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2020 Greater MetroWest NJ **Jewish Community Study**



Jewish Engagement

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The Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS), founded in 1980, is dedicated to providing independent, high-quality research on issues related to contemporary Jewish life.

The Cohen Center is also the home of the Steinhardt Social Research Institute (SSRI). Established in 2005, SSRI uses innovative research methods to collect and analyze sociodemographic data on the Jewish community.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2020 Greater MetroWest Jewish Community Study, conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies (CMJS) at Brandeis University, employed innovative state-of-the-art methods to create a comprehensive portrait of the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors of the Jewish community in Greater MetroWest New Jersey (GMW). The principal goal of this study is to highlight data and findings that will be useful for the Greater MetroWest Jewish Federation and other community organizations and funders for communal planning. This study is intended to promote an understanding of the community and to aid strategic planning, program development, and policies to support and enhance Jewish life.

The study overview report¹ serves as an introduction to all of the topic reports. It provides key findings, terminology, and a summary of the methodology used in the study.

This topic report focuses on types of Jewish engagement, including ritual observance, synagogue membership and participation, and additional means of expressing Jewish identity. Related reports cover:

- Community connections
- Finances
- Geography
- Israel
- Jewish children
- Philanthropy/Volunteering
- Seniors/Health and disability

More details about each item are available in the report appendix and through analysis of the dataset.

Greater MetroWest Jewish population, 2020

Total Jewish households	56,800
Total people in Jewish households	155,000
Total Jews	122,300
Adults	
Jewish	96,900
Non-Jewish	26,600
Children	
Jewish	25,400
Non-Jewish	4,300

Numbers do not add up to total due to rounding.

¹ View at <<https://www.brandeis.edu/cmjs/community-studies/greater-metrowest-nj-report.html>>

The present study provides a portrait of the Greater MetroWest Jewish community as it was in the fall of 2020, six months into the COVID-19 pandemic. Although some survey responses were likely to be influenced by the special circumstances of the pandemic, the questions were designed to provide a demographic and attitudinal portrait of the stable characteristics of the community. The survey questionnaire was developed by CMJS in consultation with the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ. As necessary, questions were modified to account for changes in usual patterns of behavior during the pandemic.

In total, 3,295 eligible households completed surveys between October 1 and December 11, 2020. The response rate for the primary sample, which was designed to be representative of the entire community, was 33.4% (AAPOR RR4²).

Notes on this report:

- In order to extrapolate respondent data to the entire community, individual respondents were assigned a “survey weight” so that their survey responses represent the proportion of the overall community that has similar demographic characteristics. Unless otherwise specified, this report presents weighted survey data in the form of percentages or proportions. Accordingly, these data should be read not as the percentage or proportion of respondents who answered each question in a given way, but as the percentage or proportion of the population that we estimate would answer each question in that way if each member of the population had been surveyed.
- Because estimates are based on a probability survey, no one estimate should be considered an exact measurement. As a guideline, the reader should assume that all estimates have a range of plus or minus five points; therefore, reported differences between any two numbers of less than 10 percentage points may not necessarily reflect true differences in the population.
- When a percentage is between 0% and 0.5% and would otherwise round down to 0%, the number is denoted as < 1%. When there are insufficient respondents in a particular subgroup for reporting reliable information, the estimate is shown as “—”.
- Comparisons across subgroups: When there is a statistically significant difference among subgroups, we are 95% confident that at least some of the differences in estimates reflect actual differences and are not just the result of random chance. In the tables in this report, we designate these differences by shading them light gray. Findings that are not statistically significant are not shaded. Even in cases where there are statistically significant differences in a full set of responses, it is unlikely that there are statistically significant differences between every pair of numbers. As noted above, even when a table is statistically significant, differences between any two numbers of less than 10 percentage points may not reflect true differences in the population.
- When reporting qualitative or open-ended data, sample verbatim quotes from respondents appear in italics. These responses are not representative of the views of all community members but add context and depth to the representative quantitative data included in the report.

² American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) is a professional organization that sets standards for survey research.

Comments may have been edited for clarity and to remove any identifying information. When the number of respondents who mentioned a particular theme is shown, that number indicated the actual number of respondents and not the weighted share of the population they represent.

- Comparisons across surveys: As part of the goal to assess trends, we made comparisons of answers to data from national studies (in particular, the CMJS/SSRI American Jewish Population Project (ajpp.brandeis.edu) and the Pew Research Center report, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”³

³ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020” (Washington DC: Pew Research Center, 2021). <https://www.pewforum.org/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>

