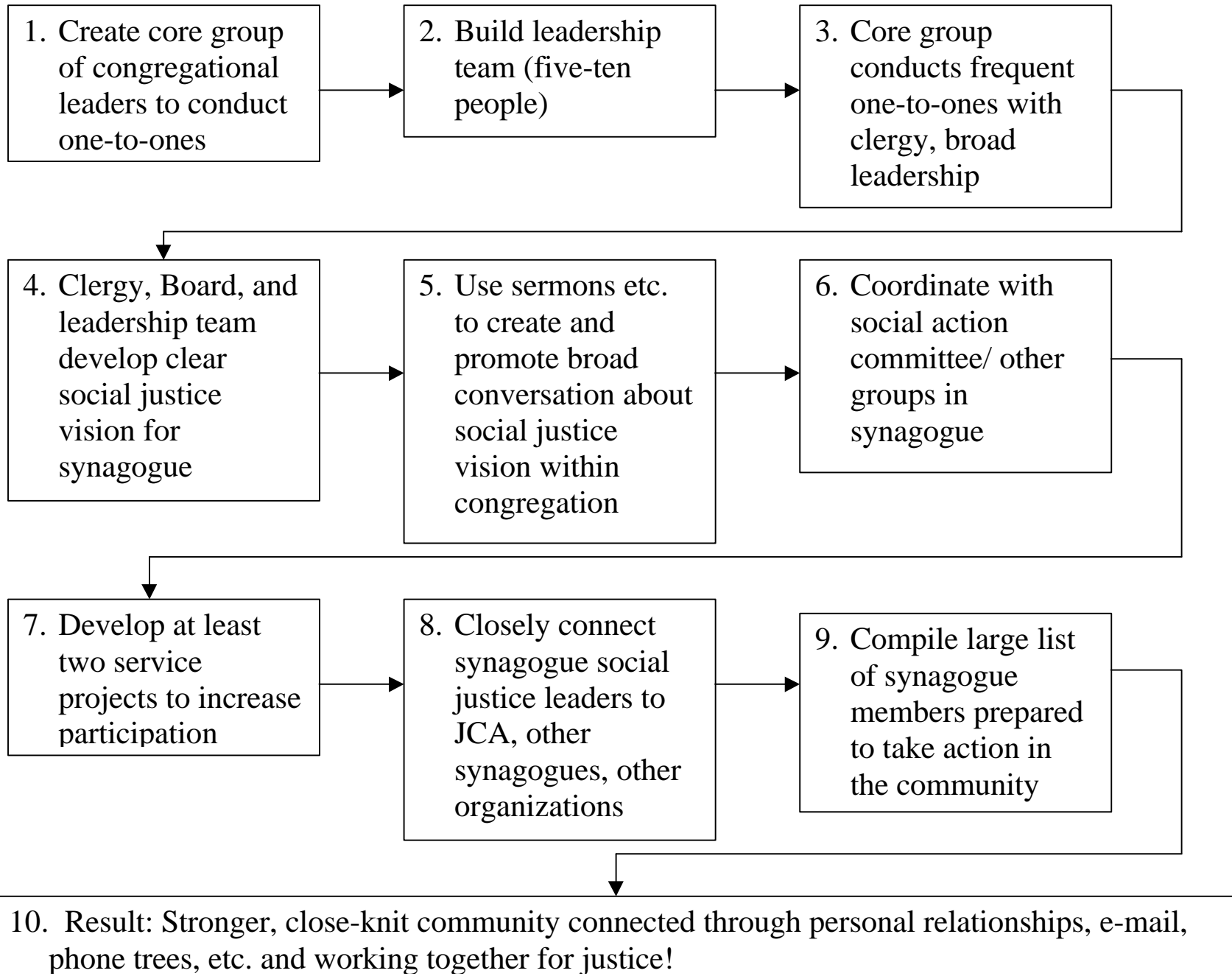


Congregational Organizing – Flow Chart for Organizing and Development

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Explanations of Flow Chart

1. Create Core Team or Group

Core group is created by JCA organizer and one or two key leaders in the synagogue. The leaders could be from the Social Action, Tzedek or Hesed committee (if one exists) or possibly someone identified by the clergy in the congregation or from another group in the synagogue. Once a core group of three to five members is established, the one to ones can begin.

One-to-ones should focus on people that we believe have an interest or capacity to join social justice efforts and/or have demonstrated other leadership capacity. Names for the core group to conduct one-to-one visits can be collected through suggestions by the clergy, lay leadership (board, sisterhood, mens group, youth committees) and from the social action committee.

The core group could also emerge as members of the Social Action Committee in the synagogue, often dependent on the history of the committee and its previous focus.

2. Build Leadership Team

The goal of the core group is to build a leadership team of 5 to 10 people who are committed to working together on social justice issues. This team should also be committed to building relationships with more members of the congregation to move the process of social justice along in the congregation. The leadership team is built through one-to-one visits. However, these visits could be supplemented with comments from the clergy about the importance of social justice, and encouragement from the clergy to specific members. In addition, the core group could work with the adult education committee to hold some discussion groups on social justice as a means to identify additional congregants interested in social justice.

