Playbook for Hosting Jewish Unity Salons

BACKGROUND

In June 2023, the World Jewish Congress (WJC), together with the Jewish Peoplehood Coalition powered by the Reut Group, convened the Jewish Leadership Bridge for the Future in Jerusalem opened by President Isaac Herzog, bringing together 250 Jewish leaders from the Diaspora and Israel. The objective of the Leadership Bridge is to foster long-term dialogue and devise, advance, and implement initiatives to strengthen Jewish unity.

The summary of the discussions at the launch event can be found in this booklet, “A Roadmap for Jewish Unity” including an exceptional ideas bank with possible actions steps for each topic discussed. Read more about the Leadership Bridge here.

OBJECTIVES

The Leadership Bridge encourages the organization of local Jewish Unity Salons - emulating the discussions at the launch event in private settings with the objectives to:

1. Foster Jewish unity by facilitating respectful conversations among community members with diverse opinions and backgrounds.
2. Further refine action and project recommendations from the “Roadmap for Jewish Unity” booklet, or advance initiatives that foster Jewish unity.

WHO TO INVITE

We recommend inviting approximately 8 to 15 participants to your Jewish Unity Salon, but feel free to adapt based on your preferences.

Make sure to invite participants from different backgrounds, affiliations, political ideologies, etc, including local members of WJC Elevate. A key objective of a Salon is to engage in respectful and productive conversations with people within the Jewish community who do not normally meet.

INVITATION TEMPLATE

Please feel free to use the email template found here to invite your guests.
LOCATION

The location for a Salon can be in your own home, the local Jewish community, or another private setting that allows comfortable conversations and a 'safe-space'.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

A Jewish Unity Salon should allow enough time for introductions, discussions, and agree on next steps. Below are two sample schedules for a Salon with and without a speaker.

Sample schedule – without speaker
18:00 Start of event: Networking and refreshments
18:20 Opening remarks: Host welcomes the participants, describes the event purpose, objectives, and anticipated outcomes
18:25 Discussions: Engaging group conversations
19:45 Recap: Host summarizes the discussions, agree on next steps with the group
20:00 End of event

Sample schedule – with speaker
18:00 Start of event: Networking and refreshments
18:15 Opening remarks: Host welcomes the participants, describes the event purpose, objectives, and anticipated outcomes
18:20 Keynote address: Esteemed speaker explores pertinent topic chosen for discussion
18:35 Q&A with the speaker
18:45 Discussions: Engaging group conversations
19:45 Recap: Host summarizes the discussions, agree on next steps with the group
20:00 End of event

SELECT A DISCUSSION TOPIC & ACTION ITEM

Based on the launch event of the Leadership Bridge in June 2023, we have selected six topics to focus on:

1. How can we strengthen Jewish unity and Israel-Diaspora relations?
2. What role should the Diaspora play in supporting Israel?
3. What role should Israel play in supporting the Diaspora?
4. How can Jewish leaders in Israel and the Diaspora collaborate effectively?
5. How can we instill the importance of Jewish unity in our young leaders?
6. How can we inspire and empower young Jewish leaders to take on leadership roles?

Select a topic that genuinely captivates your interest and aligns with your belief in making a positive impact. We suggest referring to the "Roadmap for Jewish Unity" document, which provides valuable insights into the challenges, responses, impact objectives, and a pool of action ideas related to each topic. This document will offer you a comprehensive understanding to aid in your decision-making process.
Selecting an action item
Once you have selected a topic, you should review the ideas in the topic's ideas bank and choose at least one that you would like to discuss or implement together with your group. For example, if you chose topic 1, you can select the idea below from page 15:

"Facilitating intergenerational connections, where the wisdom of the elderly is shared with the youth, to foster a sense of community and create opportunities for growth."

See point 5.b. below for next steps for your selected action item.

