

Three Congregations: Aligning Visions, Goals and Models

Congregation 1:

Vision	Goals Derived From Vision	Model
<p>“From where will my help come?” ask our families as they try to raise children with Jewish identities in our contemporary society. One kind of learning gives the answer now as it has for generations: learning as a family at the <i>seder</i>.</p> <p>All the generations of our Temple family come to the learning table (in our homes, the community or at the Temple) to join in song, food, ritual, stories and discussion to learn from one another. We immerse ourselves in the experiences of our tradition to know how to live in the world today. We honor all kinds of questions and all kinds of learners.</p> <p>Four key questions, asked by the youngest to oldest in our Temple family, guide learning that will enrich Jewish identity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can I develop my relationship to the spiritual and to God? 2. How should I treat myself and others as a result of my relationship with God and Jewish tradition? 3. How can I discover and fulfill my Jewish responsibility to the earth and to future generations? 4. How can I explore and express my commitment to Eretz Yisrael? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who will learn? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) All members of the Temple 2. How will learning take place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Engage all the senses b) Experience Jewish traditions c) Draw constructively from the questions of learners d) Respect all kinds of learners 3. Where will learning take place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) In the home b) In the Temple c) In the community 4. Who will be the teachers? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Each learner is also a teacher b) Teachers are specially trained in constructivist learning 5. Why will learning take place? To know how to live in today's world- to have a Jewish identity 6. What is the focus of the learning? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Developing skills and experiences for spiritual/God experiences b) <i>Mitzvot, middot</i> and other teachings that inform how one treats others and self c) Torah, rabbinic and modern sources on caring for the earth d) History, traditions, values embodied in Israel and contemporary Jewish life 	<p><i>Sedarim</i> Children attend weekly classes focused on skill building enabling them to participate in weekly <i>sedarim</i>. Weekday class provides time to reflect on <i>seder</i>.</p> <p>Each <i>seder</i> consists of an active Jewish experience, a discussion, meal, and song.</p> <p>Four <i>sedarim</i> each month, students attend with family:</p> <p>Once a month Friday night service and Shabbat <i>seder</i></p> <p>Once a month according to the calendar holiday <i>seder</i></p> <p>Once a month a social action <i>seder</i></p> <p>Once a month a Shabbat morning service and <i>seder</i></p>

Congregation 2:

Vision	Goals Derived From Vision	Model
<p>The Sabbath is a sanctuary in time—a place to raise children who are growing up in a hectic and stressful world. Calm, family and joy characterize Shabbat. As the cornerstone of our gathering, the rituals connected with Shabbat enable our children to experience learning and praying in a way that makes their lives richer. The riches we want for our children are for them to have lives of meaning and purpose. Torah, tradition and community are treasures for their exploration.</p> <p>The children in our congregation are the future. We all share a responsibility in raising them to be Jewish adults to live in today's world guided by the wisdom of Torah and community. We can raise a generation of children who will fondly recall “I grew up in a community that cared about me.” And then each adult in our congregation will fondly recall, “I helped the world and all of Israel become more whole.”</p> <p>Realization of this vision relies upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents, children, and non-parent members participating together. • Teaching led by professional staff, integrating enthusiastic volunteer congregants (parents, non-parents, older students) as a trained team. • Programming incorporated into the greater synagogue community so that learners become part of our community. • Treasuring Shabbat as our day for learning and community. • Curriculum that moves from learning to action in daily life. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who will learn? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Primary focus on children b) Adults also learn in order to help children 2. How will learning take place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) In a loving environment b) In a communal environment. 3. Where will learning take place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) In the school and the sanctuary on Shabbat and weekdays 4. Who will be the teachers? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Professional teachers b) Adults in the community responsible for developing curriculum and sharing Shabbat with children 5. Why will learning take place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) So students can apply Torah to daily life b) Students can relish the rest of Shabbat 6. What is the focus of the learning? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Torah that applies to daily life choices b) Shabbat and holiday skills c) Tikkun Olam d) Israel 	<p>Students learn two times a week in <i>havurot</i> that are grouped as mix grades and taught by professional teachers. (<i>Havurah Aleph</i>: grades 1-2, <i>Havurah Bet</i>: grades 3-4, <i>Havurah Gimel</i>: grades 5-6). <i>Havurot</i> focus on learning skills for Torah learning, Shabbat and holiday observation, <i>Tikkun Olam</i> and Israel.</p> <p>Curriculum for each <i>havurah</i> is developed by congregational Adult Study Groups. Adults (parents and others) in the community spend 4 weeks studying a subject on an adult level in an area that is a focus for the children's <i>havurah</i>. The Adult Study Groups then work for three weeks with a professional curriculum director to create material and learning activities for the children's <i>havurot</i>. Once a month the children celebrate Shabbat with their families and their Adult Study Group. The cycle of Adult Learning, planning, children's learning and Shabbat Celebration happens continuously throughout the year.</p>

Congregation 3:

Vision

Derived Goals

Model

Creating memories of the heart.

