

Debriefing *L'Taken* & Looking Toward the Future

Post-*L'Taken* Seminar

60 minutes



- 0:00-0:05** **Introduction**
- 0:05-0:15** **“What Have I Learned?” Posters**
- 0:15-0:35** **Reflective Discussion**
- 0:35-0:50** **“I Will Repair the World”**
- 0:50-0:60** **Final Moments**

Materials:

Easel Paper and/or Poster Board
Tape

Markers
Copies of “Earth” Worksheets (See page 3)

0:00-0:05 Introduction

Introductory statement: We have just returned from a transformative experience at the *L'Taken* Seminar, where we learned the value of advocacy and the skills necessary to be an effective advocate. And, of course, we explored the connection between our Jewish values, social justice, and specific public policy issues.

First, to begin reflecting on the experience, let’s take a moment to go around the room and each say the one word that we believe best describes the trip. Try not to repeat any of the words said by the people who came before you. (*Spend a few minutes going around the circle.*)

Clearly, we got a lot out of the *L'Taken* seminar. Our challenge is to take the energy and excitement that we built in Washington, D.C., and continue to be active and engaged on the issues that we care about. It’s not an easy task. Today, together, we are going to reflect on what we learned in Washington and begin thinking about how we can apply these lessons in our present lives and in the future.

0:05-0:15 “What Have I Learned?” Posters

Transition to activity: As you will notice, there are posters around the room with phrases that represent many different aspects of your identity. Take 10 minutes to walk around the room and write something about what you learned on every poster that you can. When you have finished writing, be sure to take a few minutes to look at others’ answers to the questions.

- Tape/stick paper or poster board to the wall throughout the room, with each of the phrases below (and any others you want to add). Provide each student with a marker to write on the posters.
 - What I learned...
 - As an advocate/activist
 - As a Reform Jew
 - As a student
 - As a citizen of the United States of America
 - As a leader
 - As a member of my Confirmation class (if applicable)
 - As an Arizonan (insert whatever state you are from)
 - As a tourist

0:15-0:35 Reflective Discussion

Using the questions below, facilitate a discussion with the students:

- What stood out in your mind during this activity?
- What was the most poignant/meaningful/memorable moment of the trip for you? Why?
- How was *L'Taken* different from other learning experiences you have had?
- What role does social justice play in your personal Jewish identity? Has its role changed since your trip to D.C.?
- How do you hope to translate what you learned into action?
- How will you get your school, community, and congregation more involved in advocacy and direct service around the issues that you care about?

0:35-0:50 "I Will Repair the World"

Transition to activity: Our tradition teaches us that we are partners with God in the repair of the world. We work together in pursuit of *tikkun olam*, to try to make our world whole. Today, we will recommit ourselves to this struggle by identifying concrete ways that we can engage on the issues of importance to us.

- 1) Remind students that we pursue *tikkun olam* in three ways: advocacy, direct service, and education. Discuss with students:
 - How do you define advocacy? How do you define direct service? How do you define education? What are examples of each of these?
 - Which of these three forms of action is easiest? Which is hardest? Which is most important? (Ideally, your conversation will conclude that they are each important for different reasons and that they are most powerful when combined).
- 2) Pass around copies of the "earth worksheet" (**Attachment I**) to each student.
- 3) Ask each student to identify one issue on which he or she will focus in the coming months. (Ideally, students will choose the issue that they advocated for at *L'Taken*.) The answer to this question should go in the top left-hand corner of the student's "earth."
- 4) Instruct students to identify three concrete tasks/actions/behaviors that they will commit to doing related to the issue that they picked—one in each of the areas of direct service, advocacy, and education. They should complete the sentence "I will..." and write these tasks, with as much detail as possible, in the corresponding quadrants of their "earth."

Examples:

- *Poverty/Homelessness: I will write to my Members of Congress to encourage them to vote against any cuts to child nutrition programs (advocacy), I will go to a homeless shelter to serve food (direct service), I will share the stories of the speakers at the Faces of Homelessness program with my friends at school (education).*
- *Environment: I will schedule a lobby visit with my Representative to ask about the progress on cap and trade legislation (advocacy), I will encourage my school to replace all of the light bulbs with CFLs (direct service), I will plan a program for my youth group about ways to reduce your carbon footprint (education).*
- *LGBT Equality: I will call my Members of Congress to encourage them to prioritize the consideration and passage of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (advocacy), I will join (or form) the Gay-Straight Alliance at my school (direct service), I will speak up in opposition whenever my friends use the phrase "that's so gay" and tell them why it's unacceptable (education).*

0:50-0:60 Final Moments

- 1) Ask each student to publicly share one of the things that he/she has committed to doing.
- 2) Option 1: Create a community “Art & Action” piece by cutting out the students’ earths and pasting them all to a giant piece of butcher paper.

Option 2: Encourage students to bring their “earth” pieces home and put them on a bulletin board or another prominent location to remind them of their commitments.

