

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 if you are preparing before or to guide you during the session.

Agenda Overview: Setting the Table

[Welcome & Opening Ritual: 10min](#)

[Learning from Our Teachers: 45min](#)

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

[Closing Ritual: 10min](#)

Session Resources:

- [Video for Session 1: Setting the Table](#)
- [Community Covenant ~ Brit](#)
- [Text Study Sheet](#)
- [Ice-Breakers & Community Building Activities](#)
- [Facilitator's Tools](#)

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 community building activities to build connection and trust in your group.

Facilitator/s: _____

Timekeeper: _____

Scribe: _____

Tech: _____

Video for Session 1: Setting the Table: <https://vimeo.com/665795009/0f9aa6f8cf>

Welcome & Opening Ritual: 10min

*** **Welcome:** 5min ***

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

Share & Invite: Put up Community Covenant ~ Brit. Invite additions & access requests.

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.

*** **Opening Ritual:** 5 minutes ***

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

→ **Press pause:** by 0:10 to keep this visual on screen. <https://vimeo.com/665795009/0f9aa6f8cf>

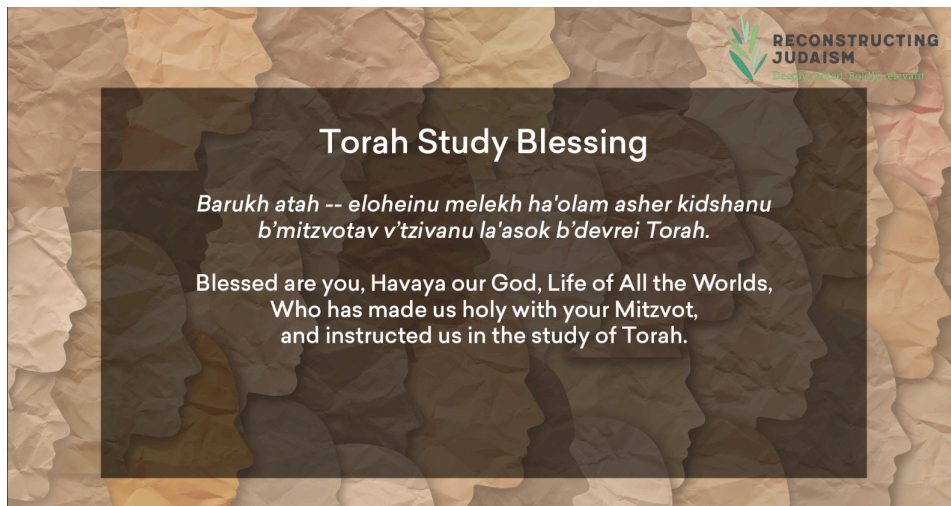


Ask participants to take three breaths or ground themselves.

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.

Invite: Take a moment to focus your Kavannah, your intention, on one way of knowing you would like to pay attention to in our learning today. I will bring us back together in a moment.

→ **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 relationship, 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...

- Lazora Jordan, LSW (they/them), Co-Chair of Reconstructing Judaism's Jews of Color and Allies Advisory Group, Member of the Tikkun Olam Commission and a Staff therapist at the Institute for Family Health, New York, NY
- Emahann Campbell, Ph.D.(he/him)

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

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

Learning from Our Teachers: 45min

Note for Facilitator: This section has **35 minutes of video content** and **10 minutes for reflection**. There are four 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 taking 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

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt #1, @ 6:55**

Invite: participants to reflect on how land ownership as part of a system of racial advantage and disadvantage connects with their lives.

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



 RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM
Disrupt. Renew. Reimagine.

Reflection Prompt:

40 Acres & A Mule

How does land ownership as a piece of the system of racial advantage and disadvantage connect with your life?

What does this piece of learning bring up for you in your *binah* (understanding), *lev* (heart) and *nefesh* (spirit)?

(Pause the video and resume after reflection)

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt #2, @ 17:40**

Invite: participants to reflect on how the New Deal and Creation of the White Middle class as part of a system of racial advantage and disadvantage connects with their lives.