Respecting that each learner connects to Judaism in a unique way, our school, like Jerusalem, has eight gateways for entering. Each gateway leads to a different site like a museum, a classroom, a nursing home or a place yet imagined. And because children need role models, caring adults and peers from the congregation help create memories, no child enters a gateway alone.

Like Jerusalem, where all meandering lanes lead to the Western Wall, all our paths eventually meet in our sanctuary, facing east, for shared prayers, hopes and stories. Standing together, children build memories for a lifetime by having choice and learning with purpose within a caring community.

8 Gateways to Memorable Learning:

1. Torah: Gate to Living as a *Mensch*
2. Music and Dance: Gate to Culture and Spirit
3. Jewish Literature: Gate to Our People and History
4. Prayer: Gate to the Holy
5. *Tikkun Olam*: Gate to Healing
6. Israel and Spoken Hebrew: Gate to Our People and to Our Land
7. Holiday celebration: Gate to Joy
8. The Arts: Gate to Jewish Imagination

Goals:

1. Who will learn?
 - a) Children are primary learners
2. How will learning take place?
 - a) Directed by choice of learner
 - b) Active engagement, personal reflection, real application
3. Where will learning take place?
 - a) Multiple settings
 - b) Include sanctuary
4. Who will be the teachers?
 - a) Professional teachers
 - b) Adults in the community who have expertise in one of the gates
5. Why will learning take place?
 - a) To honor the different interests of learners
 - b) So learning is memorable and holy
6. What is the focus of the learning?
 - a) 8 choices for the learner
 - b) All experience shared prayer, story time

Alternative Model:

Yearly families meets with a *Limud* (learning) counselor to select three gates for a child to enter in the year-each gate is focused on during a 3 month semester. Parents help guide student choices.

Children are required to have at least 120 contact hours during a year.

Children learn in pods by interest across grades (e.g. 1-3rd grade pod and 4-6th grade pod).

Teaching teams for each gate meet in summer to plan the gate experience that includes class time, community time and relationship building time with adults in congregation interested in the specified gate.

Each pod meets for 40 hours. Time is shaped by the teaching team (e.g. weekend retreats and classroom learning or weekly classes and home celebrations)

Families attend monthly Shabbat services for prayer, followed by story sharing based on the month's learning. 3 times a year families host families from their child's pod and mentor/teachers from their pod for home celebration.

Questions Guiding Analysis

To determine if the three sample visions, goals and models are good examples to guide your work, discuss the questions below. The questions are based on the criteria laid out in Looking Forward for creating visions, goals and models.

Vision	Derived Goals	Model
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does this vision successfully evoke emotions? 2. Does it use Jewish language, metaphor or imagery effectively? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What makes it effective? Or not? 3. Can this vision be summarized easily in order to direct decision making? 4. Is it action oriented? 5. Does it describe a boldly different and better future of Jewish education than exists today? 6. Does it paint a vivid picture of the future? 7. Does it describe a unique organization (who they are, what they value?) 8. What aspects of this vision do you want to share with your LT? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do the goals seem appropriately aligned with the vision? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are the goals reasonable? Do they seem possible? b. Are the goals actionable? What is the action that they are trying to describe? c. Are the goals measurable? Could a governing body assess how much progress has been made toward achieving the goal? d. What goals or aspects of goals do you want to report back to your Leadership Team? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In what ways is this model an effective/not effective way to educate children considering the vision? 2. Is this model a positive alternative to what most likely exists in their school today? In what ways is it an alternative? New goals? New teachers? New learners? New way of learning? New time and place for learning? <p>Would you say this is a model (a systemic change) and not a programmatic, episodic change?</p> <p>What aspects of this model do you want to report back to your Leadership Team?</p>