

Soon after the Religious Practices Committee sent out the date application, parents received the following letter from me:

"Dear Parents,

As you begin the process of preparing yourself and your families for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah in (year), I wish to share three very dramatic experiences with you. These incidents which I write of have greatly influenced my conception of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as both a family crisis and an opportunity for family enrichment.

For some unknown reason, it was my mazel as an assistant Rabbi my first year to handle the services for the two most dramatic and unusual Bar Mitzvahs that year. The first involved a boy who suddenly stopped in the middle of his Torah reading and all but fainted. A brief glance at where his parents were sitting gave me the clue - their bodies very obviously angled in opposite directions. The view the Bar Mitzvah boy had of them was overwhelming. When I quickly rose to shorten the agony by moving into the Rabbi's blessing, I began by mentioning the need we all have at times of stopping to catch our breath to catch up with ourselves. Barely had I begun these words, when sure enough, the young boy got up again and finished, faultlessly, his part of the service.

The second most unusual Bar Mitzvah involved a family where the mother had remarried following the death of her first husband. Here the boy burst into tears during his part of the service. The mother and other members of her family were fast to join in and what was a Bar Mitzvah took on the air of a belated funeral for the first husband.

Why do I choose to share these obviously unique experiences with you? In extreme, they point to a way of looking at the Bar Mitzvah in a meaningful family context, rather than in these above examples placing all the burdens upon the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The third experience helps to illustrate the potential richness of seeing the opportunity for increased family togetherness.

While still in this same position, I met for several sessions with a small group of parents who wanted to explore their own reactions to the eventual Bar/Bat Mitzvah of their children. The fathers happened to have all been Bar Mitzvah in traditional synagogues, while the wives came from either reform or unaffiliated homes. The fathers were insistent that the children become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and the mothers were puzzled by the strength of their husbands' wishes. In trying to help the group understand why the insistence on Bar/Bat Mitzvah, I asked one of the men to try to recall what the experience was like. After some bitter words about the old man who prepared him for that special day, with shouting and a ruler across the knuckles, the man had both tears in his eyes and a smile on his face. "You know," he said, "that was my day and I was proud to be up there in front of my family, and remembering their proud smiles still fills me with happiness." Fortunately, both his wife and later his child were able to understand why he so much wanted a Bar Mitzvah for his son.

I hear from too many of our children that they are not really interested in being Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but are here only because their parents are forcing them. I listen with the realization that such protests are stylish, and yet we have been working toward making the preparation more personally meaningful to your children. I listen with the realization that such protests are stylish and yet know that of some families it is true with parents like the man above unable to articulate the reasons why. I listen with the realization that such protests are stylish and yet know some are true and the parents don't really care, and that hurts, for it puts all the burden on the child and the school."

Following the receipt of this letter, the parents are then invited to two parents' meetings which are described by the following announcements brochure:

Preparing Yourself For Your Child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- a series of programs for parents whose son/daughter will observe Bar/Bat Mitzvah during the year

Program I - BAR/BAT MITZVAH AS A CREATIVE RESPONSE TO A FAMILY CRISIS -- AND A CRISIS OF ITS OWN

The psychology behind this life cycle event and celebration - presented by Rabbi Nicolas L. Behrmann

AND

A discussion of how to survive the crisis of planning and living through your son's or daughter's Bar/Bat Mitzvah-by parents who have survived.

Program II - "THE DATE ITSELF" AND SIXTH GRADE-GIMEL HEBREW OPEN HOUSE

7-8:00 P.M. School Open House, meetings with the Sixth Grade religious school teachers and the Gimel Hebrew teachers.

8-9:00 P.M. Parent meeting with the Rabbi and the Religious Practices Committee, at which time dates will be assigned. Procedures and regulations will also be presented and discussed.

Immediately after this date assignment meeting, the following letter is sent out as a means of keeping contact with parents:

Dear

I have been informed by the Religious Practices Committee that _____, 19____, has been assigned to you for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of _____. According to the Jewish Calendar, the Torah portion for that Sabbath is _____. This Torah portion is taken from the book of _____, Chapter _____ Verse _____ to Chapter _____ Verse _____.

The above information is given to you because I wish to meet with you and _____ between now and the end of this school year. During this meeting, which I suggest will involve about a half hour, I would like to briefly discuss the Torah portion with you, review _____'s progress in our school, and his/her Hebrew reading skills, and generally to have a chance to get to know you and _____ on a more personal basis.

Please call the School Office to make an appointment with me. I would like to schedule such an appointment with you prior to the end of April.

Sincerely,

Nicolas L. Behrmann, Rabbi

P. S. It would be nice if you would take the time to look over the portion in English before our meeting.

The sixth grade religious school students are given the dates and portions for each of their students and the form which follows. The curriculum for the sixth grade involves the study of the Jewish life cycle in which the major unit consists of the study of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Torah is also part of the curriculum studied by the classes. The student's reading of the portion for his/her date is an individualized project.

PRE-BAR/BAT MITZVAH PROGRAM FOR SMALLER CONGREGATIONS

Although elements of the program for larger congregations are readily adaptable within a smaller congregation, Rabbis of these latter congregations are usually much more intimately involved with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah training process. The sensitivity to family process suggested can be applied with even more effectiveness with the less formal, smaller synagogue setting.

Rabbis working with smaller congregations are able to individualize the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to the family needs and abilities of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate. What follows is a description of a family approach to Bar/Bat Mitzvah as developed for a congregation of 125 families where I serve as both Rabbi and Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor.

