

Let's play

ROLES & LANES

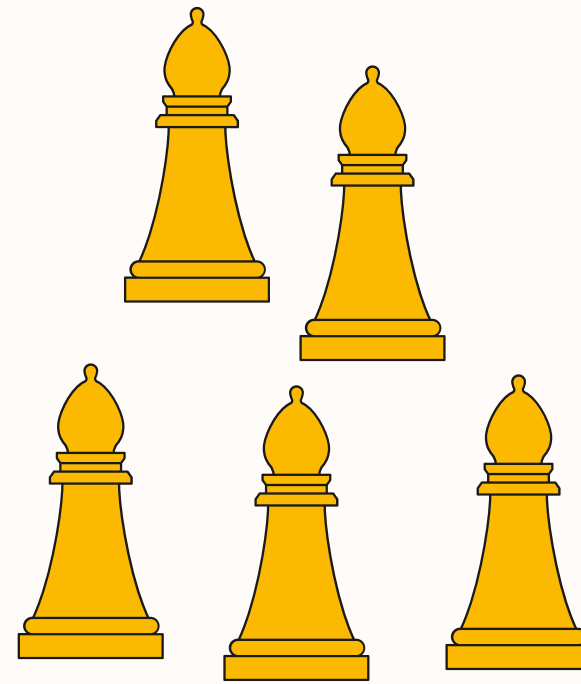
The joys of
decision-making
on a synagogue
board or
committee!