KEY FINDINGS: JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

- To understand the diversity of Jewish engagement in Greater MetroWest, the report describes five categories of Jewish engagement based on patterns of participation in ritual, communal, personal, and home-based Jewish life. The five patterns differ in terms of prevalent types of Jewish behaviors and in the degree of participation in those behaviors. Fourteen percent of Jewish adults are in the Immersed group and participate in all aspects of Jewish life; 15% of Jewish adults in the Involved group have a high level of participation in ritual and communal activities. Over one quarter of Jewish adults (27%) are in the Personal group and primarily participate in individual rather than communal activities. Another quarter of Jewish adults (27%) are in the Familial group and primarily participate in home-based holidays like the Passover seder and Hanukkah. The remaining 16% of Jewish adults are in the Minimally Involved group and participate in Jewish life occasionally if at all. These groups are unique to the Greater MetroWest Jewish community and were developed specifically for this study.
- Jewish engagement is higher among Jewish households with children, compared to other households. Jewish engagement is lower among single-adult households without children.
- Jewish engagement is higher in Jewish households with an inmarried couple, compared to households with intermarried couples or with single adults.
- Jewish engagement is higher in Essex and Union counties. Jewish households in Essex and Union are more likely to be members of a synagogue, however, they are not more likely to attend religious services than households in other regions.
- Twenty-nine percent of Jewish households belong to a synagogue or congregation of any type. Twenty-five percent of Jewish households pay dues to a local “brick-and-mortar” synagogue.
- Financial status is not associated with higher levels of overall Jewish engagement. Wealthier Jewish households are more likely to be synagogue members than those that are less well off. Wealthier Jewish households are slightly more likely to attend High Holiday services. Other than High Holiday service attendance, however, there is no difference in service attendance between Jewish households of different financial statuses.
- Of the Jewish adults who attended High Holiday services in 2020, about two-in-five would prefer a combination of in-person and online services in the future.
- A larger share of Jewish adults in the Immersed and Involved engagement groups were raised by two Jewish parents, compared to Jewish adults in the other engagement groups.
- Jewish education in childhood is associated with Jewish engagement as an adult. Sixty-three percent of Greater MetroWest Jewish adults had some Jewish education as children.
- Three quarters of Jewish adults in Greater MetroWest feel that being Jewish is very much a matter of culture, with smaller shares feeling that being Jewish is a matter of ethnicity, community, and religion.

JEWISH ENGAGEMENT

Index of Jewish Engagement

The demographic and geographic diversity within the Greater MetroWest Jewish community is reflected in the variety of ways in which its members engage in Jewish life. Examining how Jewish adults both think about and act upon their Jewish identities can serve as a valuable lens through which to understand the population and the ways in which Jewish life in the region can be enhanced. This chapter presents a typology of patterns of Jewish engagement referred to as the “Index of Jewish Engagement,” created uniquely for the Greater MetroWest Jewish community.⁴

One of the purposes of this Index is to demonstrate the full range of Jewish engagement. Throughout the remainder of this report, we present data about individual measures of Jewish engagement, such as synagogue membership and Jewish program participation. But one subgroup of the population, such as young adults, may have high levels of participation in one type of Jewish behavior, e.g., lighting Shabbat candles, but lower participation in another, e.g., attending Jewish programs, and another subgroup, such as parents with children, may have the opposite pattern. By identifying the patterns that develop around measures of Jewish engagement, we can better understand the unique ways in which Jewish people express their Jewish identities and the potential constituencies that exist for different types of Jewish connections.

In the Greater MetroWest Jewish community, we have identified five categories of Jewish engagement that describe patterns of participation in Jewish life (Figure 1). The five patterns differ in terms of prevalent types of Jewish behaviors and in the degree of participation in those behaviors. As shown in Table 1, the Jewish behaviors across the five engagement patterns vary widely, but all patterns include at least some behaviors that represent a connection to Jewish life. The table shows the proportion of people in each engagement group who engage in the listed behavior. In this table, the

How we developed these categories

Survey respondents answered questions about their Jewish behaviors. Through analysis of their responses using a statistical technique, Latent Class Analysis (LCA), we identified the five primary patterns of behavior that are presented here. Survey respondents were not asked to assign themselves to the groups or to identify themselves as part of any group.

The LCA analysis presented here is unique to the Greater MetroWest Jewish community. Both the set of classifications and their names are derived directly from data collected for this study.

⁴ Also see Janet Krasner Aronson et al., “A New Approach to Understanding Contemporary Jewish Engagement,” *Contemporary Jewry* 39 (2018): 91–113. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12397-018-9271-8>

darker the box, the higher the proportion of people who engage in that behavior. The order of groups listed in this table is somewhat arbitrary. Although the leftmost groups in the table in general have lower rates of participation in selected behaviors relative to those on the right side of the table, the arrangement of the groups in this table does not represent a simple high-to-low continuum. As can be seen in the table below, for example, Jewish adults in the Personal engagement group are *less* likely than Jewish adults in the Involved group to attend any religious services, but are *more* likely than those in the Involved group to follow news about Israel.

Because these categories are unique to the Greater MetroWest Jewish community, they cannot be directly compared to other Jewish communities.

