

Discover the Lloyd Street Synagogue

While the museum is closed the JMM team is coming together to bring some of our favorite activities from our recent family programs direct to your homes. Each collection of materials will be inspired by either one of our exhibits, Jewish History, or a Jewish holiday.

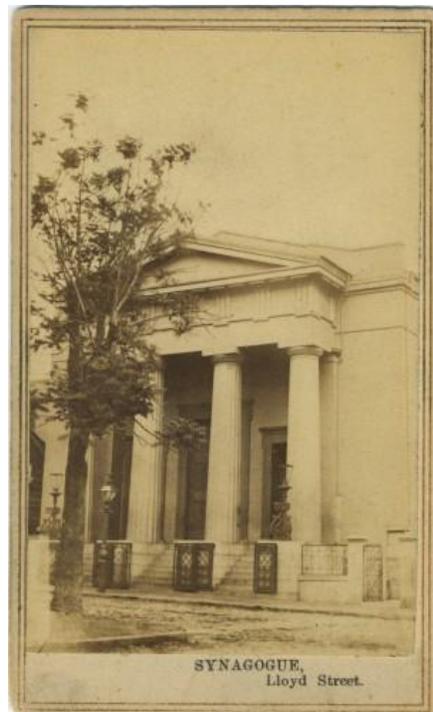
All of the activities we share will be designed for families to complete together and only require supplies you are likely to already have in your home. The activities we offer will be varied from crafts, activities, games, scavenger hunts, and online story times. [You can check out previous activity packs here!](#)

~The JMM Programs Team

Did you know that May is [Jewish American Heritage month?](#)

This month we're using our weekly family activity packets to highlight different aspects of Jewish American history, inspired by our collections. This week's activity packets focus on our historic Lloyd Street Synagogue.

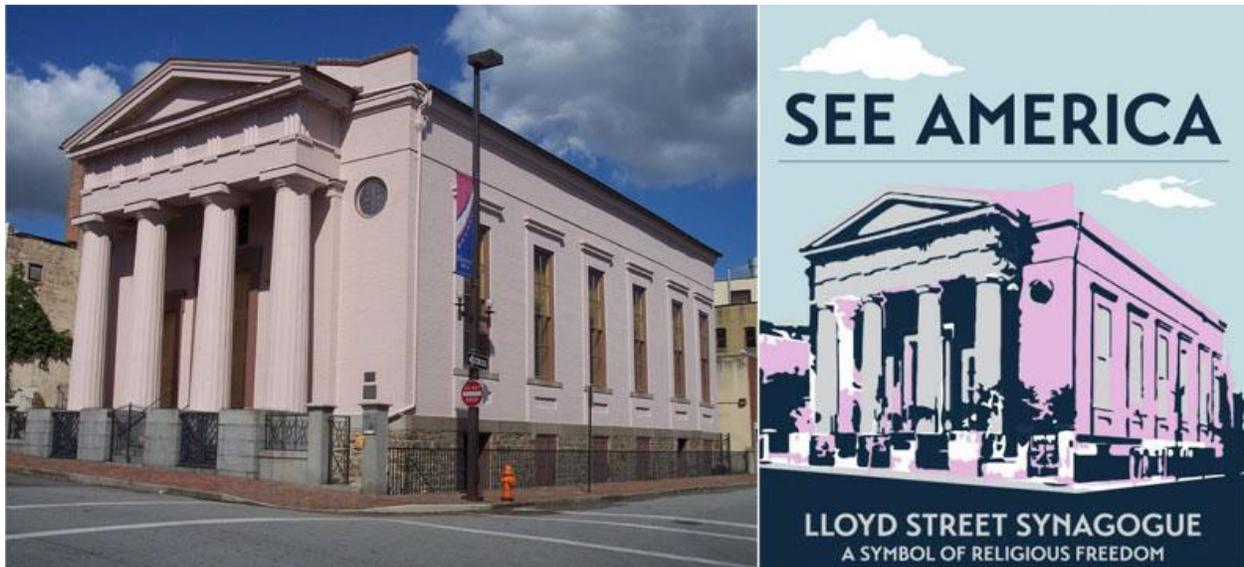
The Lloyd Street Synagogue was built in 1845. It is the oldest synagogue in the whole of Maryland and the third oldest still standing in the United States. The Synagogue has seen a lot over the last 175 years!



