

# CORE Groups at Central Synagogue

## Why CORE groups?

Central Synagogue's CORE group strategy reflects our mission: to connect our members more deeply to one another, to our community, to Jewish tradition, and to God.

## What a CORE group is:

CORE groups are intentional, lay-led communities, whose members come together on a regular basis with the understanding that Jewish tradition and deep personal relationships add meaning to our lives.

Some groups choose to focus on in-depth discussion and text study, allowing them to think deeply about "big questions" that affect all of us, but which we do not often make time to reflect upon or discuss.

Others may choose to take on Jewish practice (such as Shabbat observance) as a way to explore the power of Judaism to change their lives.

CORE groups may be longstanding or time-limited, but whatever their duration, they are defined by their members' commitment to engage in a process of transformational learning, reflection and relationship-building.

## *Participating in a CORE group encourages us to:*

**C – Connect** more deeply to each other and to our community.

**O – Open** our hearts and minds to new ideas, experiences and stories.

**R – Relate** the wisdom, tradition and values of Judaism to our everyday lives.

**E – Examine** who we are, who we want to be, and how we want to live.

## What a CORE group is not:

**A CORE group is not a class.** Many of us love learning and lectures, and text study will often be a part of our time together. In a CORE group, however, we use traditional texts to create a shared context for the personal Torah each of us will contribute, drawing on our own experience. A CORE group leader is not there to teach, but rather to facilitate a meaningful conversation based on the full participation of all group members. Likewise, while the clergy and professional staff of the synagogue will offer support and provide suggested content for your conversations, this is an opportunity to learn from one another, not the "professionals."

**A CORE group is not a social club or dinner party.** Don't get us wrong – our groups ARE centered on relationships, and we hope you will make many new meaningful connections. But the focus of your time together is not purely social.

**A CORE group is not group therapy.** People in your core group will offer their personal stories, and you should be prepared to listen, be present, and offer support as they do. But this is not a time to give advice, troubleshoot, or "save."