

Leading Through Divisive Elections

LANGUAGE MATTERS

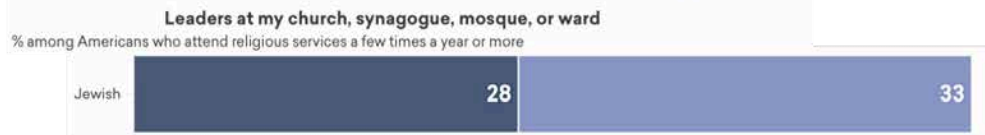
1. Elevate **facts over misinformation**.
2. Elevate the **humanity** of the situation.
3. Help activate values and **show positive social norms**.
4. Ground your focus on your **local community's** present situation.
5. **Avoid harmful language:**
 - Do not describe people as inhuman (animals, zombies, etc.)
 - Do not use the language of war (battle, ambush, etc.)
 - Refrain from disaster language (flood the streets, violence exploded, etc.)



WHY OUR VOICES ARE NEEDED

A 2024 More In Common survey demonstrates that the Jewish community is looking to their rabbis and cantors for guidance in these difficult days.

How much trust and confidence do you have in the following? ● A great deal ● A fair amount



"I want religious leaders at my place of worship (e.g. my pastor, priest, rabbi, imam, etc.) to provide guidance on..." ● Agree



WHEN COMMUNICATING ABOUT THE ELECTION

Be aware of language, behavior, and fear that increase the risk of violence.

1. When approached with fear and apprehension, remind your community that **Americans agree more than they disagree on issues**.
2. Communicate responsibly and **ground your words and actions in Jewish teachings**.
3. Set positive norms by declaring Torah teachings about **loving one another**, serving one another, and other "one another" mitzvot.
4. Provide clear and accurate information in real-time. Position your congregation as a **trusted resource** to share content that has been vetted for accuracy or bias.



WHEN COMMUNICATING ABOUT VIOLENCE

The majority of Americans condemn violence around the election and its results. But if violence occurs, here's how to talk about it.

- **Be specific.** Call out wrong when it occurs, but avoid implying that an entire group is responsible for the behavior of individuals. If you are talking about a group, ensure that it's an actual group acting in an explicitly coordinated way.
- **Be careful of alarmist or speculative language.** Only communicate facts that are verifiable, and caution against misinformation and sensationalism.
- **Communicate that your congregation is a safe place.** Explain that the Jewish community is a kingdom of peace, and any hint of malice within the church will not be condoned.

ON ELECTION DAY

Be prepared to respond as pursuers of peace in the face of uncertainty.

1. Respond in a **pastoral voice** to troubling behavior and words within your immediate community by reminding them of Jewish teachings on loving our neighbors.
2. Remind your community of **Jewish values** if they are acting or speaking out of fear, hate, or uncertainty.
3. Identify leaders within your congregation who can **deliver updates, provide support**, and help stop troubling behavior and rhetoric.

Share clear guidance on how to participate constructively on election day, such as:

- Helping community members find the information they need to vote.
- Thanking those who are working the polls.
- Engaging positively on social media.
- Providing physical support to those who may need a ride to the polls.

AFTER ELECTION DAY

Continue to model peacemaking and help your community remain grounded in Jewish values.

1. **Communicate steadfastness.** Inform people that the vast majority of Americans are invested in making the democratic process work peacefully.
2. Continue to **share information** on a regular basis. Show people that you are engaged in the issues they care about.
3. Remind people that **election results might not be immediately known.** Recounts, audits, and delays can be a normal and expected part of the process.
4. Ground your communication in facts and **shut down misinformation** as it circulates within your community.



The One America Movement is a faith-based non-profit dedicated to eliminating toxic polarization in our society. Eilu v'Eilu at the One America Movement is a network of Jewish leaders guiding their communities to place Jewish values above partisanship and societal divisions. In this time of great division, the Eilu v'Eilu connects leaders grappling with division in the US and supports them to speak and act effectively to build a future in which all human beings are treated as being created in the divine image regardless of earthly divisions.

Learn more at oneamericamovement.org.

