



Relational Judaism in Action: Check-In, Check-Out, Hang-Out

Introduction: Relational Judaism can happen anywhere and any time at TAA. *Check-In, Check-Out, Hang-Out* is a new initiative that offers three different ways for Temple members to connect during either a live or a Zoom meeting. People attend Temple and committee meetings to work on events, programs, services. But, they are also looking for meaningful experiences with other Temple members. These techniques can be used to both build relationships and increase participation at meetings.

“Meetings” cover a broad spectrum, such as a Program Committee Meeting, a knitting class, a book group, a Finance Committee Meeting or any other gathering of a group of TAA members. This simple initiative, *Check-In, Check-Out, Hang-Out*, gives members an opportunity to share something about themselves and to connect. Leaders can decide which of these techniques to use at their meeting. As Ron Wolfson, says in his book *Relational Judaism: Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community*, people will come to TAA for programs but they will stay for relationships.

1. *CHECK-IN*

Any type of meeting offers the participants the opportunity to help build relationships with each other. At the beginning of a meeting, the leader can ask participants to respond to a question before the business of the meeting starts. To help break the ice, the leader may want to consider asking someone ahead of time to go first in responding to the question.

A *Check-In* is similar to an ice-breaker: a way to have everyone say something at the beginning of a meeting. This opportunity can take several forms:

A. A quick way would be asking people to provide a one-word answer to a question. This is a good way to have everyone participate at the outset of the meeting and breaks the ice for participants who may otherwise remain quiet. This is a simple, but valuable technique. Examples of questions asking for a one-word answer:

How are you feeling today?

What is your favorite food?

What is your wish for 2022?

B. A second way could be an opening question that can be light or serious. This question would allow all participants to respond in a sentence or two. This type of question could cover a wide range of topics. Examples of questions asking for a one or two sentence answer:

What is a good thing that happened to you this week?

What is your favorite food? season? vacation spot?

What has kept you going during COVID?

What is your favorite book or movie, and why?

What is your favorite Jewish holiday, and why?

Is there anything important you want to mention today?

2. *CHECK-OUT*

The leader may want to end a meeting with a *Check-Out* question. The leader can leave 5 minutes before concluding the meeting to simply ask the participants to offer their reactions to the meeting. This question will give participants an opportunity to speak briefly as well as offer feedback. This closing question can ask for something as simple as a one-word response or a sentence or two.

A. Example of a question asking for a one-word answer at the end of the meeting:

How are you feeling at the end of this meeting today?

B. A second way of ending the meeting may be with a more thoughtful question that asks for a response in a sentence or two.

What do you hope to see happen after this meeting?

Did anything at the meeting inspire you?

What is your key take-away from this meeting?

3. *HANG-OUT*

Pre-COVID, members used to hang out after live meetings had ended to talk and socialize. As a technique for building relationships, after the leader has ended a meeting, the leader may want to invite the participants to remain on Zoom for 5 or 10 minutes just to chat.

The leader should mention this opportunity at the start of the meeting. Then, when the meeting has ended, the leader can invite people to stay for casual conversation for 5-10 minutes. *Hang-Out* is not to talk about the meeting; it is to chat as members would have done at the end of a live meeting pre-COVID. There is no pressure for participants to stay on Zoom. Just as at a live meeting, some participants may have to leave immediately and some may have the time to stay and talk.

Conclusion: The Relational Judaism Team will soon offer training on use of these techniques. If you have any immediate questions, please contact any member of the Relational Judaism Team:

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