

The document you are printing is one chapter of *Iv'du B'simchah: Worship with Joy*. It can be used on its own or in combination with other *Iv'du B'simchah* materials. You can download the full book at [www.urj.org/worship](http://www.urj.org/worship) under “Publications and Resources” or order a printed book by emailing [worship@urj.org](mailto:worship@urj.org).

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## ■ AN OVERVIEW

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Our Jewish tradition teaches us that the world is sustained by three things: Torah, *avodah* and *g'milut chasadim*—Torah, worship and deeds of loving-kindness. Prayer is at the heart of our existence. Through prayer we are offered the opportunity to connect with the Holy One and with all that is holy in our world and in each other. Providing for and sustaining meaningful communal worship is at the core of a congregation's responsibilities to its members.

Union for Reform Judaism member congregations differ in their worship styles, reflecting the uniqueness of their communities. The process outlined in the *Iv'du B'simchah: Worship with Joy* materials is not meant to change that. Rather, it is intended to support and guide your congregation through communal study about, reflection on and experimentation with worship. Our hope is that through such a process, you will discover how you can better define and fulfill your own aspirations for communal worship.

Each section of *Iv'du B'simchah* is listed below, along with a brief explanation of its purpose.

### **Getting Started: A Fanciful (but Instructive) Tale**

You will find suggestions on how and when to use each component of *Iv'du B'simchah* in the fanciful tale about Temple Oy Vey. Yet just as Shabbat services differ from congregation to congregation, so, too, will each community's process of reflection on its worship.

### **Guidelines for Worship/Ritual Committees**

These guidelines are designed to help your committee work effectively and meaningfully. They include suggestions for setting up the committee, creating an agenda and initiating a discussion about worship with the whole congregation.

### **Engaging Worship: Two Study Sessions for Congregational Boards**

These two study sessions provide an opportunity for forward-looking lay leaders, invested as partners by their clergy, to begin to share responsibility for the worship life of their community. The first session is devoted to Why Worship Matters; the second is titled Getting Unstuck. We urge you to devote a major segment of two board meetings to defining your synagogue's worship agenda by using these study guides. Further development and implementation of this agenda should be undertaken by your Worship/Ritual Committee.

### **Let Us Learn in Order to Do: A Study Program for Worship/Ritual Committees**

This program is an ambitious one. We hope it will also be an exhilarating journey for you into the world of worship. It is designed to help you respond to the question, How can we make our congregation's worship experience richer, deeper and more relevant to those who worship with us? For those of you who are Worship/Ritual Committee members, we offer this program to help you significantly increase your knowledge of the many aspects of Jewish worship. For those of you who are clergy, we offer this curriculum as a tool to help you raise your Worship/Ritual Committee's level of knowledge and awareness about worship. For both lay members and clergy, we hope that this program will enable you to go forward together as worship partners.

The Advance Readings for Let Us Learn in Order to Do are available on the Union's website at [www.urj.org/worship](http://www.urj.org/worship).

***Panim el Panim: Face to Face—A Guide for Congregational Conversations about Worship***

This guide provides the rationale and step-by-step directions for conducting congregational focus groups on worship-related matters. Focus groups are one of the most effective ways for you to learn what your congregants think about and want from communal worship.

**Writing a Worship Vision Statement for Your Congregation: From Discussions and Data to Document**

One significant responsibility of a Worship/Ritual Committee is to assist the congregation in developing a vision of worship that both articulates the centrality of worship and defines its aims within your synagogue. This guide will help your committee make the transition from study, reflection and gathering information to formulating a statement.

***Visions of Prayer***

This sixteen-minute DVD and study guide is intended to help your congregation develop a common worship vocabulary and to show you images of worship in three very different Reform congregations within our Movement.

**Entering the Dialogue: A Procedure for Self-Study of Congregational Worship**

Although *Entering the Dialogue* is a valuable tool for evaluating your congregation's worship, it should not be used until your Worship/Ritual Committee has begun serious study of worship together. The committee need not have completed *Let Us Learn in Order to Do*, but it should have finished at least the first few sessions. *Entering the Dialogue* gives your congregation the opportunity to examine its communal worship in a thoughtful, honest and respectful way by serving as a starting point for discussions aimed at making the worship experience more inviting for everyone. However, for this self-study to have a positive, long-term impact, it must be viewed as only one component of a larger communal engagement with worship.

***Bo-u L'fanav Bir'nanah: Come Into God's Presence with Singing—Worship Music Guidelines for Small Congregations***

This guide is especially helpful for congregations that do not have trained Jewish music professionals who can plan their worship music. Its aim is to offer general guidelines for music leaders and to enable congregations to ask the questions that will help them think creatively about the role of music in worship.

***Synagogue Choirs As Instruments of Prayer: Their Importance, Organization and Techniques***

Among the topics covered in this article, written by master composer Ben Steinberg, are reasons and procedures for starting a choir, rehearsal logistics, repertoire and funding.

## ■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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At the 1999 Union Biennial Assembly, Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie unveiled the UAHC Worship Initiatives during his Shabbat morning sermon:

In many of our synagogues, the prayers are heartfelt, the music uplifting, and the participation enthusiastic. But...all of us—rabbis, cantors, lay leaders—seem ready to admit that far too often,...our members pray without fervor or concentration...[and] feel religiously unsatisfied in our synagogues...

I propose, therefore, that...we proclaim a new Reform revolution,...rooted in the conviction that Judaism is a tradition of rebellion, revival, and redefinition; and like the original too, this new initiative will make synagogue worship our Movement's foremost concern.

*Iv'du B'simchah: Worship with Joy* was developed in 1999 to support our congregations as they explored ways to reinvigorate their Shabbat worship. These materials are the work of many hands and hearts—work that began under the auspices of the UAHC–CCAR Commission on Religious Living.

- We owe special thanks to Bobbi Bridge and Rabbi Rex Perlmeter, who as cochairs of this project nurtured it from its beginnings.
- We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Daniel Schechter, founding cochair of the Commission, and Rabbi Peter Knobel to this project.
- We thank the CCAR for granting us the permission to adapt the study *Lay Involvement in the Development of Liturgy*.
- The first edition of *Iv'du B'simchah: Worship with Joy* was published while George Markley and Rabbi Daniel Polish were the cochairs of the UAHC–CCAR Commission on Religious Living.
- We extend special thanks to the following staff members of the Union, who all had a part in creating this project: Rabbi Daniel Frelander, Helayne Friedland, Emily Grotta, Sarah Kricheff and Kathy Parnass.
- The text was written by Rabbi Kim Geringer and Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman.

Since 1999, we have learned a great deal about worship from those congregations of ours that have been engaged in creative worship work. This 2007 revision of *Iv'du B'simchah: Worship with Joy* reflects what their work has taught us. It includes much of the original text as well as materials that have been written by the Union's Department of Worship, Music and Religious Living during the intervening years. The additional materials have been written by Rabbi Kim Geringer, Cantor Alane S. Katzew, Rabbi Sue Oren and Rabbi Sue Ann Wasserman.

We hope that this edition of *Iv'du B'simchah: Worship with Joy* will help your congregation realize its own vision of worship.