

MOVING TRADITIONS

Launching *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood*
A Supervisor's Manual



Table of Contents and Contact Information

Table of Contents

1. Starting a Group

- A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Your *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* Group Started Page 2

2. Hiring a Group Leader

- Group Leader Job Posting Page 9
- Interview Questions to ask a potential Group Leader Page 10
- Sample Group Leader Contract Agreement Page 12
- Best Practices for Supervising a Group Leader Page 13
- Group Leader Supervision Questions Page 14

3. A Taste of *Shevet Achim*” Introductory Meeting

- Meeting Outline Page 15
- Sample Flyer Page 19
- Sign-In Sheet for “Taste of *Shevet Achim*” Meeting Page 20

Contact Information:

Sarah Fox, Program Manager
261 Old York Road, Suite 734
Jenkintown, PA 19046
215-887-4511 x103
sfox@movingtraditions.org



A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Your *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* Group Started

Thank you for partnering with Moving Traditions and *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood*.

Your role is paramount to the success of the guys' *Shevet Achim* experience. We are here to help, so please call on us at any time.

Gaining Support

While most people are familiar with programs for teens that are focused on service learning or on social events, this program is a little more difficult to explain.

As we launched the program and worked with dozens of partners, we found that the following informal descriptions were helpful in casual conversations:

"It is a program for guys where they can hang out and talk about guy stuff."

"It is a mix of play and debate that guys enjoy"

"It is a monthly group where guys can talk about what is on their minds."

If you have an opportunity to go more in-depth with someone in explaining the program, we suggest stressing that:

"This program begins with the experience of guys and then connects that experience to a mentor led exploration of Jewish values."

These are all short descriptors of the program that help people to understand the unique nature of *Shevet Achim*. If, however, people are more interested in the program itself, a background on the pedagogy and curriculum follows.

The Pedagogy and Curriculum of *Shevet Achim*

Often in Jewish education, we begin with an ancient story, such as a Torah reading, and try to connect what we hear to something in our own lives. In this curriculum, we do the opposite. We start with our lives now and then we go back to connect the challenges of our lives with wisdom from the Jewish tradition. In this way, we follow the Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig's teaching about "a learning, no longer out of the Torah into life, but out of life, out of a world that does not know about the law, back into the Torah."

We believe that great education begins with questions. The questions that we pose with the *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* curriculum are all a version of "What is the relationship

between being a Jewish man and _____?” That blank is filled in with the words pleasure or competition or money or wisdom, depending on the theme of that particular session. The goals of the program are to:

- **Help guys to make a connection between the challenges in their lives and Jewish values.**
- **Help Jewish guys to understand one another and to value the experience of being in community in which they are not judged on their athletic, academic or political prowess.**
- **Convey an understanding of how cultural based gender codes and gender restrictions limit guys and diminish the experience of all people.**
- **Give guys an opportunity to discuss, with a mentor, their personal goals and aspirations.**

Curricular Themes

We’ve created this quick list of themes of each of the sessions that guys will discuss over the year and to help you:

1. **Manhood:** Introduces the concept of masculinity and takes a critical look at how young men are taught to judge behaviors of other males. Also introduces Jewish ideas relating to manhood and being a mensch.
2. **Wisdom:** Looks at both the downside and upside of academic competition. Explores the conflicting messages men get about different types of intelligence and helps teen boys connect to Jewish values to identify their intellectual aspirations.
3. **Money:** Examines the ways in which men judge other men based on the use of money by discussing ideas such as “being spoiled”, stinginess, flaunting wealth, and arguments over money. Looks at the roots of generosity and extends the idea of generosity from friends to the wider community through acts of *tzedakah*.
4. **Competition:** Addresses the theme of “turning everything into a competition” and how this dynamic limits the experiences of men. Explores both positive and negative attributes of men that are amplified by athletic competition as well as academic and economic competition.
5. **Pleasure:** Examines how cultural norms about pleasure conflict with individual experiences of pleasure. Stresses the multiplicity of factors that go into pleasurable experiences, particularly around eating. Introduces the idea of seeking pleasure with others through intimacy and the role of consent. For more mature teens – introduces critical thinking of pornography.
6. **Courage:** Raises multiple examples of courage: physical, emotional, and moral to which men might aspire. Addresses the role of fighting, intimidation, and physical confrontation in the lives of teen boys. Connects teen boys to stories of Jewish men who exemplified multiple forms of courage.

