The Sages taught: There was an incident involving one gentile who came before Shammasi. The gentile said to Shammasi: How many Torahs do you have? He said to him: Two, the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. The gentile said to him: With regard to the Written Torah, I believe you, but with regard to the Oral Torah, I do not believe you. Convert me on condition that you will teach me only the Written Torah. Shammasi scolded him and cast him out with reprimand.
The same gentile came before Hillel, who converted him and began teaching him Torah. On the first day, he showed him the letters of the alphabet and said to him: Alef, bet, gimmel, dalet. The next day he reversed the order of the letters and told him that an alef is a tav and so on. The convert said to him: But yesterday you did not tell me that. Hillel said to him: You see that it is impossible to learn what is written without relying on an oral tradition. Didn’t you rely on me? Therefore, you should also rely on me with regard to the matter of the Oral Torah, and accept the interpretations that it contains.

There was another incident involving one gentile who came before Shammai and said to Shammai: Convert me on condition that you teach me the entire Torah while I am standing on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the builder’s cubit in his hand. The same gentile came before Hillel. He converted him and said to him: That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study.

There was another incident involving one gentile who was passing behind the study hall and heard the voice of a teacher who was teaching Torah to his students and saying the verse: “And these are the garments which they shall make: A breastplate, and an efod, and a robe, and a tunic of checkered work, a mitre, and a girdle” (Exodus 28:4). The gentile said: These garments, for whom are they designated? The students said to him: For the High Priest. The gentile said to himself: I will go and convert so that they will install me as High Priest. He came before Shammai and said to him: Convert me on condition that you install me as High Priest. Shammai pushed him with the builder’s cubit in his hand.

He came before Hillel; he converted him. Hillel said to him, to the convert: Is it not the way of the world that only one who knows the protocols [takhsisei] of royalty is appointed king? Go and learn the royal protocols by engaging in Torah study. He went and read the Bible. When he reached the verse which says: “And the common man that draws near shall be put to death” (Numbers 1:51), the convert said to Hillel: With regard to whom is the verse speaking? Hillel said to him: Even with regard to David, king of Israel. The convert reasoned an a fortiori inference himself: If the Jewish people are called God’s children, and due to the love that God loved them he called them: “Israel is My son, My firstborn” (Exodus 4:22), and nevertheless it is written about them: And the common man that draws near shall be put to death; a mere convert who came without merit, with nothing more than his staff and traveling bag, all the more so that this applies to him, as well. The convert came before Shammai and told him that he retracts his demand to appoint him High Priest, saying: Am I at all worthy to be High Priest? Is it not written in the Torah: And the common man that draws near shall be put to death? He came before Hillel and said to him: Hillel the patient, may blessings rest upon your head as you brought me under the wings of the Divine Presence.

The Gemara relates: Eventually, the three converts gathered together in one place, and they said: Shamai’s impatience sought to drive us from the world; Hillel’s patience brought us beneath the wings of the Divine Presence.
Things to know - How do we create welcoming communities?

1. Assume there are people who converted to Judaism in the room!

2. Bias and negative beliefs about converts still exist and affect us.

3. Make Jewish communal spaces accessible by providing resources and making them easy to find.

4. Recognize that converts may not have a built-in Jewish family to celebrate with.

5. Identifying us as converts or asking us to tell our story can make us uncomfortable.

6. People have many different paths to becoming Jewish that are equally valid.

7. Don’t assume that people who converted are less knowledgeable than other Jews.

8. Use inclusive language when teaching or talking about the Jewish backgrounds of people in the community.

9. Recognize the ways that access to Jewish networks benefits some people and disadvantages others.

10. Our relationship to Judaism can be complicated - just like anyone else’s!