



## ***Listening Campaign Facilitator Guide***

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# The Listening Campaign:

The Temple strives to build a vibrant, inclusive community where members feel strongly connected to our congregation and to each other. A tangible community involves more than just paying membership dues. We want the Temple to foster relationships that motivate members to live meaningful and impactful Jewish lives.

To further this vision, the Temple is launching a listening campaign. The goal of the listening campaign is to bring members together to learn and to laugh, and to deepen connections to one another and to the Temple. Our listening campaign is designed to bring the diverse voices of our congregation together. This way, we can learn from each other, deepen community, identify and develop future leaders, and discover common interests, passions, and concerns.

The listening campaign is the next step in our engagement initiative. Between October and November, we are training over forty congregants to be facilitators of these important conversations. They will be facilitating dozens of “house parties” in congregants' homes and at the Temple between mid-November and February.

## The Engagement Team

Rabbi Lydia Medwin*	Director of Engagement and Outreach
Sharon Graetz	Engagement Associate
Zachary Hoffman	Engagement Associate
Lauren Grien	Executive Vice President
Hank Kimmel	Vice President
Mark Adelman	Board of Trustees
Spring Asher	Board of Trustees
Julie Levine	Board of Trustees
Kelly Miller	Board of Trustees
Todd Slutzky	Men’s Club Chair

\*Rabbi Lydia will likely be on maternity leave for the duration of the listening campaign. Please direct questions for Rabbi Lydia to Sharon Graetz.

## Facilitator Training #1 Agenda- October 21 & October 26

0-0:10	Schmooze and nosh
0:10-0:35	Goals of Listening Campaign
0:35-1:20	Practice Actual Facilitated Conversation
1:20-2:00	Debrief Conversation – What Worked

\*October 21: 6:30-8:30 pm, October 26: 9:30-11:30 am

## Facilitator Training #2 Agenda- November 4 & November 9

0-0:10	Schmooze and nosh
0:10-0:50	Go thru the Facilitator's Guide
0:50-1:20	Terms – Note Taker, Story, Leader
1:20 – 2:00	Any Remaining Questions

\*November 4: 6:30-8:30 pm, November 9: 9:30-11:30 am

## Questions? Contact Us.

Sharon Graetz      [sgraetz@the-temple.org](mailto:sgraetz@the-temple.org)  
Zachary Hoffman      [zhoffman@the-temple.org](mailto:zhoffman@the-temple.org)  
Lauren Grien      [lgrien1@gmail.com](mailto:lgrien1@gmail.com)  
Hank Kimmel      [hwkimmel@gmail.com](mailto:hwkimmel@gmail.com)  
Julie Levine      [julielevine@aol.com](mailto:julielevine@aol.com)  
Spring Asher      [spring321@bellsouth.net](mailto:spring321@bellsouth.net)

**The Temple Phone: 404-873-1731**

## FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

### Getting ready for your house party

- Create list of people you would like to invite. If you would like help filling your party, contact Sharon or Zachary for additional names and contact information.
- Email Sharon with the scheduled date for your house party.
- Invite your guests – feel free to adapt the sample invitation email and phone call we've provided.
- Ask one of your guests to be the note-taker, and meet with them prior to the party to explain the scribe sheet and define the terminology.
- Send an email reminder to guests a few days prior to the house party.

### During your party

- Make sure everyone wears a nametag.
- Review expectations prior to starting the facilitated conversation.

### After your party

- Review notes with your note-taker. Make sure notes include attendees' names and 6 word memos, if possible.
- Submit the online form, or email your notes to Sharon.
- Follow up with a call or email to thank guests for attending your house party.

# House Party Host Guide

**Thank you for being an important part of the listening campaign.**

We value your input and appreciate your willingness to host a house party. These parties are a critical next step in our efforts to build a vibrant, inclusive community in which members feel strongly connected to our congregation and to each other. The parties will contribute to fostering relationships that motivate members to live meaningful and impactful Jewish lives.

Below are answers to some frequently asked questions. If you have further questions or comments, please contact: Sharon Graetz at [sgraetz@the-temple.org](mailto:sgraetz@the-temple.org) or (404)873-1731.

## PARTY PLANNING

The parties are designed to be vehicles to collect insights, thoughts, and beliefs of our community members, and also to provide an atmosphere for connection. We ask that facilitators invite guests and lead an organized conversation. Within this structure, we hope that facilitators will shape their event in a way that feels comfortable.

