

Bringing *L'Taken* Home

Resources for “Enhancing the *L'Taken* Experience”



When students return home from the *L'Taken* Social Justice Seminar, they are excited about what they have learned and accomplished. Providing students with opportunities to share their enthusiasm with fellow students and congregants extends the experience for them and amplifies the impact on your entire congregation. Below is a list of suggestions for achieving this goal, drawn from the “best practices” of congregations across the country:

Find ways for Students to Publicly Share their Lobby Speeches and Reflect on their Experiences:

- Select a few participants to present their lobby speeches at Shabbat Services in place of or in connection with a sermon on social justice and/or civic engagement
- Encourage students to transform their speech into a formal, written letter, which they can mail to their Members of Congress
- Publish select speeches in a synagogue-wide bulletin and/or newsletter and/or congregational blog
- Bring participants to speak to other religious school classes—particularly those who will be attending *L'Taken* Seminars in the future
- Create a booklet of the students’ lobby speeches to give to them and their parents
- Bring copies of the students’ lobby speeches to a meeting of the synagogue’s Board of Directors or Trustees
- Host a luncheon or a class session with students and their parents, where students can deliver their speeches in front of the large group, emulating their lobby visits
- Remind students that their experience in Washington, D.C. can be inspiration for a strong college essay about civic engagement, personal responsibility, and/or Jewish identity

Incorporate the *L'Taken* Experience into a Confirmation or Commencement Ceremony:

- Present “Certificates of Completion”
 - The RAC provides chaperones with “Certificates of Completion” to give to every student who attends the *L'Taken* Seminar. Instead of presenting the certificates to the students immediately upon their return home, these certificates can be given in a more formal setting, as part of a ceremony at the end of the year.
- Provide Students with a memento of the trip
 - Present students with a token gift that memorializes their experience at the *L'Taken* Seminar, such as a framed photograph of their class in front of the Supreme Court, a printed booklet of all of the speeches delivered at *L'Taken*, a printed copy of the social action blessing, etc.
- Give students an opportunity to read their speeches
 - Incorporate readings of a few of the strongest lobby speeches into the program for your ceremony.
- Encourage students to publicly reflect on the program
 - If students are required to write speeches or essays for the ceremony, encourage them to reflect on the *L'Taken* seminar and social justice themes.

Encourage Students to Attend Other URJ Social Justice Programs:

- **Mitzvah Corps** is a summer service-learning opportunity for high school students. Social action and volunteering, friends, expanded horizons, and fun are all part of the Mitzvah Corps experience. For summer 2011, we are proud to offer programs in San Francisco, New Orleans, Costa Rica, New York and New Jersey. www.mitzvahcorps.org
- **Kutz Camp** is NFTY's campus for Reform Jewish teens. Kutz offers a custom-made summer camp program with 10 specialty areas, including social action, plus dozens of electives, outdoor recreational activities and other leadership opportunities. <http://kutz.urjcamp.org/>
- **The Religious Action Center's Machon Kaplan Summer Internship Program** is a unique work/study internship program for undergraduate students interested in Judaism and social justice. Based in Washington, D.C., it provides students with a meaningful social justice internship, the opportunity to engage in academic study related to their internships, and a community of like-minded students with whom to share their experience. <http://rac.org/confprog/machon/>