1. Meeting With Parents - Letter

Dear

Bar and Bat Mitzvah is an important event in Jewish family life. The celebration of the coming of age is a gathering of family and friends to witness and appreciate the achievements of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates for 1979 and 1980 are in our Temple-Synagogue School, and a few have already begun to meet with me for their tutoring.

I wish to meet with you and the other parents of the 1979-1980 Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates to review with you the requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the program of study for it, and to share with you my expectations of you the parents.

On Tuesday, November 21st, at 8:00 P.M., we will meet together to discuss the religious and psychological background for Bar/Bat Mitzvah and talk about a family-oriented Bar and Bat Mitzvah program that I am planning and expect your participation in during the coming months.

Sincerely,

2. A Family Havdalah Service - Many congregational families choose to celebrate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah during the traditional reading of the Torah Shabbat afternoon, ending the festivities with

Havdalah. Among other reasons, this arrangement lessens the burden on out-of-town guests. The following letter was sent to those families contemplating such an arrangement:

Dear

I would like to invite you to join me and a few of our Temple families for a Havdalah Service at 6:30 P.M., on Saturday, March 24th, 1979. We should be finished by 7:00 P.M. This will allow you to experience a Havdalah Service, and I will explain it as we do it, thus giving you some more information regarding the setting for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Please let me know by March 20th if you can join me.

Sincerely,

3. Pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Dinners

To facilitate family involvement and attendance at Shabbat services, a series of potluck suppers were established. They also provided an informal setting for parents to chat, and for the Rabbi to speak with the families. For some families this was their first "Shabbat dinner" with candles, wine and challah, and for those living at a distance from the congregation, a rare being with other Jewish families.

The format for the evening was the following: There was a "cocktail" time for parents at 6:00 P.M., with dinner scheduled to begin soon afterward. Candle Lighting, Kiddush, and the Motzei were done before the meal. Once the table was cleared, the program got under way at about 6:45 P.M. - for about an hour the Rabbi and the families explored topics relating to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The themes for the three once-a-month Shabbat dinner sessions were: The Shabbat; the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Torah Service; the Jewish Worship Service. The development of these themes was carried out through a variety of experiential methods. These methods involved the whole family. An example:

THE SHABBAT THEME FOR A FAMILY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

As an introduction to Shabbat and its theme of creation, a word game was played. Each family was given a pencil and a sheet of paper, and the group was given these instructions: "When I say go, as a family working together, write down all the words you can think of that relate to the theme of the creation of the universe! - Go!" After five minutes this is stopped and one by one families read off their lists. If more than one family has the same words, no credit is given. For each word no one else has one point is given. (Where only two of the five families have the same word, one half point may be allowed.) By the end of the game many associations with and concepts of Shabbat and creation have been mentioned by the families themselves.

This game was followed up by a slide show which contrasted the six days of work with Shabbat and introduced the theme of the Shabbat bride. The Rabbi and families then read a responsive reading which was the juxtaposition of the seven days of creation with the seven traditional wedding blessings.

Following these experiences, the families joined the Rabbi and the congregation for the Shabbat evening service.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAKING JEWISH FAMILIES "POSSIBLE" - BEGINNINGS

The direction of this book is toward making Jewish family life "possible". The assumption is that the synagogue must remove itself from those forces in our society that make family life "impossible". It is not only marital separation and divorce that threaten the family but, ironically, also those institutions which "do" for the family.

There is a growing recognition and awareness of the need to re-invest the family with responsibility for its own welfare, to develop within the family the ability to take care of its own. Such is the program of the family systems approach which recognizes that problems develop when the family disowns its responsibility by placing burdens on one or more of its members. These inappropriate burdens become symptoms that call for outside intervention, such as police, physician, school guidance counselor, therapist, or mental institution.

Family approaches came out of the frustration that arose when the so-called Identified Patient was cured, but who fell back into the problem patterns back in the family settings. Work then began on changing the family communications system rather than the specific individual.

If we look at our synagogues from this perspective, we can begin to see how we treat our children as the identified patients - they are the ones with the Jewish identity problems! Further, we remove these children from their home settings to treat this Jewish identity problem, and then return them to their families!

The complaint that there is little, if any, carryover from the religious school class to the home is quite common among Rabbis, Jewish educators, religious school teachers, and even some parents. It would

not be misguided to express this complaint in the following manner:

"We do well with the Jewish identity problems of our youngsters in our settings, but when they get back home, they revert back to old behavior patterns."

There is much that can be done and is being done to humanize religious school education. Textbooks and curriculum materials are far more attractive than ever before, and more readily available. Religious school teachers are becoming more sophisticated through training and teacher resource material. But all these important efforts do not even begin to respond to the problem of Jewish identity - self-acceptance of ourselves as Jews.

I spent six years as a Jewish religious school educator. This experience taught me a great deal about the need for a family-oriented approach to Jewish education and life. The process of reorganizing a school, restructuring its curriculum and revising the methodological approaches brought me into contact with a variety of students and parents.

There were those children who were the trouble makers - the behavior problems. Very often these were the ones from whom I learned about the shortcomings of our curriculum and structure. The misbehavior was symptomatic of educational problems. Also very often these students came to our school program with real emotional needs. With them real efforts were made to humanize their classes to provide for some of these needs. At times parents would take our solutions into the public school settings!

There were also the vast majority of the students whose enthusiasms for religious school were at best lukewarm or counter-productive. These were those who were doing time for their parents (or grand-

parents). There was also a group of well-meaning, devoted students and their parents who felt alone in their positive Jewish feelings.