### **Who will be invited?**

All congregants will receive an email explaining what the listening campaign is, and provide them with the opportunity to sign up for a house party. With that in mind, facilitators can invite congregants from their own networks, and/or be in touch with Sharon Graetz or Zachary Hoffman for a list of congregants who live near their home or have expressed interest in attending a house party. We would like all new Temple members (who have joined over the past several months) to receive a personal invitation to a house party. Be sure to let us know if you have extra space at your house party so we can make sure everyone is included. Finally, facilitators may be asked to facilitate listening campaign conversations at the Temple (for example, on a Sunday morning during religious school, before a Friday night service, before or after a Sages event, and more).

### **When should I schedule the party?**

Whenever is most convenient for you between mid-November and the end of February. Be sure to let Sharon know when you will be having your house party.

### **How long is the party expected to be?**

The party should be approximately an hour and a half.

### **What's the dress?**

The parties should be casual.

### **Do I serve food and drinks?**

We suggest facilitators provide a light snack such as fruit or cheese and crackers and drinks (soda, juice, water, etc.). Facilitators are also welcome but not required to serve alcohol.

## **GETTING READY FOR THE PARTY**

### **How many people do I invite?**

Aim for 8-12 people at each party (10 being the ideal number), including the scribe and facilitator.

### **How are guests invited?**

Guests should receive a phone call or email from the facilitator 3-4 weeks prior to the party date. If necessary, facilitators can be provided a list of congregants, their phone numbers, and their email addresses.

If people indicate that they would like to attend a party but cannot attend on the date you are hosting, please let Sharon know.

If people do not respond within 3 days, please try calling or emailing one more time. If you still get no response, move on to the next person on your list.

Facilitators should send an email reminder to their guests a few days before the house party.

Alternatively, consider using Evite to keep track of your guests and easily send messages.

### **What do I say?**

**Sample invitation script:** This is \_\_\_\_\_ - I'm also a member of the Temple. I'm hosting a listening campaign house party and I'd love to have you join me and a few other congregants for food, conversation, and the opportunity to get to know each other. This is the next step of the Temple's engagement initiative and we'd really love it if you'd come to our party on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_. This party will give YOU the opportunity to share your voice, and get to know other Temple members.

The goal of the listening campaign is twofold: to connect congregants to one another and to gather information about how to direct the new small groups initiative. We want to build a vibrant, inclusive community where members feel strongly connected to our congregation and to each other. Going forward, we also want to create programming and small groups of people who come together for meaningful events and conversations.

**If the invitee can come,** ask them to bring a six-word memoir to share. A six-word memoir tells a person's life story in just six words.

**Sample email invitation:** I am very excited to let you know that you have been invited to participate in a listening campaign featuring our own Temple members. I would like to personally invite you to join myself and my family and friends at our home at *(time)* on *(date)* for food, conversation, and the opportunity to get to know each other.

The Temple's listening campaign's goal is to understand the needs of our community better, so that the Temple can continue to be relevant to you. We also hope to connect the Temple's members through shared concerns, interests, life stages, and neighborhoods. We want to build a vibrant, inclusive community where members feel strongly connected to our congregation and to each other.

I hope you join me in this opportunity to share your voice, and get to know other members of our Temple.

**Sample email reminder:** I look forward to seeing you at *(time)* on *(date)* for my listening campaign house party! My address is *(address)*, and you can reach me at *(phone number)* if you have any questions. Please remember to bring your six word memoir with you. You can read more about the six word memoir and see examples at <http://sixwordmemoirs.com/about/about-six/>.

### **Who should I ask to be the note-taker?**

Any one of your guests can be the scribe for your house party, but be sure to ask them ahead of time. Meet with your scribe prior to the party to explain the goals of the house party/listening campaign, and how to use the scribe form. Be sure to cover what sort of information calls for pastoral follow-up, what responses suggest that someone might be a potential leader, and what makes a great story. Meet with your scribe after the party to review notes and check that nothing important was missed.

### **What types of responses call for pastoral follow-up from the clergy?**

There are two different situations we foresee that might call for pastoral follow-up. 1) Someone mentions a current hardship or *simcha* (good news), including serious sickness or death, or a birth in the family. 2) Someone mentions a previous situation in which Temple clergy did not contact them at a critical time.

### **What qualities make someone a good leader/potential leader?**

This is a different mode of leadership than what we've come to expect out of a synagogue. This is not a nomination for a committee chair or the board of directors. A leader is simply someone who has followers, and therefore could be expected to lead a small group or a discussion.

