



## MISSION STATEMENT

Our Temple Circles initiative encourages our temple family to form groups that have shared interests and passions in order to **SEEK, ENGAGE, and TRANSFORM** caring and supportive relationships among themselves, with the Temple Emanu-El community, and with Judaism.



**TEMPLE CIRCLE PROMISE**

(to be signed at the end of each meeting, by those who have not yet signed it)

*Our Temple Circle, known as \_\_\_\_\_, will always be a place for transparency, vulnerability, sharing, and growing closer in relationship with each other, Temple Emanu-El, and Judaism.*

*We promise to uphold the core values of Judaism, agree to confidentiality, and commit to attending our Temple Circle Gatherings.*

*We will invite others who might share our interests and passions and welcome them with exemplary hospitality.*

*We all agree to the guidelines stated in this Promise and in the Guidelines & Procedures Booklet and waive Temple Emanu-El, its staff and lay leaders from any and all liability regarding the activities of our Temple Circle.*

Signed by:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**SESSION DATES:**

\_\_\_\_\_



## **SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR TEMPLE CIRCLE MEETINGS**

- 6:00 Warm Welcome, Nosh & Schmooze
- 6:25 Review of TC Mission, Circle Purpose, and TC Promise
- 6:30 Do something Jewish (Blessing, Dvar, Text Study)
- 6:45 Activity/Discussion involving the purpose of the circle
- 7:15 Break for “Table Conversation” and more Noshing
- 7:30 Resume Activity/Discussion
- 8:00 Review the upcoming schedule of get-togethers:  
adjust if absolutely necessary
- 8:05 Plan for the next gathering

# Sample Blessings

## The Blessing for Communal Leadership

"...Who has commanded us to engage in the work of the community."

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו לעסוק בצרכי צבור  
*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech haolam asher kidshanu  
b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu la'asok b'tzorchai tzibur.*

Praised are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe,  
who sanctifies us through *mizvot* and has commanded us  
to engage in the needs of the community.

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## Opening Blessing

Adonai, Eternal Source of Life, we appreciate each person's presence here today. We are grateful for our time together, and we set it apart as sacred. May we be as present as possible for one another. May our hearts and minds be open to the wisdom within and around us. May we share the responsibility of supporting this group to thrive. May we invest in the connections between us. 'Between us' is where we're most likely to experience something holy, something larger than ourselves, something comforting and energizing – something divine.

## SHEHECHEYANU

Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu  
me-lech ha-o-lam, she-he-che-ya-nu  
ve-ki-ye-ma-nu ve-hi-gi-a-nu  
la-ze-man ha-zeh.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו,  
מלך העולם, שהחיינו  
וקיימנו והגיענו  
לזמן הזה.

*Blessed are You, Adonai, our God who guides the universe, for giving us life, for keeping us alive, and for helping us reach this day.*

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## ***Blessing for members of Our Temple Circle***

Diverse in age, interest and background; Jews by birth, Jews by choice, and those of other faiths who join with us; all who offer their time and talent, their support and commitment.

For all who come here to \_\_\_\_\_ and share, your presence is a blessing, your friendship a gift. May the spirit of peace, dignity and respect live within our Temple Circle inspiring us to be a source of goodness and light within our Temple Emanu-El community.

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**As we gather in our Temple Circle, may we honor the values of our Jewish tradition. May we bring compassion, insight, and wisdom to our conversation and our interest [fill in the blank with your group name or topic]. May we recognize the Divine Image in one another, and let that awareness be reflected in our words and our actions.**

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## ***SHEKACHA***

**On seeing the small-scale wonders of nature, such as beautiful trees, animals, and people:**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁכַחַה לּוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ.

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech haolam, shekacha lo beolamo.*

## ***Sample Questions for Deep Conversations***

- ✚ What positive thing happened to you since we last met?
- ✚ What did you recently read or learn that energized you?
- ✚ What do you enjoy doing, just for the fun of it?
- ✚ What inspires you?
- ✚ If you could go back to any age, which would you choose and why?
- ✚ If you could have dinner with a deceased family member, who would it be and why?
- ✚ Where did you grow up and what was it like to grow up there?
- ✚ What did your bedroom look like when you were a child?
- ✚ How did you come to be a part of the Temple and why?
- ✚ What is your greatest concern or worry in your life?
- ✚ What is a story from your life, the results of which has come to define who you are?
- ✚ How do you spend time with your family?
- ✚ How would you like to transform yourself?
- ✚ How would you make the world a better place?
- ✚ How does TEE help you enjoy life?
- ✚ Where would you most like to travel and why?
- ✚ What kind of support do you prefer during the good times and not so good times?
- ✚ How does this temple circle relate to Judaism and/or Temple Emanu-El?
- ✚ What are your skill sets and how could you use them at Temple Emanu-El?
- ✚ What do you love most about your life and love sharing with others?
- ✚ How would you describe the impact Judaism has had on your life?
- ✚ Jewish Journey
- ✚ Meaningful Experience
- ✚ 6 Word Memoir
- ✚ What keeps you up at night?

- ✚ What makes you happy to wake up in the morning?
- ✚ Bring Personal Artifact and tell a story
- ✚ For who are you named?
- ✚ What is your current profession and what would you want to be if you weren't that
- ✚ Tell us about the temple you grew up in

What is a 'relational' question? A question that is open-ended, personal but not private, and unusual enough that people need to think about their responses, rather than defaulting to their stock material.

What's the thinking behind this? It's important to shift from individual schmoozing to inclusive group conversation, and sometimes a little structure can go a really long way!



# SAMPLE EMAILS

## Sample Welcome Email

Shalom!

I want to welcome you to our Temple Circle, \_\_\_\_\_ . Our first circle gathering will be on (date) at (time). We will meet at (insert address). (Name) will be bringing snacks [if applicable]. Please don't forget to bring \_\_\_\_\_ .

Here are the proposed dates and times for our subsequent get-togethers:

\_\_\_\_\_. Please mark your calendars now.

If you have any questions between now and when we meet, please don't hesitate to ask.

I hope you are as excited about doing this pilot session as I am as we deepen our relationships with one another and with Temple Emanu-El.

All the best,  
(Your name)  
(Your contact phone #)

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## Sample Reminder Email

Hi Temple Circle Members!

I am looking forward to seeing you on (date) at (time). We will meet at (insert address). (Name) will be bringing snacks [if applicable]. Please don't forget to bring

\_\_\_\_\_.

All the best,  
(Your name)  
(Your contact phone #)