



# Intergenerational Torah Study Congregation Emanu-El of Westchester

RYE, NY

## WHO ARE THE LEARNERS? THE TEACHERS?

- Intergenerational teams consisting of two adults, one teen, and 4-5 sixth or seventh grade students
- Adults and teens learn when studying with the rabbi and teach when working with the students
- The Rabbi works with adults and teens on Judaic content.
- The educator works with adults and teens on pedagogy

Adults range in age with some members in their eighties and others in their forties and fifties. Many no longer have kids in the school. Also, all parents of 6th and 7th graders are asked to participate at least one time. Many of the adults participate over several years creating continuity in the model. Most of the teens are in 10th – 12th grade.

## WHEN DOES THE MODEL TAKE PLACE?

- Once a month during Sunday school hours
- Three times a year for the sixth grade
- Four times a year for the seventh grade

## WHERE DOES THE MODEL TAKE PLACE?

- Meetings with the Rabbi take place in the synagogue library
- Meetings with the students take place in synagogue classrooms

## HOW IS THE LEARNING DESIGNED?

- Teens, adults and parents meet with Rabbi to study relevant text each month.
- Educator meets with the teams to think about how to approach the text with the kids.
- Teams meet for 15 minutes to decide how they will teach the text.
- In the meantime, students read over the text in their classes.

- Teams lead learning with 4-5 students for 35 minutes.

Adult volunteers and teens can participate in the model without advance preparation. They study the text, decide how to focus the learning, and then meet with the students.

## WHY IS THE LEARNING DESIGNED THIS WAY?

- To create community through Learning and Study, one of the three pillars outlined in the congregational vision.
- To provide Jewish role models for students.
- To promote idea that congregants of all ages are valued members of the community.
- To enable students to see that the Torah is a living aspect of Judaism.

As the students and adults engage in study together, each brings their own experience to the process. They create connections to one another and to the texts.

## KEY FIRST STEPS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

- President of congregation spoke about the model on the High Holidays.
- Personal contact with potential volunteers.
- Calendar set early on and shared with volunteers.

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THE MODEL

- Originally created in partnership with lay people.
- Lay team still involved in assessment of the model from year to year.

## BUDGET/RESOURCES

- Commitment of time on the part of the Rabbi and the educator to prepare teams to work with students.
- Commitment of time on the part of adults and teens to work with the students.
- LOMED funds used this year to bring in Educational Resource Provider to work with the teams.

Given the volunteer nature of the model, the congregation incurs almost no additional cost.

### **INTEGRATION OF GESHER FAMILIES AND LARGER CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY**

This model involves all of the students in 6th and 7th grade.

### **IMPACT ON LEARNERS, TEACHERS, CONGREGATION**

- Fulfilled a need for older congregants looking for a connection with the Temple.
- The experience connects 6th and 7th graders to what they will be doing in their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Provides additional opportunity for teen engagement beyond being a teaching assistant on Sunday mornings.
- Builds connections across the generations in the congregation.