

Ohio Valley's RCVP Network Packet!

Created by Emma Zelkind, the RCVP of NFTY's Ohio Valley 2018-2019 with the help of past NFTY and RCVP's resources.



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Dear RCVP's for the 5778-5779 year,

Hey! And welcome to your RCVP network (it's an awesome one)! It is important to remember that we are all here since we are Jewish and that it is what connects all of us together. With this in mind it is our job as RCVP's to ask the question "what about this program is Jewish?" And if there isn't one it is our jobs to create one. This packet, throughout the year, will aid you in doing so.

You will need to put in work in order to create amazing programs, but trust me when you see your impact on the Jewish teens around you, you will know that it was all worth it! Since we only have a handful of regional events every year it is all of your jobs to make sure that NFTY makes a huge impact throughout the year!

An RCVP's job is to not only plan amazing and unique service and cultural programs, but to find a religious connection to every program that you TYG creates. You will find that even though there are so many amazing values in Judaism you might find a program that doesn't fit into a specific Jewish value, but that is okay! Continue working with your board on the rest of the programs to find their Jewish components.

All in all, don't forget to have fun! You will get out of your TYG's board what you put into it. Never forget that if you ever need me you can contact me at (513) 444-5812.

Sincerely with LOVE or באהבה,

Emma Zelkind, NFTY Ohio Valley RCVP 5778-5779.

Reform Judaism... what is it?

It is an extremely progressive, pluralistic, egalitarian denomination of Judaism. It allows the individual autonomy to decide their personal practices and observations based on all Jewish teachings (Torah, Talmud, Halacha, Rabbis etc.) as well as morals, ethics, reason and logic. The Union for Reform Judaism, the governing body that represents most (but not all) Reform synagogues in North America, takes official stances that represent Reform Judaism as a whole, but leaves the individual the right to their own individual belief. Judaism believes in **CHOICE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE!**
[Check here for more info!](#)

TORAH

THE 5 BOOKS OF MOSES:

Genesis (Bereshit): Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah and the flood, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, & Leah. The promise that Abraham's descendants would receive the Land of Israel and be a blessing to the rest of the world.

Exodus (Shemot): The Egyptian exile. Moses, the ten plagues, the Exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Mt. Sinai. The gift of the Written and the Oral Torah. The building of the Mishkan.

Leviticus (Vayikra): The laws of the Priests, the Temple, the sacrifices, and the festivals. The Jewish code of morality and ethics, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Numbers (Bamidbar): The struggles of the Jewish People for 40 years in the desert. The census, the formation of their camp. The rebellion of Korach, the episode of the 12 spies, the capture of the East Bank of the Jordan River.

Deuteronomy (Devarim): Moses addresses the Jewish People before his death. Includes rebuke, encouragement and warnings for their future. Commandments that apply only in Israel. Commandments that govern the interaction with other nations. One copy of the complete Torah is given to each tribe. One is placed in the Holy Ark. The death of Moses "the greatest of all prophets" and "the most humble of all men."

PLANNING A SERVICE

There are three types: **Traditional, Thematic, and Experimental.**

Traditional Services:

- Outlines in the Mishkhan T'filah
- For every prayer you must decide how you want it to be presented (English or Hebrew, read or sung, as well as the melody)
- Usually includes a D'var Torah or a sermon
- Similar to your temple's Friday night services

Thematic Services:

Follow these steps to create an amazing and thoughtful thematic service

1. Pick a theme (anything from meditation to love)
2. Find readings that go along with the theme or have those helping you with the service right them
3. Draw connections between them and the prayer

4. Create a mood that goes along with the theme you picked (by picking melodies for music)
5. Place your readings between music and prayer
6. Finally choose an opening and closing song for your service

Experimental Services:

It is important to note that these types of services do not have as strict of a template or outline since they are supposed to be experimental and creative. You should come up with some sort of outline that works with your idea to organize your thoughts. Your services goal should be to connect to each individual person to have them each experience their own unique, spiritual experiments. If you are having any trouble look at some guidelines...

1. Decide the impact that you wish to have on others: What connection are you trying to make? What message are you trying to send?
 - Start with why: what is your reason for writing this service? What is your goal? Always start with the question why and then go to how and what.
 - Create a connection: make the service fun! You don't want people to just be reading and singing the same prayers as always. Find a creative way to establish a connection between the prayer and the participants. Few people truly understand why they pray and what praying means to them, so take this opportunity to explain what some prayers mean. Or create an interactive or enlightening program within the service to create a connection between prayers and the participants. Use this as a way to redefine how and why people pray.
2. Decide how you want to communicate your message: You group leaders use discussion questions, activities, or simply highlight a part of the service that sticks out to you but not to others most of the time. You are in charge of the setting and mood of your service so you can alter its setting by changing its method of prayer or by incorporate discussion throughout the service. As long as you stay true to the prayer itself, its message, and your goal then you can manipulate the service in all different types of way.
 - Make sure that you know your audience: know their interests and their attention span. Know how they communicate with each other and how they will walk into your service.
 - If you are planning a service for younger kids such as 5th grade or below make sure your service does not go too long. Make your service very interactive and appealing to young children. Try and do all of this while still holding onto the meaning of a service.

