

(In the TEL Program) "we can meet with teens outside of school, camp or synagogue and meet other people up and down the east coast!"

"The (TEL) Program was really fun. There was enough free time that we could really focus and find

meaning in the programs. There was a great balance."

"This is a great way for teens to get together and meet, and talk.

Do YOU  
"fit in"?

Do you  
"STAND  
OUT"?

Do you  
CARE?

## Be part of the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement's TEL Program in 2011-2012!

How do our real-life experiences intersect with our identities as Reconstructionist Jewish teens?

Let's figure it out together.

"It sounds like it would be really boring, but even I really enjoyed everything, I feel much better about myself for doing this."

TEL "is a great program! It is meaningful, but at the same time understanding in a way that lets teens be teens."

## TEL: TEENS, EXPERIENCE & LEARNING



TEL Teens are talking - listen to what they have to say!

Reconstructionist teens from all over the east coast will spend

Oct. 14-16, 2011 & April 27-29, 2012 together at Camp JRF in the Poconos.

In between, TEL teens will explore *Derekh Eretz/Character* in their congregational TEL Groups.

"TEL is fun, and it gives teens the opportunity to connect with other Reconstructionists. Usually teens don't really know what other Reconstructionists are like because there aren't many around. It gives us a unique opportunity to meet and make long-lasting friendships."

*This year the teens will begin to design and lead more and more of the TEL program for themselves.*

TALK TO YOUR CONGREGATION'S EDUCATION DIRECTOR TODAY!

## TEL Program Overview

### From the original proposal:

“To answer the need for effective engagement of Jewish teens, JRF has developed an integrated model of post *b’nai mitzvah* education called **TEL**. *Tel* is the Hebrew word for an archeological hill, and JRF is using it as an acronym for **Teens: Experience and Learning**. JRF seeks to create a true *tel* experience for our teens, beginning in eighth grade, based on the opportunity to *dig* through first-hand “life-centered” experiences and *sift* out new, meaningful educational gleanings that are personally relevant to their lives. The **TEL** program, although it would begin within the Reconstructionist movement, is designed to be a model that is easily adaptable to other branches and segments of the larger Jewish community.”

### Format:

- Fall kallah at Camp JRF for teens from 8 – 10 congregations at which theme introduced
- PBL monthly curriculum to use back in the congregations
- Spring kallah at Camp JRF at which projects were shared and gleanings about theme processed
- Each annual theme was a value: *Tikkum Olam, Derekh Eretz, Hiddur Mitzvah, Am Yisrael*.

### Core Reconstructionist Concepts embodied in **TEL**:

#### Living in Two Civilizations

- Gave teens an immersive Jewish experience
- Gave teens sense of being part of a larger Jewish community than their congregation and their congregational peer group.
- Gave teens a sense of being part of a larger Jewish Reconstructionist civilization
- Gave teens opportunity to bring their experiences from all parts of their lives into the TEL space

#### Judaism as Civilization

- Gave teens an immersive Jewish experience
- Gave teens opportunity to explore many different dimensions of being Jewish
- Gave teens opportunity to explore many different modalities to express and explore being Jewish

#### Judaism as an **Evolving** Civilization

- We offered both traditional services and more contemporary alternative spiritually-meaningful Shabbat morning experiences
- We gave the teens leadership responsibilities in some activities
- We had cut out the idea of having teens try to reconstruct the vessel, but they independently asked to do it and we supported the addition of that activity to the kallah
- The project-based learning curriculum allowed the teens to take ownership of their relationship to Jewish civilization

#### Judaism as an Evolving **Religious** Civilization

- We integrated ritual elements at meals
- We integrated Shabbat observance
- We included traditional prayer services

- We included alternative spiritual experiences on Shabbat morning

#### Past has a Vote but Not a Veto

- We taught kabbalistic Tikkun Olam creation story and then invited teens to explore its contemporary meaning
- We integrated traditional Jewish texts, songs, prayers and values and then invited teens to think about their meaning and potential relevance to the teens' lives
- We offered both traditional services and alternative spiritually-meaningful Shabbat morning experiences

#### Belonging, Behaving, Believing

##### Teens:

- Focus was on creating community first at kallah and then each session in congregation.
- We created a teen-centered experience with clear communal values and norms
- Only after we created or reinforced sense of being part of a group, we created wide array of activities for the teens to do together.
- We then gave teens the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and values and priorities.
- Teens designed and carried out their own projects
- Teens unpacked everything they learned at the kallot and as they worked through the curriculum

##### Adult staff:

- We worked with the kallah staff and the congregational educators prior to each kallah to understand themselves as a team.
- We offered professional development sessions at the kallah for the congregational educators and followed up with webinars during the interim months.
- The kallot staff and the congregational educators all had leadership roles and responsibilities.
- We asked for feedback and input as we planned each successive kallah and curricula

