

## CHAPTER 2

# FIVE MONTHS TO A WORKING TYG (a month-by-month guide)

*Lo aleichah ham'lakah ligmor, v'lo atah ben chorin l'hivatel mi-menah,  
You are not required to complete the work, nor are you free not to begin.*

—Pirkei Avot 3:18



## ■ MONTH #1: FRAMEWORK

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### GET HELP

Starting a TYG is a lot of work, and no matter how much free time you have, you cannot do all the work yourself. Find two people you can count on and get them excited about NFTY. Make them feel like they have ownership of the TYG. This should not just be YOUR project; it should be THEIR project as well.

### GET AN ADULT ADVISOR

While NFTYites should run the TYG, an adult advisor is an integral part of making a TYG happen. Advisors are an enormous help when it comes to communicating with your temple leadership, and can help you with the nuts and bolts of running and organizing TYG programming.

To begin, **approach your temple leadership** about the possibility of hiring a part-time advisor. Explain the need to provide pay for an advisor in order to attract someone who will give all of the time and support that the TYG will need, especially in its early stages. If this is not financially possible for your temple, look for an advisor who is willing to work on a volunteer basis.

The best places to look for an advisor are within **organizations at the synagogue**. Ask to speak at Women of Reform Judaism (WRJ), Brotherhood, and Board of Directors meetings. Explain what NFTY is, its importance to youth, and the need for adult supervision, input, and leadership. Also send word to other organizations within the synagogue such as the Ritual Committee, the Religious School Committee, etc. You may also want to search in outside areas, such as Union camps or local college campuses.

Most importantly, early on in the process of starting the TYG, **talk to your rabbi, cantor and/or educator**. If they have never heard of NFTY or were never active in NFTY, that's okay. Enlist the help of the congregational professionals in finding an advisor; after all, they know the individuals in the congregation better than anyone else.

**You can enlist temporary help from a parent of one of the people working on building the TYG.** However, you may want to keep searching for an advisor who is not the parent of a TYGer, thus giving every participant the full NFTY experience of having a non-parent adult Jewish role model. You might want to utilize college students who are interested in the field of youth work. Once you have a full or part-time youth advisor, it is a good idea to have them teach in the religious school, so the kids get to know them.

### COMPILE "POTENTIAL MEMBERS LIST"

- First, obtain from the Religious School a list of all students currently enrolled in Confirmation class down through the 9th grade (Confirmation years vary by congregation).
- Second, obtain a list of students who were previously enrolled in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class who were confirmed recently.

- Third, obtain a list of congregants, and search for ones who have teenagers who are of high school age.
- Combine all three lists, and delete the duplicates. Organize the list in a database for easy use later for phone calls, mailing labels, etc.
- Make sure the list of potential members contains first and last names, complete mailing addresses, phone numbers with area code, e-mail addresses, and the grades in which they are currently enrolled.
- Once you have a database, you can begin to use it for contacting and recruiting your members for your TYG!

## **TALK TO NFTY**

Contact your regional NFTY officers. Tell them that you are starting your own TYG. They will be able to put you in touch with other people who have also started a TYG; they can give you the names and phone numbers of the officers of nearby TYGs; they can assist with planning and programming nuts and bolts. Please go to [www.nfty.org](http://www.nfty.org) to find out what NFTY region your TYG belongs to and then use the regions page to contact the regional officers.

## **■ MONTH #2: PLAN MEMBERSHIP EVENT #1**

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**A QUICK NOTE ABOUT SCHEDULING EVENTS:** Remember to clear all dates with your temple's Executive Director/President to make sure that your events don't conflict with large temple events. Also ask your Executive Director to put your TYG events on the main temple calendar. This is good publicity for your TYG and prevents scheduling conflicts. Also be sure to consult a Jewish calendar before planning events.

## **MEETING #1**

- The advisor and 2-3 new members (event chairs) should meet to determine event specifics:
  - **The actual event**
  - **Date, Time & Location** Allow at least 4 weeks to prepare and plan the event. If the Temple is unavailable, find a location which does not require a minimum number of people for usage or requires a head count in advance.
  - **Cost** The first event should be free, so try to get donations from the Rabbi's discretionary fund, WRJ or Brotherhood to cover any costs incurred.
  - **If any particular instructions are required** (e.g. closed-toe shoes for sporting events or rock-climbing)

- Divide up the tasks:
  - Who will create the flyer, stamp the flyers, and address flyers to potential members, etc;
  - Who will organize the name games, mixers and ice breakers including all of the materials involved;
  - Who will organize the actual program and execute it.
- Create deadlines and be sure to stick to them! (Advisors should follow up with event chairs before the event)