- **If your service is led by the youth for a congregation** you want to stick close to a traditional service. I always suggest to incorporate new elements but it important to remember your whole audience and not just the teens there so keep it traditional yet fun! We don't want to overwhelm them with too many new prayer techniques. Work with your tyg, advisor, and rabbis to create a good balance between traditional and new.
- **If you are creating a service for NFTYites**, there is plenty of freedom and open elements that you can incorporate. There are classic NFTY Melodies that you can use for your services. Look into themes during your services, these can give you something to connect the services back to and make the service more fun! One very important and difficult aspect of NFTY services is keeping the tradition. Yes our goal is to make services engaging and fun but at the same time we are a part of a Reform Jewish Youth Movement, services has certain aspects about them that must be respected. Your job as RCVP and your biggest challenge is to find the line between creative and traditional. Don't forget that it is still a spiritual experience and that the overarching goal for all services is to create a meaningful religious experience for all of the participants.

3. Build the rest of the service around this experience. Services are rarely one prayer, they are a combination of prayers. Make sure to create additional experiences that set the mood necessary for you to achieve your goal. Use music that will interest and excite the congregation. Readings are also a great way to break up music.

- Always offer leadership opportunities: Whether you're leading a service in front of OV or your TYG, know the strengths and skills of your peers. If there are musicians, be creative and incorporate their music. If you know some people like to be up in front of everyone, give them a prayer to lead. If you know some people are shy but want to participate, let them light candles or undress the Torah. If people do want to lead a prayer but aren't comfortable reading in Hebrew give them something to read in English. Become familiar with your audience and know how to engage them even more than just executing a good service.
- **Working with Songleaders:** A songleader's job is to be flexible, but it is still very important to have clear expectations and for the songleaders to know your clear expectations. If you know someone who is musical, encourage them to become a songleader. It's a great way to access Judaism in a different way.

Don't be worried to make mistakes, they'll help you to grow as an RCVP!

Prayer layout:

Modeh Ani: Morning prayer, thanking God for waking up in the morning.

Nissim B'chol Yom: "Daily miracles", as we begin the day we thank God for the daily miracles that make it so we can be here healthy.

Barchu: The "Call to Worship"

Yotzeir: Morning Prayer, celebrates the creation of light.

Ma'ariv Aravim: Evening Prayer, celebrates the creation of evening.

Ahava Rabbah: Morning prayer, expresses thanks to God for the love God gives us.

Ahavat Olam: Evening prayer, expresses thanks to God for the Torah.

Shema: This prayer, which many think of as the holiest prayer, reminds us that God is One.

V'ahavtah: A prayer following the Shema about loving God, it shows the commandments we must follow to show our love.

Mi Chamocha: Our "redemption" song that was sung after being freed from the land of Egypt. It reminds us how holy God is.

Hashkiveinu: Thanks God for protecting us and watching over us as night falls.

Amidah: Set of 18 prayers (plus Sim Shalom and silent prayer), a central part of the service that contains the bulk of prayer and petition to God.

Aleinu: We are the "chosen" people and have a unique destiny, and we pray for a better future.

Mourner's Kaddish: We say this prayer to remember those who have passed away. The direct translation of the prayer does not mention death, but is a prayer that declares God's glory, and ends with a prayer for peace.

Friday Night Service Outline:

1. Opening (anything that you want)
2. Candle blessings
3. Kabshab
4. Barchu
5. Ma'ariv Aravim
6. Ahavat Olam
7. Shema/V'ahavta
8. Geulah
9. Mi Chamocha
10. Hashkiveinu
11. V'shamru
12. Adonai S'fatai
13. Avot V'imahot
14. Rest of the Amiyah
15. Shalom Rav

16. Silent Prayer (Yih'yu L'ratzon)
17. Mi Shebeirach
18. Aleinu
19. Mourner's Kaddish
20. Closing Song (anything you want)

Morning Service Outline: BASIC MORNING SERVICE

1. Modeh/Modah Ani
2. Mah Tov
3. Elohai N'shamah
4. Nisim B'chol Yom
5. Blessing for the study of Torah
6. Chatzi Kaddish
7. Bar'chu
8. Yotzeir Or
9. Ahavah Rabbah
10. Sh'ma
11. V'ahavta
12. Mi Chamochah
13. Amidah
14. *Yismechu
15. Sim Shalom
16. Silent Prayer
17. Yih'yu L'ratzon or Oseh Shalom
18. ***TORAH READING*** (Shabbat morning, afternoon, and Mon/Thurs morning)
19. Aleinu
20. Mourner's Kaddish
21. Closing Song

You don't need to have all of these prayers in every service that you plan but there are a few that you should always have! You can always ask your Rabbi or other temple clergy for help!