Figure 1. Index of Jewish Engagement

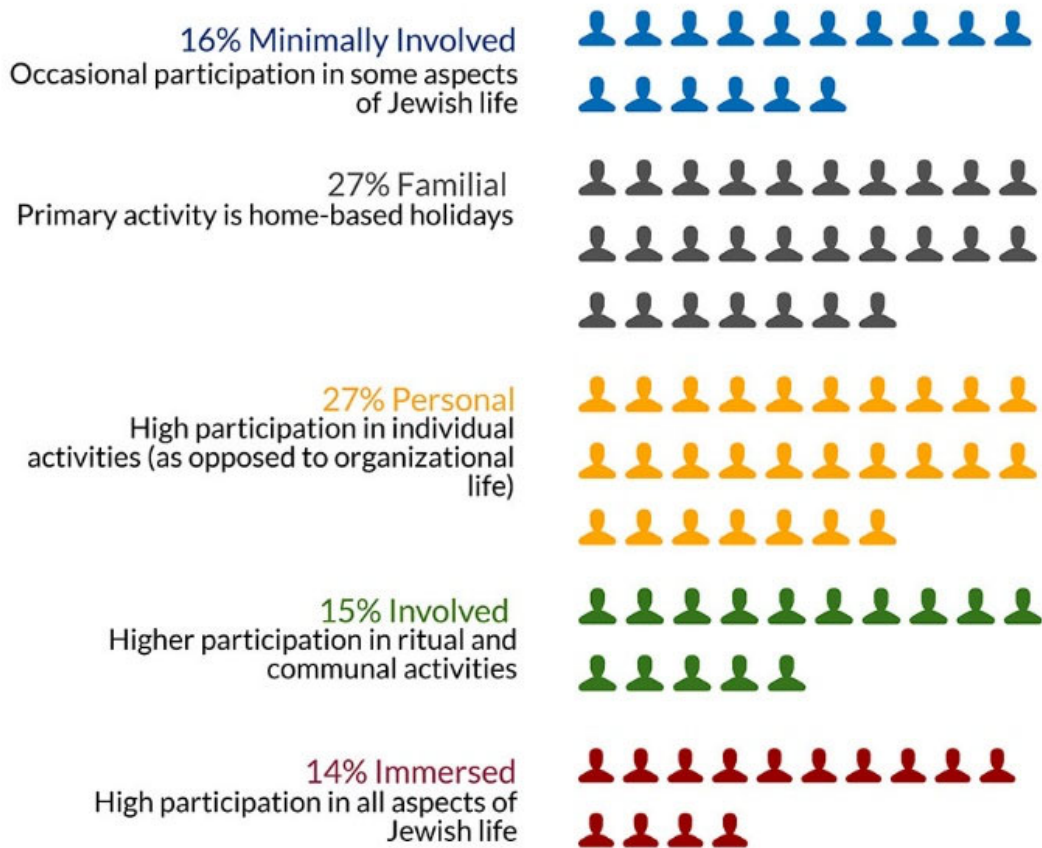


Table I. Jewish activities used to construct Index of Jewish Engagement

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14
Home behaviors					
Attended seder	10	93	94	96	100
Lit Hanukkah candles	38	97	96	100	100
Ritual behaviors					
Shabbat candles/dinner, ever	7	53	63	83	96
Shabbat candles/dinner, regularly	4	37	73	77	96
Services past half year (online/in-person)	4	4	19	10	62
Services past year (online)	10	31	53	86	97
High Holiday services 2020 (any setting)	17	34	65	82	90
Yom Kippur fast (not including medical)	7	18	41	71	95
Kosher home	<1	1	13	4	47
Organization behaviors (past year)					
Synagogue member	1	8	18	67	92
Organization member	11	<1	12	19	30
Informal group member	14	2	12	12	31
Participate in program (local)	17	7	27	83	83
Participate in program (online)	25	3	59	46	92
Volunteer or lead Jewish organization	6	<1	7	62	60
Donated to Jewish organization	44	48	74	82	95
Individual behaviors (past year)					
Talk about Jewish topic	81	90	99	95	100
Seek out news about Israel	64	55	97	67	97
Read Jewish publications	47	33	95	62	98
Engage with Jewish-focused culture	55	63	98	67	97
Eat Jewish foods	69	85	98	87	99

Legend	0-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
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Jewish denominations

The proportion of GMW Jewish adults who identify with each Jewish denomination is similar to the pattern among all US Jewish adults (Table 2). In Greater MetroWest, the share who are Orthodox is slightly smaller than overall (4% in GMW compared to 9% of all US Jews) and the share who are Conservative is slightly higher (22% in GMW compared to 17% of all US Jews). The largest group - 38% - does not identify with any particular denomination, with half (19%) describing themselves as secular or cultural, and half (19%) describing themselves as “Just Jewish.” Among all US Jews, 32% do not identify with a specific denomination.

Table 2. Denomination of Jewish adults

	GMW (%)	US ⁵ (%)
Orthodox	4	9
Conservative	22	17
Reform	32	37
Other denomination	4	4
No denomination	38	32
Secular/cultural	19	
Just Jewish	19	
Total	100	100

How does the Index of Jewish Engagement compare to Jewish denomination?

Although denominational affiliation and Jewish engagement are related, the two differ in important ways. The Index incorporates a range of Jewish behaviors, not only ritual and religious behavior. In addition, the Index describes the variations of behavior among Conservative and Reform Jews and, in particular, those with no specific denomination—the fastest growing segment of the Jewish community.

Table 3 shows the proportion of Jewish adults in each denomination by engagement group. For example, 84% of Orthodox Jewish adults are in the Immersed group, and 15% of Orthodox Jewish adults are in the Personal group. Among Jewish adults with no denomination, 25% are in the Minimally Involved group, 34% are in the Familial group, and 32% are in the Personal group.