## **PUBLICIZE**

- Send out a flyer to everyone on your “potential members list” approximately 3-4 weeks prior to the event date. (See “How To Make Great Flyers For Your TYG” in Chapter 7)
- Post the flyer around the Temple, particularly in the religious school.
- Follow up that flyer with phone calls at least one week before the event to all the potential members that you know. Ask them to each bring one friend from the Temple. (See “Phone Calls—DOs and DON’Ts” in Chapter 7 for details on making an effective follow-up phone call).
- Make sure the senior staff of the Temple is aware of the event so they can help get the word out.
- Sound excited!!! If you are excited and interested in your membership event, everyone else should be excited too. Your flyers and phone calls should be upbeat and enthusiastic.
- Try to co-sponsor your event with another temple organization (i.e. the Brotherhood or WRJ), this will be good for publicity within your Temple community.
- Ask the Rabbi to add your event information to the list of announcements at weekly services.

## **AT THE EVENT**

Event Chairs should...

- Have a sign-in sheet that asks for the name, grade, phone number, e-mail address and screen name of each participant.
- Have nametags prepared for everyone OR have the materials and the time built-in for everyone to design their own nametag. This allows everyone to tell a little bit about him or herself creatively.
- Start off the event with mixers and icebreakers that allow everyone to get to know each other.
- Don’t just plan to have people “hang out.” People will become easily bored. Plan stuff to do—i.e., if you have a pool party, have pool toys, a volleyball net, a barbecue, etc.
- Spread out and introduce themselves to all of the participants.

Advisors should...

- Thank event chairs for their work and participants for coming.
- Encourage participants to offer ideas and feedback for future events in a constructive way, following the event. It is important that everyone have a sense of ownership with the Youth Group.
- Find people who want to help out with the next event.

## ■ MONTH #3: EVALUATION AND NEXT STEPS

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### THANKS

Send out notes or e-mails to all of the people who participated in creating the first event (parents, TYG members, guest speakers, Jewish professionals, etc.).

### EVALUATE

Gather any feedback from the event and note for future planning.

One of three scenarios occurred at your Membership Event:

- 0-5 potential members attended
- 6-12 potential members attended
- 13+ potential members attended

### PLAN MEMBERSHIP EVENT #2.

- If between 0–5 potential members attended Membership Event #1, then consider inviting neighboring TYGs to Membership Event #2. Their support may encourage more participants to attend.
- If between 6–12 potential members attended Membership Event #1, then plan Membership Event #2 as an event for your potential members only. Don't network with other TYGs this time. Using the guidelines for Membership Event #1, create an event that allows for group dynamics building (ropes course, social action activities, etc.). See the "Social Action Projects for Small TYGs" in Chapter 5 and "Religious & Cultural Programming for Small TYGs" in Chapter 6 for ideas on social action and religious and cultural programs.
- If 13 or more of your potential members attended Membership Event #1, then plan Membership Event #2 to possibly include participants in neighboring TYG's. Their enthusiasm can help generate energy within your group.



### CHECKLIST:

*(Be sure to check out the master event checklist in the appendix of this guide)*

- ✓ **Evaluation Meeting**—determine what worked and did not work when you created and held your last event. Determine what kind of program will encourage participants to return to the second event and will also encourage new participants as well. Determine event specifics (what event is, time, location, cost, dress, etc.). Divide work: decide who will create flyer, stamp flyers, address flyers to potential members, etc. Create deadlines and stick to them!
- ✓ **Follow-up to first event**—Call or e-mail everyone who attended the first event, thank them again for coming, and tell them about the second event.
- ✓ **Meeting #2**—Ten days before the event; designed to allow you to “touch base” and make sure everyone has accomplished what they said they would. Divide the potential members list in order to be able to make follow up phone calls; designate one person to be called by others the night before the event with a final head count.
- ✓ **Membership Event #2**—Be sure to have the sign-in sheet, nametags and mixers again. Encourage people to talk to participants they don't know rather than congregate with their friends. Continue to get feedback and ideas for future programming

## ■ MONTH #4: ESTABLISHING TYG LEADERSHIP

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**Plan a special election meeting.** Invite all potential members, even if they did not attend either of the two previous events. Send out flyers two weeks in advance and have follow-up phone calls three days before the meeting.

**Establish membership guidelines.** Determine what dues should be, to cover both local registration and registration with the North American NFTY office. Create a membership form to use.

