

In the Bena Year...



...participants learn, practice, and reflect upon specific **leadership skills** at each meeting. Their Rosh Hodesh group becomes a “safe laboratory” for exploring and practicing **accessing their power** as citizens, leaders, and young women.

Activities draw on Jewish teachings and focus on life issues most germane to high school girls.

The group leader encourages girls to further **discover their voices** as they develop new skills.

By learning **transferable skills**, the girls will more capably contribute to secular and Jewish communities as both members and leaders as they move into their 20’s—and throughout their lives.

y Opening Month

Me, Myself, and Us

In the opening month, participants will have an opportunity to **reconnect** with one another, to begin exploring the **meaning of leadership**, and to learn about the **structure of the Leadership Years**. Building on the theme of “**Journey Inward, Journey Outward**” from the Kol Year curriculum, participants will learn, through **games** and **self-exploration**, that leadership encompasses both of these things. Together, participants will write a **ketubah**, a community **covenant** that will help them define both what they will **bring to the group** and what they hope to **take from the experience**.

Come Together: Review of Group Guidelines and reconnecting game

Leadership 101: Introduction to leadership and leadership roles

Creating Covenant: Creation and decoration of a group ketubah

y Tishrey

Inside Out

This session will draw upon the High Holiday themes of **self-reflection** and **commitment to authenticity**. We will use some well-known Jewish texts to initiate a discussion of both **personal and communal needs** and the personal and communal **voice**. Through a dramatization of the life of a powerful, spiritually-centered Jewish woman, participants will explore the benefits and detriments of **finding and following one’s true voice**. Participants will be lead through a series of **meditation exercises** meant to help each one **find**, or **connect to**, her inner voice. The gathering will conclude with an opportunity for each girl to express her own **inner voice**.

If I Am Not For Myself: Girl-facilitated discussion

Who’s Your Rebbe?: Matching Game

Finding a Space for Your Inner Voice: Guided meditation, individual reflection and writing

Lessons in Leadership: Conversation about how it feels to step into leadership

y Heshvan

Women and Style

Heshvan is the one month on the Jewish calendar that contains no holidays. Girls will fill in this “empty” month with the foundations of both Judaism and leadership. Through learning about two **women leaders** of the labor movement, girls will examine **different leadership styles**. Participants will **assess their leadership ability and desire** in different settings. They will learn that one does not need to be at the front of the room in order to lead.

The Machine: Theater warm-up game exploring labor issues

Leading Questions: Guided visualization of women labor leaders’ roles and discussion of leadership styles

Where We Stand: Self-assessment of leadership styles

Living Leadership: Role play of contemporary problem-solving

y Kislev

Let There Be Light

During the month of Kislev—using the story of Hanukkah as a platform—we will open the door for a discussion of the **sacred and profane**, (or holy and ordinary). Girls will delve into **elevating the everyday** through the study and creation of blessings. They will explore how **Jewish values** influence **leadership**, and how, as leaders, they can increase the light in the world.

Kodesh and Hol—The Sacred and the Profane: The story of Chaya Hammer or Myriam Mendilow

I Resemble that Remark: Self-reflection on Jewish values and personal leadership styles

Counting your Blessings: Group discussion and writing

Sharing Your Light: Matchbox craft

y Tevet

One's Company, Two's a Crowd

During Tevet girls will participate in and process a series of games which will help them understand **group dynamics** and the **phases of group development**. Each group member will **be assigned rotating roles**: participants, time-keeper, gate-keeper, or observer. Through this experience, girls will be encouraged to **recognize the relationship and task roles** which they and other participants assume in the group and their impact on the **group's process and productivity**.

It's all Fun and Games: A series of group games and a discussion

Order From Chaos: An ordering activity based on the phases of group development

y Shevat

Can You Hear Me Now?

This month is all about **communication**. Girls will learn about and practice **active listening**. They will assess how they **approach conflict** and explore the difference between **passivity, assertiveness, and aggression**. Through role play scenarios, they will use their new found skills and knowledge to work through conflicts they might confront as high school leaders in both social and organizational settings.

Listen Up: Role play and discussion on active listening

Apples or Oranges?: Self-assessment quiz on conflict style

What Would You Do?: Role play on managing conflict

y Adar I

Where You Lead, I Will Follow

This month is about the **role of the leader** in a group setting. Girls will experience, reflect on, and script the role of the group leader in **creating a welcoming environment**. Participation in a **team building** exercise will help participants see how **leadership style** affects individual group members and group dynamics. Through a discussion of Jewish texts and a quote from Golda Meir, they will explore the value of **asking for help and delegating tasks**, and their own **comfort level** utilizing these skills.

You're Welcome: Reflection and writing project on the theme of creating a welcoming environment

Managing Merriment: Creation of *mishloah manot* packages or hamantaschen and an exploration of the effects of leadership styles on group process

Help, I Need Somebody! Help, Not Just Anybody!: Exploration and self-assessment on delegation and asking for help

y Adar II

Powered Up

In honor of the women of the Purim story, this month participants will explore **power** and what it is like to lead among men. Looking at famous **gender studies** as well as their **own experiences**, participants will explore the **differences between all female and mixed gender groups**. Through reflecting on the ways in which the people in their lives are powerful, girls will **redefine the concept of power**. In the closing exercise, the participants identify the **ways in which they are powerful**.

Where the Girls/Boys Are: Skits and discussion

Who is Powerful?: Personal environmental assessment and discussion

Phenomenal Woman: Poetry, self-assessment, and writing exercise

y Nisan

Like Herding Cats

During Nisan girls will explore many facets of **effective group facilitation**. Through a study of Passover's four children, they will learn about and gain insight into the motivations behind **archetypal group behaviors**. They will practice engaging and responding to these types using a group survival scenario. Together, they will brainstorm strategies for **managing difficult behaviors** in group settings.

After Passover, the Four Children Come to Meetings: Reading and discussion about some of the archetypes of group dynamics

Lost (and Found): Group activity and processing of the archetypes of group dynamics in action.

Two (or Three or Four) Heads are Better than One: Group brainstorm of behavior and management strategies

y Iyar

Risky Business

This month is all about **taking risks**. As **Yom Ha'atzma'ut** occurs during Iyar, girls will explore risk taking through a look at the lives of Israeli pioneer and **freedom fighter**, Hannah Senesh. They will also learn from a pioneer of a different sort, **artist** Judy Chicago. They will discover and sharpen their own **internal sense of safety in risk** taking by playing a series of improvisational theater games. They will discuss **personal safety nets**, which buffer risk, and **craft a visual representation** of their own support network.

Risky Business: An inventory and discussion about personal risk taking

The Game's the Thing: Theater games which promote risk-taking in a supportive environment

O' the Tangled Web We Weave: Craft project simulating a safety net

y Closing Month

Blessed Are You When You Go

This month will be part **culmination**, part **celebration**. Girls will have the opportunity to review what they have **accomplished as leaders**. They will revisit the **Wonderful Women** they have met throughout the year and—using their lives as an example—**commit** to the next steps they will take as leaders. They will close the evening by bestowing **blessings** on one another. This gathering plan provides an opportunity for you to create a **celebration** which is appropriate to your Rosh Hodesh group.

Because of the celebratory nature of this gathering, some of the standard elements, such as *Bring it In*, have been omitted. Others have been placed at different points in the gathering, so that it ends on a high note.

My First Steps: Group discussion

Someone to Watch Over Me: Reflection and sharing

Clip Art: Creation of a keepsake

Celebration: Planned and executed by the girls