The best leaders have the following qualities: exudes friendliness and openness (but not necessarily always outgoing), wants to listen to others, expresses curiosity, is interesting unto themselves, and is willing to not just talk but also do. Some leaders may self-select; other leaders may need a little support from us to realize their capacity. The role of the synagogue is to cultivate both kinds of

leaders, for the sake of the work of the Temple and, most importantly, for the sake of the leader's new understanding about himself or herself in the context of synagogue life and beyond.

### **What makes a good story?**

A "story," for our purposes, is one of those life experiences that you hear from someone in your group that takes your breath away, a story that moves you because of its inspiration or its tragedy. This "story" is something you'd likely repeat to the right person, because it symbolizes a larger truth or personifies a broader societal reality. We like to record "stories" because we may want to return to that person to tell their story at the right place and the right time to help motivate our community in a certain direction – towards addressing the underlying issue or pattern.

## PARTY

### What is the timeline of the party?

<b>Total Time: 90 minutes</b>	
20 minutes	Welcome and Introductions/mingling
45-50 minutes	Facilitated Conversation
20 minutes	Conclusion/Casual conversation

### What is the best seating arrangement for the conversation?

Seating arrangements in which all participants can easily hear and see each other are preferred. If you can arrange your furniture in a circle, or have the conversation at a table, that would be best.

### Who will keep track of the conversation we're having?

Each conversation should be recorded by a predetermined scribe (note taker). The facilitator should meet with the scribe prior to and after the conversation. Please use the form provided for taking notes.

## PARTY FOLLOW UP

### How do I submit the information I learned from the conversations?

Whether you record the information directly into the computer, or you take handwritten notes, please submit the information via the online form. If this is prohibitory, you can also simply email your notes to Sharon Graetz. Make sure to include names of everyone who attended, as well as their six-word memoir if possible.

### If I have more information to share from the evening, how do I do that?

If it's specific to a particular individual, please include that on the form. If it's general information about the evening, please get in touch with Sharon. We greatly value your insights!

### What are the expectations of us after the party?

We encourage you to stay in touch with your guests. If you found common interests, follow up on that! For example, if some people reported a shared interest in Shabbat, invite the group to attend services together and then go out to dinner. If people reported a shared interest in art, invite the group to visit a museum together.

### **What happens next?**

The Engagement team will collect the stories, passions, ideas, and concerns shared in these conversations. In the spring, the Engagement team will report findings to the entire Temple community. Hundreds of new relationships will be built, a new sense of community will emerge, and small groups will be formed.

The Engagement team, in coordination with our lay leaders, will identify common interests, passions and concerns, and begin to invite those members together to form small groups that:

- Focus on the lives and significant concerns of our members.
- Organize around shared interests, life stages and geographies.
- Feature shared Jewish experiences, learning and celebration.
- Are self-led by lay leaders working in a group dynamic.

## SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR HOUSE PARTY

### OPENING: (5 minutes)

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and first and foremost, I want to thank all of you for coming. For those of you who don't know me, I am a Temple member and I have volunteered and been trained to lead some of these small group conversations with the listening campaign.

(Go around the room and ask for people's names and basic biographical information.)

[NOTE to FACILITATORS AND SCRIBES: WRITE DOWN PEOPLE'S NAMES! Make a simple map of the table and put people's names on it as they introduce themselves based on where they're sitting in relation to you (might help if you think of the table as a clock with yourself sitting at 6 o'clock.)]

### WHY WE'RE HERE:

The *sh'ma*, the central prayer in Jewish liturgy, teaches us to listen. We cover our eyes when we say it as if to acknowledge that we need a little help with the distractions that keep us from really hearing what's being communicated to us – from others around us, from our community, from God.

Think of our conversation today as a practice in living the *sh'ma*, *helping us to* build relationships and community by creating a space where we will share with and learn and hear from each other. To help us get started, I'd like to offer some guidelines and ground rules.

Our scribe, \_\_\_\_\_, will be taking notes so that I can focus more deeply on what we are all talking about and help facilitate the conversation. I want to assure you that what we share tonight won't be shared outside of our engagement team without your permission.

### EXPECTATION SETTING:

- We'd love to hear from everyone, but of course you don't have to talk if you aren't comfortable.
- And because our time is short, please keep regulate your responses so as to allow everyone the chance to talk. Please don't be offended if I move things along to make sure everyone gets a chance to talk. I'm actually going to ask for everyone's permission to interrupt to move things along. (STOP AND GET EVERYONE'S PERMISSION). Thanks!

