
TORAH IN A BOX - BUILD YOUR OWN JEWISH COMMUNITY GUIDE

MATERIALS

- Board/Map of Town
- Game Pieces (not included)
- Letter From the Investors
- Sheets with sources and \$ cost of each community institution.
- \$8 million in fake money (not included)
 - 3 - 1 million
 - 5 - 500K
 - 20 - 100K
 - 10 - 50K

THE MAP

Split into 3 sections, each with a different price range for land:

1. Jewish Community (x1.25)
2. Midtown (x1.5)
3. Industrial area (x1)

- note the different costs of land and how that impacts buying land and building there.

Unless the card says otherwise, the price of the "land" on the source cards should be increased according to where the institution is built.

You can play in teams or as a group! How do you win? Build a community!

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

WITH CONSIDERATIONS/MEKOROT THAT ARE NOT INCLUDED ON THE SOURCE SHEET

Beit Din/Court of Law

Source: Rambam, Laws of Kings 7:26

- One may not go to secular courts, even if the secular courts rule similar to the Jewish courts.
- Think: what does the CRC do?
- Divorce, Conversion, Monetary disputes, Kashrut (yum)

Cemetery

Source: Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Dei'ah 363:1

- Don't take a deceased person from a city with a cemetery to another city. Unless the body is going to be buried in Israel from outside of Israel.
- When we're looking for Jewish communities in Europe, we always look for a Jewish cemetery because you can't have a community without it
- You can control if you go to the mikvah, or travel for the mikvah, but what about burial?

Eiruv

Source: Responsa of Rabbeinu Asher (Rosh) 21:8

- A community without an Eiruv is actively causing people to break Shabbat.
- Communities should endeavor to the greatest extent to build an Eiruv.
- Who would move to a Jewish community without an Eiruv?

Gemach/Chessed Fund

Source: Yevamot 78 – there are 3 characteristics of the Jewish people: bashful, sympathetic and generous/giving.

- "How can you call yourself a Jewish community without chessed?"

JCC

- Where will people play basketball? Go to preschool? Camp?
- Are there *more* ways that you can use the JCC?

Kosher Supermarket

- *Note: we assume that the cost of this "supermarket" is adding a Kosher section to a local institution such as Jewel.*
- Other Jewish communities, such as Charleston, SC, don't have a butcher, they receive meat from Atlanta every six weeks. Is this a viable option? How many staple products in the supermarkets are also kosher?

Mikvah

Source: Beit Yisrael of the Chofetz Chaim #3

- One cannot live in a city that does not have a ritual bath.
- And should you find a community that does not have a mikvah, force the people of the city, young and old, to build a mikvah.
- This supersedes building a shul, buying a Torah scroll and all other mitzvot.
- Why is a Mikvah so important? Married couples can't be together without a mikvah (no need for further elaboration)
- Is there an alternative to a mikvah? Perhaps a nearby river or lake that can be used instead of a whole building?
- Consideration of building next to shul vs. separate: (1) less tzanua and women feel less comfortable (2) If it's in a building then the mikvah lady can live above the mikvah instead of needing many women to set aside time as attendants

School

Source: Rambam, Laws of Talmud Torah 2:1

- There should be schoolteachers in every city
- Every city without teachers are excommunicated until they bring in teachers
- Why? Because the world sustains through the Torah learning of school children learning Torah.
- Is going to public school with after school learning an option?
- What about K-8 and then a boarding school for high school?
- Will costs look different if you have separate vs. co-ed schooling?
- Note: Even if a school is fiscally sufficient/responsible/independent and takes in the same amount of tuition as it spends, there are still costs to build the structure and pay for land.

Shul

Source: Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 150:1-2

1. We force the community to build a shul
 2. Can't have any home in the community bigger than the shul – it is the most important building in the community
- Do you build the building considering the size of the current community or the hopeful growth of the community? Will you run programs in the shul, or only daven (shteeble vs shul. *think*: Skokie shuls vs. BCD)?
 - Location of Shul? Seemingly needs to be near Jewish homes.
 - o Note: Big split between Orthodox and Conservative: driving to shul on Shabbat

Additional Notes/Rules

- If the group concludes their best option is to combine institutions then cut the price in half for each place

A FEW MORE THINGS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- (If you want: rank the institutions in order of priority *before* you start. Then see the sources and evaluate.)
- This game takes place in Springfield, IL which is 3.5 hours from Chicago and 1.5 from St. Louis
- Players will work in their groups deciding how to lay out their Jewish community. The facilitator will play devil's advocate and help them think about why they choose one institution over another, and where to place each building.
 1. If you map out your community and you can pay for everything then consider this: "Will you be able to support the institutions after a year, two years, five years?... Do you want to start with no money in the bank?"
 2. Is there an advantage to an institution that *makes* money?
 3. (This should go without saying but somehow needs repeating:) It is impossible to spend more money than you have.

Note: Try to think out of the box. Do we really need a school? Can't we just send our kids to boarding school? How necessary is a butcher? Can we daven in a home and forget building a whole shul? Even if unconventional, considering similar questions brings decision-making to life.

Closing Thoughts:

Jewish communities are not naturally grown, they are built with hard work and careful decision making. While חס ושלום would anyone ever move out of Chicago, one day we may be involved in building a Jewish community: maybe in Springfield, maybe in Israel! In just the past 10 years, a number of communities have sprouted and those involved had to ask these very questions (ex: Ramat Beit Shemesh 3 & 4)!