⁵ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

Table 3. Jewish engagement by denomination

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
Orthodox	<1	<1	15	<1	84	100
Conservative	4	19	33	18	26	100
Reform	10	28	26	26	11	100
Other	38	11	12	15	25	100
No denomination	25	34	32	6	3	100

Jewish background and Jewish engagement

A large majority of Jewish adults (85%) had two Jewish parents (Table 4). Nearly all Jewish adults in the Immersed (94%) and Involved (93%) engagement groups were raised by two Jewish parents, compared to those Jewish adults in the other engagement groups—in particular, the Minimally Involved group (76%).

Jewish education in childhood is associated with Jewish engagement as an adult. Overall, 63% of Greater MetroWest Jewish adults had some Jewish education as children. Participation in childhood Jewish education ranged from 42% among the Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group to 75% in the Immersed group.

Table 4. Jewish engagement by Jewish background

	All Jewish adults (%)	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)
Parents inmarried	85	76	85	82	93	94
Had Jewish education as a child	63	42	63	61	64	75

Demographics and Jewish engagement

Jewish engagement varies across the GMW Jewish community based on age, household composition, and region. Tables 5 and 6 show the relationship between age, household type, and Jewish engagement group. Table 7 shows the distribution of people who are inmarried, intermarried, and not married in each engagement group.

Age

All age groups have approximately the same share of Jewish adults in the Immersed group. However, in the other engagement groups, age patterns differ widely (Table 5). For example, Jewish adults ages 18 to 34 include the smallest share who are Minimally Involved (7%), and Jewish adults who are ages 65 to 74 include the largest share (32%) who are Minimally Involved.

Table 5. Jewish engagement by age group

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
18-34	7	24	36	19	15	100
35-49	7	24	27	25	18	100
50-64	15	32	25	14	14	100
65-74	32	18	25	10	15	100
75+	16	26	38	7	12	100

Household composition is another predictor of Jewish engagement (Table 6). Among Jewish households with minor children, only 6% are in the Minimally Involved group. Single Jewish adults without minor children includes the largest share, 41%, in the Minimally Involved group.

Table 6. Jewish engagement by household type

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
Minor children in household	6	28	24	24	17	100
Couple, no children	17	19	37	9	19	100
Single, no children	41	18	27	7	8	100
Multiple adults, no children	15	37	26	14	9	100

Among inmarried Jewish adults, 22% are in the Immersed group, compared to 6% of intermarried Jewish adults and 8% of unmarried Jewish adults. Among inmarried Jewish adults, 8% are in the Minimally Involved group compared to 23% of intermarried Jewish adults and 26% of unmarried Jewish adults. Intermarried Jewish adults include a larger share (38%) in the Familial group, compared to Jewish adults who are inmarried (21%) and unmarried (26%).

Table 7. Jewish engagement by marital status

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
Inmarried	8	21	32	17	22	100
Intermarried	23	38	24	9	6	100
Not married	26	25	26	15	8	100

Geography and residency

Jewish engagement varies by region, with those in Essex and Union including the largest share of Jewish adults in the Immersed group (19% and 17% respectively), compared to 7% of Jewish adults in the Immersed group in Western GMW (Table 8). Western GMW has the largest share of Jewish adults (42%) in the Personal group.

Table 8. Jewish engagement by region

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
Essex	12	27	26	16	19	100
Union	12	27	22	22	17	100
Morris	22	24	28	13	13	100
Western GMW	15	28	42	9	7	100

Several respondents described why geography is a challenge for Jewish engagement.

Activities and programs are based in Essex County or eastern Morris. Few, if any, activities in western Morris, despite the camp property in Mt. Olive. There are many unaffiliated Jewish families in this area but little outreach to them.

Synagogue options in Morris County are challenging and limited, Jewish services in Morris County are limited, although there is a big Jewish community out here.

More recent arrivals to GMW are more Jewishly engaged than longtime residents. Table 9 shows the relationship of length of residence and engagement group. Twenty-two percent of Jewish adults who have been living in the area for 0-4 years and 23% of Jewish adults who have been living in the area for 5-9 years are in the Immersed group, compared to smaller numbers of those who have lived in GMW 10 or more years.

Table 9. Jewish engagement by length of residence

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
0-4 years	3	26	31	17	22	100
5-9 years	6	25	31	15	23	100
10-19 years	8	26	21	28	16	100
20+ years	18	26	30	12	13	100

Financial situation and Jewish engagement

Overall Jewish engagement does not differ by standard of living (Table 10). However, some specific aspects of Jewish engagement are related to financial situation; for example, see below for information about synagogue membership.

Table 10. Jewish engagement by financial situation

	Minimally Involved (%)	Familial (%)	Personal (%)	Involved (%)	Immersed (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults	16	27	27	15	14	100
Struggling	9	26	36	12	15	100
Enough	17	27	28	13	16	100
Extra	19	28	25	17	12	100
Well off	12	23	29	18	18	100

JEWISH LIFE

Synagogue membership and participation

In Greater MetroWest, 29% of Jewish households belong to a synagogue or congregation of any type. Twenty-five percent of Jewish households in GMW pay dues to a local “brick-and-mortar” synagogue (Table 11). We use the term “brick-and-mortar” to describe those synagogues that typically have dues structures, buildings, ordained clergy, and host organized programs.

