

Shalom!

Thank you for signing on to be a host or facilitator for The Conversation of Shearith Israel. This document is to help all of us coordinate our efforts and answer any questions. We'll explain our goals, what your role in the process is, and how you will be supported throughout.

- I. **What is the Conversation**
- II. **Goals**
- III. **What happens at a typical house meeting**
- IV. **Host Roles and Responsibilities**
- V. **Facilitator Roles and Responsibilities**
- VI. **Note Taker Roles and Responsibilities**

I. **What is The Conversation**

- A. A series of intentional, facilitated conversations that are recorded and analyzed by our team. This will be an opportunity for every Shearith Israel member to share their voice and their story with the congregation and one another. Hearing the stories of other Shearith Israel members will deepen connections and form new relationships and friendships.

II. **Goals**

- A. The Conversation will help us **find out** where we are today as Shearith Israel, and where we might be going together, so that we might achieve even more meaning in our lives and impact in our community.
- B. We will identify trends and themes that emerge through The Conversation that will help us prioritize the work of the Congregation.
- C. Identify who within the Congregation is most energized to help make transformation happen.
 - 1. Nothing that will happen in our future happens by magic. It will take many hands working together to achieve our best collective self.

III. **What happens at a typical house meeting**

- A. Opening (Facilitator / 10 minutes)
 - 1. Welcome (2 minutes)
 - 2. Why we're here (3 minutes)
 - 3. D'var Torah (3 minutes)
 - 4. Ground Rules (2 minutes)
- B. Rounds (The facilitator begins, everyone has the opportunity to share their answer for 2-4 minutes / 30-40 minutes per round / 60-70 minutes total)
 - 1. What is the Jewish journey that brought you to this point in your life?

2. Where do you see the next steps of your Jewish Journey taking you?
- C. Interpretation (10-20 minutes)
1. The facilitator will bring together some threads of the conversation and facilitate open discussion about what we can learn from it. (shortened)
- D. Next Steps (3 minutes)
1. Participants will be informed about how the Conversation will be utilized and what next steps they can take to remain engaged.
 2. Participants will be invited to fill out a form (at a table, with pens provided by host) to evaluate the experience and share anything that might have been missed.

IV. Host Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Choose a date and time for your conversation**
[The Conversation Organizing Sheet](#)
2. **Make sure there are 10-12 unique participants at your conversation**
3. **Set up the space in a comfortable manner, optionally providing light snacks and drinks**

More details on above

- **Choose a date and time for your conversation**
 - Select any time that is not Shabbat (Friday at sundown to Saturday after dark) between **Wednesday October 17th-November 7th**.
 - There can be more than one conversation on any given night.
 - We will be publishing the dates and times once they are all confirmed.
[The Conversation Organizing Sheet](#)
- **Make sure there are at least 6-10 unique participants at your conversation**
 - This is the most important, and time intensive step, **and** we are relying on you.
 - The best practice for this will be calling and inviting potential participants directly, though you may use any method of communication you wish.
 - You can choose the makeup of the group
 - It could be mostly friends who already know one another and are comfortable
 - It could also be intentionally diverse, **both** demographically and across friend groups within the congregation
 - Shearith Israel staff will support you in this step.

- We will provide a list of congregants that are either new members, or perhaps have been less engaged in Shearith Israel. We want to make sure they are included in the process
 - We will create 'sign-up geniuses' online for each conversation **where** congregants will have the opportunity to choose at their convenience. We will work with you to determine the number of slots you wish to make available on the sign-up genius.
- **Set up the space in a comfortable manner**
 - Chairs, couches, or some combination should be arranged in a circular manner to facilitate easy conversation
 - If you choose to have food and beverages, please make sure you add extra time to the total to allow for schmoozing and in order to maintain the expectation that the conversation itself is the purpose to be there.

V. **Facilitator Roles and Responsibilities**

- A. **Attend facilitator training, watch video of training, or have a conversation with Rabbi Kaiman or Shana Tabak about facilitation**
- B. **Open the conversation by welcoming the room, sharing intentions, D'var Torah, and ground rules**
- C. **Model openness, vulnerability, and brevity when beginning the rounds**
 - a. **The most important role perhaps is creating the space that encourages relational conversation.**
 - i. **When it is your turn, don't talk about general policy or current events or societal trends, but about why an issue is important to you personally or to people you know and care about.**
 - ii. **Listen closely to all.**
 - iii. **This is a time for sharing our stories, not brainstorming details or talking about specific programs. We need to hear about what's going on from each other before we can really start talking about solutions.**
 - iv. **This is about dreaming about how we can improve the world around us and make our synagogue even stronger and more vital in our lives. We don't want to waste this time by turning it into a gripe session.**
 - v. **Suspend judgment**
 - vi. **No criticism: This isn't a time to debate – first we just have to listen to each other.**
 - vii. **We are looking for participants to share *themselves*, not just what they think.**
- D. **Help participants to stay within time domain, and encourage an environment to help people share from their hearts**

- E. Listen carefully, and draw together themes for a group discussion and learning at the end**
- F. Share next steps with the participants**