## TEL Fall Retreat: Tikkun Olam

Friday

5PM Arrival/Registration

After teens put their stuff down have them come back to Hadar Ohel, they are each asked to **decorate individual quilt patches with what they did for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tikkun Olam project.**

- If a teen didn't do one/have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, they can write about a family/synagogue/school social action project)
- *The teens' prior experiences are the building blocks of our TEL program this year.*

5:30PM Jeff leads some Tikkun Olam-related songs

Ani V'ata Na Na- Litaken et Ha olom Blowing in the wind Miriam haniviah Gesher Tzar Meod	Vayashvu ish And the youth shall see visions Mi ha ish Turn turn Light One Candle Sounds of Silence	Im lan Ani li mi li Mitzveh Goreret Mitzvah Al Shelosha D'varim Lo Aleha If I had a hammer
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- Erin & Gabby do welcome and intros of who's who
- Overview of weekend – need to mention Shabbat Unplugged talent show
- Make sure to address importance of socializing as one big group - camp and non-camp teens, teens from different congregations, etc.
- Some Ice Breakers

6:15PM Dinner & Shira

Educators sort all completed quilt squares into 6 major areas/themes and make signs marking each area by the end of Kabbalat Shabbat. Display quilt squares in each appropriate area.

7:15PM More Ice Breakers - this time teaching meaning of the word TEL.  
PLASTIC SHOVELS – why are there shovels in your folders?!

7:40PM *Kabbalat Shabbat*—“Making the World a Better Place”

Jeff begins service by telling kabbalistic story of origin of tikkun olam and smashing the vessel.

- Teens try to glue vessel back together over course of kallah.
- Just by our good luck, teens eventually figure out they had to break it more in order to be able to reconstruct it.

Shabbat service includes readings by teens about Tikkun Olam

8:30PM **Tikkun Olam: In Direct Service**

We are building on all your individual Tikkun Olam experiences. Think about what you accomplished as individuals, then look at how many people are here. Think about how

much more we can accomplish by working together. We are going to explore 3 types of Tikkun Olam through havayot at this kallah.

- Divide teens by areas in which they did their tikkun olam projects individually.
- Share with them that we have \$180 to donate to a cause. Show them actual check.
- Invite them each to make commercials or skits advocating the money go to a cause that they worked for individually.
- Teens all vote on how to distribute the money to causes.
- Later some teens research specific organizations that support each cause.

10PM Free time with optional **Tikkun Olam bumper sticker-making activity.**  
12PM *Lailah Tov!*

### *Saturday*

8:30AM Breakfast  
9:30AM Exploring Bereshit/Creation through hoogeem

- Mural-making with Cindy
- Clay with Nancy
- Nature Experience with Ruhi
- Experiential sharing and physical activity with David (exploring our understanding of ourselves as created beings)
- Dance with Elana Richman
- Reading and Writing Poetry with Ben
- Bibliodrama with Gabby

10:45AM Shacharit  
Jeff will focus on creation and the connection to the environment and b'tzelem elohim  
Sid will do the dvar  
Lior Liebling will play drums and accompany Jeff

11:45AM Kiddush  
12:15PM Lunch

### 1:30PM **Tikkun Olam: Direct Service**

One type of tikkun olam work is hands-on doing projects to repair something in the world. We will do some meaningful direct service projects on-site, either related to the environment or food. Teens work in one of the following projects: compost pile, front garden, back garden, food project inside. Text study about environment and food for groups to study before doing actions.

### **Judaism & Ecology**

One generation goes and another generation comes, but the earth abides forever.  
(*Ecclesiastes 1:4*)

When God created the first human beings, God led them around the Garden of Eden and said: Look at my works! See how beautiful they are, how excellent! Take care not to spoil or destroy My world, for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you. (*Midrash Rabbah*, 7:13)

But ask the beasts, and they will teach you; the birds of the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth and it will teach you; the fish of the sea, they will inform you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Eternal has done this? (*Job* 12:7-9)

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said, three things are of equal importance, earth, humans, and rain. Rabbi Levi ben Hiyyata said: ... to teach that without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, the earth cannot endure, and without either, humans cannot exist (*Genesis Rabbah*, 13:3).

**Questions:**

- What do these texts teach us about humanity's relationship to the earth? What do they teach about our role in nature?
- How do we view these texts in light of what we know about issues connected to ecology and the environment today?

**Judaism & Hunger**

"When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses to live in and your herds and flocks have multiplied and your silver and gold have increased and everything that you own has prospered, beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget Adonai your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery." (*Deuteronomy* 8:1)

**Questions:**

- Who is the text addressing? What kind of warning is it giving?
- Why would someone who has plenty to eat and a fine house to live in need to remember the hard times of slavery?
- Put this text into contemporary terms. Where would the person with lots of flocks and herds of gold and silver live today? What kind of car might he/she drive? How might he/she express his/her "haughtiness"? And who is in economic "slavery" today-- Who is in need?