7. **Body:** Looks closely at the messages that the wider culture and media are sending guys about their own bodies. Examines issues such as strength, flexibility, weight, height, and size. Introduces Jewish ethics around self-care.
8. **Soul:** Addresses the concerns of teen boys around theology and metaphysics and examines the limits of patriarchal God language. Encourages teen boys to expand their set of spiritual experiences in a Jewish context.
9. **Beauty:** Teaches guys to look critically at issues regarding what a guy is supposed to wear, how he is supposed to smell, and how he is supposed to groom. Stresses a Jewish ethic regarding diversity and natural beauty.
10. **Risk:** Examines risky behaviors among older teen boys – particularly regarding drugs, alcohol, and criminal activity. Encourages teen boys to play an “upstander” role in situations of risk.
11. **Vision:** Encourages guys to think about their future as men and to consider who they aspire to be. Raises ideas around male friendship and mentorship and encourages guys to choose realistic challenges that they want to have in their lives.

The Four Educational Components

For each theme of the curriculum, there are four central components:

1. **Physical** – Involving play and movement, often engaging in competition or collaboration.
2. **Cognitive** – Igniting discussion and debate through reactions to game-play or to words, images, film clips, statements, folktales, texts, and concepts.
3. **Emotive** – Evoking stories (both impersonal and personal accounts) and exploring the themes of these stories with participants in age appropriate ways.
4. **Ritual** – Eating, singing, pounding the table, dancing, blessing the moon, holiday related elements (blasting a Shofar, building a sukkah, shaking a lulav, making havdallah, baking challah).

Once you’ve begun talking to people about the program, it is likely that someone will ask:

“Is the program going to be touchy-feely?”

One of the challenges many young men face, articulated by Dr. William Pollack of Harvard University Medical School and others, is growing up in a culture that encourages men to hold in their emotions. Anger is an accepted emotional outlet, but any feelings of vulnerability are considered off limits. Since we see the critical role of vulnerable emotion in developing a sense of “closeness” in relationships, we work to challenge the cultural norm.

But this program is not about asking guys “how do you feel?” in a way that pushes them uncomfortably. It is not therapy and it is not “sharing feelings.”

Instead, the program is one in which boys are encouraged to tell stories – real stories about their lives. Group leaders are trained to create safe spaces in which guys can share stories

without judgment and learn from one another. In doing so, guys understand how sharing these stories with friends can be a great emotional outlet and a positive Jewish learning experience.

The Ideal Group Leader

It is very rare that a Jewish communal institution will have the ideal man to lead a group of teen boys already on the staff. If you do, that's great. But if you do not, consider the following:

- Maybe there is a man in the community who relates well to teens and has some experience working with teens in his past.
- Maybe there is a man who works as an educator and is willing to foray into Jewish education.
- Maybe there is a Jewish man who volunteers as a coach or mentor with teens outside of the Jewish community.
- If you have a rabbi or cantor who works well with teens maybe they would consider setting the time aside to lead the group.

Consider a few men and whenever possible, speak with teens about them. It may require inviting one of these men to an event which teens attend just to observe the social dynamics.

Keep in mind that the men who lead *Shevet Achim* across the country are a diverse group: Rabbis, teachers, social workers, lawyers, doctors, artists, software engineers. We even have a rocket scientist. We encourage you to think creatively about your options and nominate a man who will really click with your teen boys.

In our experience, we've seen both charismatic men lead successful groups as well as men who are better at listening than public speaking. At our training, we help guys to get an understanding of teen dynamics and give them a great toolkit of informal education techniques. But there is no substitute for sensitivity, maturity, and humor.

Parent Leadership

Once you have a group leader headed to the training conference, what do you need to start the program? To start off, you'll need one connected parent with one teen boy who has positive relationships with other boys in his grade. Most boys are resistant to starting new Jewish programs, so this last aspect cannot be stressed enough. Make sure that you have the ability to start off with a parent who is willing to support you and to nudge their son to say yes to trying something new.

