

Reconstructionist Learning Networks

DREAM • CONNECT • CREATE

2016-2017
CATALOGUE



JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST COMMUNITIES IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST RABBINICAL COLLEGE

Welcome to Reconstructionist Learning Networks



"Reconstructionists are pragmatic dreamers. We care deeply about the rich Jewish legacy we have inherited, grapple with the challenges and opportunities of the current moment, and dream about — and build — the Jewish future we want to see."

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D., President
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Jewish Reconstructionist Communities

**Are you ready to dream about
and build the Jewish future
you want to see?**

Reconstructionist Learning Networks connect you with people across geography and perspectives. Explore the crucial questions of Jewish life that just can't be Googled, and that matter most to you and your community.

**For the questions of Jewish life that
can't be Googled
Dream Connect Create
Join a network**



WWW.JEWISHRECON.ORG/NETWORKS

Reconstructionist Learning Networks were piloted in 2015-16.

Here is what some participants had to say.



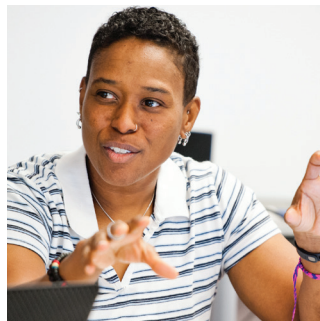
“Since participating,
I have been able
to redirect
and
re-energize
my own community.”

— Synagogue Professional



“As a result
of the network,
I thought more
creatively
and
intentionally.”

— Synagogue Professional



“I appreciated
connecting with my
Reconstructionist colleagues,
and I felt more
connected to RRC.”

— Rabbi



RECONSTRUCTIONIST LEARNING NETWORKS

Information

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Collaborate with experts, including Jewish Reconstructionist Communities staff and Reconstructionist Rabbinical College faculty. Facilitators work with you to set agendas, bring expertise and foster learning among colleagues. Explore case studies, text studies, resource materials, and real-life challenges and solutions. Experiment and troubleshoot together.

Networks meet three to six times a year online for about an hour each session. At least six people are required for each network. Networks are capped at 12 participants unless otherwise specified, and a waitlist will be created if a network reaches capacity.

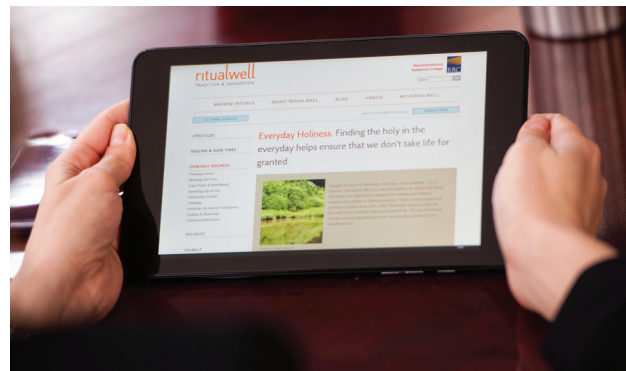
Make a Request

All networks offered this year have come from the dreams and questions of the community.

Do you have network ideas? We'd love to hear from you!

Three new Learning Networks will be added in the spring based on interest. Check the website and Reconstructionist newsletters for updates throughout the year.

Submit your ideas at
www.JewishRecon.org/Networks



Register at www.JewishRecon.org/Networks

Your engagement is crucial to the success of the Learning Networks.

Requirements

You'll need access to a computer with a camera and an Internet connection. The video-networking platform we use fosters connections by making it easy for participants to see and hear one another.

Support is available.

When you register, you are committing to full participation.

Check the website for more information or contact:

Rory Schonning, Community Engagement Assistant at RRC
rschonning@rrc.edu or **215-576-0800, Ext. 131**



Cost

Networks are free for members of the Reconstructionist movement. A member of the movement is a member of an affiliated congregation or havurah, an RRA rabbi, or a direct contributor.