Because synagogue-member households often include more Jewish adults than non-member households, the share of Jewish adults who are part of synagogue member households (31%) exceeds the proportion of households that include a synagogue member (29%). Overall, 31% of GMW Jewish adults are members of a synagogue, similar to the share of the US Jewish adult population (35%).⁶

Table 11. Membership in a synagogue or congregation

	All Jewish households (%)
Any synagogue member in household	29
Local synagogue member in household	28
Local brick-and-mortar synagogue, pays dues	25
Local brick-and-mortar synagogue member, no dues	1
Out-of-area synagogue	1
Chabad	2
Independent minyan	1

Table 12 shows the denomination of the synagogues for the 25% of Jewish households that are members of a local brick-and-mortar synagogue. Forty percent of Jewish households that pay dues to a local brick-and-mortar synagogue belong to a Conservative congregation and an equal share, 39%, belong to a Reform congregation.

⁶ Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020.”

Table 12. Denomination of brick-and-mortar synagogues

Synagogue-member Jewish households	
	(%)
Orthodox	13
Conservative	40
Reform	39
Other	10

Note: Proportions exceed 100% because some households belong to more than one synagogue.

In GMW, over half of Jewish adults (52%) attended religious services online or in-person at least once in the past six months (Table 13). Almost half (48%) of Greater MetroWest Jewish adults did not attend any Jewish religious service in the past six months (Table 13), and 4% attended weekly or more. Because this question was asked during the COVID-19 pandemic, service attendance included both in-person and online services.

Table 13. Participation in online or in-person services in the past six months

All Jewish adults	
	(%)
Never	48
Once or twice	27
Every few months	10
About once a month	6
Two or three times a month	6
Once a week or more	4

Although just more than half of Jewish adults attended at least one service in the past six months, a smaller share (42%) attended a High Holiday service in 2020 (Table 14). Religious service attendance is not limited to synagogue members. While 80% of synagogue members attended a High Holiday service in 2020, so did 25% of nonmembers.

Synagogue membership varies by region and household composition. Jewish households in Essex and Union are more likely to be members of a synagogue, compared to Jewish households in other regions. Jewish households with children are more likely to be synagogue members than households without children.

Wealthier households are more likely to be synagogue members than those that are less well off. However, service attendance does not differ by household financial situation.

Several respondents described financial obstacles to Jewish engagement.

Membership in a congregation is too expensive.

Synagogues are way too expensive, seems like it's all about the [money], which is why we left.

Cost is too high to attend some activities.

Table 14. Differences in synagogue involvement by group

	Synagogue member (%)	Attended services (online or in-person) in past six months (%)	Attended High Holiday services (online or in-person) in 2020 (%)
All Jewish adults	31	52	42
Synagogue membership			
Not synagogue member	n/a	36	25
Synagogue member	n/a	88	80
Jewish engagement			
Minimally Involved	1	10	7
Familial	8	31	18
Personal	18	53	41
Involved	67	86	71
Immersed	92	97	95
Region			
Essex	35	53	45
Union	43	56	46
Morris	27	59	49
Western GMW	18	35	23
Age			
18-34	28	62	49
35-49	40	57	45
50-64	29	49	41
65-74	26	46	41
75+	31	47	33
Marital status			
Inmarried	41	60	52
Intermarried	17	38	29
Not married	20	46	30
Household composition			
Minor children in household	40	57	49
Couple, no children	32	56	48
Single, no children	18	40	26
Multiple adults, no children	23	44	32
Financial situation			
Struggling	22	53	39
Enough	28	56	46
Extra	30	44	36
Well-off	43	55	49

Because the survey asked questions about High Holiday service attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, additional questions explored this type of participation. Of the 42% of Jewish adults who participated in High Holiday services of some kind in 2020, the majority (83%) participated in online services (Table 15). Of those who attended any High Holiday service, 81% attended a service at their own synagogue, 7% attended a service at a synagogue to which they did not belong, and 12% attended at their own and another synagogue (not shown in table).

I miss being able to go to services whenever I feel like it. I feel a strong sense of community whenever I am in the building. I celebrate holidays with family and friends. Zoom is a poor substitute for being together.

Table 15. Participation in a High Holiday service by type of service

	Jewish adults who participated in High Holiday services (%)
Indoor, in-person	14
Outdoor, in-person	13
Online	83
Other	2

Note: Because individuals may have participated in High Holiday services in multiple ways, the total exceeds 100%.

Of the Jewish adults who attended High Holiday services in 2020, the plurality (41%) would prefer a combination of in-person and online services in the future. Another 24% would prefer to return to in-person-only services in 2021, and 17% would prefer to participate in online services only (Figure 2). Jewish adults in the Immersed group were most likely to prefer in-person services, but all other groups preferred either online only or a combination of online and in-person. Of the small number of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group who attended a High Holiday service in 2020, three quarters do not expect to participate in services in 2021 (Table 16).