If you can get this parent to help you from the beginning and to serve as a liaison to other parents in the grade throughout the year then it will help a great deal.

The best kick-off "taste of" events are ones that are held in a family's home – so if this parent can do that, even better. But whoever hosts, ask them to invite the other parents and teen boys

© 2013 Moving Traditions

to their home. You can do so as well, but if parents do it the program will seem like a “special” event set aside from the routine events in your community.

Scheduling, of course, is a major issue. Many groups meet Sunday evenings. Include dinner, and end in time for guys to do their homework.

Select Meeting Location and Times

The space in which the guys gather should be **informal and intimate**, yet **ample** for the group to meet comfortably. It must offer **privacy** and be a place where **food and activities will be welcome**. Everything does not have to take place in the same room. You may gather initially in one setting, and adjourn to another space for activities or eating. It’s a good idea to check the session for any special monthly requirements. There are two models that have been successful: **home-based** and **institution-based**.

Home-based Groups

Home-based groups, which rotate the meetings among the guys’ homes, provide inviting, hospitable environments. Meeting in homes may require attention to socioeconomic differences among the guys and may present challenges related to family lifestyles, such as noise, parent or sibling intrusion, comfort with “mess,” level of *kashrut*, or allergies to pets. If you are holding the first session in a home, you may not be able to confirm the location until three to five weeks in advance, when you have a few guys on board and have received a commitment from a host parent.

Institution-based Groups

Alternatively, your sponsoring institution may prefer to host the monthly sessions in its own facility. This model can work, but we still recommend that a few of the meetings be in homes or so that guys get the message that this program values hospitality.

Scheduling

Your choice of meeting time may intersect with your choice of location. For instance, institutions may have limited schedules when their buildings are open and appropriate rooms are available. Most groups meet one Sunday afternoon or evening a month, while others find a weekday afternoon or evening more amenable. Make sure that the time and place you pick is optimal for the majority of the guys who will be in your group. **Be consistent with day and time**—unless you need to adjust the schedule to avoid secular and religious holidays and competing events in the community.

Publicize the program and recruit members

Your publicity objective should be to create wide **name recognition** for the program, create a “**buzz**” in the community, and **stimulate** interested guys and parents to find out more. Plan a **multi-pronged approach** to letting guys and their parents know about the program.

You can recruit guys using these strategies:

© 2013 Moving Traditions

- Encourage word-of-mouth and peer outreach by present group members.
- Speak with mothers in adult Rosh Hodesh groups.
- Mail flyers and announcements using institutional mailing lists.
- Send announcements using institutional e-mail lists.
- Place articles in institutional/organizational newsletters
- Place listings and/or advertisements in organizational program guides.
- Post announcements on web sites.
- Placing brochures and posters in community settings (such as JCCs, pizza shops, cafes, etc.).
- Staffing a table at special events, such as community fairs.

Create a flyer, invitation, and/or letter that is simple and inviting. **Talk it up** to as many people as you can. Spread the word!

Invite Guys and Parents to a “A Taste of Shevet Achim”

We have found that an introductory guy-parent meeting is one of the most effective ways of obtaining a commitment from both the guys and their parents. This session provides information about the program and allows both to experience firsthand what a *Shevet Achim* session is like. (See the meeting outline in this manual.) **It is best to host this meeting in the Spring—before the guys go away for the summer.** Excite the guys and parents early and you won’t have to run after them later!

Our experience supports publicizing the group to large numbers and inviting about 20 guys to the introductory guy-parent meeting. This usually becomes a group of 10-15 committed guys for your ongoing group. It can take a few sessions for the group to “settle in” and a core group of steady guys to solidify. The group may choose to become closed at that point, or explore the inclusion of new members as the issue arises.

Follow-up

We strongly recommend that soon after a guy has committed to attend the group, you have a conversation with his parent(s). In addition to reviewing the expectations regarding meeting times, attendance, hosting, and costs, this will give you the opportunity to answer parental questions and address any concerns. It will also allow you to ask the important question, **“Is there anything I should know about your son?”** so that you can be made aware of concerns, such as *kashrut*, allergies, and any other religious, health, or social issues.