**SALON DISCUSSION ORDER**

1. **Introduce yourself** including your WJC lay leadership role and program (JDCorps, NextGen, role at local WJC-affiliated Jewish community, etc).
2. **Emphasize that we aim for the discussions** to be open, honest, productive, and respectful. While we may hold strong opinions on these important issues, let us remember that above all, we are all “Am Yisrael” – one family.
3. **Introduction round of participants** – name, organization, city/country of residence. Feel free to add a short ice breaker.
4. **Encourage participants to join the WhatsApp Community** of the Leadership Bridge (print the QR code in advance [download here] or share this link).
5. **Inform the participants about the two expected outcomes:**
   a. **Discussion of the selected topic.** We recommend that you also read some of the topic’s challenges, responses, impact objectives, and ideas bank from the "Roadmap for Jewish Unity" document.
   b. **Discuss the selected action item(s)** from your topic’s ideas bank in the “Roadmap for Jewish Unity” document and complete one of three options:
      i. Elaborate on the chosen idea by for example expanding on the idea, identifying key partners, or devising a step-by-step work plan that can be used by you or other members of the Leadership Bridge to execute the selected idea.
      ii. Commit to executing the idea as a group and devise a step-by-step work plan and divide responsibilities within the group.
      iii. Suggest a new action item for the topic discussed, to be added to the ideas bank in the roadmap.
6. **Discuss the expected outcomes** and take notes in order to complete follow-up points 1 and 2 (see below).
7. **Decide with the group** if you should create your own sub-group in the Leadership Bridge WhatsApp community and your own webpage on the Leadership Bridge website for publishing your activities.

**FOLLOW-UP**

After the event has been concluded, these are your possible next steps:
1. Submit a meeting summary, text for news item for publication on the Leadership Bridge website, photos, and create your own webpage on the Leadership Bridge website using the form found in this link.

2. Post about your meeting on social media and tag the World Jewish Congress.

3. Open a WhatsApp group with the participants of the Salon or send a thank you email to the participants including for example:
   a. Invitation to join the Leadership Bridge WhatsApp group – use this link.
   b. Your social media post.
   c. Photos of the event.
   d. Next steps for the group

4. Initiate the action item discussed at the Salon.

5. Organize another Salon – either for you to organize or encourage another participant to do so - inviting the same people or a mix of new people that the participants can recommend.

**ESTABLISH A LOCAL LEADERSHIP BRIDGE COMMUNITY**

The optimal goal of hosting a Jewish Unity Salon is to lay the foundation for a local Leadership Bridge community, fostering continuous efforts towards Jewish unity. To aid you in this endeavor, we offer various tools and resources designed to facilitate long-term engagement:

- This "Playbook for Hosting a Jewish Unity Salon" document to guide you through the process.
- The option to create a dedicated WhatsApp group within the Leadership Bridge WhatsApp Community, enhancing communication and collaboration.
- An opportunity to establish a community webpage (available soon) on the Leadership Bridge website, allowing you to publicize your community's activities and initiatives effectively.
- Access to the expansive Leadership Bridge network, encompassing WJC-affiliated Jewish communities in over 100 countries, **WJC Elevate** members in over 60 countries, and the **Jewish Peoplehood Coalition**. This invaluable network will provide you with additional members for your community, facilitate the coordination and implementation of activities, and offer abundant opportunities for growth.
- Regular Zoom meetings for the Leadership Bridge, focusing on current issues, networking, and brainstorming sessions, fostering a robust and supportive community.
- In-person meetings in Israel and the Diaspora to progress key actions and strengthen the network.

For the sustained growth and impact of your community, we recommend organizing a minimum of two Jewish Unity Salons each year. By doing so, you will strengthen the bonds within the community and actively contribute to the overarching goal of Jewish unity.

We believe that your efforts, combined with the support provided, will pave the way for a thriving and impactful local Leadership Bridge community dedicated to promoting unity within the Jewish community. Together, we can make a lasting difference.
CONTACT US

Please feel free to reach out to us with any comments, ideas, and questions.

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