

TriBE Vision

What are TriBEs?

TriBEs are an effort to deepen connections with one another, to Temple, to God and to the rhythms of Jewish time and life. TriBEs are regular gatherings of five to fifteen members led by TriBE Leaders. Some TriBEs connect around common interests and affinities. Others gather to discuss topics of deep concern or importance to their lives. The intention is for each to engage in meaningful conversations and learning through curriculum provided by Temple Beth El.

What are Social Justice & Action TriBEs?

Social Justice & Action TriBEs (SJA TriBEs) are also regular gatherings of a small group of congregants led by a TriBE Leader. However, these TriBEs will gather around particular social justice and action issues. Congregants will join the SJA TriBE that speaks to the issue or issues they care most about. Through connections with like-minded TriBE members, congregants will work together to fulfill their goal of making change in their lives and communities. **It is important to note that all work done that is affiliated with Temple Beth El must fall within the guidelines and parameters of non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations and does not include partisan political work or the endorsement of candidates for elected office.**

Expectations of a SJA TriBE

- Focus efforts on a specific issue of social justice and, within their work, utilize at least one of the following frameworks
 - Advocacy
 - Direct Service
 - Education
- Meet regularly in an agreed upon setting that is conducive to achieving the social justice and action goals of the group
- Agree to and observe a brit (covenant) with each other
- Create real and honest relationships
- Ensure that, without further TBE Board approval, they are not acting on behalf of Temple Beth El, but on behalf of themselves as individuals

Work from the perspective of inclusion, making decisions and taking actions to center, protect and support diversity and emphasize those who are being served or supported by your work.

How Do SJA TriBEs Form?

Any congregant can form a TriBE. If you have a small group that is already working on a social justice issue or are part of a TBE initiative, we want to support you. If your group desires to become a TriBE we will provide leadership training to participant of the TriBE and share necessary resources so the TriBE can engage in meaningful conversations that lead to deeper relationships and are more conducive to accomplishing your goals. Please note, this does not mean that every existing group must transition into a TriBE, this is just an additional opportunity and resource.

Temple Beth El will be happy to help pair individual members with SJA TriBEs. Email Nicole Sidman, Social Justice Outreach Coordinator, nsidman@templebethel.org or call 908-423-9876 for questions about starting or joining a SJA TriBE.

SJA TriBE Vision Statement

“Action is the only remedy to indifference: the most insidious danger of all” – Elie Wiesel

Jewish tradition is clear that it is our sacred obligation to respond to injustice. In the Book of Leviticus, we are commanded, “Do not stand idly by the blood of your fellow.” In Deuteronomy we learn that “If you see your fellow’s ox or sheep gone astray, do not ignore it; you must take it back to your fellow.” In other words, “Justice, justice shall you pursue” (Exodus 23:8). The question becomes then, how do we act? How do we take action as individuals, as a community, as a congregation?

Imagine congregants gathering regularly in small groups to connect and act around the issues that matter most to them, deepening their relationships with each other, with Temple Beth El and inspired by the Jewish call to act. SJA TriBEs are an expansion of the success of the current TriBE model and the relationships and leadership built through our community organizing efforts and our long history of social justice and action at TBE. SJA TriBEs will help Temple Beth El realize this future of a connected, committed membership through the formation of small groups which will:

- Focus our *Tikkun Olam* on the issues which matter most to our congregants.
- Organize around shared interests, concerns, and desires to act.
- Feature shared Jewish experiences, learning and celebration as well as bringing a Jewish lens to the work being done in concert with others.
- Be self-led by lay leaders working in a group dynamic.

Different Types of SJA TriBEs

There is no one way to pursue justice. Below are the different types of TriBEs we envision, but please note that your TriBE does not have to be exclusively one of the following. You may decide to focus solely on one or decide to do a hybrid. TriBEs are not eternal and each TriBE and TriBE member will have the opportunity to make the decision every year whether to continue.

Direct Service: These TriBEs will focus on direct, tangible service that meets an immediate need in the community. These TriBEs may decide to dedicate one day a month to working at a food bank, commit to building a house with Habitat for Humanity, drive seniors or recent immigrants to appointments, or any other action that they wish to take together.

Education: These TriBEs will spend time learning about particular issues to better understand root causes, solutions and current trends in social justice matters. This could take the form of a book or film club, a lecture series or participating as a group in a course on a particular subject. An education focused TriBE works particularly well for a group who would like to work in direct service or advocacy, but do not feel well-versed enough in the subject matter to do so in an appropriate and effective way. An education TriBE could easily evolve over time into a direct service or advocacy TriBE.

Advocacy: The biggest changes can take the longest. Some TriBEs may want to focus on making the big structural changes that come from advocating for a particular issue. This can take the form of lobbying government on a particular issue, campaigns for better corporate governance or other efforts to change the way decisions are made. Please note that all advocacy must remain nonpartisan and issue, rather than candidate or political party, focused in accordance with 501(c)(3) regulations.

Time Bound: Some issues only arise during particular times of the year. In these cases, a TriBE could commit to getting together annually around primary and election season to work on efforts to expand voting access, or in August to help kids and teachers collect the supplies they need for back-to-school or during the holidays for toy drives and holiday meals.

Shalom Park Partnership: Temple Beth El has always proudly stood for social justice and action work. Although much of that work will fit well within TriBE structure, we recognize that some, particularly those that are part of larger Shalom Park partnerships, may not. However, it is entirely possible that TBE members who also work with Shalom Park initiatives (Shalom Green, Abraham's Tent, Freedom School, etc.) could form a TriBE within the larger group. We have seen much of the work of these initiatives falling directly on shoulders of individual congregants who have held the weight for many years. Forming a TriBE around these initiatives could provide those leaders with a team of congregants resulting in increased awareness and training for the next generation of leaders as well as camaraderie and connection of TriBE relationships.