Attend the Training Conference

Our two-day summer Training Conference is required for all new group leaders and recommended for supervisors. It is consistently rated by participants as a “superior professional development” opportunity. Our professional trainers are knowledgeable and passionate about *Shevet Achim*, and are committed to working with you to ensure that your *Shevet Achim* experience will be wonderful—for you, your institution, and most importantly, the guys. You will meet other supervisors and group leaders from around the country and will gain proficiency in

- using the *Shevet Achim* materials;
- facilitating groups;
- dealing with issues facing adolescent guys;
- marketing and recruitment.

Moving Traditions is committed to your success! We encourage you to take advantage of the consultation and support we offer through our web site, direct e-mail, and personal contact with our staff.

Partner with Moving Traditions

Shevet Achim is the product of many years of writing, field-testing, and editing—made possible by Moving Traditions’ staff and Board and by the national funders committed to the program and its mission. It is also a living, dynamic program that is being expanded and updated every year. Please let us know if you run into any difficulties so that we can help you resolve them.

You are a crucial link in the chain of this program’s continuity. Every time you report a great experience, give us feedback that will allow us to improve the curriculum, you are making a contribution to the program and helping to support your colleagues and guys across the continent. Send us pictures of your guys, and share both your challenges and successes!

Finally, you are our links to the guys and their families. We provide a wonderful resource of information on teens and Jewish life that your parents will benefit from. By sharing these resources, you can help parents to see that there are Jewish educators thinking specifically about the challenges that their sons are facing. We will need contact information for parents to ensure that we can conduct evaluation and reporting—and we thank you in advance for your assistance!

Sample Group Leader Job Posting

Do you enjoy working to build connection to community and Jewish identity in adolescent boys?

We are seeking an enthusiastic and creative group leader to facilitate the Moving Traditions program, *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood*, which draws on Jewish tradition to build connection to community and Jewish identity of adolescent boys. You will use the *Shevet Achim* materials to run monthly *Shevet Achim* meetings. These groups offer a supportive and authentically Jewish experience through which boys can explore the issues that they face as they become men. You will receive training, ongoing consultation, and supervision.

Qualifications

- experience working with youth in informal settings
- ability to facilitate groups by employing a range of modalities including debate, games, and experiential exercises
- enjoy working with Jewish boys in grades 8–9
- willingness to engage with Jewish text and ritual
- openness to discussing issues regarding gender codes and stereotypes
- must be friendly, organized, motivated, and a good role model

Responsibilities

1. Attend Moving Traditions' *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* Training Conference with other group leaders from around the country.
2. In conjunction with the supervisor and with parents, recruit ten to fifteen boys for the group. Recruitment includes creating an invitation and/or flyer, sending out a mailing, and making follow-up phone calls to parents and potential participants. Interface with appropriate organizational staff about program.
3. Sustain an ongoing group through monthly follow-up calls and mailings.
 - If the group is home-based, each month call the participant who volunteered his home to confirm that he cleared the date with his parents. Speak with a parent to introduce yourself and confirm.
 - Each month divide reminder calls with a participant.
 - Each month send reminder postcard or email ten days to two weeks in advance.
4. Use provided materials and personal creativity to facilitate fun and meaningful gatherings.
5. Manage group dynamics. Identify and act upon any issues that require follow-up or referrals.
6. Become familiar with current popular culture through television, teen magazines, and other teen-targeted media.
7. Help evaluate the program's effect on boys.
8. Interface periodically with the Moving Traditions national office to report on the ongoing status of the group and to provide the participant contact information.

Please email or call: _____ for more information.

© 2013 Moving Traditions

Sample Interview Questions to Ask a Potential Group Leader

We hope these questions will help you select the most capable group leaders. Below some of the questions are examples of positive responses from potential group leaders.

1. Why are you interested in leading a *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!* group or *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* group?
 - Love working with tweens and teens
 - Believe in the mission of the program
 - Want to facilitate a Jewish identity and empowerment process for girls and boys

2. What professional experiences have prepared you for this position?
 - Teaching
 - Coaching
 - Camp Counselor
 - Facilitating groups
 - Youth group advisor

3. What personal experiences have prepared you for this position?

4. With what age group do you have experience working?
 - 12 – 18

5. Please name three key skills/attributes of a successful facilitator in this kind of setting
 - Organized – takes care of administrative details, planning, and preparation
 - Able to make participants feel welcome, heard and appreciated
 - Responsible leader – able to assert herself when necessary and facilitate the group meeting's goals
 - Role model
 - Flexible – able to think on her feet and adapt things when necessary
 - Creative
 - Willing to take a risk – go beyond comfort zone with modalities/material that may be new
 - Kind, warm and FUN!