Non-members are asked to make a donation of \$72 to \$118. No one will be turned away due to an inability to pay.



RECONSTRUCTIONIST LEARNING NETWORKS

Ritual and Service Leading Networks

For the questions of Jewish life that can't be Googled

How can Jewish bedtime rituals help children feel loved and secure?

Facilitated by Rabbi Vivie Mayer, Director of the Mekhinah Year Program and Bet Midrash at RRC

For anyone who is responsible for children's bedtime routines

Wednesdays 1 p.m.-2 p.m. EST – Jan. 25, Feb. 1 & Feb. 8

The Jewish tradition has a beautiful bedtime ritual that helps people of all ages to pause nightly, take account, practice forgiving and feel secure. Reciting the prayers and songs with children at bedtime creates a loving bond, teaches self-soothing and cultivates Jewish spiritual intelligence. We will explore methods of teaching these prayers to enable parents and others to design the Jewish bedtime ritual that best suits their families.



How do we make Shabbat liturgy come alive?

Facilitated by Rabbi Margot Stein, Liturgical Specialist at RRC

For service leaders and congregational members who want to incorporate more music into their spiritual practice

Thursdays 2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. EST – Jan. 12, Jan. 26 & Feb. 9

Using examples from Reconstructionist composers, we will explore how the music of Shabbat is related to the spirit and energy of each time of day: Kabbalat Shabbat, a space emphasizing letting go of the week and entering sacred time; Shacharit, the morning prayers that help us deepen into spiritual renewal; and Havdalah, a time of drawing close and transitioning to the rest of the week. Your experiences, questions and curiosity will help shape this interactive network.

“Thank you
to everyone
who participated in this
network.
I wish there were
more sessions.”

— Parent

How do we create new rituals for changing times?

Facilitated by Rabbi Roni Handler, Interim Director of Admissions and Recruitment at RRC, Executive Editor of Ritualwell.org

For Reconstructionist clergy and those experienced with innovative ritual creation

Wednesdays 1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. EST – Dec. 14, Feb. 15 & May 17

Rabbis' manuals and traditional liturgy will only take us so far in meeting the needs of contemporary Jews and Jewish communities. This network will be an opportunity to pool our collective knowledge and expertise to create and discuss meaningful and innovative Jewish rituals. Sessions will offer examples from experts in the field. During the second half of each session, participants will share their own experiences and knowledge with the group. Together, we may even create new ideas to be shared on Ritualwell.org!

Where is our Shabbat when we work on Shabbat?

Facilitated by Rabbi Vivie Mayer, Director of the Mekhinah Year Program and Bet Midrash at RRC

For congregational clergy

Thursdays 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m. EST – Dec. 1, Dec. 8 & Dec. 15

When your profession demands that you work on Shabbat, how do you maintain the weekly Jewish holiday? Where do you find respite from work? We will explore: how we set boundaries for our Shabbat work; the language we use to describe our Shabbat work; and the internal spaciousness we cultivate on Shabbat while we are showing up for others.



Education and Administration Networks

For the questions of Jewish life that can't be Googled

How can we make Jewish stories come to life?

Facilitated by Lisa Litman, Director of PJ Goes to School; and Cyd Weissman, Assistant Vice President for Innovation and Impact at RRC

For up to 20 educators, or parents of children in kindergarten through second grade

Webinars are from 12 p.m.-1:15 p.m. EST.

Attend one session for each gathering.

Gathering 1 Sept. 15 or Sept. 22

Gathering 2 Nov. 10 or Nov. 17

Gathering 3 Jan. 19 or Jan. 26

Gathering 4 March 16 or March 23

Educators and parents across movements will identify best practices for making Jewish stories come to life. To nurture resilience, our children need heroes. We'll explore Jewish stories that help children *have and become* Jewish heroes. Four children's books, curricula and online resources will be sent to you through a generous scholarship of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's PJ Goes to School. Books: *Zishe the Strongman*; *The Chameleon That Saved Noah's Ark*; *Hanukkah Cookies With Sprinkles*; and *Nachshon Who Was Afraid to Swim*

How are executive directors responding to new challenges?

