

# RCVP Network Packet 2019-2020!

Welcome to the world of Religious and Cultural Vice President!

By: Lindsey Marnocha, with resources from past RCVPs

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## SHALOM, RCVPS!

Welcome to the best and *most important* network, the RCVPs! I want to thank you before we even begin this year for your dedication to the spiritual and religious side of NFTY. The position you're sitting in brings a special light to NFTY that wouldn't be possible without your amazing voices, ruach, and love for our movement.

Your job this year is to help incorporate a little Judaism into your board and their endeavors. The RCVPs cover such a wide surface area of NFTY's mission statement and 13 Principles and the work we do is absolutely vital to the movement as a whole. Each of you have a special talent for seeing the importance of addressing religion in everything we do; whether it be inclusivity, programs, or the typical services and song sessions.

Keep your Judaism as your inspiration, and keep NFTY in your heart as you move through this very religious and cultural year :) Remember that I, along with the rest of the regional board, will always be here to cheer you on through this year. I can't wait to see what we accomplish and the emotion we can bring to NFTY this year. <3



הבהאב (with lOVe),

Lindsey Marnocha (NFTY Ohio Valley RCV 5779-5780)

## What is Reform Judaism??

Reform Judaism is a pluralistic, progressive, egalitarian denomination of Judaism that 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.

## TORAH: The Five 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."

## How to Plan a Service!

There are traditional three types of services: Traditional, Thematic, and Experimental.

### Traditional:

- Follows the format of the Mishkan T'filah
- The prayers, language, and melodies are all chosen
- Normally accompanied by a sermon or D'var Torah
- This is most recognizable in comparison to services at your temple

### Thematic:

Here are a few steps you can take to plan a wonderfully inspirational and thoughtful thematic service:

- 1) Decide on a theme (e.g. Nature, Israel, meditation, the Beatles, love...)
- 2) Find readings that go with the theme, OR have service participants write them. Be sure to apply the reading to the prayer.
- 3) Select melodies for music that create the correct mood for the theme.
- 4) Insert readings in between music and prayer
- 5) Choose an opening and closing song in accordance with the theme

### Experimental:

These kinds of services don't have the usual outline or template, they are completely free and creative! The write up should include some sort of outline, but it should be creative!

Instead of focusing on making services as manageable as possible, experimental services have the goal of impacting each person individually so

that each person can say they had their own unique, spiritual experience. Here is a list of guidelines if you are having trouble:

**1) Decide what impact you want to have:** How do you want to connect with the congregation? What message do you want to send? A few methods are to connect through music, nature, have them relate the prayers to our lives.

- **Start with the "Why":** Why are you writing this service? What is your goal? What do you want the participants of your service to learn or experience? Start with the "why" when writing services and programs, then get to the "how" and "what."
- **Establish a Connection:** Rather than making participants mindlessly read and sing the same prayers they always have, be creative and establish a connection between the prayer and the participant. Very few people know why they pray or what they pray for. Take the opportunity to either explain what each prayer means or do an interactive or enlightening program/mixer within the service that creates a connection between and participant and the meaning of the prayer. You have the opportunity to redefine how and why people pray.

**2) Decide how to best communicate that message:** it can be through discussion, activities, or simply highlighting a part of the service not usually talked about. You can change the setting, method of prayer, or incorporate discussion throughout service. Any means of impacting is acceptable as long as you stay true to the prayer itself and the message.

- **Know your audience:** Who are you talking to? What are they interested in? What is their attention span? Are they going to our service voluntarily? How do they communicate with each other?
  - If this is a service for younger kids (5th grade and younger), you're going to want to make the service nice and short. Most of the younger kids can't keep direct attention at one thing for very long. Make your service interactive, make it appealing to young children. Prayers with different melodies, stories from the Torah, anything that will keep their attention but still hold onto the meaning of a service.
  - If this is a "youth-led" service for a congregation, you want to do your best to keep it traditional and not deviate too much from what is common. Incorporating new elements is always encouraged, but remember that this probably involves the older community who are used to traditional services. We want to give them a fun experience, but we don't want to overwhelm them with our new fangled prayer techniques. Work with your clergy to make sure there is a good balance between new and traditional!
  - If this is a service for NFTYites, there is a lot of freedom and open elements that you can incorporate. NFTY Melodies and other types of new melodies are always popular. Having themes during services sometimes gives you something to connect the service back to and can 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 remain holy and respected. Finding the line between creative and traditional is our jobs as RCV, and also our biggest challenge. 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 the participants.

**3) Build the rest of the service around this experience.** Services are rarely one prayer. They are a combination of prayers. Use any means necessary to create additional experiences and set the mood for the message. Use music that will interest and excite the congregation. Readings are a great way to break up music as well.

- **Give opportunity for Leadership:** 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 English or Hebrew prayers to lead, if you know some people are shy but wouldn't mind participating, let them light candles or undress the Torah. 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.

## IMPORTANT REMINDER!!!!

If you make a mistake, don't be scared to laugh at yourself, you're not perfect, I promise you the participants have made the same mistakes and they will be laughing with you. Be comfortable, services aren't only a time for participants to decompress and reflect, it's also yours.

## Service Cheat Sheet:

**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.

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

**Mi Chamocho:** 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.

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|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Avot            | 10. Cheirut     |
| 2. G'vurot         | 11. Mishpat     |
| 3. K'dushah        | 12. Al HaRishah |
| 4. Binah           | 13. Tzadikim    |
| 5. Teshuvah        | 14. Yrushalayim |
| 6. Selichah        | 15. Y'shuah     |
| 7. Geulah          | 16. Tfillah     |
| 8. Refuah          | 17. Avodah      |
| 9. Birkat Hashanim | 18. Hodaah      |

**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

<u>Liturgy</u>	<u>Key / Point</u>	<u>Read / Sung</u>	<u>Cue / Notes</u>
Opening			
Candle blessings			
Kabshab			
kabshab			
Barechu			
Ma'ariv Aravim			
Ahavat Olam			
Shema / V'ahavta			
Geulah			
Mi Chamocha			
Hashkiveinu			
V'shamru			
Adonai S'fatai			
Avot v'Imahot			
Rest of Amidah			
Shalom Rav			
Silent Prayer, Yih'yu L'ratzon			
Mi Shebeirach			
Aleinu			
Mourner's Kaddish			
Closing			