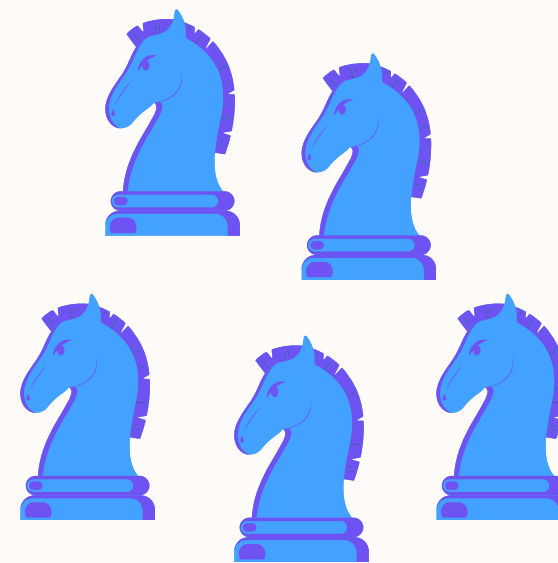
Roles



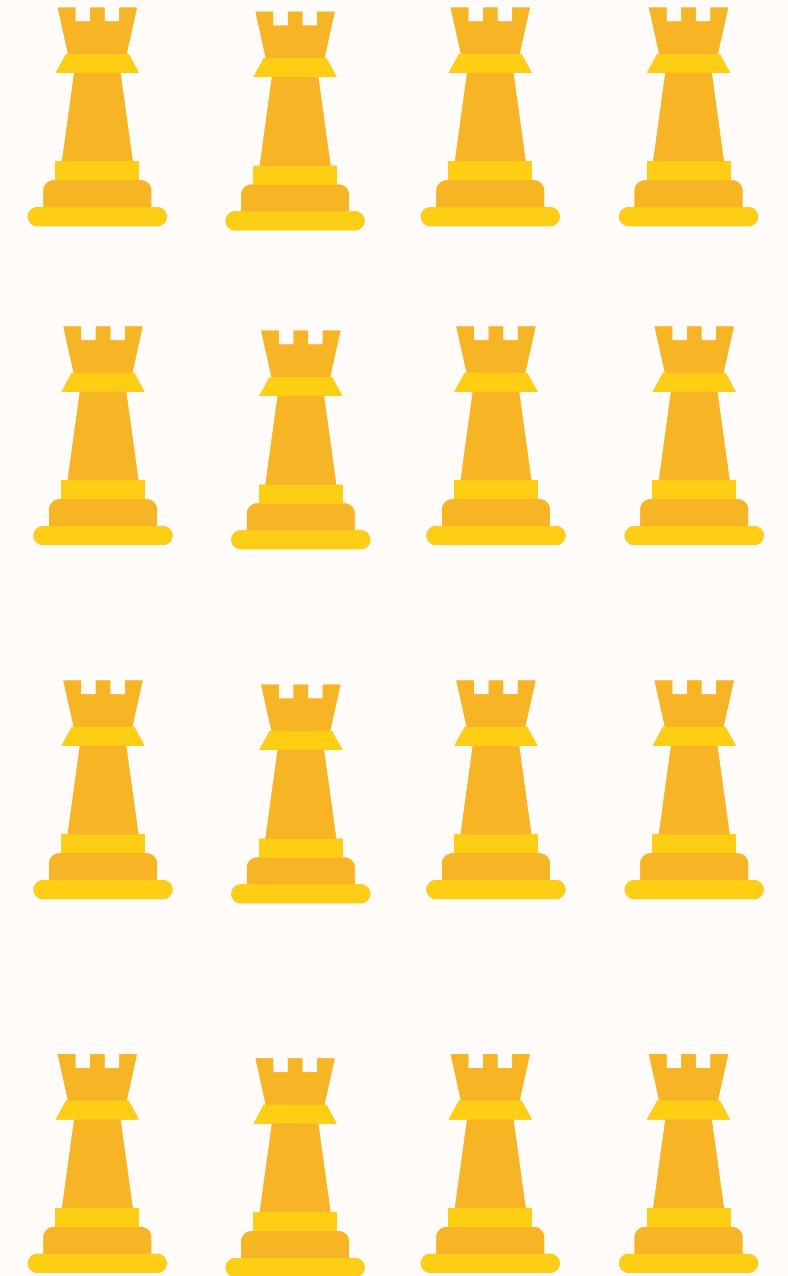
President



Exec



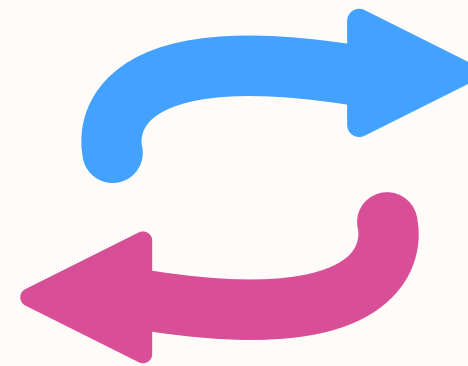
Committee



Board

Scenario: The Board wants a committee to create a proposal to accomplish something that will require board approval

**Board gives broad goals
to committee**



**Committee gives detailed
proposal to board**

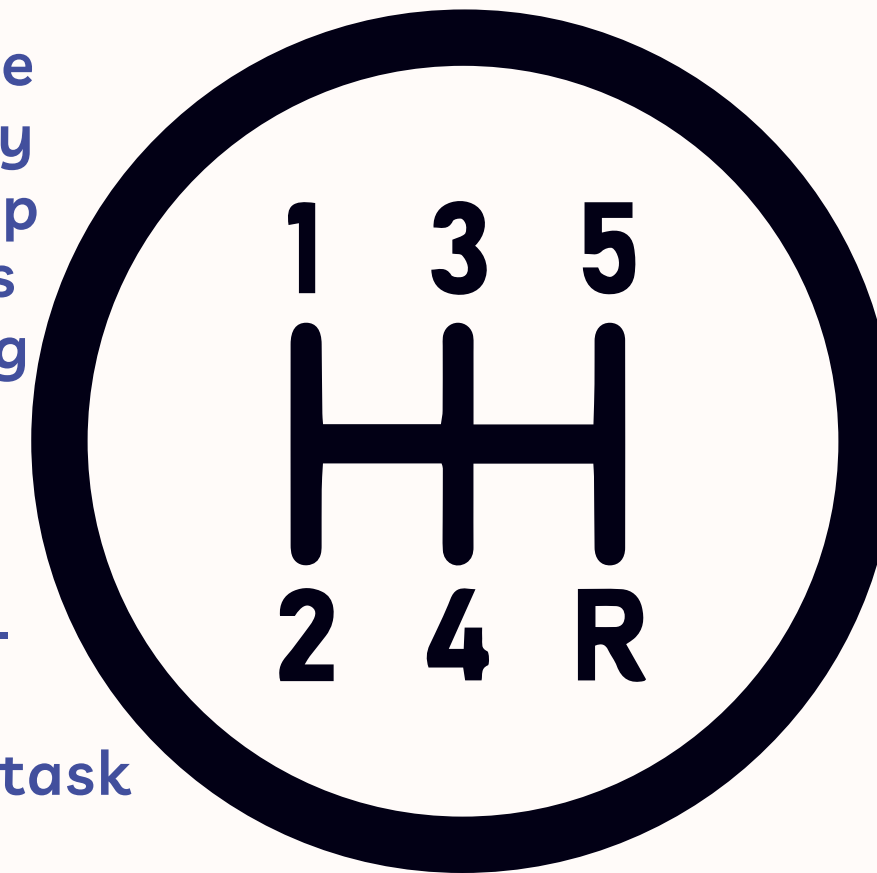
Knowing what gear we're in



1st gear -
time for initial debate
& discussion, possibly
including membership
Before or sometimes
during the "Assigning
Board Meeting."

