



Team Building Resources

*from the I*Express Initiative*

No single person can effectively implement innovation Jewish education by themselves. It takes a team. As you begin to pilot your learning experiences it is important to keep in mind who is on your team, who might be a good fit to join your team and how you can continue to build the strength and trust of the team you have. In this resource you will find:

- Roles, capacities and skills of teammates that you can use to help you assess who you have on your team and who you might want to join your team and why.
- Team building activities to help you continue to strengthen your team.

Team Roles, Capacities and Skills

Adapted from the Re-IMAGINE Guidebook

How do you create the best team that you can to support your new model of education? One way is to think about the roles you would like represented on the team. Some of them you might already have and some you might need to recruit for. All of them will lend a different perspective to help move you along towards implementation and long-term sustainability.

Activity: Read through the two sets of lists below. Take some time to think about which **roles** and **capacities** are already being filled by your team members. Then create a list of 2-3 other roles and/or capacities you would like to add and make a plan as to how you might recruit for these new team members. Don't forget: some of these capacities might already be part of one of your team member's skill set...you might just not know!

Roles to Consider:

Current lay leader in school	Newer school parent
Future lay leader in school	Long-time school parent
Former lay leader in school	Parent of day school student
Current lay leader in congregation	Single parent
Future lay leader in congregation	Active parent volunteer
Former lay leader in congregation	Parent of child in preschool
Educator	Parent of child in K-2
Rabbi	Parent of child in 3-7
Teacher	Parent of child post b'nai mitzvah
High school student	Advocate for children's ed within congregation
Other	Interested/involved in Jewish adult learning



Desired Personal Capacities and Skills to Consider:

Ability to separate ideas from identity	Thought partner
Ability to think beyond their child's experience towards what is best for the community	Outgoing, assertive advocate
Willingness to reflect	Jewishly knowledgeable
Thoughtful	Professional with background in education
Enthusiastic	Open to change
Able to see the big picture	Loyal to and supportive of decisions made by the team
Attends to details	Background in "process"
Asks challenging questions	Well-connected within school community
Able to create harmony when disagreements arise	Data or survey expertise
Demonstrated commitment to synagogue	Professional background in marketing
Passionate about Jewish education	Skill with budget
Worker—willing to get tasks completed	Technology expertise
	Social media expertise
	Other

Team Building Activities

Team Building activities provide an opportunity for teams to focus on challenges most teams share, in a non-threatening and fun way. These activities provide occasions for peers to learn to work well together, with a renewed focus thereby improving every aspect of the work generated.

They are many benefits attributed to team building activities. They are generally used to improve communication, create community, boost morale, and allow people to get to know one another better, build interdependence and trust and develop problem solving skills. To achieve these results, the team must get to know each other and practice these skills often. *Depending on your group, some teams may be reluctant to jump right into a prescribed activity. One remedy is to take out a stopwatch and announce the minutes in which the activity must be completed. With time ticking away, foot dragging is less likely to occur.* Besides, nothing gets the adrenaline pumping like a stopwatch!



Communication and Icebreakers

Beach Ball Ice Breaker Game

Time: 20 minutes

Instructions: Get a large inflatable beach ball and use a permanent fine or medium point marker to write questions on it. Although this is time consuming, the resulting tool is an "icebreaker ball" that you can use for years to come. The ball can be used in a large or small group and throw it around. The person who catches it has to answer the question touching on her left thumb. The response must first include the person's name. Upon answering the question, the ball is then thrown to someone else.

Alternatively, these questions can be placed in a box. Each participant draws a question and answers it aloud.

The following questions are simply suggestions:

1. If you could meet any person in the Bible, which one would you choose?
2. What is your favorite movie?
3. What is your favorite movie line?
4. Tell us your favorite joke.
5. If you could be either a famous actor, writer, athlete, artist or musician, which would you choose and why?
6. What is the scariest movie you've ever seen?
7. If you could go any where in the world, where would you go?
8. What is your favorite song?
9. Who is one person you wish you could meet?
10. What do you love to do best?
11. What do you want to be when you grow up?
12. What is one thing you are good at?
13. If you could be a member of a TV family, which would it be?
14. If you were any animal, what would you be?
15. What country would you like to visit? Why?
16. What is your favorite book?
17. If you were a teacher what subject would you teach?
18. What are you most proud of?
19. What is your favorite color?
20. What do you like best about our congregation?
21. If you were any animal, what would you be?
22. What three adjectives best describe you?
23. What is the best costume you ever wore for Purim?
24. If you were a teacher would subject would you teach?
25. What's the best advice you've ever received?



Two Truths and a Lie

Time: 15-30 minutes

Instructions: Team members secretly write down two truths about themselves and one lie on a small piece of paper. Once each person has completed this step, allow 10-15 minutes for open conversation in which everyone quizzes each other on their three questions. During this time, team members try to convince others that their lie is actually a truth, as they pose questions to try to guess other people's truths/lies. After the conversational period, gather in a circle and one by one repeat each one of your three statements and have the group vote on which one they think is the lie. This game helps to encourage better communication, and allows team members to get to know each other better.

Life Highlights Game

Time: 30 minutes

This is an excellent icebreaker activity that's perfect for small and large groups alike.