**Elect your leaders** (see the “Specific duties of TYG Executive Board Positions” in Chapter 3)

- If 0-5 potential members attended Membership Event #2, elect or appoint (if possible):
  - President
  - Programming Vice President (PVP)
  - Communications Vice President (CVP)
  - Religious and Cultural Vice President (RCVP)
  - Membership Vice President (MVP)

Establish a once-a-month regular time and meeting location. Continue to hold a social event once a month until six or more people attend. Continue to seek assistance from temple leadership on how to increase the size of your potential members list. Continue to try to network with other TYGs. Encourage those already engaged to call their friends. If possible, try to have the president of your TYG and the advisor sit in on temple board meetings.

Set a date and time for an Executive Board meeting to plan a four-month calendar. Set a date for Membership Event #3, which should be at the end of this month. Decide on the details at the executive board meeting.

- If 13 or more potential members attended Membership Event #2, then you can elect or appoint more positions such as:
  - President
  - Programming Vice President (PVP)
  - Communications Vice President (CVP)
  - Social Action Vice President (SAVP)
  - Religious and Cultural Vice President (RCVP)
  - Membership Vice President (MVP)
  - Grade Reps

Set a date and time for an Executive Board meeting to plan a four-month calendar. Set a date for Membership Event #3, which should be at the end of the month. Decide on the details of Membership Event #3 at the executive board meeting.

## ■ MONTH #5: MOVING RIGHT ALONG

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### KEEP IT UP

- Continue to have two people co-chair an event each month.
- Try adding some educational element to the programs, such as a visit to your local soup kitchen, a program on Arab-Israeli Conflict, or a Havdalah service.
- As your TYG grows, you may want to have subcommittees in charge of fundraising, phone tree, etc.

### FUNDRAISING

- Decide, based upon attendance at past events and the size of your Potential Membership List, how much money your TYG will need to function.
- Refer to “Why Fundraising Is Important” in Chapter 8 to decide which fund-raisers will work best for your TYG. Schedule time for your fund-raisers in your 4-month calendar.
- Your TYG should try to keep a minimum of \$300 on hand at all times for things like flyers, stamps, etc.

### CONSTANT RECRUITMENT

Make a concerted effort every year to get freshmen excited about your TYG. You can do this by inviting 8th-grade students to the last two events of the year.

- Starting to talk about youth group opportunities as early as 6th grade makes this an easier task.
- If your temple does not have a Junior Youth Group (JYG), think about making it a part of the long term plan for youth activities in the temple.

## **KEEP A CONSISTENT CALENDAR**

- Be sure to consult the temple, school, test dates, NFTY regional and community calendars to avoid conflicts.
- Determine how often you need Executive Board Meetings, how often you want to have events, and what type of events you want to have.
- Decide what month elections will be and hold them at the same time every year.
- Your fiscal year should match the fiscal year of the temple. This makes things easier when the budget for youth activities is up for review.
- The new board should make any necessary changes to the membership form or adjust dues before each school year officially begins.

Continue to have one large, purely social membership event at the beginning of each year, with membership forms present, to encourage people to join and pay dues.

### **Helpful Resources**

[www.nfty.org/regions/directory](http://www.nfty.org/regions/directory)

[www.nfty.org/resources/leadership](http://www.nfty.org/resources/leadership)

### **CHECKLIST:**

- ✓ **Election Meeting—*Beginning of the month***
  - Review the roles and responsibilities of each position.
  - Elect or appoint officers.
  - Set date for first Executive Board Meeting.
- ✓ **Executive Board Meeting**
  - This is really a calendar meeting. Find two dates and times for each of the next four months: one date should be for an Executive Board Meeting, one date should be for a general event.
  - Determine cost of membership dues and design a membership form (see sample in the Appendix). Send out the form with the flyer for the next event.
  - Discuss the nature of the upcoming events, especially the ones to be held this month (religious and cultural, social action, team building, etc.).
  - Appoint chairs of the upcoming events who will work with the Board and the advisor.
- ✓ **Next Event**
  - Determine the nature of the event, the cost, etc.
  - Chairs of the event should work with the board and the advisor to make sure the program, materials, recruitment, etc. are under control.
  - Get the flyer out with the membership form.
  - Make follow-up phone calls and e-mails to everyone who attended the first two events reminding them to send in or bring their membership forms to the next event.
- ✓ **Membership Event #3—*End of month (By now, you're rolling! This should be one heck of a party!)***
  - Have additional membership forms available at the door for those who forgot to send them in ahead of time.
  - People should be charged a fee to attend the event, with a discount at the door if you sign up to be a TYG member.