



Debriefing *L'Taken* **Resources for Enhancing the *L'Taken* Experience**

Debriefing sessions are critical for students to reflect on their time in Washington, D.C., process what they learned, and determine how they can be social justice leaders at home. These debriefing sessions can happen in many formats—on the **bus/plane/train trip home, at the first meeting of the confirmation (or other) class after your trip, at a scheduled luncheon or dinner with the students, or one-on-one**. No matter the context, these conversations can provide important connections and opportunities for reflection for students and are a valuable part of the *L'Taken* experience.

Sample de-briefing questions:

Questions about the efficacy of advocacy

- What is the difference between social action and social justice? How do you engage on both of these levels of *tikkun olam*?
- What is the relationship between the direct service work that you typically do and the advocacy that you did on Capitol Hill?
- How can you incorporate your Jewish values into your advocacy? Why is it important to bring a Jewish voice into conversations about public policy?
- In what ways can you continue to be an advocate on the issue that you lobbied about?
- How can you get other people in your school, community, and congregation more involved in advocacy and direct service around the issues that you care about?
- Do you feel that you made an impact?
- How can we amplify each of our voices so that elected officials hear our messages more clearly/easily?

Questions about personal growth and Jewish identity

- What was the most poignant/meaningful/memorable moment of the trip for you? Why?
- What role does social justice play in your personal Jewish identity? Has its role changed since your trip to D.C.?
- How did the *L'Taken* Seminar impact your perspective on government and the political process?
- What is the role of the Religious Action Center in the Reform Jewish Movement? How will you continue to be involved with the work of the RAC in the future?

Sample de-briefing & follow-up activities:

Posters for Reflection

- On posters taped to the walls around the room, write questions for the students to answer, all of which begin with the phrase “What did you learn...” and concluding with phrases such as “as a student, as a voter, as an advocate, as a leader, as a Reform Jew.” Give students an opportunity to walk around the room and write their answers to the questions on the various posters. Then, encourage students to revisit the posters to read what their classmates wrote. Conduct a conversation about the activity, using the discussion questions above or a more specific set of questions related to what the students learned.

Create Refrigerator “To Do Lists”

- Break students into groups based on their lobby topics. Ask each group to discuss how they can continue to be active on this issue at home. Have them to think creatively about what they can do in their family, in the synagogue, in their schools and in the broader community. Their lists should include, if possible, direct action, education, and advocacy items. And, encourage them to discuss specific ways that they can continue to effectively lobby their elected officials. At the end of their conversations, have each student create a “to do list” to post on a refrigerator (or another prominent location) to remind them of how they can take action.

Declare “I am an advocate”

- Have students define, based on their experience at L'Taken, what it means to be an advocate. Discuss about how they have advocated for themselves or others in the past and how they plan to advocate in the future. Discuss how their conception of advocacy has changed and what it means to be a Jewish advocate. Take photos of the students with signs that read: “I am an advocate for _____” (allowing each student to fill in the blank separately). Then, have students bring signs to other classrooms or to an event in the community, where they can take photos of people outside of the class. Create a poster or booklet titled “A Community of Advocates.”

Write Thank-You Notes to Your Elected Officials

- After students discuss their experience, ask them to each write notes to the offices of the members of Congress that they visited, thanking them for their time and reiterate the points made in their lobby speeches. Discuss, as a group, what language to use and major themes to touch upon.