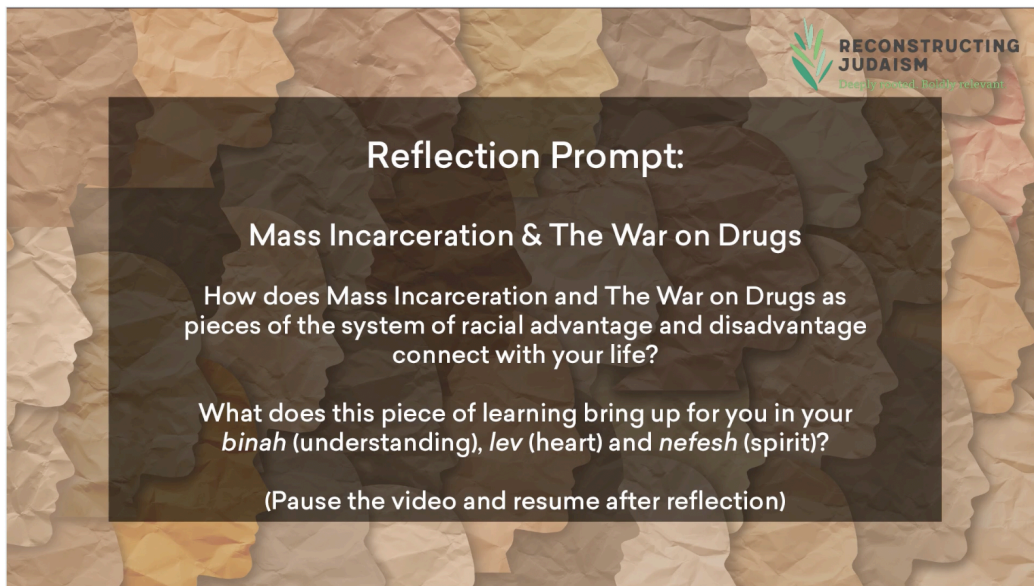
Invite: participants to notice what this learning brings up in mind (*binah*), heart (*lev*) & spirit (*nefesh*).

The slide features a background of crumpled paper in shades of brown and tan. In the top right corner, there is a logo for 'RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM' with the tagline 'Deeply Jewish. Radically Jewish.' below it. The main content is centered in a dark brown rectangular box with white text. The text reads: 'Reflection Prompt:', 'The New Deal and Creation of the White Middle Class', 'How do the GI Bill, Redlining/Greenlining and the Exclusion of Farm & Domestic Workers from Labor Protections as pieces of the system of racial advantage and disadvantage connect with your life?', 'What does this piece of learning bring up for you in your binah (understanding), lev (heart) and nefesh (spirit)?', and '(Pause the video and resume after reflection)'.

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt #3, @ 27:50**

Invite: participants to reflect on how land ownership as part of a system of racial advantage and disadvantage connects with their lives.

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

The slide features a background of crumpled paper in shades of brown and tan. In the top right corner, there is a logo for 'RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM' with the tagline 'Deeply Jewish. Radically Jewish.' below it. The main content is centered in a dark brown rectangular box with white text. The text reads: 'Reflection Prompt:', 'Mass Incarceration & The War on Drugs', 'How does Mass Incarceration and The War on Drugs as pieces of the system of racial advantage and disadvantage connect with your life?', 'What does this piece of learning bring up for you in your binah (understanding), lev (heart) and nefesh (spirit)?', and '(Pause the video and resume after reflection)'.

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt #3, @ 33:50**

Invite: participants to reflect on “why not”. This may be an uncomfortable question. In seeking to learn we are also seeking to learn what barriers exist, within ourselves and within our societal narratives, in order to face them and reconstruct a more just world. Ask people to share OR save to bring into their chevrotah conversations in the next section.



→ **Pause:** for a one minute mind & body break @ 34:00.

Chevrutah & Text Study: 25min

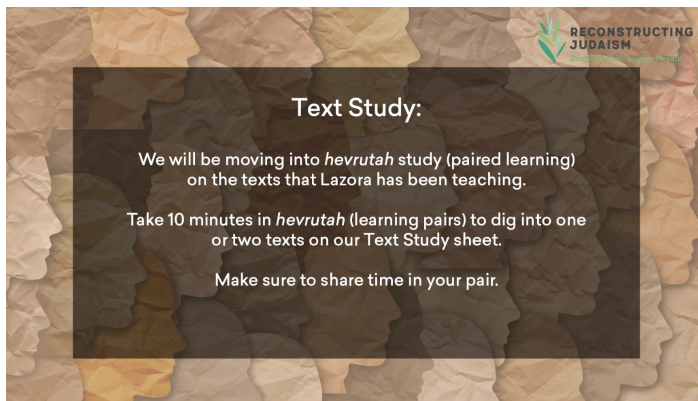
Facilitator Note: This section contains **3 minutes of video** introducing the texts we will be studying from our teachers, **a quick 1 min grounding all group prompt in the middle of the video** and then **15 minutes** for study in chevrutah pairs, followed by **5 minutes** for sharing back.

