



TEMPLE BETH EL

OF SOUTH ORANGE COUNTY

The Samueli Center for Progressive Judaism

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Small Groups at Temple Beth El

Our congregation has identified that building meaningful relationships among congregants is a top priority for our community. This year, we will create opportunities through “small groups” for congregants to connect with others in an intentional and structured way. Initially, a small group meets for 6 weeks around a compelling topic. Our inaugural six week program that begins in the fall is entitled:

How Our Relationships Can Help Us Live More Fully.

Each group will pick its own weekly time to meet during the period of *October 20 – December 1, 2017*. Each weekly session will have a topic with a teaching from one of the rabbis accompanied by discussion questions.

After the six week period has ended, the members of each small group will decide if they want to continue meeting. They can pick study materials and topics from a recommended list, or plan to attend synagogue services together, or engage in a social action project. Group members can also decide to form or join another group or take a break from meeting with the group.

How Does A Small Group Get Formed?

During the High Holy Days, every member of the congregation will be invited to be a HOST. A HOST picks up the 6 Week Program kit (distributed right outside the sanctuary and chapel on Yom Kippur) which includes: A DVD, HOST instructions, Discussion materials, and other resources. The HOST can invite 1 or more people of their choice to form a “small group.” The people can be Temple members or not. The minimum size of the group is 2 and the recommended maximum is 8.

The HOST finds a weekly time during the six week period to host the group at their home. When the HOST gets agreement from its members, they will go to the synagogue website and report who is in their group, as well as the dates and times they are meeting.

Each small group will also be assigned to a COMMUNITY LEADER – a congregant who has had leadership training in small group facilitation. This COMMUNITY LEADER will contact the small group HOST at one point during the six week program to check in about how the group is going. The HOST can also reach out to the COMMUNITY LEADER for advice.

What Happens During the "Small Group"?

For the Initial six weeks of the life of the small group, there is a "curriculum" or series of topics and materials to provoke meaningful conversation and reflections. This fall, our six week program is:

How Our Relationships Can Help Us Live More Fully

Session 1: Introduction to Covenant: The Jewish View of Sacred Relationship

Session 2: "If I Am Not for Myself..." Self Respect and a Personal Relationship with God

Session 3: Shema: Sacred Listening

Session 4: "Let There Be Light" The Power of Our Words

Session 5: *Am Yisrael*: Being a Part of a People

Session 6: Widening Our Circle: Expanding Our Connections and Embracing Diversity

Each session will include a 10-15 minute DVD segment or YouTube video followed by discussion questions that engage people in exploring the material and sharing personal experiences.

The role of the HOST is to:

H- Have a heart for people

O – Open your home

S – Serve a snack

T – Turn on a DVD or YouTube video

At the end of the six week period, groups will be invited to share their experiences at a Shabbat dinner with the congregation as a whole.