

Amplify Israel Microgrant Application
Rabbi Ashley Englander

Congregation Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville, Florida, under the leadership of Rabbi Maya Glasser has chosen to focus on the theme *K'al Yisrael*, Jewish Peoplehood, for the foreseeable future. Our education and guest speakers have focused on Israel education and antisemitism awareness for the last 8 months, and we intend to continue to bring Israel education to our members. For example, our adult learners had the opportunity to learn from Rabbi Josh Weinberg of ARZA and Rabbi Namaah Kelman about Jewish peoplehood and the modern state of Israel. Learners of all ages had the opportunity to learn from and worship with Rabbi Jan Katzew and Cantor Lanie Katzew as they strengthened their own personal Jewish identities. A small group of adult learners are learning with Rabbi Glasser and myself through a Hartman curriculum about Jewish Peoplehood and Israel. In April, our congregation will welcome Dr. Ayal Feinberg of Gratz College to teach our learners about matters regarding antisemitism. Next year, our entire congregation will enjoy a weekend with Elana Arian to connect with Jewish music and worship.

We have decided that our educational programming for our members in the next year (August 2025 - May 2026) will target specific ages/demographics within our community when it comes to Israel education. We will provide moments for intergenerational learning, and we want to ensure that each demographic feels seen, heard, and spoken to as we all navigate our relationship with the modern state of Israel. Our Congregation will invite two scholars to share perspectives on Israel politics, religion, culture, etc. for adult community members.

I am requesting the full grant of \$3500.

Goal: Families will deepen their knowledge and strengthen their relationship with Israel.

Programs mentioned in this grant are opportunities for our families and students to meet the goal shared.

❖ Families with young children (ages 0-8).

Enduring Understanding: The students and their parents will expand their knowledge of the land of Israel through its culture, music, and food.

Current educational objectives:

- Introduced to the modern state of Israel - its culture, language, people, cities, etc.
- Develop an ongoing relationship with Israel from a place of *ahavath chesed*, loving kindness

Ongoing projects/programs	New projects/programs
Israel Day *program attached	Book club with parents and teachers (separate meeting spaces for processing)

Measuring the outcomes:

- Students are able to identify five cities in Israel, including the city's trademark/known activity.

- Parents will feel empowered to invest in continued Israel education at Temple's Religious School, in which they will complete a survey that measures their feelings and opinions from before and after the activity/program.
- Teachers will develop an Israel class lesson about Israel in accordance with their curriculum map.

Desired Impact:

- Adults in the congregation (parents and teachers) will be empowered and motivated to cultivate an Israel committee for the congregation, which will address our congregation's continued support of Israel and our member's relationship and education of the nation and land.

❖ School aged children (ages 9-13)

Enduring Understanding: As a Jewish people, it is integral that we develop relationships with the people that live in Israel through intentional connection and understanding of the Hebrew language.

Current educational objectives:

- Develop relationships with places and people in Israel as they connect with Israelis their age in our sister
- Understand Israel as a part of one's Jewish identity by learning its primary language
 - Learning is assessed through our Hebrew curriculum map and learning checkpoints

Ongoing projects/programs	New projects/programs
Shalom Learning Hebrew program (funded through the Religious School and parent tuition)	Pen pal program with sister city Hadera-Eiron

Measuring the outcomes:

- Students will meet or advance beyond their current Hebrew curriculum map in the Religious School.
- Students will virtually meet or write to their pen pal at least five times during the school year, in which they learn and feel like they became friends with their Israeli peers.

Desired Impact::

- The congregation will build a stronger, more meaningful relationship with our sister city.

❖ Post b'nei mitzvah students (ages 14-18)

Enduring Understanding: Young American Jews are unaware of the geo-political nature of Israel, therefore, they should find moments to discuss and learn about all the people living in Israel, including Israelis and Palestinians as they grapple with their own understanding of Zionism and relationship with the country.

Current educational objectives:

- Continue to study on the history and ongoing narratives surrounding the modern state
- Grapple with the complexities of the conflict in Israel amongst Israelis and Palestinians through use of the Moving Traditions Israel curriculum
 - Additional learning resources will be used to discuss the nature of this topic
- Develop a stronger relationship with Israel through the values of love and understanding as their Jewish identity matures while creating relationships with Israelis their age

Ongoing projects/programs	New projects/programs
Moving Traditions Jewish Identity and Israel Program (funded through the Religious School)	Leo Baeck School teen pen pal/zoom pal program
	Project teens will co create with Rabbi Englander

Measurable outcomes:

- Students will be able to articulate a general history of the state of Israel.
- Students will be able to understand parts of the Israeli-palestinian conflict through a progressive, Reform Jewish lens.
- Students will meet with teens their age in Israel at least 5 times during the school year (via zoom or email).
- Students will be able to confidently consider themselves zionists after the completion of the school year.

Desired Impact:

- Students will become actively involved in Israel programming and initiatives the Temple hosts, therefore increasing engagement in Temple and Israel programming.

❖ Young adults (ages 20s and early 30s)

Enduring understanding: Young adults can relate to the impact October 7th had on Jews in Israel who are their age. Because of this, adults in our congregation need opportunities to discuss what happened and develop an ongoing relationship with their brothers and sisters across the ocean as they build community and comradery.

Current educational objectives:

- Understand the importance to visit Israel
- Build relationships with Israelis that share progressive Jewish values
- Grapple with the narratives surrounding Israel in America and the world post October 7th, 2023

Ongoing projects/programs	New projects/programs
	Shabbat dinner and Israel discussion about progressive Judaism in Israel
	Nova Festival presentation with Shye Klein

	on Zoom
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Measurable outcomes:

- These young adults will articulate and share their support, understanding, and connection to Israel in our Temple's weekly email, Facebook or during an Israeli Shabbat service.

Desired Impact:

- The congregation will join the young adult group for Klein's presentation, which will create a moment of intergenerational connection while deepening their relationship with Israel.
- The congregation will be filled with more knowledgeable Jews who deeply relate to Israel.

In order to know if I am reaching my goals and completing the objectives, I will develop two modes of feedback after each group's program. Each program/learning session will have desired outcomes that meet our overall goal. First, the participants will receive a form or oral assessment (for younger learners, but to be written down by the facilitator) prior to each program to gauge their current understanding of the subject that will be presented to them. After each learning opportunity, the participants will be sent a feedback form or oral assessment that will be compared to their first to gauge a possible change in their understanding of the subject matter. Second, each age group will elect 2-3 participants who will report to Rabbi Englander what they learned. Rabbi Englander will share in her weekly emails or sermons these findings. Some participants will have the opportunity to report their findings in our weekly email letter, Religious School newsletter, social media, Torah study or Shabbat services. Rabbi Englander will meet with these participants and work with them to help meet their own objectives when engaging with Israel. Each group will have their own set of objectives that will meet the overarching goal.

Budget:

Israel program - \$300

Book club - My Second Favorite Country by Zakai - \$400

Teen project - \$300

Shabbat dinner - \$500

Nova Festival Presentation - \$1000 - <https://www.shyeklein.com/about-me>

Speaker - \$1000