→ **Press Pause: Reflection Prompt @ 34:30**

Invite participants to share in the chat (Zoom) or in a go-round (in-person) how they would finish this statement in **ONE** word or phrase.



→ **Press Pause: Text Study @ 37:40**



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

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/13dAOZgf3WLg0ygflc4XvUiUG8fYxsSpA-xLVWKDNRSE/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 chevrutah 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?



Ice-Breakers & Community Building

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

[#1: Exodus & Reparations](#)

[#2: Talmudic Liability & Collective Action](#)

[#3: Communal Responsibility & AI Chet](#)

#1: Exodus & Reparations

[Exodus 12:35-36](#)

וּבְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשׂוּ כְּדִבְרֵי מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם כֶּל־כֶּסֶף וְכֶלִי זָהָב וְשִׁמְלֹת:

The Israelites had done Moses' bidding and borrowed from the Egyptians objects of silver and gold, and clothing.

{וַיְהִי־נָתַן אֶת־תֶּחֱן הָעַם בְּעֵינֵי מִצְרַיִם וַיִּשְׁאַלּוּם וַיִּנְצֹלוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם: פ}

And the LORD had disposed the Egyptians favorably toward the people, and they let them have their request; thus they stripped the Egyptians.

Reflection Prompts:

- What questions do you have about this text? Try to list as many as you can.
- What words stick out to you in this text?
- Who is acting in this text? Who is the subject of the sentences? Whose actions move forward the story?
- What reasons might there be for silver, gold and clothing being the items named specifically?
- How, if at all, have you heard this a portion of the Exodus story talked about?

We will return to this text in a few sessions, so note any questions for deeper wrestling.

#2: Talmudic Liability & Collective Action

[Mishnah Bava Kamma 8:1](#)

הַחוֹבֵל בְּחֵבֵירוֹ חַיֵּב עָלָיו מְשֹׁם חֲמִשָּׁה דְּבָרִים, בְּנִזֵּק, בְּצָעַר, בְּרַפּוּי, בְּשִׁשְׁבַּת, וּבְבוֹשָׁת.

One who injures their neighbor is liable to them for these five things:
injury, pain, healing, loss of livelihood, and humiliation.

Lazara Jordan, LSW, Reconstructionist Day of Learning 5782

"We all have some involvement even if it's passive. What are the things that we can do to change the world? To change the country? To change the social injustices around race. I think that reparations speaks to that and can do a bit of healing"

Reflection Prompts:

- What relationship do you see between these two texts and the Exodus passage?
 - How is passive involvement addressed in the Talmud text on Harm & Liability?
 - Where in these texts do you see the concept of healing being addressed?
 - What has healing looked like for you in your own life?
-

#3: Communal Responsibility & AI Chet

Lazora Jordan, LSW, Reconstructionist Day of Learning 5782

Reparations is a mitzvah. Not a good deed, but a Torah commandment.

Pirkei Avot 2:16

לֹא עָלֵינוּ הַמְלָאכָה לְגִמּוֹר, וְלֹא אֲנִיחָהּ בֶּן חוֹרִין לְבָטֵל מִמֶּנָּה.

It is not upon us to complete the work but neither are we free to abandon it.

Reflection Prompts:

- What role do mitzvot play in your personal life? In this community's collective life?
- What does Pirkei Avot add to your understanding of mitzvot as commandments?
- Where have you or communities you are part of gotten stuck on the spectrum of completing the work or abandoning it? Unstuck? What has made that possible?

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 607

That which we say, the AI Chet prayer, does not specify the person's specific sin.

Everyone says it equally according to the nusach of the prayer.

Lazora Jordan, LSW, Reconstructionist Day of Learning 5782

AI chet... is a communal prayer. We are praying individually for things we may not have done, but we still hold responsibility for as a community, because we live in a world where we have let these things happen in one way or another.

Emahann Campbell, Ph.D., Reconstructionist Day of Learning 5782

I know that there is some pushback against the idea of reparations for black people. And I would ask people to look into themselves and say, "why not?". To look into the history, to understand that the history we've laid out which is just scratching the surface is a history that is still playing out today.

Reflection Prompts:

- What does Lazora's lifting up of AI Chet as a communal prayer and model of collective responsibility add to this conversation?
- What is your relationship with the AI Chet liturgy: the collective prayer of taking responsibility for wrongs we have done in the past year?
- Where have you seen communal responsibility play out in-practice?
- Take a minute to share any "why not's" that came up for you. How might these texts address these "why not's"?