Out of realization that much of the disenchantment was caused by lack of parental and family involvement, a series of family-oriented programs was launched including the pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah program previously described. The first family-oriented program was a revitalization of the Family Sabbath Service, then we moved onto more "educational areas".

THE FAMILY FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE

Here again we come to an interesting intersection of misdirected thinking. One of the goals of religious school education should be training students to take Jewish worship and the Sanctuary seriously. A quite effective way to do this is to have the students prepare and take part in the worship services. Often there is concern about whether such efforts will take away from curriculum teaching. On the contrary, such efforts pay off in the long run.

Each month during the school year there is a family-oriented Friday night service, usually conducted in part by one of the grades in the religious and Hebrew schools.

Beginning with a service during which the kindergarten, first, and second grades participate through songs, each grade level student learns that he or she is responsible for being part of a congregational service. These services are usually well attended by the parents and oft times even the grandparents.

Beyond encouraging Sabbath Eve Service attendance as families, these services allow special contact between the educational director and the students, and especially between the Rabbi of the congregation and the students. The educational director works with the teachers and

the music teacher and the students to rehearse for the service. The congregational Rabbi has the opportunity to address himself to the students and their parents.

Inasmuch as many of our families have more than one student-child, the families are encouraged thus, to attend more than one Friday night service. Through his or her participation in up to seven of these services before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the individual student comes to see his or her participation in the congregational service at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as more of a matter of course than as an isolated event.

Through such motivation as their children participating in these services, families begin to pattern themselves coming to services, so that their children would be able to fulfill the established service requirement the Temple sets for sixth, seventh, and eighth graders prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

There is, in these services, the clear message that the synagogue is concerned with its students and members in the family context.

One innovation in such family Sabbath services which proved quite productive in a small-town congregation was having the students in the elementary grades invite their public school teachers to our Teacher Appreciation Sabbath. These students are often the only Jewish children in their classes, or at best among the few, so that having their teachers present became a matter of real pride. The teachers were asked to stand as their names were read and remain standing during a prayer on their behalf. The sermon for that evening dealt with our Jewish respect for teachers and education.

STUDENTS BRING YOUR PARENTS TO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DAY

This program involved having the students create invitations to send home to their parents inviting them to come to the religious school. The title was chosen to grab the parents with a bit of old-fashioned Jewish enticement! The student involvement in creating the invitations, generated excitement and anticipation several weeks ahead of time. The requisite announcements were put in the Temple Bulletin.

The program for the day included parents meeting in the classrooms with the teachers while the students gathered for an assembly-service. After an hour, students went to the classes and parents spent the next hour with the Director of Religious Education in the Sanctuary. Both the students and the parents saw a slide show on a Jewish theme, to give them something they could discuss at home. The parent session with other parents and the Religious School Educator allowed for questions and answers about all aspects of the school program. This opportunity alerted the Educator and the school committees to some potential problems, and parents felt the receptivity and interest in them.

SOME EXAMPLES OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT

1. Seventh grade parents invited to attend a special program on Soviet Jewry, part of the seventh grade curriculum and held during Religious School. The program featured a recently arrived family from Soviet Russia.
2. The Saturday morning following K, 1, 2 Family Friday Night Service, families of these grades were invited to a brief morning service, ate lunch together, and a brief Havdalah Service was conducted. The program was a complete Shabbat experience in miniature.

3. Eighth grade parents were invited to sponsor and participate in a brunch with their children during the regular session of Religious School. The program was a "force choice" exercise dealing with Jewish survival. Divided into mixed groups of adults and children, the participants worked on survival solutions generating arguments and much excitement. All agreed it was a worthwhile experience.
4. A fourth grade family Shabbat experience dealing with the life cycle, a Friday night service apart from the congregation service on the theme of the Shabbat bride and Israel, the groom, and a Shabbat morning service dealing with birth through Confirmation. The Shabbat morning service included family activities. Parents were asked to talk with their children about how they got their names. This was one of the most fruitful parts of the morning, as parents told the related family stories!
5. A fifth grade family potluck supper prior to their participating in a Friday night service.

These are but some of the many one-shot types of programs which can be initiated toward parent-family involvement in religious education. Some programs are to share an experience, while others were designed to create an opportunity for parent-child communications.

Even these one-shot programs can become an educational curriculum if they become part of the calendar year. Established as school year events over the course of time they form the beginnings of a Jewish family life curriculum for families.

Eventually, a co-curricular set of family experiences is created that becomes part of the religious education of the students and their families. This development then locks in sync with the established pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah program and also the Shabbat Evening Family Services.

The programs mentioned were developed as beginnings of what would become a total congregational program of family involvement between the start of religious school and Bar/Bat Mitzvah-Confirmation. These programs were seen as building blocks in a wide-scale systematic approach toward re-establishing the synagogue as a vital, positive resource and experience of family life.

By developing a sequential, but relatively simple and non-demanding, set of parental-family programs, support and involvement will over a time be generated, and parents will come to see the validity of their own family participation.

Such a program could also be seen as a preliminary step toward on-going family educational efforts. Given the growing complexities of single-parent households, two-working-parent households and/or adjustments in work schedules, it may be wise to begin efforts toward flexible offerings that could involve families meeting together outside classrooms. Also, where trained teachers are not available, family educational packages and programs may offer some real possibilities.

