

Reconstructionist Day of Learning on Reparations

Congregational Study Pilot 5782/2022

Facilitators Guide

You already have everything you need to have a connected and generative session.

Questions, breaks, and prompts are all included on the video. Below is a step-by-step facilitator guide. Use this to prepare or guide you during the session.

Agenda Overview: Setting the Table

[Introductions: 10min](#)

[Welcome & Opening Ritual: 20min](#)

[Learning from Our Teachers: 25min](#)

[Chevrotah & Text Study: 25min](#)

[Closing Ritual: 10min](#)

Facilitator Note: Take a minute to assign these roles for each week and/or part of the session.

In this opening session or for all sessions you may want to add on to our 1.5 hour program one of the ice-breakers or activities to build connection and trust in your group.

Facilitator/s: _____

Timekeeper: _____

Scribe: _____

Tech: _____

Video for Intro Session: [Welcome](#)

Introductions: 10min

Gather the group. Invite people to gather in-person or online. Share any space, tech or accessibility information.

Share: Facilitators take a minute to introduce yourselves (name, pronoun), and a brief 1-2 sentences on what personally moved you to facilitate our learning about Reparations together in a Reconstructionist context.

Orient: Give a very brief overview of this session & upcoming sessions. Examples:

- “We will meet in _____ setting weekly/monthly/on these dates”
- “Each session will flow similar to this one – we will gather for a welcome and opening ritual (a bit longer today), have some time dedicated to learning from our teachers, which will happen through video, and then we will have time in chevrotah learning in pairs, and to close as a group.”
 - *****Option to show visual of flow on-screen*****
Turn video to <https://vimeo.com/718443830>
- “We will go over our group agreements shortly – but we want to start with brief introductions.”

Go-Round: What brought you to this community? What has been meaningful for you in being part of this community?

Welcome & Opening Ritual: 20min

Share & Invite: Put up Community Covenant ~ Brit. Invite additions & access requests. Invite one participant to read or to read in a go-round.

[5min]

Community Covenant ~ Brit

- Listen to understand. Try on different ways of knowing (mind, heart, spirit).
 - Take care of yourself! Take breaks as you need.
 - Speak from your own experience. Use “I statements”.
 - Take space; Make space. Notice and adjust your contributions.
 - What’s said here stays here; What’s learned here leaves here.
 - Affirm disagreement. Avoid shame & blame.
 - Cultivate awareness of both impact and intent.
 - We are all teachers and all learners. Get curious. Take risks.
- Sourced from Tzedek Lab, Franny Silverman, Bobby Samet & Barbara Gross.

Orient to Opening Ritual: Give a brief overview and then move people to discuss in pairs.

[15min]

Welcome your group to a moment of *kavannah*, intention setting, together.

We will start each gathering with setting our intentions for our own learning. Setting our *kavannah* intentions is a central part of Jewish spiritual practice. This allows us to guide our own learning and stretch our own growth in the process.

Today we are going to take some time to explore three ways of knowing which we will use as our intention setting guides.

→ **Press pause:** by 0:15 to keep this visual on screen. <https://vimeo.com/718443830>



Ask participants to take three breaths or ground themselves.

Share: In [“Measuring Love in the Journey for Justice”](#) Shiree Teng & Sammy Nunez teach that there are three ways of knowing in our bodies: in mind, heart, and spirit.

Each session we will invite you to focus your Kavannah, your intention, on one way of knowing you would like to pay attention to in our learning.

You might be wondering – what does this even mean? What does this mean to me? We are going to explore these questions briefly in pairs.

Ask participants to either:

- Find a chevrotah – someone they would like to build a learning relationship with
- Pair participants – you can do this before or during
- Turn to the person next to them
- Find someone they don't know

