

Greening Houses of Worship – Advice from The Bayit Green Team

Diversify - try to attract members from different ages, stages, strengths, experience as long as they share a passion for the environment;

Maintain Structure - Develop a meeting schedule, determine priorities, assign roles: minutes taker, scheduler, time keeper, moderator;

Cultivate champions – who are your internal and external champions; getting representatives from clergy, lay leadership, board members & respected members of the congregation on your side goes a long way in supporting your agenda; but your best friends should be the maintenance staff, they do the real work and nothing gets done without them;

Know your limits- time & energy may be limited for your team members but your biggest obstacle may be risk aversion on the part of institutional leadership: reluctance to offend big donors, board members & supporters by promoting what may be perceived as radical change, joining outside coalitions with “objectionable” members, or otherwise challenging the status quo;

Be prescriptive but don't shame or blame – changing individual habits that are bad for the environment is challenging; provide specific steps & actions individuals can choose from to green their lives; keep it positive & encourage even small steps;

Strength in numbers- team up whenever possible with likeminded members of other congregations;

Spread the word - use internal bulletins, newsletters to let the congregation know what you are doing and how to get involved;

Showcase your work- plan events that highlight your work e.g. organize a zero waste green Kiddush;

Make use of local resources- local sanitation departments; city/state energy regulatory bodies may provide free guidance, demonstrations, materials;

Aim high but set expectations low – when planning events that require a great deal of time & energy, avoid team disappointment & burnout by preparing for low turnout, unexpected weather, maybe even a pandemic!