How would such a family-oriented educational approach work? What follows is an example of what might be a model of the future in terms of such a family educational course of study. While it covers only a four-week time span, it has potential for expansion. Again, what is presented is but a beginning, so that the example does not seem overwhelming or impractical to the reader given his/her congregational situation.

A family orientation program was devised for a small congregational sixth grade class of seven boys. The parents had been brought in at the end of the previous year because of discipline problems. We decided to try a more positive family approach to begin the new school

year. A letter was sent to the seven sets of parents inviting them to participate in a family program to be held the last hour of Religious School for the first four sessions. Parents were told that they would be active participants and would find out more on the first day of Religious School when they met with the Rabbi for coffee an hour before the program with their sons.

While only four of the seven sets of parents were there the first session, for the next three at least one parent per student participated. At the first session one father grumbled about being there, but by the third was a convert to the program!

During the initial parent session there was discussion about the negative experiences of the past; were they really there to discipline? The parent who was not happy about being there expressed his negativity - he had paid his dues as a child, so why should he be here now? The other parents themselves jumped on him and expressed their interest in being here. The Rabbi responded that it was preferred to have his negativity here than at home, in the classroom personified by the father than acted out by the son!

In the very least these seven families showed support by having at least one parent each participate in the program, investing some of their time even as they asked their sons to invest much of their free time! Beyond this the teacher and the Rabbi were able to observe the family units at work and gain insight into each of the students.

During the orientation session for parents, the format for the family program was outlined, as well as the overall course of study for their sons' class. As part of the social ethics study, the teacher was going to assign a television show. The students would agree to watch a show - it turned out to be a situation comedy - and they would

talk about it. This assignment was intended to spark the interest of the students, and it was felt parents should know why the assignment was given.

As the family session began, each family unit was given a piece of newsprint and crayons. They were instructed to draw first a large Magen David, the Jewish star. Using this as the basic framework, each family was to create a symbol for their family including all family members, hobbies, etc. They were told that these would then be hung in their classroom to make the room theirs!

Because not all parents were there this first time, the assignment was given to finish these family shields at home. The students were then asked to tell the parents about the first session of their class with their new teacher. The bell rang and class ended for the first day.

As the parent-student session began the second week, all seven boys had at least one parent present. Each student was asked to place his family symbol on the wall. He was then to introduce his parent(s) and explain the various parts of his family symbol. By the time the seventh class member was done, everybody had a much fuller understanding of who they were as a class-community.

The parents were then asked to each speak about the importance of his/her son's Jewish education. The sons were then asked to talk about how their time in Religious School could be made more interesting. The students decided that they wanted to huddle by themselves to decide what they could do to police their own behavior. The parents, meanwhile, began to argue about motivation (sugar coating) is real learning.

The Rabbi and teacher were able to learn first-hand about the class and its families. Three of the families were mixed marriages,

and in at least two families the father was hardly around, while in a third he, the father, did not spend much time with the class member who was the youngest of three sons - the other sons being at least six years older. In a fourth family there was a step-father involved. It was important to see the dynamics at work to grasp a direction with the class.

The third session of parents and sons was devoted to a forced choice exercise presented here. As are many such exercises, it is a variation on a variation:

In anticipation of the upcoming destructive nuclear holocaust, the Israeli Government had built a special fallout shelter. There are only eight places within that shelter. The Ministry of Survival has narrowed the list of people to 13. Which of the 13 would you pick to make up the 8 who will be saved?

1. _____ 54-year-old Rabbi
2. _____ 45-year-old Male Business Executive who is a member of a Reform congregation.
3. _____ 60-year-old Male Doctor who donates \$1000 annually to the combined Jewish appeal.
4. _____ 38-year-old Female Hebrew School Teacher who has always dreamed of going to Israel.
5. _____ 13-year-old Boy who has just had a Bar Mitzvah.
6. _____ Mother of the Bar Mitzvah, whose last two years were spent preparing the Bar Mitzvah of her only son.
7. _____ Mr. Rowe, 47, who attends services regularly, but has changed his name from Rosenberg for business purposes.
8. _____ 21-year-old Female College Student who has been involved in radical political activities.
9. _____ 35-year-old Woman, devoted to both family and temple and is president of the Temple Sisterhood.
10. _____ 19-year-old Israeli Sabra, currently serving in the Israeli army.
11. _____ 35-year-old Male who recently left a successful career to become a part of a Hasidic community-submerged in ritual and tradition and love.

12. _____ German-American Male in his late 40's, active political expert and advisor to Government officials.
13. _____ Male Athlete, 22, world-wide admiration for his athletic skills and prowess.

Two groups were formed mixing parents and students together. Each person answered the question by choosing eight of the thirteen. Then each group reached its own consensus. Finally, the results of each group was compared to the other, and the common choices were put on the blackboard, while the others were subject to discussion and negotiated.

The exercise was intended to allow each student and each parent the validity of his or her own opinion - there was no right or wrong answer. The results are different each time, but all the adults were startled when the sons expressed the desire to leave out the young male athlete in favor of the mother of the Bar Mitzvah whose only accomplishment was the Bar Mitzvah of her son! This desire was expressed toward the end of the session and did indicate some real thought by the students whose identities as young male athletes were at stake!

The sense of work well done pervaded the room as the classtime ended. Allowing for each person the group of parents and sons had achieved the goal together of doing the task. Everyone felt that he had learned something.

The fourth session for the parent-son program was devoted to a slide show of a trip to Israel. This experience was tied into the second part of the class curriculum - a study of modern Israel. Those seeing the show were asked to imagine that they were on the trip themselves, visiting Israel as a group. The students in their work with their teacher were planning just such a trip.