Carte-de-visite, c. 1864. JMM 1997.71.1.

It was originally built for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, serving new Jewish immigrants from central Europe as they tried to establish themselves in the US. A little later it served a brief time as St. John the Baptist Lithuanian Catholic Church, again welcoming new immigrants but as a Catholic church. In 1905 it returned to being a synagogue, this time for Shomrei Mishmeres Ha-Kodesh, a congregation of mainly new immigrants from eastern Europe.

Today there is no congregation worshipping in the synagogue. Instead, the Lloyd Street Synagogue is an important part of the Jewish Museum of Maryland, used for education, performances, and even the occasional wedding.



With the activities below you will learn more about the history of the Lloyd Street Synagogue, and synagogues in general. **You might want to start with this glossary**, which will help you understand some of the terms and vocabulary used throughout these activities.

Don't forget to share photos of you enjoying our crafts and activities on our [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [Tumblr](#) pages and use #MuseumFromHome.

Take a Virtual Tour

While visiting the Lloyd Street Synagogue in person isn't possible right now, we have created an interactive virtual tour so you can explore this important, historic building. You definitely want to start with this tour before heading on to the other activities, as it will help connect each activity to the history of the Synagogue.



Whether you've visited the Synagogue before, or just getting introduced, this virtual tour is a great chance to test your knowledge!

Stained Glass Windows



Stained glass window from the Lloyd Street Synagogue during the 1964 renovation of the building. JMM IA 1.0024.

One of the most iconic parts of the Synagogue is the beautiful stained-glass window showing a Star of David. You can use just a few simple supplies to create your own stained-glass windows.

Supplies needed:

- 6 Popsicle sticks, you could also use strips of cardboard
- Colorful tissue paper
- School glue
- Needle and thread
- Optional - A hot glue gun, for adult use only

Building Your Own Synagogue



Painting by Harry Evans, Jr. showing a composite of Baltimore synagogues. Pictured are: Baltimore Hebrew Congregation - Lloyd Street Synagogue, Har Sinai - High Street, Oheb Israel - Eden Street, unidentified, Tzemach Tzedek - Fairmont Avenue, Ohel Yakov - Aisquith Street, Beth Hamedrosh Hagodol - Baltimore Street.) Museum purchase with support from the Ellen Kahan Zager Accession Endowment, JMM 2002.82.2.

Building your own synagogue model is a great chance to think about the key elements we see on most synagogues while also using your imagination to make some unique architecture. We had [a lot of fun with this activity a few years ago](#), and think you will too.



Build your model out of blocks, Lego, Magna-tiles, clay, or get really creative and use recycled materials from around the house! You could also make a drawing or create a collage of your synagogue design.

Supplies needed:

- Recycled materials such as boxes, containers and magazines
- Craft supplies such as paper, scissors, glue and markers
- Optional printed decor
- Blocks, Legos, or other building materials

Digging Up History



Artifacts found during the archaeological excavation of the Lloyd Street Synagogue's 1845 mikveh. JMM IA 1.0460.

A great way to learn about the history of old buildings is through archaeology. Archaeology is the process of carefully digging into the earth to gather evidence that helps us to better understand a place or building. When the Lloyd Street Synagogue was being renovated and repaired, we found many items in the ground that helped tell us the story of the Synagogue and the people who lived in the neighborhood.

In this activity you will create your own archaeological dig! While the instructions here are based on how we share this activity on-site at the Museum, you can also go bigger and expand your dig into a sandbox or even your whole backyard (be sure to check where it is safe to dig and that you are destroying anything planted in your yard).

Supplies needed:

- Foil pan, at least 10" x 12"
- Soil or sand, if you have both even better
- Small objects you are willing to bury
- String
- Paint brush or small excavating tools

Keep Discovering

Want to know more about what being in the Lloyd Street Synagogue was like a long time ago?

[You can read our fabulous children's book, *The Synagogue Speaks*, written by Anita Kassof and illustrated by Jonathan Scott Fuqua here.](#)

You might like [this short video tour](#) of both our historic synagogue buildings, the Lloyd Street Synagogue and B'nai Israel.

