

Small Jewish Communities: A Proctologist's View

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www.smalljewishcommunities.org



UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

Small Jewish Communities

- ✓ What you don't know about your community can hurt you.
- ✓ What is the takeaway from religious education?
 - ✓ Children / teachers / parents
 - ✓ What is and is not being reinforced at home?
- ✓ Which Jewish values are well-known and lived out?
 - ✓ Which Jewish values are lesser-known?
- What is the plan for community sustainability?
- What is the vision for community viability?



Thinking small works!

- Stories of Local Genesis
- Family Education Projects
- Community Education Opportunities





Strengths of small Jewish communities

1. Basic historical information available to all members of the community.
2. Parents empowered to take a lead in their child's Jewish education.
3. Families learning together.
4. Community education opportunities (internal and external).

UTILITY

Strengths of small Jewish communities

Desired Outcomes:

Strengthened Individual/Family Identity



Clarified Community Continuity



Increased Family/Community Vitality



Amplified Voice in Larger Jewish Community
and beyond



Better odds that the community will survive
in tact to the end of the 21st century.

MAGIC



Tactics to Strengthen Your Community

“Thinking Small” Projects:

1. Interview Key Community Members
2. Ongoing Visibility Projects
3. Guided Family Discussions
4. Community-wide Education Forums



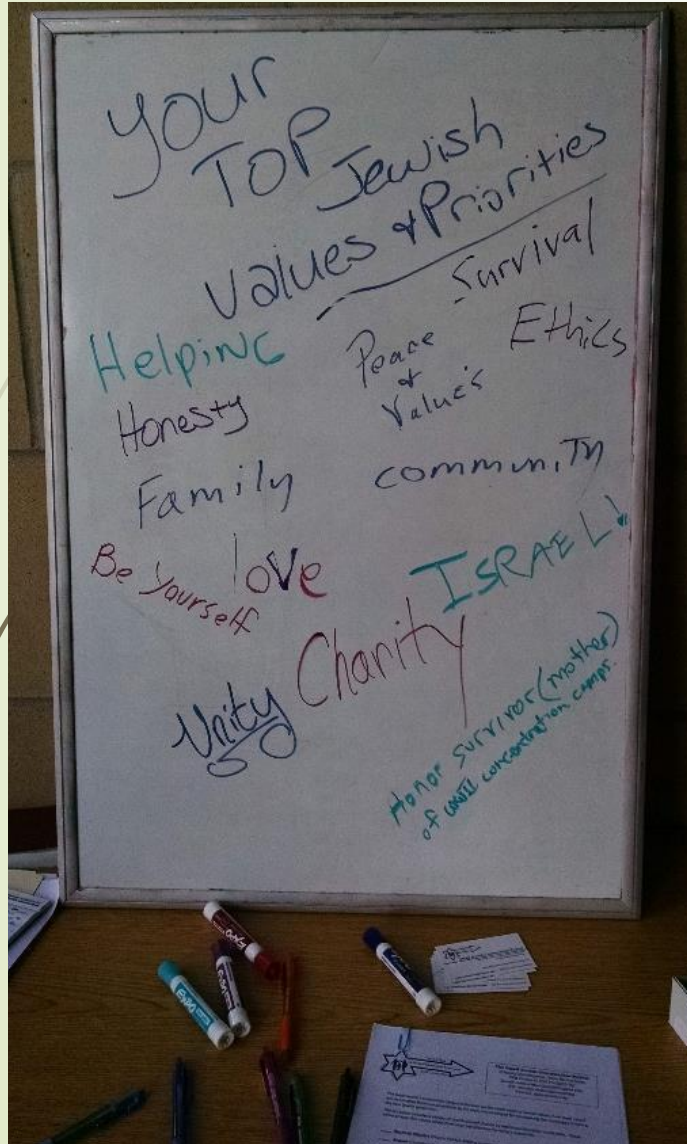
Tactics to Strengthen Your Community

Interview Key Community Members

1. “Old-timers” and their children/grandchildren
- Get the story!
2. Descendants of the founders
- Or those who know the stories!
3. Past leaders (rabbis, presidents, etc.)
4. Current pillars of the community

Tactics to Strengthen Your Community

Mountain City Information Table



Visibility Projects

COMMUNITY		
Mountain City	Green Valley	Springfield
Lovingkindness	Lovingkindness	Respect/Dignity/Honor
Loving the Stranger	Righteousness	Love of Israel
Respect/Dignity/Honor	Respect/Dignity/Honor	Faith/Trustworthiness



Tactics to Strengthen Your Community

Guided Family Discussions

- Family priority discovery
- Inter-family cooperation
- Community-building

SURVIVAL IN SARAJEVO -- FRIENDSHIP IN A TIME OF WAR

Choose Audio/Subtitle language

English

[Download Video \(Size: 179.94 MB\)](#) [Direct Link](#)



The story of how an old synagogue in the Bosnian war zone became a beacon of hope for everyone. During the Bosnian war (1992-1995), the Jewish community of Sarajevo refused to take sides, opened their own humanitarian aid agency inside the city's synagogue, and were soon joined by their Muslim, Croat and Serbian friends. While outside of the besieged Bosnian capital, nationalist politicians swore these ethnic groups could not get along, here's a group of people who never got the memo. In this European war, Jews were not the victims. In this war, Jews were saving Muslims and Christians. An inspiring story of friendship and commitment.

FILM DETAILS

DURATION:

00:11:41

COUNTRIES:

Bosnia, Macedonia,
Serbia, Montenegro,
Croatia

STUDY GUIDE

Find more
information in our
comprehensive Study
Guide.

[click here](#)

FILM SCRIPT

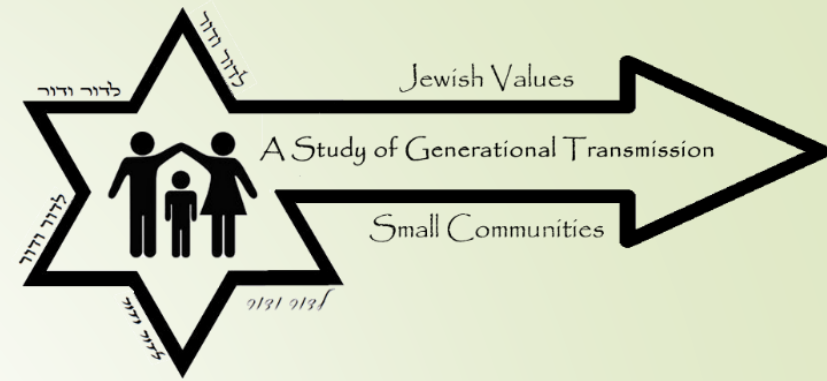
for teachers and students
who would like to read
the script.



Tactics to Strengthen Your Community

Community-wide Education Forums

1. Increase knowledge and understanding of Judaism among Jewish adults in our community.
2. Increase knowledge and understanding of Judaism within the wider community.
3. Encourage open dialog between Christian and Jewish members of our community.
4. Increase non-Jewish participation in Jewish community programming.
5. Build stronger relationships between Jews and non-Jews in the wider community.



Thinking small works!

- Don't rely heavily on institutions or the professional class.
- Reduce outsourcing.
- Increase parental responsibility.
- Clarify and articulate Jewish values.
- Don't be afraid to set boundaries.



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