

DEFINITIONS FOR FIND A CAMP

When you're searching for a Jewish camp, it's important to understand the search parameters that are available in our Find A Camp search engine. Below, we've listed definitions of our terms, and we hope that these will help to clarify your search. Please also click on 'How do I choose a Jewish camp for my child?' to assist you in narrowing your search when speaking with the camps you are considering.

Region: Each region in the country has different programming based on the needs/desires of the community as well as the climate and natural resources available like mountains or lakes, beaches or farmland.

Gender: Some camps are gender specific or have sessions separately for girls and for boys. Some gender-based camps have sister or brother camps that they join for evening activities or special events. Other camps are co-ed. Some co-ed camps have separate gender-based programming whereas others do not.

Special Needs Program: Camp offerings for children with special needs vary from week-long programs at the beginning or end of the summer. Some of these experiences include parents; others do not. Other camps offer integrated programming ranging from separate, parallel programming held concurrently with other programming to integrated, mainstream programming with additional staff. Please be in touch with the camp directly to determine if the camp can meet the needs of your child.

Affiliation: Camps are often affiliated with a specific denomination or camping movement. Below is a list of the types of denominations or affiliations available:

Conservative

The Conservative Movement's camps are called the Ramah Camps, and are located all over the country.

There are also several camps that are affiliated with Conservative Judaism, its beliefs and practices but are not formally affiliated with the Ramah Camping Movement.

Non-Denominational

Jewish camps designated Non-Denominational do not necessarily align their mission and teachings to a single established denomination (i.e. Conservative, Reform, Orthodox, etc.) and all Jews, regardless of their level of Jewish observance, are welcome.

Orthodox

Orthodox camps are run by a variety of sponsors such as Bnei Akiva and Chabad Lubavitch, as well as other organizations affiliated with a local Federation, synagogue or educational institution. Each camp reflects the particular type of Orthodox Judaism practiced by their sponsor.

Other

Camps included in the "other" category are typically Orthodox in practice but are welcoming to campers of all affiliations.

Pluralist

Pluralist camps typically present religious practice at varying levels to accommodate those across the religious spectrum.

Reconstructionist

Reconstructionist camps adhere to the principles of the Reconstructionist movement in practice and principle. The mission of Camp JRF is to provide experiences for children, youth, and families through the blending of formal and informal educational approaches that promote strong connections to Judaism, Reconstructionism, and positive human values.

Reform

The Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Camps foster a Jewish camp experience in the context of Reform Judaism, incorporating the movement's approaches to religion into all aspects of the camp program and educational curriculum.

There are also several camps that are affiliated with Reform Judaism, its beliefs and practices but are not formally affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism camps.

Zionist

There are several different types of Zionist camps—camps that focus on connecting the staff and campers to the state of Israel. Habonim Dror, Young Judaea, Canadian Young Judaea, and Hashomer Hatzair are just a few of the movements that sponsor Zionist camps. They differ in their approaches, but you can find out more on the camp's website.

Specialty: Many camps offer the opportunity for your child to hone a specific skill or interest within the context of Jewish values. Typically, these specialty programs are different from general activities that campers participate in and for a more intensive amount of time. These activities may require a separate application or extra fee, and are blocks of time that the camper has chosen to spend in a specific activity area.