Or check out this blog post from Lauren Mitchell, who wrote about the Lloyd Street Synagogue and historic preservation as a high school senior: [Preservation in My Community.](#)

Lloyd Street Synagogue

Glossary

Ark: The structure that contains the Torah scrolls placed at the Eastern wall of the synagogue sanctuary so that it is closest to Jerusalem.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Hebrew term which means “son/daughter of the commandment.” At the age of 13, a child becomes a Bar- or BatMitzvah at a special ceremony where he or she reads from the Torah for the first time and accepts the duties and responsibilities of Jewish law. The plural form of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is B’nai Mitzvah.

Bimah: A raised platform with a table that faces the ark. The prayers are led from the bimah and the Rabbi will deliver the sermon from here. The bimah is often located in the center of the synagogue.

Eternal Light: In Hebrew, called the **ner tamid**, the eternal light is a lamp that is always lit in the sanctuary, usually by the ark. The lamp recalls the eternal light in King Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem. The light is a symbol of God’s eternal presence and protection.

Hebrew: The language of many Jewish prayers and texts. Hebrew is an ancient language used in Biblical times and a modern language that is one of the national languages of the modern country of Israel.

Immigrant: A person who leaves their country of birth and settles permanently in another country. Immigrate: Permanently moving from one country to a new country.

Lithuania: A small country in Eastern Europe just to the west of Russia. Between 1880 and 1920, many Lithuanians of all religious backgrounds immigrated to the United States.

Mezuzah: A small case attached to the right doorpost of Jewish homes and businesses. It contains a small parchment with a short passage from Deuteronomy on it that instructs the Israelites to place God's commandments on the doorposts of their homes.

Mikveh: A ritual bath whose custom goes back to biblical times. It is used before major life cycle events (weddings, bar/bat mitzvah, etc.). The waters of the mikveh must be "living water," which means from a natural source, such as rain or a spring.

Shabbat: The Jewish Sabbath that lasts from sundown on Friday through an hour past sundown on Saturday. This is the Jewish day of rest.

Rabbi: from a Hebrew word for teacher, this is the spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation or community. A Rabbi leads the services, teaches classes, and leads life-cycle events like weddings, Bar/BatMitzvahs and funerals.

Star of David: A six-pointed star consisting of two superimposed triangles, the Star of David is a universal Jewish symbol connected to Biblical times.

Synagogue: From a Greek word meaning "meeting place," this is the name for a Jewish house of worship, sometimes called a shul or temple.

Torah: The first five books of the Jewish Bible are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which contain a series of stories from the creation of the universe to the death of Moses. The Torah is read three times a week from a special scroll written in Hebrew on parchment. The Torah scrolls are stored in the ark along the East wall when not in use.

Stained Glass Window

The stained glass windows in the Lloyd Street Synagogue are one of the most eye catching and beautiful elements. Stained glass is often used within houses of worship, such as synagogues and churches, as a way of controlling light, adding beauty and inspiring the congregants, often stained glass can be used to tell a story.

This stained glass, like most, is made using small pieces of colorful glass, held together with strips of lead. The Star of David window in the Synagogue dates to the original building, though it has undergone some conservation, or repairs. The window was carefully removed when the building was expanded to accommodate the growing congregation and repositioned in the new wall. Make your own stained glass window inspired by the Star of David window in the Lloyd Street Synagogue.



What you will need:

- 6 Popsicle sticks, you could also use strips of cardboard
- Colorful tissue paper
- School glue
- Needle and thread
- Hot Glue

Optional - A hot glue gun, for adult use only

Stained Glass Window

What to do:

- Take three popsicle sticks and form them into the shape of a triangle, with the tips of each stick meeting, now glue them together. If you have a hot glue gun available it will make this process a little easier. Repeat this process with the remaining three popsicle sticks, creating two triangles.
- Now take your two triangles, one pointed up and the other pointed down, and put one on top of the other, this should create your Star of David shape. Glue these into position.
- You are now ready to decorate your star, take small pieces of tissue paper and glue them to the popsicle sticks, filling in the interior of the star. This can be a little fiddly and messy, though be aware the more glue you use the stronger your star will become.
- When the glue is dry carefully pierce a small hole through the tissue near one of the points of your star and thread through the string to create a loop so you can hang your star in a window. Enjoy the way your star shines in the sunlight.