Instructions: Begin by asking each participant to close their eyes for one minute and consider the best moments of their lives. This can include moments they've had alone, they've shared with family or friends; these moments can pertain to professional successes, personal revelations, or exciting life adventures. After the participants have had a moment to run through highlights of their lives, inform them that their search for highlights is about to be narrowed. Keeping their eyes closed, ask each participant to take a moment to decide what 30 seconds of their life they would want to relive if they only had thirty seconds left in their life. The first part of the activity enables participants to reflect back on their lives, while the second part enables them to get to know their team members on a more intimate level. The second portion of the game is the "review" section. The leader of the activity will ask each and every participant to describe their 30 seconds "re-lived" and why they chose it. In this way, participants will get a glimpse into each other's passions, loves, and personalities.

One Question, and One Question Only!

Time: 15-20 minutes

This icebreaker allows team members to talk to and work with each other effectively.

Instructions: The leader identifies a situation, about which each team will be allowed to ask just one question. Example situations include who would be the best candidate to: babysit, lead the school or synagogue, or marry. After putting participants into teams of 2, the leader will pose this question: If you could ask just one question to discover a person's suitability for (insert topic here), what would your question be? For example, If the leader chose to go with the marriage situation, that would mean each person in a two-person team would come up with one question that would help them discover whether or not someone was suitable for marriage. If the topic was babysitting, each team member would come up with just one question whose answer would disclose whether or not the person was suitable to babysit their child.



This icebreaking activity (above) can be made more difficult by allocating a different situation to each team member or pair to work on. This activity demonstrates how important it is to properly develop crucial questions.

Back-to-Back Drawing

Time: 20 minutes

Instructions: Divide your group into pairs, and have each pair sit on the floor back to back. Give one person in each pair a picture of a shape, and give the other person a pencil and pad of paper. Announce to each pair that they will be asked to draw a shape. Ask the people holding the pictures to give verbal instructions to their partners on how to draw the shape – without actually telling the partners what the shape is. After they've finished, ask each pair to compare their original shape with the actual drawing, and consider the following questions:

- How well did the first person describe the shape?
- How well did the second person interpret the instructions?
- Were there problems with both the sending and receiving parts of the communication process?
 - Repeat the activity, and allow each pair to seek redemption. (The first time the results will probably be embarrassingly horrible!) With practice, each person will improve dramatically.

Who Am I?

Time: 10-15 minutes

This is a fun exercise for a medium-sized or large group.

Instructions: Write on nametags many different professions and pin or tape one tag to each person's back, so that they can see everyone else's tag, but not their own. Then, ask each person to figure out which profession is on his or her back by asking stereotype-based questions of other people – “Am I a man?” “Am I an athlete?” “Am I an entertainer?” and so on.

Allow group members to answer only yes or no, and encourage participants to ask questions to as many different people as possible.

Here are some professions you could consider: Auto mechanic, Olympic medalist, Professor, Fast-food restaurant worker, Postal worker, Movie star, Dentist, Baker, Factory worker



Building Interdependence and Trust while Developing Problem Solving Skills

Human spring

Time: less than 10 minutes

Instructions: Ask group members to stand facing each other in pairs. Their elbows should be bent, with their palms facing toward each other. Instruct them to touch their palms together, and gradually start leaning toward each other, so that they eventually hold each other up. Then, instruct everyone to move their feet further and further back, so that they have to depend solely upon their partners to remain standing.

Sneak a Peek Game

Time: 10 minutes

Instructions: This problem solving activity requires little more than a couple of sets of children's building blocks. One member of the team will build a small sculpture with some of the building blocks and hide it from the group. The participants should then be divided into small teams of four or less. Each team should be given enough building materials to replicate the original structure. The sculpture to be copied must be placed in an area that is an equal distance from all the groups. One member from each team comes up at the same time to look at the sculpture for ten seconds and tries to memorize it before returning to their team. Upon returning to their teams, they have twenty-five seconds to impart the necessary components to build a replica of the sculpture. After working for one minute to recreate the sculpture, another member from each team comes up for a "tweak" before returning to their team and refining their sculptures. The game should be continued in this pattern until one of the teams successfully duplicates the original sculpture. This game will teach participants how to problem solve in a group and communicate effectively.

Recycled Goods

Time: 20 minutes

This activity provides ways to revisit/rethink the ways your team accomplishes different goals.

Instructions: Take a simple object (a chair, a fork, a pencil), set a timer for 10 minutes, and challenge students to think of as many possible uses for it as they can-apart from the established use. Have each team present their best "recycled" use.



Out-of-the-Box Thinking

Time: 20 minutes

Instructions: Divide the class into teams of no more than six players each. Give each team a stack of boxes of all sizes. Within the time allotted (10 minutes) each group should build a creature, structure, or original invention using scissors and tape. Each group should explain their creations and be scored for originality, design, and presentation.

Variations:

Create the tallest structure- using straws, rubber bands and tape, or marshmallows, pretzels and licorice. Have each team present how their invention will reinvent Jewish education. Or talk in gibberish. Have the students explain their creation in gibberish (and expressive body language) while the rest of the class tries to interpret it.