2nd gear -
giving a
committee a task

3rd gear -
committee
does its work



4th gear -
Exec gives
feedback on
committee's work
and committee
refines proposal

5th gear -
The "Voting
Board
Meeting"
EITHER board
votes to
approve
proposal OR
sends task
back to
committee for
more work

Scenario #1:

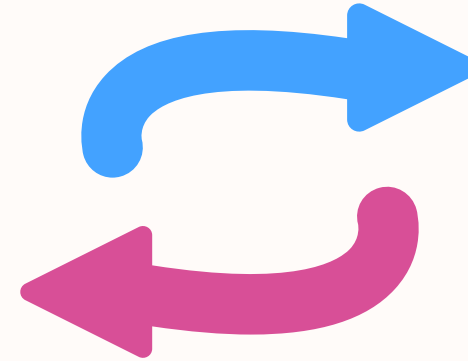
It begins with a board member who has kids that attend your Religious School. A fellow parent with a child in 6th grade tells them that her husband is a person with severe social anxiety often triggered by feeling sensory overwhelm. He wanted to honor the b'nai mitzvah program's requirement that parents attend multiple Shabbat services with their kids, so he attended once and the environment was overwhelming for him. The singing and use of instruments flooded his capacities, and after services well-meaning people kept coming up to him and introducing themselves, spiking his social anxiety so severely that he has not attended any more services despite the requirement. She and he go to a support group that is trying to educate the public about creating accommodations for people with sensory sensitivity challenges, such as including regular announcements letting people know that it's socially acceptable to wear ear plugs, and identifying a quiet space to take breaks in during events. She believes they'll be able to work out a one-time plan with the rabbi and Ed director to get their family through their son's bar mitzvah, but she feels strongly that there's a need for a more substantive accommodation policy. She isn't sure who the best person is to talk to, but she has already emailed everyone she can think of: the Ed Director, the Rabbi, the President, and the religious school committee chair, the accessibility committee chair.

AND SO when you, the president, received emails from the concerned parent and from the board member they spoke to, you used your ability as president to add an agenda item to the next board meeting: "New possible accessibility/inclusivity concern regarding social anxiety and sensory issues."

As President, you take steps before the board meeting to help ensure that the following process will be set in motion:

This is the "Assigning Board Meeting"

**Board gives broad goals
to committee**



**Committee gives detailed
proposal to board**

Things you want to make sure happen when the work is given to the committee:

Decide who will communicate that this is happening to the congregation and how, including who can be contacted on the committee for input.

**What is the committee's deadline to report back?
Who will report back?**



Goal #1:

**In the end: Board passes
committee's proposal
by lopsided margin**



Goal #2:

**No surprises
during board
votes**



Goal #3:
Great majority
of BSWT spent
in the "in-
betweens."

When the committee is ready to share a proposal, or a rough draft of one, with the board, now is the time for...

Executive Committee /
Board Rep(s)



Committee Rep(s)

**A Check In Meeting to Assess if the Proposal is Ready to
Go to the Board for a Vote**

Special Focus: the back-and-forth between a committee and the Exec*

Executive Committee

* *Note: You could assign this responsibility to a designated board member.*

- Preview committee proposals or even partially developed proposals.
- **Assess chances of board passage.**
- Serve as informal go-between between committee and board.
- **Ensure that goals assigned by the board are being addressed by the committee's proposal.**
- Prevent surprises for board or committee.

And finally, the Voting Board Meeting arrives...

Unanimous or lopsided yes vote

Passes by just one vote -
president can seek a vote to
send proposal back to
committee to try to get to
higher degree of board support

Board votes to have
committee do more work

Five things we're tryin' to do in governance:

Include
members of the
congregation to
a degree
warranted by
the importance
of the issue

Avoid surprising
people on
committees or the
board as much as
possible

Communicate,
discuss, disagree,
and wrestle in
between Board
meetings

Conserve peoples'
precious time and
energy by wisely
locating work in
specific "lanes"

Accept in advance
that there's no way
to do this perfectly
& give people
benefit of the doubt

Scenario #1 progress report and next-level decisions:

Fast forward four months: the Board ended up assigning this task to the Accessibility Committee with a directive that they keep the Religious School and Ritual committees in the loop as they research and work on a possible proposal. One member from both of these other committees has been working on this task with the Accessibility Committee.

The "Accessibility Committee +2" informed the Board that they have a newsletter article they'd like to have run that reports on what they've learned querying congregants, a couple churches, and the support group attended by the one Shalom Smile parent. The article doesn't make any policy recommendations, but it does report on their work and reissues the invitation for members to be in touch if they would like to weigh in. It is looking like there are some potential policy recommendations on the horizon of the committee's work and that none of them require any major new budgetary expenses.

The Accessibility Committee +2 asks for 2 more months to have a proposal ready for the board to consider voting on. One member of the Exec will be responsible for meeting with leaders of this committee to review the proposal to the board and troubleshoot any issues that might prevent a lopsided board vote in favor.