Figure 2: Preference for High Holiday services in future

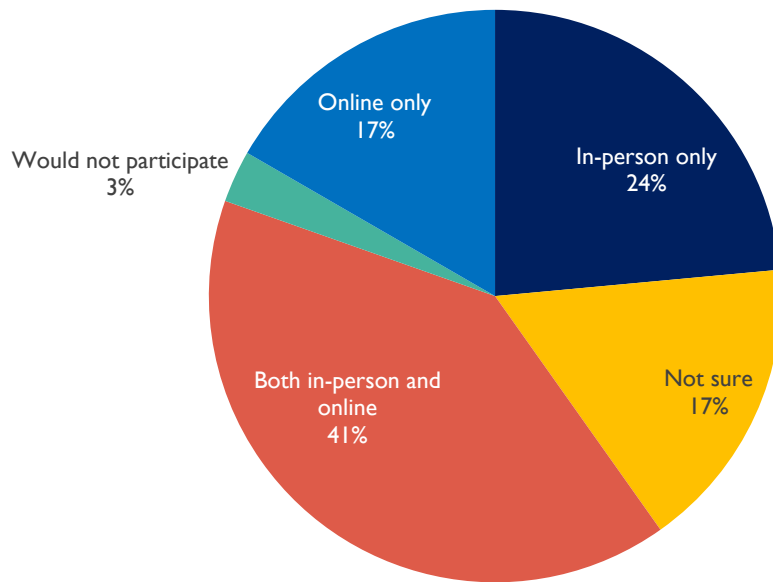


Table 16. Type of future service preferred by Jewish adults who participated in High Holiday service in 2020

	In-person only (%)	Online only (%)	Both in-person and online (%)	Would not participate (%)	Not sure (%)	Total (%)
All Jewish adults who participated in High Holiday services in 2020	24	17	41	3	16	100
Minimally Involved	<1	11	12	75	2	100
Familial	26	29	9	<1	36	100
Personal	19	27	36	<1	17	100
Involved	17	9	54	<1	19	100
Immersed	33	11	49	0	7	100

Of the Jewish adults who did *not* participate in High Holiday services in 2020, 14% would participate in 2021 if services were offered in person, 54% would not, and 33% are unsure (not shown in table).

Jewish rituals

Jewish households of GMW engage in religious life and ritual practices inside and outside the home. Sixteen percent of Jewish households light Shabbat candles regularly and half (50%) *never* light Shabbat candles (Table 17). As well, twelve percent of Jewish households have a Shabbat meal

regularly and about half (48%) did not have a special Shabbat meal in the past year. Seventy-three percent of Jewish adults do not follow any kosher dietary rules (Table 18). More than half (54%) of Jewish adults fasted on Yom Kippur for all or part of the day (Table 19).

Nationally,⁷ 46% of US Jews fasted for at least part of Yom Kippur, slightly fewer than in GMW. Seventeen percent of US Jews keep kosher at home, roughly the same rate as in GMW.

Table 17. In past year, household frequency of marking Shabbat

	Lights Shabbat candles (%)	Has a Shabbat meal (%)
Never	50	48
Rarely	21	27
Sometimes	13	12
Regularly	16	12

Table 18. Current practice regarding keeping kosher

	All Jewish adults (%)
Don't follow kosher rules	73
Follow some kosher rules	16
Keep kosher only at home	6
Keep kosher all the time	6

Table 19. In past year, fasted on Yom Kippur

	All Jewish adults (%)
Fasted for all or part of the day	54
Could not fast for medical reasons	11
Did not fast	35

Eighty-one percent of Jewish adults live in a household where someone hosts or attends a Passover seder in a typical year, and 86% live in a household where someone lights Hanukkah candles in a typical year (Table 20). Nationally, 62% of US Jewish adults attended a Passover seder, significantly fewer than in GMW (81%).⁸

Different types of Jewish adults mark holidays in a variety of ways. Single Jewish adults without children are less likely to participate in these rituals. Jewish adults with children and couples without children are most likely to keep kosher at home, mark Shabbat in some way, and celebrate Passover and Hanukkah. Jewish adults who are financially struggling include the largest share of those who mark Shabbat.

⁷ Pew Research Center, "Jewish Americans in 2020."

⁸ Pew Research Center, "Jewish Americans in 2020."