6. What issues do you think that boys are facing these days?
 - Media influence – dealing with mixed messages, emphasis on appearance, etc.
 - Peer pressure/social dynamics/friendship issues
 - Bullying, expressions of aggression
 - Eating disorders, body image
 - Dating/relationships
 - Drug and alcohol use
 - Internet use, on-line relationships, ambiguous boundaries
 - Individuation, family dynamics
 - Pressure to achieve/overscheduling/college admissions

7. What would you do if a group participant talked about thoughts of suicide?
 - Inform supervisor and develop a response together
 - Avoid playing the “therapist” and trying to solve the problem or probe further during the group
 - Avoid making it a group discussion – address it after the group meeting at the appropriate time and include the necessary adults
 - Refer to the ground rules established as part of the group development (breaking confidentiality when there are concerns about safety)

8. What other professional commitments do you have?
 - It is critical that candidates understand that being a group leader requires at least two to three hours a week for planning, administrative details, shopping for materials, becoming familiar with the monthly curriculum, participating in national group leader conference calls, and facilitating the meetings. The professional time commitment is more than just the group meeting times.
 - Candidates need to consider if they can attend the required Moving Traditions group leader Training Conference in the summer.

9. What questions do you have?



Sample Group Leader Contract Agreement

20-__-20-__ Group Leader Contract Agreement

Group Leader Responsibilities:

- Attend two-day Training Institute for *new* group leaders, conducted by Moving Traditions, during the summer of _____. (Travel, accommodations, salary and expenses to be paid by (name of local institution)).
- Recruit and register group participants.
- Send Group Contact List to Moving Traditions so parents will receive seasonal e-newsletters with information about the program
- Prepare and facilitate for monthly group meetings, including purchase of program supplies (all expenses will be reimbursed by (name of local institution)).
- Group meetings are on _____ (day of week) at _____ (time).
- Reminder calls to be made to each participant the week of meeting.
- Contact parents 2-3 times a year to inform them about the program.
- Attend one supervision meeting each month with _____ (name of supervisor) at a time to be mutually determined.
- Communicate concerns to supervisor, as well as any significant communication with parents.
- Administrative tasks (i.e. mailings to participants, photocopies).

Salary:

Group Leader will be receive a monthly salary of \$_____, effective _____ to _____.

This letter will act as a mutual agreement between the group leader and supervisor on the above responsibilities. A consistent and/or problematic relationship regarding the delineated responsibilities will be formally discussed between the group leader, supervisor and the director/rabbi of _____.

_____	_____	_____
Group Leader	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Program Supervisor	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Education Director/Rabbi	Signature	Date

Best Practices for Supervising a Group Leader

These recommendations for supervising *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* group leaders are based on what we have learned from successful supervisory experiences. A successful supervisory relationship ensures the longevity of a healthy, thriving group.

We are mindful that supervisors have varying amounts of time to give to supervising group leaders. You may be able to do all of these, or you may have to pick and choose.

- 1. Sign a group leader contract and register him for the Moving Traditions Training Conference.** A sample contract is included in this manual. Please edit and use to meet the needs of your institution.
- 2. Schedule a “post-training meeting” with group leaders.** After attending the Training Institute, group leaders are full of questions and ideas for their supervisors! Seize this opportunity as soon as possible after training to get together and make a great plan for the year.
- 3. Facilitate one-on-one supervision.** Supervision is an important time for the group leader – we have included sample questions in this manual to facilitate this meeting.
- 4. Ask group leaders to include supervisors as a cc on all e-mail communication to parents and boys.** This keeps everyone in the loop and is an easy way for a group leader to communicate what’s happening in the group to his supervisor.
- 5. Ask the group leader and one or more boys to offer a presentation about *Shevet Achim* to your board mid-year.** This will garner support, assist with funding, and increase momentum. It’s also a great skill for the boys.
- 6. Conduct an evaluation of the group with boys and parents at the end of the year.** Sample evaluation questions can be found on our website (www.movingtraditions.org).
- 7. Encourage each group to continue for multiple years.**

Group Leader Supervision Questions

Supervision should invite open communication about the *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!* or *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* group so that questions can be answered, problems/challenges can be addressed, and the group's success can be ensured.