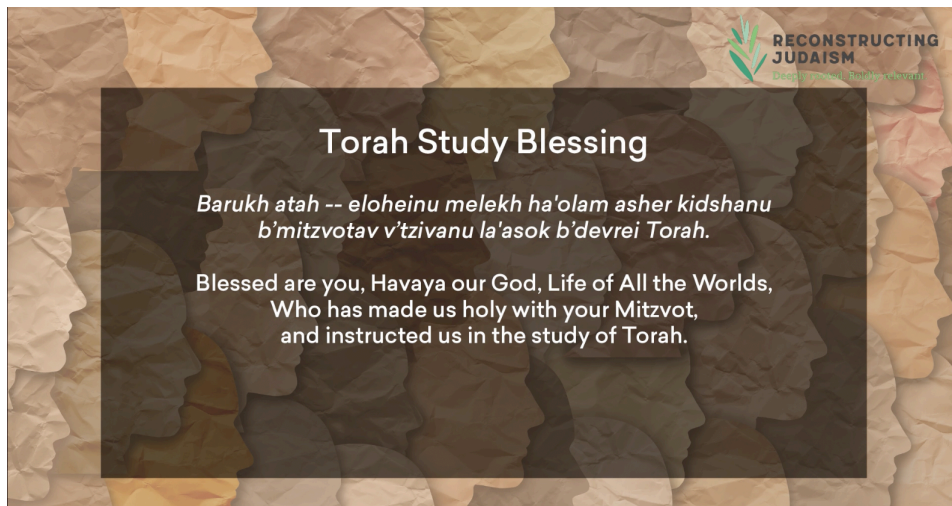
Invite: In your pair take 1 minute each to explore what each way of knowing in your body might mean to you.

- Mind: Cultivating *binah*, understanding.
- Heart: Cultivating *lev*, heart connection.
- Spirit: Cultivating *nefesh*, cultivating connection to your spirit and/or the Divine.

Facilitators remind people to switch after one minute. [OPTIONAL: switch pairs between questions.]

Gather the group back together. Invite 1-2 people to share on each way of knowing.

→ **Press Play:** to proceed to Torah Blessing



→ **Press pause:** to keep Torah Study blessing on screen

Share: Our tradition teaches that the Torah contains both the words written on the Torah scroll and our oral tradition. We received the Torah at Sinai. And we receive Torah through on-going relationships, study and conversation. We have gathered to study the Torah of our Teachers at the Reconstructionist Day of Learning on Reparations. Together we bless this opportunity for learning and connection.

Share: Today we are learning from these valued members of our community...

- Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D. (she/her), President, Reconstructing Judaism
- Rabbi Sandra Lawson (she/her), Director of Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Reconstructing Judaism

Invite: Invite a participant to read the Torah Study blessing for the group and/or lead the group in reading. At the Adonai or Melech you are welcome add your preferred God-word (Havaya, Shechina, Yah, Ruach).

→ **Press Play:** to proceed to Learning from Our Teachers

Learning from Our Teachers: 30min

Note for Facilitator: This section has **24 minutes of video content** and **6 minutes for reflection**.

There are two prompts for reflection. If you spend more time on one, you can make the other moments a bit briefer. The goal is for participants to digest, to draw personal connections to the content, and to engage as a group at least once. Ask participants to focus on sharing one brief thought or take time to record for themselves one reflection.

If you are in-person this can be an opportunity to:

- turn to a neighbor to share a thought
- invite 2-3 people to share with the whole group

If you are on Zoom this can be a moment for people to:

- do personal reflection
- share in the chat or out loud

Share: The Day of Learning on Reparations took place during Elul leading up to 5782. You will hear references to this specific moment in Jewish time. Wherever we are in the year-cycle, we are always moving towards this moment in our year, a moment for individual and collective spiritual accounting.

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt 1, 4:50**
[3min]

Invite: participants to reflect on what *anavah*, humility, and the idea of putting down the privilege of comfort mean to them.

Invite: participants to notice what this learning brings up in mind (*binah*), heart (*lev*) & spirit (*nefesh*).

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt 2, 9:50**
[3min]

Invite: participants to reflect on what it means to you to open your heart to things that are hard to hear.

Invite: participants to notice Rabbi Sandra's teaching brings up in mind (*binah*), heart (*lev*) & spirit (*nefesh*).

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt 3, 18:01**
[3min]

Invite: participants to reflect on what it means to you to open your heart to things that are hard to hear.

Invite: participants to notice Rabbi Sandra's teaching brings up in mind (*binah*), heart (*lev*) & spirit (*nefesh*).