Facilitated by Rabbi Fredi Cooper, Director of Assessment and Mentoring at RRC

For executive directors of congregations

Tuesdays 1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. EST – Jan. 17, Feb. 7 & Feb. 28

Executive directors are faced with new management, leadership and governance challenges. Explore your questions and solutions about congregational programming, finances, communications and volunteer engagement with colleagues from Reconstructionist congregations who are navigating similar challenges. We will work with you to set an agenda that is meaningful and relevant to your work.



Which model of Jewish education is right for us?

Facilitated by Cyd Weissman, Assistant Vice President for Innovation and Impact at RRC

For five educational teams of at least two participants each. Teams can include a combination of professional staff and lay leaders. Each member of the team should have been in their role for at least one year. A spirit of experimentation is required.

Tuesdays 1 p.m.-2:15 p.m. EST – Nov. 22, Dec. 20, Jan. 24, Feb. 14, March 28 & May 16

Colleagues and experts will share their experiences in launching new models of Jewish education that speak to today's learners. New models of Jewish learning are expanding across the country to include education that is based in the home, in museums, on the streets or online, around Shabbat or depends deeply on family engagement. Which one is right for your community? Are you ready to find out and start implementation? This network will enable your team to identify assets and goals; launch pilot programs; and support and assess implementation. A seasoned educational consultant will guide you through the project.



How do we bridge the gap between shul and home?

Facilitated by Brianna Spatz, Program Manager: Education and Engagement at Camp JRF

For educators and education directors

Tuesdays 1 p.m.-2 p.m. EST – Nov. 1, Dec. 13, Jan. 31, March 14 & April 25

One set curriculum doesn't meet the needs of the diverse congregations across the Reconstructionist movement. Together, we'll utilize available resources, brainstorm and develop new resources to take learning and engaging beyond the walls of the congregation and engage families. Our meeting dates are spread throughout the year to facilitate using materials and sharing experiences with one another.

Community-Building Networks

For the questions of Jewish life that can't be Googled



What does rabbinic leadership look like in a Jewish Community Center (JCC)?

Facilitated by Cyd Weissman, Assistant Vice President for Innovation and Impact at RRC

For rabbis of all denominations working in JCCs

Mondays 1 p.m.-2 p.m. EST – Nov. 21, Jan. 23, March 27 & May 22

The JCC is a cultural hub, providing programs, courses and activities for a wide array of ages and populations. As a rabbi, you have unique challenges and opportunities within this complex setting. This network creates a space to share and learn with others in similar positions. Every participant will have a role in shaping the agenda to explore what it is that rabbis are doing in JCCs.

How do you serve college students who want to save the world, but can't manage to talk to their own roommates?

Facilitated by Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at RRC, and chair of RRC's Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives; and Rabbi Rachel Gartner, Jewish Chaplaincy Director at Georgetown University

For campus chaplains and religious advisors

Thursday, Feb. 9 12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m. EST; March & April sessions to be scheduled for mutually convenient times

Despite the diversity of college campuses, secular student-life professionals often see the topic of religion as too hot to handle. Is it? Campus chaplains want to make their unique contributions to building a culture of sacred listening across differences. Join your colleagues, a seasoned campus chaplain, and a longtime interreligious scholar and activist to find out how.

Can you hear me now? How can our community's brand stand out in a busy world?

Facilitated by Rachael Burgess, Communications Associate at RRC/Jewish Reconstructionist Communities

For congregational volunteers or staff members responsible for community communications

Tuesdays at 7 p.m.-8:15 p.m. EST – Nov. 22, Dec. 6, Dec. 20 & Jan. 10

With our day-to-day lives cluttered with appointments and never-ending “To Do” lists, this network will explore ways that congregations can cut through message overload and reach into the wider community in meaningful ways. Sessions will offer teachings from experienced communications professionals in the movement, including social-media guru and student rabbi at RRC, Sandra Lawson, and Joel Blechman, a marketing professional from the Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in Evanston, Ill. During the second half of each session, participants will share experiences and contribute knowledge to the group.



