



Shabbat 2.0, Reform Temple of Forest Hills

FOREST HILLS, NY

WHO ARE THE LEARNERS? THE TEACHERS?

- An intergenerational cross-section of the congregation
- Empty-nester families, families with young children, families with children in grades 1-7
- Rabbis, Rabbinic Educator, Cantor, Educational Leader and one teacher

WHEN DOES THE MODEL TAKE PLACE?

- Two times a month on Shabbat
- Mix of Shabbat dinner, Shabbat morning and Havdalah sessions

WHERE DOES THE MODEL TAKE PLACE?

- In various synagogue spaces
- At home when learners use the ritual object studied at the prior session
- One off-site session to deliver food and visit recipients

HOW IS THE LEARNING DESIGNED?

- Shabbat 2.0 is designed to foster community among participants
- Facilitators provide opportunities for both informal and experiential learning
- Sessions begin with community-building “schmooze” time
- The group is divided to facilitate age appropriate learning initially and then comes back together to share feedback
- Learners without children participating received art projects completed by the children during group learning to add to their Shabbat baskets
- Learning sessions are followed by participation in the congregation’s Shabbat service

Shabbat 2.0 participants received Shabbat baskets during the first session of the model. Learning in subsequent sessions centered around each of the items in the basket. On Shabbat mornings when Shabbat

Central met, Shabbat 2.0 participants joined with the rest of the religious school.

WHY is the learning designed this way?

- To centralize Shabbat, bringing it back into people’s lives, and to reinvigorate Saturday mornings in the synagogue
- To help foster deeper connections for participants into the larger congregational community
- To provide community in good times and in bad
- The model complements another initiative, Shabbat Central, in which the entire religious school comes on Shabbat morning together with their parents.
- Wanted to bridge the gaps between youngest and oldest members of the congregation.

KEY FIRST STEPS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

- Identifying people who would be interested in participating in the model
- Conducted a focus group to develop model
- Preparing the Shabbat baskets and the curriculum including what items should be in the basket that participants would then focus on throughout the year

Participants received personal, individual invitations to join the model in order to keep numbers manageable in the pilot year. One outcome of the focus group was conceiving of Shabbat 2.0 as an additional learning opportunity rather than one which would replace the regular religious school experience.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR SHABBAT 2.0

- Initial lay oversight included representation from each of the groups in the model – an empty-nester, parents with young children, and the religious school committee chairs.
- All involved in development of model and also provided feedback to facilitator’s about the sessions during the year.

BUDGET/RESOURCES

- Funding for model came from Legacy Heritage Innovation Project grant money
- Additional costs include Shabbat baskets for each family and one for each grade in religious school, meals, and additional funding for staff

The congregation is looking for ways to sustain the model without the grant money in coming years.

INTEGRATION OF SHABBAT 2.0 FAMILIES AND LARGER CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Families participated in the four Shabbat Central events during the year.
- Religious school age children continued to attend religious school classes on Sunday.

IMPACT ON LEARNERS, TEACHERS, CONGREGATION

- The congregation created a richer intergenerational experience for Shabbat Central.
- Families feel more connected to the congregation and more knowledgeable about Shabbat.
- Participants in Shabbat 2.0 became more involved as leaders in the congregational community
- Increased involvement in congregational activities and programming