Table 20. Jewish ritual practices

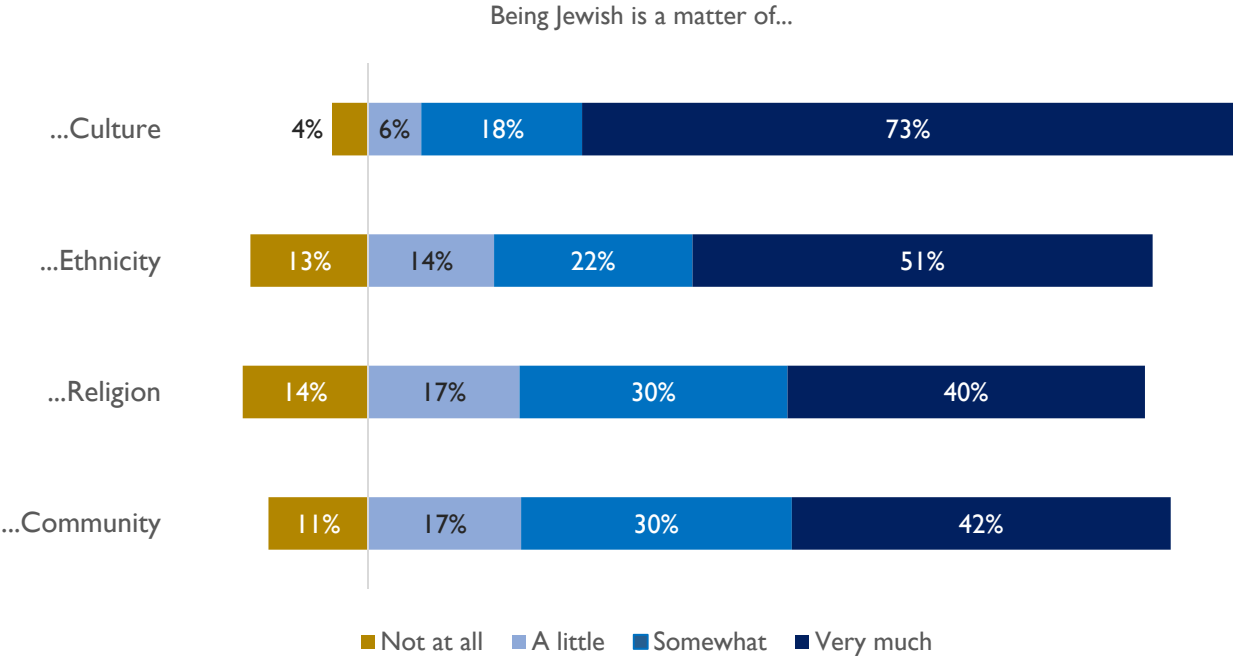
	Hanukkah candles (%)	Passover seder (%)	Fasted on Yom Kippur (%)	Marks Shabbat (%)	Keep kosher at home (%)
All Jewish adults	86	81	60	59	11
Jewish engagement					
Minimally Involved	38	10	7	4	<1
Familial	97	93	53	37	1
Personal	96	94	63	73	13
Involved	100	96	83	77	4
Immersed	100	100	96	96	47
Synagogue membership					
Not synagogue member	84	75	47	47	6
Synagogue member	98	97	86	79	24
Region					
Essex	90	87	55	59	12
Union	88	82	67	59	16
Morris	89	76	65	51	9
Western GMW	84	80	48	60	11
Age					
18-34	94	89	60	73	25
35-49	97	91	67	64	10
50-64	89	84	61	52	7
65-74	79	68	50	51	11
75+	81	78	53	52	9
Marital status					
Inmarried	94	91	66	70	19
Intermarried	86	72	46	34	1
Not married	76	70	55	52	6
Household composition					
Minor children in household	98	91	66	64	11
Couple, no children	87	80	55	59	18
Single, no children	63	62	52	42	3
Multiple Adults, no children	88	80	58	51	6
Financial situation					
Struggling	95	84	52	75	18
Enough	87	79	61	57	10
Extra	85	82	57	47	7
Well-off	92	87	62	56	15

Note: Those who could not fast on Yom Kippur for medical reasons are not included in the column “Fasted on Yom Kippur.” “Marks Shabbat” includes candle lighting or special meal. Passover seder and Hanukkah candles refers to observance by anyone in the household.