Sample supervision ideas follow.

A. Clarify Institutional Partner standards:

1. Payment (see sample Group Leader contract)
2. Privacy and safety regulations at your site with regard to issues of concern in the group.
3. Communal policies regarding kashrut/observance

B. Sample questions follow. Some questions you may ask every time you meet, others are one time questions.

1. What can I do to help you?
2. Is there anything in the materials for which I can provide further understanding?
3. Tell me a great thing that happened at your last gathering.
4. Tell me about the dynamics of the girls/boys in your group.
5. Are there any girls/boys about whom you have concerns?
6. What tools are you using to communicate with parents?
7. What do you enjoy most about leading your group?
8. What challenges you the most about leading your group?
9. What can we put together to share with the board about the group this year (ex. photos, written summary, letter from teens/parents, presentation by two participating teens).
10. What are the next steps to be taken as a result of our time today?

Outline of “A Taste of *Shevet Achim*” Introductory Meeting for Guys and Parents

This informational meeting for parents and guys is a tool for recruiting before the guys have their first official gathering. It is a great way to ensure that the parents and guys understand the goals of *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood* and are excitedly anticipating a wonderful experience. In addition, guys often feel more comfortable coming to an introductory meeting than committing to participation in an unknown group. **In other words, get them to the introductory meeting, and then they will want to come back for more!**

You can present this meeting yourself, or invite your supervisor or an experienced group leader to help you facilitate.

Planning Tips

- Find a convenient, comfortable, and private space to hold your meeting. Keep in mind that you will need space for three different groups.
- The meeting will take approximately one and a half hours.
- Solicit guidance from potential participants regarding optimal times for meeting.
- Familiarize yourself with the meeting plan below.
- Prepare:
 - *name tags and markers*
 - *cards with discussion questions*
 - *poster board with Partner-up statements written on it*
 - *pad and pen for each of the three groups*
 - *flyers, meeting date sheet, sign-up sheet*
 - *kosher snacks (include some healthful snacks) and drinks*
- Arrive early to set up, but expect others to come late. Pace yourself to ensure enough time for questions at the end of the meeting.
- Arrange seating in a circle or semicircle as numbers and space permit.
- Feel free to use your own program ideas, as long as they meet the goals outlined in the following plan.

Running the “Taste of” Program

“Taste of” programs serve four functions:

1. They introduce parents and teens to the program.
You can use the “Taste of” to answer their questions and allay their concerns.
2. They introduce parents and teens to the group leader.
Even if most people know the group leader, it is great for them to hear how the new role of “group leader” will be different from previous roles.
3. They introduce parents of boys to each other.

Parents may know each other – but bringing specifically parents of boys together gives parents a common bond.

4. They introduce teen boys to each other.
Even when boys know each other from co-ed settings, it is good to establish their rapport as part of a guys' group.

It is best to have two people lead the “Taste of” event so that your group leader is leading the teens. If you or someone else is with the parents, then engage them in a simple activity that explores the challenge of raising teen boys. Here is an example:

On a 3 x 5 card, have parents list two concerns that they have for boys in general and two things that they would like to see in their boys' lives as they mature. Then ask them to work in groups of four discussing the things they listed. Then have the entire group discuss the issues that emerge.

Suggested Introductory Meeting Outline

1. Opening 5 minutes

Welcome participants.
Introduce yourself and share your background.
Express your enthusiasm for the project.

2. Goals 5 minutes

Outline four goals for the meeting:

- to get acquainted and have fun together
- to experience a “taste of” *Shevet Achim: The Brotherhood*
- to get excited about joining a *Shevet Achim* group
- to address logistical issues and answer questions

3. Warm-Up 15 minutes

Every session begins with a fun physical activity. To kick things off, play this group tag game, called Octopus and Minnows. It is best played in a large space.