This four-week parent involvement program accomplished a great deal and set the stage for a very positive school year. It is but an

life. After our development of family systems thinking, family centered Jewish education, including Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we will now turn to the broader questions about Jewish family life and the synagogue. Within that context these newer developments need to be addressed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PARA-PROFESSIONAL-PARARABBINIC PROGRAM

Moses was very busy managing the affairs of his people. His father-in-law acted the role of management consultant and suggested that he establish a means of responding to the needs of the people. Upon the advice of Yitro, Moses established a series of individuals who shared responsibility for the maintenance of the people.

The contemporary Rabbi is as much a spiritual manager of congregational affairs as he or she is the traditional "teacher". Today's Rabbi is overburdened by the tasks that he or she needs to do, especially if there is any professional sensitivity to the needs of the people.

Certainly one of the tasks of the Rabbi is to follow Yitro's advice and see to the establishment of a group of individuals who can serve as a support system to the Rabbi. In larger congregations this support system is often professional, such as Cantor, Educator, Administrator. Within smaller congregations this support system is usually made up of volunteers.

Within the context of reinvesting in the Jewish family, both in smaller and larger congregations, there is a real need to develop a cadre of group leaders and family educators who can carry out much of the programming discussed earlier in these pages. In the very least, these individuals would work with the Rabbi in developing such programs and, ideally, they would become the group leaders and family life educators.

Rabbi Harold Schulweiss, the pioneer of chaverot and other responses to the human needs of congregants, has apparently gone through three stages within his congregation. The chaverot were initial

responses to the need for more interpersonal contact within larger impersonal congregations. While meeting needs, chaverot opened up another level of needs, and a para-professional counseling training program was established to train congregational members to respond to deeper levels of human contact needs.

The third stage at which he and his congregation have arrived is that of training paraRabbinic individuals whose work would parallel more closely the Rabbis own, rather than being modeled on the more secular and even therapy model counselor trainees. This third stage in itself brings about more of what has been suggested, namely, an integrative process of human relations training and traditional Jewish metaphor.

Chaverot started as completely a lay-oriented, lay-led cluster group process. One of its foremost students, Dr. Bernard Reisman, has adjusted his thinking and is now writing about the need for a more professional hand in guiding them. His suggestion is an individual trained in both Judaic content and group process.

Not only chaverot, but the situational groups and the family educational process as well, begin to demand a new type of congregational volunteer, a volunteer who is both experienced in group process and somewhat knowledgeable in basic Jewish life. This chapter is written toward a program which trains just such individuals.

To properly understand such a program, a brief historical digression about small groups is necessary. In the late 1940's, a German Jewish psychologist, Kurt Lewin, concerned himself with small groups and ethnic identity. At times both combined, and at times these were treated as special, separate fields.

Lewin argued that if individuals felt that ethnic identity hindered their entrance into the broader world, a negative self-image would be established with individuals born into ethnic families. The reversal, of course, was true also. The message was that one's ethnicity properly related to could be of an asset to an individual, and, if not, it would present an identity problem to the individual.

In his group dynamics work, Lewin influenced the development of the use of small groups in attitude changing, studying the impact of groups on the behavior and attitude of their members. At one related conference, group participants had an opportunity to join staff members in evaluating what was going on within the groups. This started a revolution in group dynamics, as participants began to be not only participants but also observers of the group process.

As the role of participants expanded, there developed group workshops devoted to the task of learning how small groups functioned. Within this human relations training process there also developed an emphasis on the individual learning about himself or herself through participation in these small groups.

Workshops also began to be established to train individuals in group leadership. There was the realization developed that degrees and professional training did not necessarily lead to skilled group leadership. Also there was a clear shift from a psychological therapy context to an educational one. If people could learn better communications skills within the small group process, they could become better people.

Teachers, clergy, and sensitive lay people also became part of the population of T-groups, sensitivity training groups, and encounter

groups. Many went out to become group facilitators. Parallel to this was the realization from other fields of endeavor that at times former addicts, alcoholics, or others often did better with groups experiencing problems with those chemicals of dependence. Further, there is more of a trend to develop para-professional fields such as medicine and law.

In the late 1960's-earlier 1970's, a black psychiatrist by the name of Price Cobbs began to practice ethnotherapy in a small group context. This was an effort to have participants understand how their own self-images are affected by racism, how blacks and whites suffer interpersonally and intrapersonally from racist bigotry. A coworker, Dr. Judith Klein, moved ethnotherapy into the Jewish sphere.

Jewish ethnotherapy is a product of both the Kurt Lewin explorative of racial cultural background and of Price Cobbs's work. It is also a response to the need of many Jews to deal constructively with their own Jewish identities.

Kurt Lewin's seminal influences were also felt in the Jewish community when the Reform Movement published its findings, "Reform Is a Verb". Part of the self-evaluation was written questionnaires, and a significant part was a series of human relations exercises. These exercises or "games" were designed to generate data from the participants about their Jewish identities and expectations of congregational life.

These exercises or games were then made available to those Reform congregants who were willing to undergo basic training in their utilization. These laymen were examples of how non-professionals could be used to facilitate group identity discussions. The exercises and others are now readily available and listed in the Bibliography.

For several years I was responsible for the training of my religious school faculty. It was often necessary to train Jewishly knowledgeable individuals in methodology and trained teachers in Jewish materials. A large part of the training was in putting the Jewish content into experiences students could understand. By creating such experiences, students could gain insight into their own lives, as well as a deeper understanding of the text material.

