

# UJA-FEDERATION OF NEW YORK THRIVING SYNAGOGUE LEARNING TOOL

## Thriving Synagogue Learning Tool – Survey Items

### Congregation Survey

#### Current Vitality

1. In the past few years, the synagogue has been successful in keeping its members.
2. The synagogue successfully attracts new members.
3. I believe the synagogue is financially sound.
4. The synagogue's activities are very well attended.
5. The synagogue is constantly alive with activity.
6. Congregants are mostly apathetic.

#### Future Strength

7. I believe the synagogue is heading in the right direction.
8. I have doubts about the future of the synagogue.
9. I am excited about the future of the synagogue.
10. The synagogue has a clear sense of purpose.
11. The synagogue has a clear plan for achieving its vision.
12. Synagogue's activities are in keeping with its core values.
13. I am confident that the synagogue is well equipped to address this challenge.

#### Belonging: This Is MY Place

14. The synagogue is an excellent fit for me.
15. I feel comfortable and at home in the synagogue.
16. I feel like an outsider at the synagogue.
17. The last time I attended an activity at the synagogue, I felt connected to the other people there.
18. I am proud to be a member of the synagogue.
19. I would recommend the synagogue to a friend.
20. It is important to me to be active in the synagogue.
21. I feel a personal responsibility to help the synagogue achieve success.
22. I feel a sense of shared responsibility for the future of the synagogue.
23. The synagogue plays a central role in my life.
24. I am considering leaving the synagogue.
25. I consider the money I give an investment in the synagogue community.
26. This year, make a financial contribution beyond the suggested or requested amount.

#### Intentional Leadership

27. I am satisfied with how the synagogue lay leaders perform their jobs.
28. Overall, I trust the lay leadership at the synagogue.
29. Lay leaders model Jewish values in their work for the synagogue.

30. Lay leaders do a good job of promoting a vision for the synagogue.
31. Lay leaders are responsive to members' needs.
32. I have little personal contact with the lay leaders.
33. There is a healthy flow of new people into lay leadership roles each year.

### **Sacred Purpose**

34. The synagogue meets my spiritual needs.
35. Religious services at the synagogue are meaningful to me.
36. I look forward to attending services at the synagogue.
37. The synagogue has helped me grow as a Jew.
38. My knowledge of Judaism is growing as a result of my participation at the synagogue.
39. Jewish education at this synagogue has made a positive difference in my life.
40. I feel this synagogue is a sacred place.
41. The clergy present a compelling vision of Jewish life that resonates with me.

### **Connected Community**

42. I have many close friends at the synagogue.
43. I have found a group at the synagogue that feels like my community.
44. I have little contact with members of the synagogue outside of synagogue services, activities, and events.
45. It's easy to become part of the synagogue community.
46. The synagogue community is cliquish.
47. At synagogue activities, people socialize only with people they know.
48. I appreciate all that people do for the synagogue.
49. The staff is friendly and welcoming.
50. A member of the clergy at the synagogue knows me by name?
51. This synagogue makes good use of my skills and talents.

### **Sound Operations**

52. Things run smoothly at the synagogue.
53. Operations and management are well grounded in Jewish values.
54. The synagogue's physical space detracts from the worship experience.
55. The layout of the synagogue's physical space makes it difficult for me to participate fully.
56. The synagogue's physical space makes it difficult to talk to and get to know others.
57. The synagogue's physical space greatly enhances my experience as a member/participant.
58. Physical space(s) and grounds are well kept.
59. The synagogue would effectively manage any crisis that could be reasonably anticipated.
60. Changes for the better are readily adopted.
61. The synagogue is stuck in its ways.
62. The synagogue preserves the traditions that are important to me.
63. Changes rarely catch me by surprise.
64. The synagogue does a good job of informing people about activities, programs, and opportunities.
65. Lay leaders do a good job of discussing important decisions with the congregation.
66. I usually understand reasons behind decisions on policy or practices.
67. Lay leaders do a good job of presenting the synagogue's financial information.
68. I understand the synagogue's financial condition.
69. It is easy to get answers to any questions I might have about the synagogue.
70. The synagogue offers programs of the highest quality.

### **Outward Facing**

71. The synagogue collaborates effectively with other organizations.

72. The synagogue works to enhance the quality of life in the larger community.
73. If the synagogue were to close, its contribution to the larger community would be sorely missed.
74. The synagogue is well regarded in the larger community.

## **Board Survey**

### **Mission and Vision**

1. Board clearly understands the synagogue's mission.
2. Board ensures that programs and policies are aligned with the synagogue's mission and values.
3. Synagogue mission and values are central to the board's budget discussions.
4. Board members agree on the vision for where the synagogue is headed over the next three to five years.
5. Board is actively involved in setting the direction and priorities of the synagogue.
6. The board and clergy are unified in purpose and direction.
7. Board's time is taken up with the current situation rather than future plans and possibilities.
8. Board has useful ideas for how to engage members on a deeper level.

### **Structure**

9. Synagogue policies are effectively communicated to all board members.
10. The board can count on its committees and taskforces to get the work done.
11. Lines of authority and responsibility are clear in the synagogue.
12. Relationships between lay leaders and top professionals at the synagogue are characterized by mutual respect.

### **Board Responsibilities**

13. Develop and oversee strategic plans
14. Monitor and strengthen programs and services
15. Ensure adequate financial resources
16. Protect assets and provide financial oversight
17. Build a competent board
18. Ensure the synagogue's legal and ethical integrity
19. Serve as "ambassadors" for the synagogue
20. Support and evaluate the clergy
21. Support and evaluate the top professionals
22. Adequately prepare new board members for service on the board.

### **Decision Making**

23. The board uses sound decision-making processes.
24. Board explicitly makes decisions in accord with Jewish values.
25. Decisions of the board are made by a small group of leaders.
26. The board represents the diversity of perspectives among the synagogue's members.

### **Conflict Management**

27. Board moves quickly and effectively to resolve issues with others in the synagogue.

### **Board Meetings and Dynamics**

28. Board meetings are generally a waste of time.
29. Board meetings are well run.
30. Conversations on the board are open and honest.

**Change Management**

- 31. The board is stuck in its ways.
- 32. The board effectively implements changes in the synagogue.

**Personal Experience on the Board**

- 33. Are your leadership skills improving as a result of your participation on the board?
- 34. Do you agree with the board's priorities and plans?
- 35. Do you have a good understanding of the synagogue's financial reports?
- 36. Do you understand the synagogue's fundraising needs?
- 37. Do you assist with fundraising?