Community-Building Networks

For the questions of Jewish life that can't be Googled



How can we effectively work for justice, while maintaining our energy and keeping our members involved?

Facilitated by Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, Director of the Social Justice Organizing Program at RRC and student rabbi Ariana Katz, rabbinic intern for the Reconstructionist Tikkun Olam Commission

For members already involved in Congregation Based Community Organizing (CBCO) and for those seriously exploring CBCO

Wednesdays 12 p.m.-1 p.m. EST – Nov. 9, Dec. 14 & Jan. 18

Have you already invested time in organizing your community? How can you continue to build and maintain momentum? Bring your experiences, triumphs and challenges in working within a CBCO network to share with and learn from others. We will talk about how to maintain involvement, respond to concerns and use the organizing to enliven our congregations.

WWW.JEWISHRECON.ORG/NETWORKS

What does it mean to plan a Reconstructionist program for your teenage peers?

Facilitated by Brianna Spatz, Program Manager: Education and Engagement at Camp JRF

**For 10 teens in grades eight to 12 by application
(request through registration)**

**Gather online for 10 meetings at mutually convenient times
between October and March, and meet in person in New
York City March 3-5**

This leadership opportunity requires you to think about what Reconstructionist Jewish community means to you and your peers. You will play a role in designing and preparing an exciting weekend for Reconstructionist teens from across North America. The retreat will include a Shabbat celebration and activities to explore New York City.



Presidents' Forums

To lead in a changing world, we need—as Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan indicated—the exchange of ideas and experiences. Presidents' Forums enable lay leaders to explore the challenges and solutions of leading Reconstructionist congregations and havurot.

Each president of a congregation or havurah in the Reconstruction movement will be invited to join a Presidents' Forum based on size or location. Meetings take place online and in person, when geography allows. Presidents work closely with Jewish Reconstructionist Community staff to set agendas, share materials, connect with each other and learn about best practices.

Look for your invitation to explore the questions of interest and urgency to you and your community.

“I really
appreciated
all the response and
feedback.”

— Congregational President



Examples of questions to be explored:

How do we create a strong leadership succession plan?

How can social media build connections within our congregation?

What are our goals and best practices for growth?

How do we have hard conversations?

Should we consider a new dues model?

How do we shape a culture of philanthropy?

Forums

Chesapeake Presidents' and Leadership Forum

Large Congregations Presidents' Forum

Mid-Atlantic Presidents' Forum

Midwest Presidents' Forum

New England Presidents' Forum

NY/NJ/CT Presidents' Forum

Pacific Northwest Presidents' Council

Small Congregations Presidents' Forum

**“I look forward to
continuing to learn
from each other
and to grow
in our capacity to
lead and strengthen
our congregations”**

— Congregational President

**“It was
such a boost
to know that the others
[in the forum]**

understand the challenges

I face as president.”

— Congregational President

Upcoming Gatherings

Global Day of Jewish Learning – Nov. 20, 2016

NY/NJ/CT Area Reconstructionist Day of Learning – Jan. 29, 2017

Chesapeake Day of Learning and Celebration – March 19, 2017

Pacific Northwest Shabbaton – May 5-7, 2017

Plenum Meetings – Dec. 4, 2016 & May 21, 2017

Facilitators

Tresa Grauer, Assistant Vice President for Affiliate Support at JRC

Maurice Harris, Associate Director of Affiliate Support at JRC

Jackie Land, Associate Director of Affiliate Support at JRC

Rory Schonning, Community Engagement Assistant at JRC



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Reconstructionist Learning

Networks

DREAM • CONNECT • CREATE

1299 Church Road
Wyncote, PA 19095

For the questions
of Jewish life that
can't be Googled



Coming Soon!

Reconstructionist Convention: November 2018

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