

On Sunday, May 5 and 26, the teens from Beth Emet and Second Baptist who participated in the [Sankofa Civil Rights'](#) trip shared their experiences on the trip and how the trip has had an impact on their lives. In preparation for the trip, we learned from the story of creation that God created all human beings in the Divine image which means we are all equal, but not the same. During the trip we explored our differences, not papering over the divergent ways we experience the world because of our race and religion, in a respectful and thoughtful manner that honored the Divine fractal that each of us represents. The trip was challenging because of its pace-we were in 3 states (Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee) and 5 cities (Atlanta, Selma, Montgomery, Birmingham, and Memphis) in just 6 days-and its intensity-we visited many sites and had many experiences that affected us emotionally and spiritually, and we had conversations that challenged our assumptions about topics such as racism and anti-Semitism that many people would rather ignore or gloss over, especially in a heterogeneous group. Each student and chaperone was paired with a person from the other community with whom we shared our reactions to what we were experiencing. Everyone roomed with their partners which meant that the conversations and interactions continued until we fell asleep, usually late at night. Then after what was always a short night's sleep, we woke up and continued our journey together.

Our journey took place during the week of Passover for the Jews and Holy Week for the Christians so the themes and rituals of these holidays permeated our thinking and activities. We also attended worship services for Good Friday, Easter Sunday, and Shabbat. Sharing prayer and faith was a vital part of our experience.

Since we've been back from the trip, the students have been organizing themselves to continue meeting to explore the issues of inequality and racism in our society and how they might be agents for change. I'm so proud of all the growth and learning they did and the leadership they are taking.

I want to thank everyone who came to the presentations hosted at Second Baptist. We had an excellent turn out and the teens felt uplifted and supported by your presence. If you were unable to join us or you'd like to experience again the powerful learning and growth that happened on our Sankofa journey, you can read the collective memoir that some of our students wrote and performed with the help of Elliot Leffler. Our students are still collecting their thoughts and we'll continue to share these with the community

Rabbi Andrea London