3. Build Relationships and community

Leadership team conducts ongoing one-to-one visits with clergy, board leadership and others in the synagogue to strengthen relationships, learn more about what clergy and others think are the social justice priorities. Consideration should also be given to convening small groups or forums on social justice with participation from the clergy and other synagogue leaders. Through one-to-ones and small group meetings, the social justice leadership team and JCA organizer should always be looking for additional potential leaders.

4. Development of Social Justice Mission and Vision

Leadership team should work to develop a mission statement defining the broad mission of increasing the focus of the synagogue on social justice. If the leadership team is developed through the synagogue's social action committee, the mission statement could reflect the mission of the committee. Once the leadership team has a clear mission and vision, they should meet with the clergy to secure support of the statement and overall goals. The leadership team should then take the mission statement to the full board of directors for their review and approval. This is an important step to make sure the lay leadership of the congregation understand the overall goals of social justice for the team and the congregation.

5. Promote broad conversation in the synagogue about Social Justice

The leadership team should work with the clergy and lay leaders to promote an ongoing discussion about the importance of social justice to synagogue life. First, the team should work with the clergy to make sure that sermons and Dvrei Torah are delivered on social justice as a part of our historical text and its relationship to the work synagogue members are involved in through the social action committee or with other organizations in the broader community. Second, articles should be published in the synagogue newsletter or through mailings to the congregation on a regular basis discussing social justice work in which congregants are engaged. Third, the team should work with the adult education committee to periodically hold forums and educational sessions on social justice topics. Each of these approaches are designed to increase the dialogue in the congregation about social justice while also providing new ideas and opportunities for synagogue members to participate.

6. Coordinate with Social Action Committee/ and other groups in the Synagogue

The leadership team, as part of the social action committee or separate, needs to encourage cooperation and coordination among groups in the synagogue who have an interest or commitment to social justice and service. Members of the board, men's club, sisterhood and adult education committee should be involved in discussions to determine the various projects in which they are engaged, including involvement in blood drives, clothing drives, or food shelve programs. There may be opportunities for collaboration as well as discussion as to how specific projects relate to the overall goal of social justice. Members of these groups may have an interest in joining congregation efforts with other groups in the community that relate to social justice. Only through one-to-one visits and meetings with leaders of these groups can cooperation and coordination be encouraged and implemented.

7. Develop at least two service projects to increase participation

While the focus of the leadership team is on social justice work, there are always synagogue members who are drawn to social service projects because they are more concrete and time-limited. The leadership team should support the social action committee and other synagogue groups, such as the sisterhood to participate in such projects but continually talk about the relationship of those projects to larger, more ongoing problems in the community. If the project is to maintain food shelves, the leadership team, through steps listed above, needs to describe how food shelves are related to the broader problem of poverty and hunger. Service projects can sometimes be used to increase the number of people focused on broader community issues because they are less controversial and more feasible for family participation. The leadership team needs the support of people involved in the service projects, and the clergy, to clarify the relationship between service and justice and provide opportunities for people involved in service projects to participate in justice campaigns (Habitat for Humanity and affordable housing policy work).

8. Closely connect synagogue social justice leaders with JCA and other community organizations

Once the synagogue team has had success in increasing the number of congregants interested in working on justice campaigns (through the steps followed above), the team must then develop closer working relationships with JCA leaders and staff, other synagogues and other community organizations. It will be critical for members of the congregation to play important community roles in issue justice campaigns to develop stronger leadership skills, and gain more ideas about how coalition work is done. Synagogue members should also have opportunities to work more closely with members of other congregations and other faith groups to gain a better sense of how increasing the number of people involved strengthens campaigns working on justice issues. The leadership team should receive strong support from Jewish Community Action organizing staff to learn more about the issues and more about community organizing strategies. It will be important for synagogue members to participate in coalition and JCA working groups as leaders and members of justice campaigns.

9. Compile large list of synagogue members prepared to take action on justice issues

From the development of lists of congregants through service projects, ongoing communication through mailings and synagogue bulletins, and leaders participating in community justice campaigns, the synagogue should be able to create a much larger list of its members to participate in community action. Through email action alerts and mailings, this list of congregants should be kept informed about issues and provided opportunities to turnout at important events, hearings, meetings and action to make progress on social action issues. The clergy can provide ongoing reminders and motivation to increase participation. As congregants participate, they should periodically report on the progress of campaigns through synagogue newsletter articles and occasional announcements or

sermons. These campaigns and the congregants who participate can be seen as participating in projects important to the goals of the synagogue as a whole.

10. Result: Stronger, close-knit community working together for Justice

The first nine steps of building personal relationships within the congregation and outside the synagogue, organizing service projects and participating in justice work, all strengthen the synagogue community and its connection to justice work. Different groups will work more closely together – the synagogue will have more cooperation and coordination and justice will be a very important theme that will hold this together.