### INTRODUCTIONS: (5-10 minutes)

Go around the table and ask each person to briefly introduce themselves by briefly share their six-word memoir.

### FACILITATED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Before each question is a bit of background and context that we hope will help you facilitate the conversation. Feel free to read it directly or rephrase as it feels comfortable to you.

### **QUESTION 1: (10 minutes)**

Rabbi Medwin gave a sermon over Rosh Hashanah that talked about the ways that being connected to a community, especially a religious community, adds meaning and health to our lives, and can even help us to live longer and to age with more health. The lack of community causes the opposite – research shows that its impact is the same as smoking 15 cigarettes a day! We know that community and the relationships that create it are vital to a physically, psychologically, and spiritually healthy life, but it's not always easy to find the time to invest in those relationships. In the spirit of thinking more deeply about community, our first question for tonight will help us know better what makes for a great community, and what elements should we try to avoid as a community. If you are comfortable, please **share a story about a time when your synagogue or community was there for you or conversely, a story about a time your community let you down.**

### **QUESTION 2: (15 minutes)**

One of the most powerful reasons for belonging to a synagogue is that we can do more together than we can do alone. Whether it is fighting to end sex trafficking, advocating for the State of Israel, or walking in the Pride parade; whether it is playing mahjong, enjoying a round of golf, or reaching a running goal; whether it is celebrating a simchah, mourning a loved one, or learning something that changes your life – all of us are stronger because we have each other. It is part of what we see as the value of having a vibrant Jewish synagogue – we can become and do more together than we can do as individuals. As we move into an engagement model of gathering the Temple community together in groups of 10-12, we are considering all that we could accomplish as a community. This leads us to wonder from you, in ways big and small: **What would you want to do with a group of people that you can't do on your own?** Don't worry – this is not a sign up. We'll let you know when it's time for that. This is just a brainstorm.

### **QUESTION 3: (15 minutes)**

The Temple knows that we always have to adapt to the times in which we live – it's what has kept the Temple vibrant over its 150 years. As a Temple community, we know that we are uniquely positioned to help each other with the “stuff” going on in our lives. And so, as we end this evening, we'd like to check in with you. **At what crossroads do you find yourself right now in life?**

### **THANK YOU:**

Thank you for participating in the conversation, our time really flew by. I also want to talk about next steps.

### **You may be wondering: what's next?**

Over the next few months the listening campaign's team will collect the stories, passions, ideas, and concerns shared in these conversations. In the spring, the Engagement Team will report findings to entire Temple community.

Our hope is that these conversations help to build hundreds of new relationships, and that a new sense of community will emerge. It would be a great thing if 1,000 people in our community had conversations with each other. But that's not all we are doing.

Next, the Engagement team will identify common interests, passions and concerns and begin to invite members together to form small groups that:

- Focus on the lives and significant concerns of our members.
- Organize around shared interests, life stages and geographies.
- Feature shared Jewish experiences, learning and celebration.
- Are self-led by lay leaders working in a group dynamic.

We want you to imagine hundreds of Temple members gathering regularly in small, lay-led groups to learn and laugh, and to develop meaningful Jewish relationships that deepen connection to one another, and to the Temple.

### **So, how can you get involved?**

- A) In the coming months, we will be looking for motivated people to participate in pilot small groups. We haven't created the small groups yet or developed focus for the small groups. That will come after we finish the listening process and learn from what we heard. But these pilot groups will help us learn and develop replicable models for the congregation.
- B) For those that want to participate, but may not be ready to be part of the pilot group that will meet regularly, we are considering new opportunities to gather in small interest groups to do some activities in the Fall.
- C) So my request is simply this:
  - a. If you enjoyed the conversation tonight, encourage your friends to go to the website and to sign up to attend a house party in the coming month(s).
  - b. If you are interested in being in a pilot small group, that process will likely begin sometime in the spring or summer. Please be sure to let me know you are interested in being a part of it.
- D) Finally, I want to thank each of you for participating this evening.

## **CONCLUSION AND CASUAL CONVERSATION – 20 MINUTES**

This is a time to continue the conversation have casual conversation. These 20 minutes also give you some time to go over if things aren't running on schedule.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ □○△

Six Word Memoir: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1: Community

Question 2: Group

Question 3: Crossroads

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ □○△

Six Word Memoir: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 1: Community

Question 2: Group

Question 3: Crossroads