Understand the qualities of God are not like the qualities of flesh and blood. If a person gives a generous gift to a ruler, he/she is unsure whether or not it will be accepted from them...and the person is unsure whether or not he/she will see the face of a ruler. The Holy One of Blessing is not so: anyone who gives a penny to a poor person merits to be received by the Divine Presence. (*Babylonian Talmud Bava Batra* 10a)

**Questions:**

- How is God being compared to a ruler in this text?
- What does it mean "to be received by the Divine Presence"?
- What does this text teach us about the importance of giving to those in need in Jewish tradition?
- Can you think of other deeds that are worthy of bringing a person into God's presence?



Advocate for the indigent and the orphan and deal righteously with the poor and downtrodden...save them from the hand of the wicked." (*Psalms 82:3-4*)

### Questions:

If we are to advocate and deal righteously with the poor, we need to know who they are.

See how you answer these statements:

- Poor people in the United States live in...
- Poor people are usually from this ethnic group...
- Poor people work at...
- Poor people like...
- Poor people don't like...
- Poor people should...
- Poor people should not...

Compare and contrast your answers and with other teens and see what you agree and disagree about.

From your answers, which would you imagine are accurate statements?

Which do you think are stereotypes?

3:30PM	Free time in with options for activities including:  Sports equipment (Frisbees, balls) and board games, additional tikkun olam elective
3:30-5PM	TEL Group Leaders professional development with Cindy, discussing tailoring TEL congregational havayot to their individual communities and reviewing curriculum we are  Providing
6PM	Dinner
7PM	Shabbat Unplugged talent show
7:45PM	Havdallah
8-9:30PM	Final Havayah: <b>Tikkun Olam: Advocacy</b>

### Panim Value Conflicts Exercise - United We Stand (2009)

Your Jewish community is planning a one-day lobbying trip to Washington, D.C., where you will meet with Members of Congress. The goal is to advocate for the Jewish community's perspectives on a variety of issues: church-state legislation, Israel and the peace process, hate crimes, etc.

Your love for Israel is strong. You visit at least every other year and never fail to leave inspired. Your participation in this Washington mission is motivated by that very commitment.

In preparation for your trip, you attend a program where an expert on American politics and the Middle East argues that the Jewish community has been especially effective with members of Congress

because, despite our small numbers as a percentage of the American electorate, Jews have in the past, spoken loudly and with one voice. AIPAC has been especially effective at keeping any disagreements that Jews may have with each other and with Israeli policies in the background for the purpose of requesting ongoing financial and political support for Israel from elected officials. Yet recently, the consensus has started to break down. There are groups both to the left and right of AIPAC that have become increasingly prevalent on Capitol Hill.

You have strong concerns about the way Israel is treating Palestinians who are under its control in the occupied territories. You have heard appalling stories about the impact of the checkpoints and the “wall” on the daily lives of all Palestinians. The ongoing building of settlements in the West Bank by Israel seems to be undermining the U.S. peace initiative. As a Zionist committed to a Jewish and democratic state, you are not comfortable with Israel’s ongoing military rule over millions of non-citizens. You are convinced that if America took a stronger and more evenhanded role in the peace process, life would get better for both Israelis and Palestinians. You have discussed these issues with friends and family and know that you are not alone in having these concerns.

You fully understand the importance of presenting a united front to public officials but, in the meeting with your Senator, some of the exact issues that trouble you are raised. The Senator wants to get a read from the leadership of the Jewish community and asks you a direct question about Israeli settlements and the treatment of Palestinians. Do you speak out with the hope that policies that promote peace will be introduced by your representative or keep quiet for the sake of unity and the success of the lobbying effort regarding other issues? What Jewish values are at stake?

Think of all angles of the issue. What are the Jewish values that support your decision?

(Distribute copies of Panim Values Matrix for reference)

9:30PM Ice Cream Sundaes

10PM *Paper Clips* is a documentary film about the **social action project** of a small group of students in rural TN and the impact that it makes on their lives and the lives of the people in their community. We are showing it as a model of excellent project-based learning for teens.

TEL Group Leaders professional development with Sid exploring challenges and opportunities of teaching teens Tikkun Olam and helping them develop meaningful projects.

12AM Tzrifim

12:30AM *Lailah Tov!*

Sunday

8AM Breakfast

On display: quilt of all the teens’ quilt pieces tied together and hanging for all to see

9AM “Taking It Home”



Giant foamcore puzzle of world – 7 pieces, keep center one out – give piece to each congregational group to write on what they will take back from this kallah to inspire them in their tikkun olam work together over course of year. Put pieces together – world is still not complete...Jeff leads Lo Yigamer

9:30AM: Clean-up/pack-up

10:30AM: Closing Circle

L'hitraot! Good-bye!