

Potluck Learning

Goal: To create opportunities for Jewish young adults to engage in Jewish learning and community building through a grassroots, “potluck” style text study group.

What is Potluck Learning?

Just like a Potluck meal, Potluck learning means that instead of one person preparing an entire learning session and source sheet, all participants contribute a text relating to a central theme in order to create a grassroots and multi-perspective Jewish learning experience.

Why PotLuck?

Learning is both the backbone of any Jewish community and essential for personal spiritual growth. As young adults creating our space in society, we can especially benefit from Jewish learning

Potluck takes away the burden from one person for creating and leading a shiur, and instead places equal responsibility and opportunity for all participants to be a part of the process. Further, it lowers the barrier of entry for Jewish learning, because it allows Jews with a range of backgrounds, textual skill level, and interests, to bring something to table. As young adult communities are very used to the concept of collaborative Potluck meals, adapting the model to Jewish learning seems like a natural fit. Additionally, Potluck Learning is a great example of harnessing our generation’s preference for peer-led, non-institutionalized experiences to create a new model for Jewish learning.

How does it work?

I. Preparation:

Potluck learning will meet at the home of one of the participants. The “host” will be responsible for selecting a thematic topic that the learning and sources will be based on, as well as the group of people to invite.

The host will frame the topic with guiding questions, in addition to one text that will frame the learning. The host will share the text with all invited guests at least three weeks before the Pot-Luck event, along with a google doc. On the google doc, there will be spaces for each guest to sign up to bring a text to PotLuck learning. The text can be Biblical, Talmudic, from the Modern period, an article, a TED talk, a piece of literature, a painting... any sort of text, as long as it responds to the topic prompt, and relates in some way to the original text selected by the host.

Guests are encouraged to look at what other guests are bringing, and select a text accordingly (ie to prevent having a session with 5 paintings and one Soloveitchik quote). Texts should be limited to one page, or one image. Guests are asked to make copies of whatever text they

choose to bring.

~~Like any great community building event, Potluck Learning will take place over food, preferably over dinner. Guests can sign up on the googledoc to contribute to the meal, in addition to whatever text they are bringing.~~

The event:

Potluck learning will occur in the evenings, at around dinner time. Participants will spend the first 20 minutes arriving, and eating, and then the learning will commence! The host will frame the topic, explain why he/she chose it and the questions that they are interested in exploring, and discuss the original text that they selected. Afterwards, each guest who brought a text will introduce their text. Throughout, participants can discuss how the texts relate to each other, and any ideas that come to mind. The host will serve as a facilitator, and can guide the conversation/ask participants to move to the next text when they feel it is needed. The host will also be responsible for closing the learning session, and provide a summary of some of the ideas covered through the text study.

For more information, contact:

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