Chevrotah & Text Study: 25min

Facilitator Note: This section contains a text study sheet for chevrotah pairs to work from. Plan for **15 minutes** for study in chevrotah pairs, followed by **5 minutes** for sharing back.

Tech Note: Share Text Study sheet link in the chat:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NFbFsCMhlan5dFsDLbAZBTue5ychbcQVArXCblK_xC8o/edit?usp=sharing

Invite participants into pairs for 15 minutes. You can assign randomly in break-out rooms (Zoom) or have people turn to the person next to them or find someone they don't know (in-person).

- Learning in chevrotah is a Jewish practice studying text with one other person to deepen your reflection, curiosity and engagement with a text.
- Choose 1-2 texts to read and discuss using the guided questions.
- Share time and ask each other questions to deepen your learning together.

Invite participants to share one highlight of their reflection in their chevrotah during 5 minutes of all group time. You probably have time for 3-5 brief reflections. Modification: put in the chat and read them.

→ **Press Play:** to move into the closing ritual

Closing Ritual: 10min

Invite: participants to take a moment for personal reflection on the closing questions.

There is a Jewish practice of dedicating our learning to someone to honor their teaching, their importance in our lives or their memory.

Record: assign a scribe to record the answers (without names attached). We are writing together an on-going Torah of our Learning on Reparations as a Reconstructionist Movement. You are learning alongside a cohort of other congregations. We are recording and sharing to honor this learning, so it may spark more learning and support our collective transformation.

Questions:

- Where would you like to cultivate further learning in the three realms of understanding we have been focusing on: mind (*binah*), heart (*lev*) & spirit (*nefesh*)
- Who would you like to dedicate your on-going learning on reparations to in the coming weeks?

Closing & Continuing Our Learning:

Where would you like to cultivate further learning in the realms of *binah* (understanding), *lev* (heart), or *nefesh* (spirit) on the topic of reparations?

Who would you like to dedicate your on-going learning on reparations to in the coming week?

Ice-Breakers & Community Building

Go-Round: What brought you to this community? What has been meaningful for you in being part of this community?

Pair & Share: Break into pairs, take 3min each to share.

(Suggestion: Use one question a session)

- What brought you to this community? Where have you found meaning here?
- Why did you join this group? What is your personal connection to Reparations?
- What is a time that you had a transformative learning experience, either as the learner or the teacher? What made that transformative experience possible?
- Who is someone whose memory, work, or presence in your life you would like to honor with your learning today? Tell me about them!
- What resources are you bringing into our collective work for transformation, justice & repair? What resources do you need to stay in our work alongside me?

Invite a member of your group each time to give a brief Dvar Torah (words of Torah) reflecting on the Torah Portion from this week.

Invite group members to bring an object or picture which connects them to their desire to be part of learning and/or social justice, and to share a word or two about their object.

Community Covenant ~ Brit

- Listen to understand. Try on different ways of knowing (mind, heart, spirit).
- Take care of yourself! Take breaks as you need.
- Speak from your own experience. Use “I statements”.
- Take space; Make space. Notice and adjust your contributions.
- What’s said here stays here; What’s learned here leaves here.
- Affirm disagreement. Avoid shame & blame.
- Cultivate awareness of both impact and intent.
- We are all teachers and all learners. Get curious. Take risks.

Access Needs:

Facilitator's Tools

Parking Lot or Bike Rack

Keep a running list (on butcher paper or on a GoogleDoc) of important questions, conversations or topics which you don't have time or capacity to explore in the group.

Compost Bin ---> Fertilizer: Compost your guilt & shame into responsibility and action.

Keep a running list of things to "throw into the compost bin" -- especially guilt and shame. Towards the end of each session, take a few minutes to brainstorm a matching list of "fertilizer" items for action and taking responsibility.

Pair & Share

Great to use if you're finding it challenging to facilitate the whole group in conversation on something, need a moment to re-ground as facilitator or think there is way more to be said that can be said in the group. Invite people to turn to the person beside them to share! You can ask the pairs to share anything meaningful that came up if you'd like.

Group Agreements

You can always re-ground in the group agreements to support the group in staying accountable and connected to each other. Take a moment to remind or share an agreement that people may be forgetting about or having challenges putting into practice.