The teachers were also given an introduction into group dynamics, seeing the class as a small group. My experience in working with curriculum development, teacher training, and the application of small group theory to the religious school classroom has influenced my own thinking about training laymen for adult group leadership and family educator training.

What is proposed here is a two-year training program designed to prepare individuals for group leadership by experiencing their own growth process. It is sequential and developmental both in experience and intellectual content. Participants are involved in ongoing evaluation by themselves, their fellow group members, and those doing the training.

The first segment of the program, the first year, involves the trainees in the basic groups and group experience, along with reading assignments in related areas. The nature of these readings has to do with the function of the synagogue and its possible future.

Phase One of the first year is a basic encounter group in which participants experience what being a group member is all about. There is an emphasis on dealing with relatively unstructured group process and on interpersonal communications. Basic ground rules of group

membership are taught and learned. (The "Reform Is a Verb" exercise sequence is usable here.)

Phase Two of the first year is an exploration of the creation and Garden of Eden stories using experiential techniques, imagination, fantasy, and role playing. This is an experience in the combining of group process and specific content material. Some aspects of this phase were present in the previous chapter.

The third phase of the first year is a Life Planning Workshop. The design and material are intended to provide a structured exploration of participants past and present and assist them in accepting responsibility for themselves. It is a deliberate use of Jewish metaphor. The material will be published separately.

By the end of the first year sequence, the participants will experience their own lives in a new light. They will have also gained appreciation for the use of Jewish tradition in facilitating human growth. The format of the training maximizes the learning experience about human nature.

Built into the program at one or several points should be a session or two with the participants and their spouses. The purpose of this is two-fold. Firstly, these would be learning experiences in couples communications. Secondly, as the participants experience much growth in themselves, there are necessary adjustments in their own interpersonal relationships. In a way these sessions are safeguards.

It would also be advisable to create family experiences within this first year time frame for very similar reasons. This program should avoid the plague of other congregational activities which can be done at great expense to the family!

has made the reader think about the establishment of such a program within his or her congregational context.

Even the most capable, competent, sensitive, and Jewishly knowledgeable Rabbi cannot be in all places at all times for all people. Knowing this, I have set out to study those areas, master those skills, and develop those techniques and programs which would maximize my own ability to touch members of my congregation.

What is described within these pages is the result of my own experience and training with groups, with marital and family counseling seminars, and organizational development courses. Rabbis without such background will find that people with this type of training exist within their community, whether the Jewish or the secular community.

Each congregation will have its own needs to fulfill with such a program, and each Rabbi his or her own emphasis and concerns. Some would be fortunate to find within its own ranks professionals in the related fields to direct, guide and perhaps even conduct the training program.

The program could also be done, when appropriate, in conjunction with other Jewish congregations or, when necessary, with some area churches. I have had the good fortune of being able to work with a group in a local Methodist church that I have taken through the first year program as outlined above.

Another aspect of such a training program is the spin-offs possible for other congregational members. A variety of lectures and informational programs that are part of the training process could also be opened to the congregation. This would accomplish not only the sharing of information but also indicating to the congregation the extent and scope of the training process.

An example of such a program for trainees but open to the public is one I organized for my local Council of Churches on "The Sandwiched Generation - Raising Children and Dealing With Aging Parents". Part One involved school principals in a discussion of "Issues Facing Children In Schools". Planned Parenthood and the local drug treatment center personnel discussed "Can Sex Education Solve Drug Abuse?".

Part Two of the program dealt with "Death, Dying, and Family Response", a presentation by a minister whose graduate training was in this field. It also involved staff members from the local Office on the Aging talking on "Coping With Changes In the Older Person".

The congregational Rabbi must be an integral part of the thinking, planning, and establishment of the training program and human growth group program. For those Rabbis whose inclinations are more in a scholarly direction, such involvement might be along the lines suggested below, which would be a segment of the life cycle phase of the training and a distinct unit of study for adult education.

"THE JEW AND THE ADULT LIFE CYCLE"

The book Passages has called popular attention to the phenomena of the adult life cycle which follows the transition from birth, childhood, and adolescence to become an "adult". This course is intended to be a Jewish response by following a particular individual through the adult life cycle.

King Solomon, according to Rabbinic tradition, was the author of Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Kohelleth. While modern scholarship discounts the Solomonic authorship, the tradition is a useful hypothesis for our study. Song of Songs is said to be Solomon's youthful tribute to love, Proverbs the wisdom of middle age, and Kohelleth the bitter reminiscences of Solomon as an old man.

Through examination of the Biblical background of Solomon, and each of the three books attributed to Solomon, we test out whether Solomon is an accurate model of the passages of the adult life cycle.

The sessions will be during the Sabbath adult education series offered January through April. The first session will be on the Biblical Solomon, son of David and Bathsheba. The second session will concentrate on the Song of Songs. The third session will be on Proverbs. The fourth session will deal with Kohelleth.

Each session will also have some attention paid to the background to the texts as developed through modern scholarship."

What has been outlined in these pages has been a total Jewish educational process that is first family oriented through Bar/Bat Mitzvah and then adult human growth oriented afterwards. Many religious schools have teacher training classes for its own graduates, and the adult education curriculum suggested herein also has such a regenerative aspect.

The totality of the curriculum which is written about in this book is ambitious but highly practical and pragmatic. All of the details cannot be and should not be put forth herein. As Kurt Lewin is credited with saying, there is nothing as practical as a good idea.