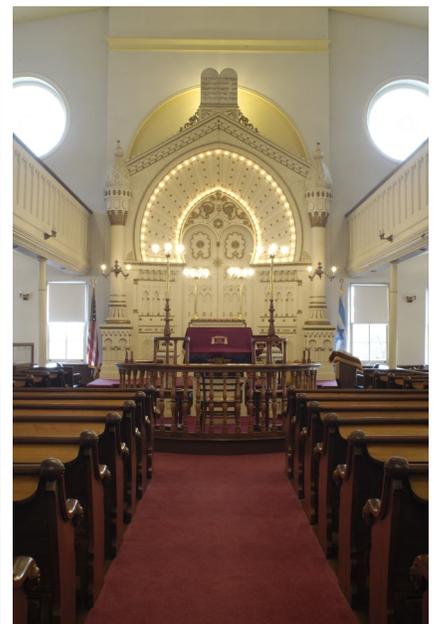
Bonus challenge: Now try to make some more complicated designs, can you tell a story using stained glass?

Build Your Own Synagogue

All synagogues have at least three key elements a bimah, an ark and the ner tamid. Though there are other important elements such as seating, windows and décor. Below are pictures of the inside of the two synagogues at the JMM, the Lloyd Street Synagogue and B'nai Israel, built just a few years later in 1876. Have a look at these two images and see if you can identify some of the key similarities. Once you have a better sense how these basic elements can be adapted try designing your own synagogue.

What you will need:

- Recycled materials such as boxes, containers and magazines
- Craft supplies such as paper, scissors, glue and markers
- Optional printed décor sheets



What to do:

- Use all of your materials to build your own synagogue, we found starting with a shoe box worked well.

Bonus challenge: Think about adding even more special elements, you can see in the images above or learned about during your virtual tour such as chandeliers, mezuzahs or even people!

Digging Up History

One way in which we are able to learn about the past is through archaeology, the process of carefully excavating, or digging up the earth and recording all the evidence that we find. Evidence can be large such as walls, small such as pottery sherds or miniscule such as seeds or bone fragments. Sometimes evidence comes in the form of slight changes in the type of earth that an archaeologist is excavating.

In the Synagogue there are a couple of areas archeologists have helped us to better understand through excavation and careful study, including the mikvah, a ritual bathing area, and the exterior paint color. Follow the instructions below to get a taste of what is involved in being an archaeologist. We recommend that an adult sets up the dig to create the most accurate experience for amateur archaeologists.



What you will need:

- Foil pan, at least 10" x 12"
- Soil or sand, if you have both even better
- Small objects you are willing to bury such a coins or small toys
- String
- Paint brush or small excavating tools, we found spoons worked well

What To Do - Creating Your Dig

- Start by putting a layer of sand or earth on the bottom of your pan, if you have both we would recommend starting with the sand.
- Now place in a few objects in your dish, try spreading them across the whole area. Also add a few small stones.
- Fill in the rest of the dish with soil or sand.
- Tape equally place popsicle sticks along the sides of your dish, we would recommend one on the short edges and two on the long edges. As you get more practiced you could include more for more accurate recording.

To start your dig print a copy of the site recording sheet and follow the directions.

Bonus Challenge: You can introduce the idea of different strata or layers within your dig. This idea is important to archaeologists as it helps them to think about the age of the things they find, often each layer can represent a different era. Try building another dig with a mix of layers using sand and soil to make them easily distinguishable. Now create different drawings for each layer of your dig, by looking at the finds in each layer you can start to understand the history of your site.

Site Recording Sheet

One of the most important parts of being an archaeologist is carefully recording everything the you find. An archaeologist records all of their finds, the location in which they found them and the way in which items are connected. They also record other things they come across such as rocks and the type of soil in which they are digging, all these clues can help to create a better understanding of the site.

- Start by orientating your recording sheet put an arrow that indicates the direction of north.
- Now start to slowly remove the earth, be careful not to remove any objects or rocks. Archaeologists put the removed material in the spoil heap, sometimes they will go back through this material with a sieve to be certain they haven't missed anything.
- Once you have removed your first layer of soil use your string and popsicle sticks to create a grid so your site looks the same as your recording sheet. Using the grid to guide you start inputting your finds in the corresponding squares, the more detail the better. Also take a minute to record all of the larger stones on your site.
- Once you have everything recorded you can carefully remove your finds and look for more clues to help you date your site or learn about the people who once lived there.
- If you have more than one layer, or strata, to your site continue to remove the next layer of earth and do another recording sheet for your next layer. Keep digging until you get to the bottom of your pan or what archaeologists would call the natural, earth that is undisturbed by humans.