Grounding Practices

In between sessions or if the group could use some support grounding, you can invite people to take a moment for some grounding practices. Examples:

- Put your feet on the floor and take 10 deep breaths.
- Stretch break! Ask someone to lead.
- Niggun or Call & Response. Share or ask someone to lead a song.
- Appreciations: Ask for a few appreciations from the last conversation.

Text Study Sheet

Reconstructionist Day of Learning on Reparations Congregational Study Pilot 5782/2022 Text Study

Learning in chevrotah is a Jewish practice studying text with one other person to deepen your reflection, curiosity and engagement with a text. Share time and ask each other questions to deepen your learning together.

Choose one section below which you all are interested in focusing on in your chevrotah pair.

Text Study about Chevrotah

Source Sheet by David Eber & Rayna Grossman

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

(9) Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. (10) For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falls, and there isn't another to lift him up.

קהלת ד':ט'-י

(ט) טובים השניים מן-האחד אשר
יש-להם שכר טוב בעמלם: (י) כי
אם יפלו האחד יקים את-חברו
ואילו האחד שפול ואין שני
להקומו:

Questions:

- 1.) What might it mean that 2 people have a good reward for their labor?
- 2.) In what ways might someone lift up their fellow?
- 3.) What might this text teach us about chevrotah?

Proverbs 27:17

(17) Iron sharpens iron; So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

משלי כ"ז:י"ז

(יז) ברזל בברזל יחד ואיש יחד פני-רעהו:

Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Taanit 1:19

R. Chama b. Chanina said: "What is the meaning of the passage (Pr. 27, 17) Iron is sharpened by iron? It means just as iron sharpens another iron, so also when two scholars study together, one sharpens [the intellect of] the other."

עין יעקב (מאת שמואל צבי גליק) , תענית

א:י"ט

אמר רבי חמא בר חנינא מאי דכתיב (משלי כז יז) ברזל בברזל יחד לומר לך מה ברזל זה אחד מחדד את חברו אף שני ת"ח מחדדין זה את זה בהלכה.

Questions:

- 1.) What did you take away from the text from Proverbs initially? What might it mean for a man to sharpen the countenance of his friend?
 - 2.) How does the second source add to, or change your understanding of the 1st text?
 - 3.) Taken together, what do these two texts teach about the benefits of chevrotah?
-

Berakhot 63b:12

"Attend [*hasket*]" — i.e. "form classes" and occupy yourselves with Torah, because Torah is only acquired in a group [*b'chabura*]. This is in accord with the statement of R. Jose b. R. Hannina who said : What means that which is written, "A sword is upon the boasters [*baddim*] and they shall become fools" (Jer. 1. 36)? A sword is upon the enemies of the disciples of the wise who sit separately [*bad wa-bad*] and study Torah.

ברכות ס"ג ב:מי-מ"ב

הסכת עשו כתות ועסקו בתורה לפי שאין התורה נקנית אלא בחבורה כדר' יוסי ברבי חנינא דאמר ר' יוסי ברבי חנינא מאי דכתיב (ירמיהו נ, לו) חרב (על) הבדים ונאלו חרב על שונאיהם של תלמידי חכמים שיושבים בד בד ועוסקים בתורה

Questions:

- 1.) What might "Torah" mean in this text?
 - 2.) What might this text mean when it says "Torah is only acquired in a group?"
 - 3.) What is this text telling us about those "who sit separately and study Torah?"
 - 4.) What does this text teach us about chevrotah?
-

Berakhot 63b:15

"Attend [*hasket*] and hear, O Israel":
Be silent [*has*] and then discuss
[*kattet*]; according to the statement
of Raba who said : A man should
always study Torah first and
afterwards meditate thereon.

ברכות ס"ג ב:ט"ו

הסכת ושמע ישראל הם ואחר כך
כתת כדרבא דאמר רבא לעולם
ילמוד אדם תורה ואחר כך יהגה

Questions:

- 1.) What might it mean when this text says, "Be silent and then discuss?" What might be the benefit of that silence?
- 2.) What might it mean that one should meditate on the text after the study of Torah?
- 3.) What might this text teach us about chevrutah?

*Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Rayna Grossman
Based on a sheet by David Eber*