The application of the material and theories of family education and adult human growth will be a significant step in congregational renewal and assuring the future of the congregation as a vibrant entity. The total program touches people where they live and invites them back into services and other "traditional" congregational functions.

As is suggested by the title of this book, what is proposed is the "reinvesting in the Jewish family". Such reinvesting requires effort, time and energy, but will pay the dividends of a fuller

personal involvement by more and more congregational members. Contrary to most sermonics, the congregation is a service center and must be. If we respect the sanctity of the individual, each must be "serviced" where he or she is!

If our message is non-receptivity, non-availability, individuals will continue to turn to physicians, psychiatrists-psychologists, growth centers, ESP, cults, and other people and places which do open themselves to the plight of the human condition.

If, on the other hand, we open ourselves to the real human needs of our congregants, we will strengthen their commitments and our attractiveness both to other Jews who might presently be uncommitted or alienated.

Many congregations and national Jewish organizations have developed fine position papers and program suggestions for dealing with the distinct issues of cults, aging, singles and single parents, family education, and exploring issues of Jewish identity. What is proposed here is but the gathering of all these efforts into a total systematic congregational educational program. By establishing such a program, congregations will create an energy source for its own exciting future. Theoretically, such a program would take about five years to reach a certain level of maturity but also would begin to bear fruit almost from day one.

CHAPTER SIX

HUMAN GROWTH GROUPS AND PROGRAMS

A folder in my filing cabinet is getting thicker each month as clippings from Jewish congregational bulletins are placed into it. The folder is labeled, "Life Skills Coping Programs". The following are but some of the offerings:

- "Life Crises - A Jewish Perspective"
- "Coping With Life"
- "Discovering Your Own Uniqueness"
- "Coping With Parenthood"
- "Dealing With Aging and Aging Parents"
- "Loss - Death and Dying, Life and Living"
- "Problems With the Prince and Princess - Our Children"
- "Sexuality, Male and Female"
- "Dynamics of Separation and Divorce"
- "The Single Parent Family"
- "Chemical Dependence - the Family Disease"
- "Women and Stress"
- "The Courage To Be" - a high school retreat

Many of the offerings listed in congregational bulletins are one-shot lectures or single presentations within a series. There are, however, a growing number of congregations beginning to offer small groups in ongoing programs, and several congregations not only have established counseling center programs but also are beginning to train their own lay members to staff these programs.

Of the phenomena which bring more and more people to seek these lectures, workshop experience, and counseling, the psychologist, Carl Rogers, writes:

"In our affluent society the individual's survival needs are satisfied. For the first time, he is freed to become aware of his isolation, aware of his alienation, aware of the fact that he is, during most of his life, a role interacting with other roles, a mask meeting other masks....so he is seeking, with great determination and inventiveness, ways of modifying this existential loneliness."

Our understanding of the human life cycle is growing as we begin to see that there are what are being called "predictable crises of adult life". Each of these life stages requires a reexploration of

personal identity, and along with personal identity, relational or interpersonal identity. From such popularizations as Gail Sheehy's Passages, we are becoming more aware that adult life does not mean living happily ever after.

From a variety of sources we are also learning a great deal about how we are affected by stress and change. For example, a study of sick bay on a Navy ship indicated a high correlation between sickness and changes that had occurred during the previous six months. The change need not have been negative.

Just as we need to examine our real responses to families, we need also examine our concept of the role of the synagogue in our lives. Such examination has led Rabbi Harold Schulweiss to write:

"The synagogue could become the most important therapeutic institution imaginable. But that requires a radical change in the understanding of what is in the proper ken of the synagogue....If we can say there are problems that we have not been attending to, such as existential aloneness, single parenthood, a tremendous increase in divorce, the home which has become a pathogenic institution; and if we can come to understand that it is the synagogue's function to deal with these new kinds of psychological problems, then loneliness, and the rest can be, oddly enough, an opportunity."

In thinking about the end of the century, Carl Rogers ventures this view: "...Religion, to the extent that the term is used, will consist of tentatively held hypotheses which are lived out and corrected in the interpersonal world. Groups, probably much smaller than present day congregations, will wrestle with the ethical and moral and philosophical questions which are posed by the rapidly changing world."

More and more people are beginning to take part in small group activities. Rogers writes: "The individual will forge, with the support of the group, the stance he will take in the universe - a stance which he cannot regard as final because more data will continually be coming in."

Such small groups, "probably much smaller than present day congregations", have already been formed within congregations. Chaverot are family clusters, extended families, or simply collections of several families who get together for social, cultural and/or religious ceremonial purposes. Within these chaverot, members begin to take responsibility for their own Jewishness.

Bernard Reisman wrote an excellent study of the chaverot movement, so a discussion of them is not necessary here. Rabbi Harold Schulweiss has summarized the real needs that are met by these chaverot:

"The primary task on the agenda of the synagogue is the humanization and personalization of the temple. To overcome the interpersonal irrelevance of synagogue affiliation is a task prior to believing and ritual behaving. To experience true belonging is an imperative prerequisite for the cultivation of religious and moral sensibilities."

Chaverot provide a personal sense of belonging, interpersonal contact with a larger somewhat impersonal congregational context. Schulweiss expands on this:

"I see one of the major functions of the synagogue to be that of shadchan - bringing together separate, lonely, parties into chaverot...comprised of...families who have agreed to meet together at least once a month to learn together, to celebrate together, and hopefully to form some surrogate for the eroded extended family."