ATTITUDES ABOUT BEING JEWISH

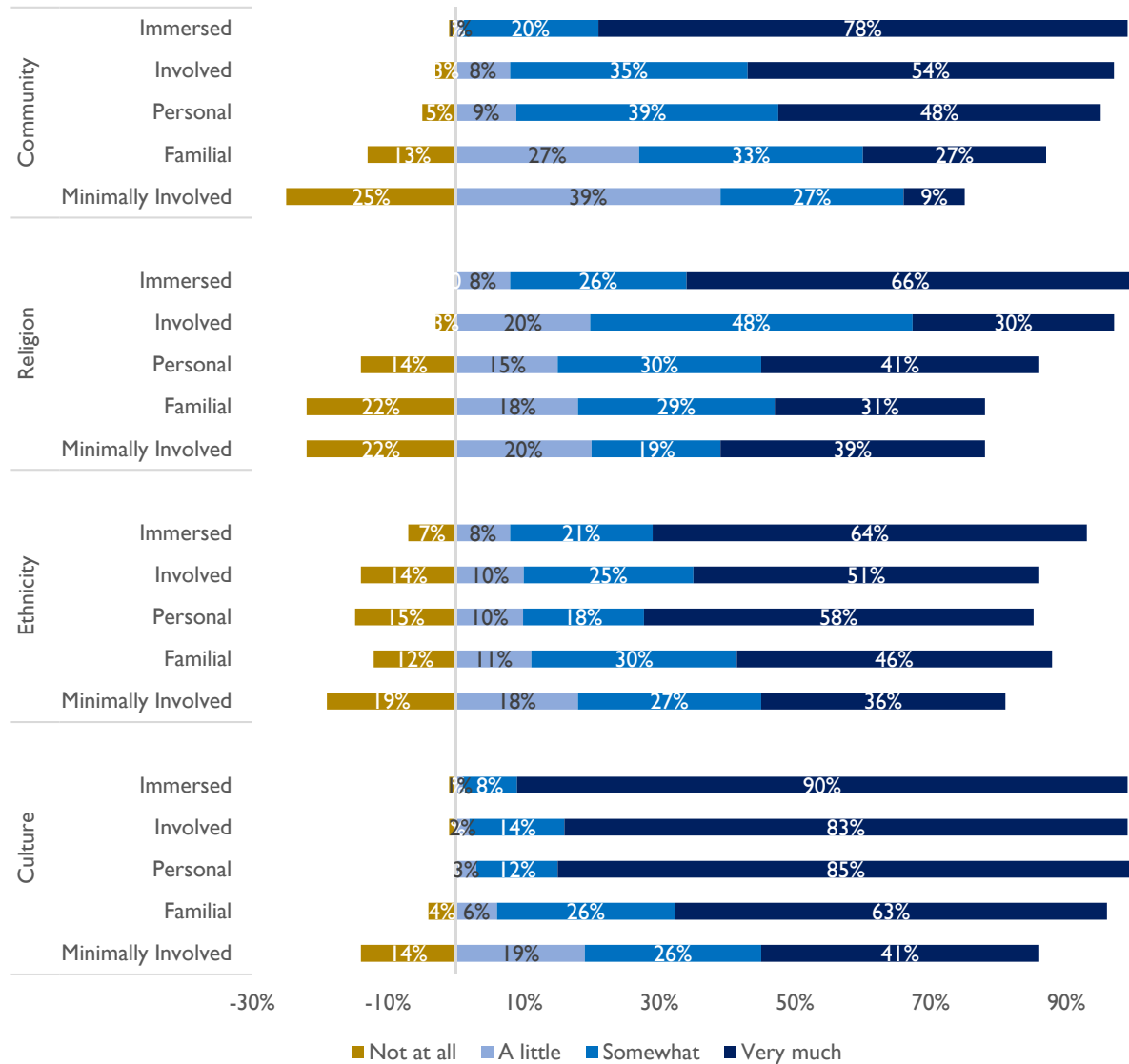
Nearly three quarters (73%) of Jewish adults in Greater MetroWest feel that being Jewish is very much a matter of culture, with smaller shares feeling strongly that being Jewish is a matter of ethnicity, community, and religion. (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Meaning of being Jewish



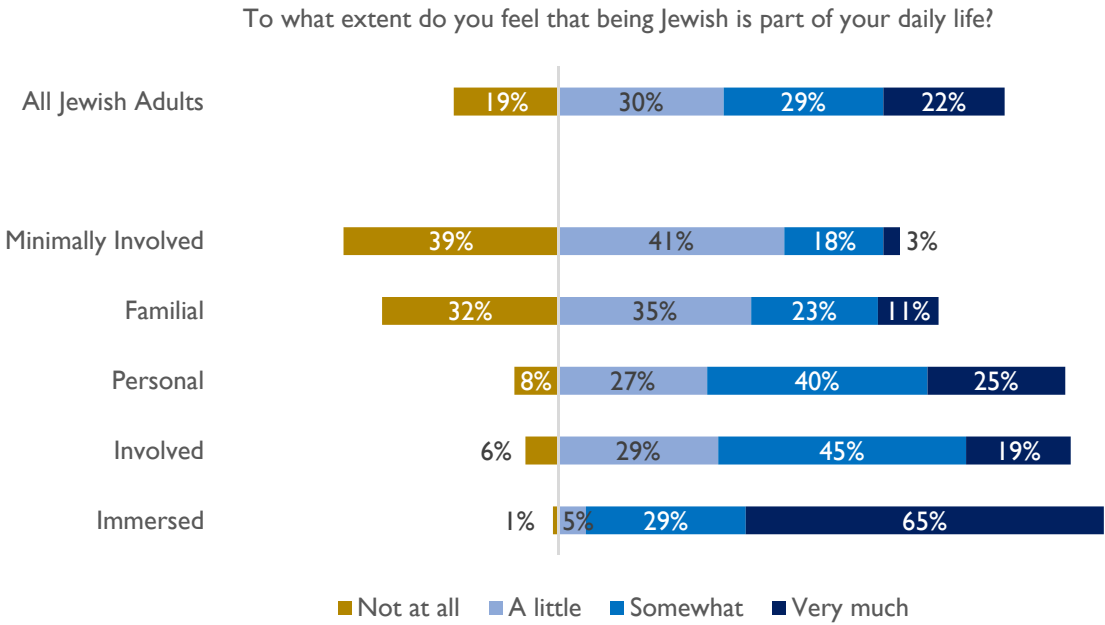
These views, however, differ by type of Jewish engagement. In particular, Jewish adults in the Immersed group are much more likely to think of Judaism as a matter of religion and community than any other group (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Attitudes about being Jewish by Jewish engagement categories



To capture the overall importance of Jewish life, we asked whether Jewish adults feel that being Jewish is part of their daily life. Overall, one-in-five Jewish adults (22%) feel that being Jewish is very much part of their daily life (Figure 5). Unsurprisingly, this attitude differs by engagement group. Nearly two thirds (65%) of Jewish adults in the Immersed group feel that being Jewish is “very much” part of their daily life, compared to 3% of Jewish adults in the Minimally Involved group.

Figure 5. Judaism part of daily life



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