saints and the life stories of the nuns and monks she gets to know.
- *Travelling Mercies*, by Anne Lamott. Memoir of finding faith and trying to live it.
- *Lying Awake* by Mark Salzman. Fiction about a nun/mystic who faces serious illness and difficult decisions.
- *Evensong* by Gail Godwin. The heroine of *Father Melancholy's Daughter*, now a minister herself, must deal with a series of challenges to her marriage and her ministry.
- *The Screwtape Letters* by C.S. Lewis. Senior devil advises his apprentice on how to corrupt the soul of a hapless young man. A good view of Christian ideas of evil and temptation.
- *Things Seen and Unseen* by Nora Gallagher. Liturgical year as seen by a woman who returned to faith as an adult Christian in the Episcopal tradition.
- *The Seville Communion* by Perez Reverte Arturo Rome-based priest learns about the importance of the local parish in a murder mystery set in contemporary Spain. The city of Seville is a starring character in the story.
- *Open Secrets* by Richard Lischer Lutheran minister describes his first parish in his first year of ministry.
- *Gilead: A Novel*, by Marilynne Robinson. Letter to a son from a father covering the time of the American Civil War and the generations beyond.

## **Muslim:**

- Border Passage, by Leila Ahmed Egyptian woman's memoir of growing up in an Egyptian/Turkish family in the 50s, going to college in England, and understanding the complex identity of Egyptian women in her time.
- Believing Women in Islam, by Asma Barlas. A feminist study of Islamic texts that uses the Qur'an as a primary source.
- The Rock , by Kanan Makiya. Historical fiction based on the viewpoint of a Yemenite Jewish man who converts to Islam during the Prophet's lifetime. He witnesses the Islamic takeover of Jerusalem and the building of the Dome of the Rock.
- Even Angels Ask by Jeffery Lang. Memoir of finding faith and trying to live it.
- The Crusades Through Arab Eyes by Amin Maalouf. History of invasion by European infidels in the middle ages, known to Westerners as “the crusades.” This book describes the politics and culture present at the time of the Christian invasion and occupation.
- The Hadj by Michael Wolfe. American convert to Islam visits Morocco and goes on the Hadj.

### **Read more than one for a discussion:**

- Poems of Arab Andalusia. Amazing 13th century poetry.
- An Audience of One, Majid Mohiuddin. Contemporary Muslim Poetry.
- 19 Varieties of Gazelle, Naomi Shihab Nye. Contemporary poems about the Middle East.
- Video: Islam In America, Christian Science Monitor, produced by Lindsay Miller. Demonstrates the Five Pillars of Faith through interviews with American Muslims. At the same time, the history of Muslim communities in American is shown.
- Storyteller's Daughter by Saira Shah. European-raised Muslim journalist has the opportunity to visit her Afghani homeland while covering the beginning of war years there.
- Islam: The Straight Path by John Esposito. Thorough review of Islam. More historical, philosophical than it is social or practical.

### **Involving more than one faith:**

- The World's Religions, by Huston Smith. We read the chapters on the three Abrahamic faiths to establish a common background from which to begin our dialogue.

- Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain by Maria Rosa Menocal. Tells of a time and place – from 786-1492, in Andalusia, Spain -- that is largely and unjustly overshadowed in most historical chronicles. It was a time when the three cultures – Judaic, Islamic and Christian – forged a relatively stable, though occasionally contentious coexistence.
- Daughters of Abraham: Feminist Thought in Judaism, Christianity and Islam edited by Yvonne Yazback Haddad and John Esposito
- Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths by Bruce Feiler A review of the Biblical and historical Abraham.
- Healing Israel/Palestine by Michael Lerner. Rabbi Lerner reviews the history of the area, the development of Zionism and then outlines his plan for peace in the area.
- A History of God by Karen Armstrong. A comprehensive history of religious thought from Abraham to present.
- Common Prayers by Harvey Cox. About an interfaith, Jewish/Christian marriage. Written through the eyes of a well-informed Christian husband who celebrates the Jewish liturgical year with his Jewish wife and child.