Create boundaries. One person is “the octopus” and must try to tag others. The other people are minnows; they need to “swim” from one side of the play space to the other. When you are tagged, you need to hold onto the arm of the octopus or to someone who is holding the octopus. The last person tagged is the winner.

4. Game Debrief 10 minutes

Ask: What happened while we were playing that game? Who was really into it? Who was really competitive? Who was thinking really strategically?

5. Jewish Wisdom – “Be a Man” 15 minutes

If we could have taken a movie of us playing, and watched it again, I wonder who we would say was acting the most “like a guy” or “like a man.”

Allow anyone who wants to respond to this question now.

Distribute text sheets:



Read the text above aloud in the group and ask the questions below.

- What types of situations might this text be referring to? Give examples.
- In your opinion, why does this text say that one should “try” to be a man? Why does it take effort (i.e. try)?
- According to this text, what does it mean to be a man, or to be a mensch? How does it compare with the definitions we were using in thinking about how we played our game?

If you can, at this time, invite parents into one room and kids into another. Both groups will do a powerpoint activity, and then have an appropriate follow-up discussion.

6. Which is More Manly? Powerpoint 20 minutes

Show the powerpoint, found here: <http://bit.ly/10d4qUs> (download it in advance). For each slide, ask, “which is more manly?”

Optional discussion:

- Why did one thing seem more manly?
- What are the factors that went into our decision?
- Were any of these things truly manly?

7. How are *Shevet Achim* groups unique and what happens at a session? 15 minutes

Highlight the following points:

- *Shevet Achim* offers adolescent guys the opportunity to gather on a regular basis to explore issues that are important to teen guys, like sports, movies, TV, and what it

means to be a (Jewish) man. The program is informed by teen guys who care about being Jewish and want a new way of learning about what really matters in life and will challenge them to think about and talk about issues that they may not have time to do elsewhere.

- The groups draw on Jewish wisdom and practice as a resource for young men as they explore an array of topics relevant to their lives. Our approach fosters self-expression, analytical thinking, and the validation of individual experience.
- The method of facilitation is experiential. Every session begins with an activity, and then there's food, fun, games, debate and discussion.
- Guys will get an opportunity to talk about competition and power and manhood, and be able to hear what your friends are thinking about and share their own views about things.

8. Logistics/Closing Comments 5 minutes

Explain format, dates, time, location, role of parents, costs, method of communicating meeting times and confirming participation. Solicit and respond to questions.

If there is resistance, say “try it the first session. If you don't like it, that's cool, no pressure.”

SHEVET ACHIM

Why on earth would I want to join a group for Jewish guys?

If you are even a mildly **intelligent** guy then you are probably asking:

What is this group for Jewish guys and why would I consider trying it given the fact that I am crazy busy and I have lots of other things to do with my time?

Good question.

Here is the deal — the idea is pretty simple. We all know that guys like to hang out and to eat and to talk about ... well, to talk about just about everything. One thing that Jewish guys rarely get to talk about is what it really means to be a man and

what it means to be a Jewish man. Every guy has questions about this:

Should I have a best friend or lots of friends? Should I tell my friends if I am crushing on someone or should I keep it private? Should I fight that dude who is bothering me or ignore him? Should I do what my parent(s) wants me to do or what I want to do? Should I speak up when I see a friend acting like a total moron?

This group is basically about these questions. But it won't just be talking. There are games (that are not corny)

and there are other activities that are generally not boring and are actually kind of fun.

This is not a class by any stretch of the imagination.

There is no reading or writing and lots of watching video clips and throwing ping pong balls against the wall and snacking and general hanging out. And you might learn a thing or two.

Check it out. Be part of it. Get a friend to try it with you. You'll be glad you did.



Contact Sheet

Boy Info:

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Birthday (month/day/year) _____

Parent Info

Parent 1 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Parent 2 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address if different from above _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Boy Info:

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Birthday (month/day/year) _____

Parent Info

Parent 1 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Parent 2 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address if different from above _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Boy Info:

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Birthday (month/day/year) _____

Parent Info

Parent 1 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Parent 2 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address if different from above _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Boy Info:

Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____

Birthday (month/day/year) _____

Parent Info

Parent 1 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Parent 2 Name _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Address if different from above _____

Street/Apt _____

City/State/Zip _____