In what follows I propose that there is another "shadchan" or matchmaking function of the synagogue, and that is bringing together individuals whose situations in life are similar. Beyond the traditional organization of religious school, youth group, sisterhood and men's club, we need to think about singles, single parents, golden agers, young divorced individuals, widows and widowers, women seeking new self-awareness, and middle aged couples dealing with both growing children and aging parents.

Dr. Herbert Gerjuoy has written about what he has come to call "situational grouping". He explains his rationale for such gatherings

of individuals facing like experience:

"A man required to adapt to a new life situation loses some of his basis for self-esteem. He begins to doubt his own abilities. If we bring him together with others who are moving through the same experience, people he can identify with and respect, we can strengthen him. The members of the group come to share, even if briefly, some sense of identity. They see their problems more objectively; they trade useful ideas and insights; most important, they suggest future alternatives for one another."

The establishment of the base of operating of such groups within a congregational setting is first of all a response to Rabbi Schulweiss's observation, "To overcome the interpersonal irrelevance of synagogue affiliation is a task prior to believing and ritual behavior." Another Rabbi expressed it in the following words:

"Before men and women can gain inspiration and courage from the sanctuary for living, they must be able to give expression to their innermost fears, anxieties, disappointments, and misgivings of life."

The question which faces us is whether we are willing to establish within our congregational settings trustworthy environments in which individuals can meet with others "to give expression to their innermost fears, anxieties, disappointments, and misgivings of life." The question strikes to the very basis of synagogue life!

A family therapist, Dr. Barbara Krasner, who is a keen observer of Jewish congregational life, has written the following regarding the question of congregational renewal and relevance:

"Neither haverot nor strobe lights nor upbeat liturgies nor the challenge of bioethics nor the inclusion of women into more aspects of religious participation nor greater synagogue attendance nor fuller ritual observance in themselves begin to address the failure of trust within Jewish communal life which, in the first instance, I ascribe to a breakdown of trustworthiness in the family."

Earlier, the more totally family-oriented programs within congregations were outlined. Here we need to counter what Dr. Krasner

describes as "the synagogue's inability to find ways to teach the context and content of trust-building." Among the questions that are involved for the individual are "what in this world is worthy of trust and to what am I entitled as a human being?"

The synagogue has not only the question of response to membership to contend with, but also a fundamental theological one - can we continue to speak of the sanctity of the individual without providing an interpersonal sanctuary in which to experience it!

Related to this last issue is also the question of what Judaism has to offer our congregants. It is not enough for us merely to house/sponsor and follow through with group activities. What we need to do is develop the relevant Judaic materials for use in these groups.

Through combining group process with appropriate Jewish content we can not only acknowledge the sanctity of the individual, but also provide some specific resources for their personal growth and grappling with their situational existence. It is this two-fold process that the synagogue can contribute to its members.

It would be useful to present two examples of small groups or human growth groups. The first was an interpersonal communications workshop given for women who were parents of students in the congregational Religious School. Held during the day, the workshop was time limited to women. Essentially the discussions dealt with the conflict these women felt between the needs of their families and their own needs to grow as people.

The group attracted some women who had previously been quite vocal in their criticism of the school. As the congregational school and its group process trained director provided a proper setting for their needs, the criticism changed to appreciation and cooperation.

By acknowledging the validity of their needs for interpersonal relevance, the group gave these women a sense of belonging.

This group was interesting from another standpoint. Three women eventually decided to divorce their spouses. The congregational-sponsored group did not cause these divorces, but did allow the women sanctuary to discover their own uniqueness. It became clear to them through the group that they were not able to achieve a real sense of kiddushin with their husbands, a real sense of interpersonal support for each other's sanctity. The other women in the group, however, learned how to accept responsibility for themselves and their own needs without blaming their husbands.

The experience was one of feeling related to by the congregation through its Rabbi-Educator. There was also a positive attitude change in many of the children of these women to both the congregation and its educational process.

The other group that can be illustrative of the human growth process is that of a group that used the Book of Genesis as its context. Through the use of imagery, trial identification, and other Gestalt therapy techniques, the group members related to the creation and Garden of Eden accounts.

One woman participant found it easy to speak as if she were the water of creation, free flowing and formless. When asked to imagine herself as an animal, she saw herself as an eagle flying gracefully through the sky. But when asked to choose a name for herself, she picked Joshua. Over a period of weeks, this woman had changed her self-image from formless water to a more definite, self-assured and strong Joshua!

One of the contributing factors in this process was the session in which the group conducted an experiment based on the verse, "and

God saw that it was very good", a reference to the creation of the human being. Each member of the group was the beneficiary of the other members' giving them positive comments about themselves. This technique, known as "Strength Bombardment", did much to build up the self-esteem of the members, but also to teach the meaning of being created in the image of God.

Members of the first group received affirmation of their sanctity as distinct human beings within a congregational setting. Members of the second group received that plus the reinforcement of a Jewish tradition which could serve as a resource in their lives.

There is to a certain extent a continuum which is suggested here, a sequence from dealing with personal identity issues within a Jewish setting to dealing with identity with a Jewish metaphorical context, both as important aspects of an educational process. As I have written in another context, ours is the dual task "of assisting the individual Jew to develop a positive self-image of himself or herself as a member of the Jewish people, and that of providing the individual with specific knowledge of his resources of our historical experience which he or she might find useful tools toward further self-discovery."

While there is a growing literature dealing with the dynamics of small groups, I would like to share some of my own observations. As a Rabbinical student, I studied the relationship between human relations and Jewish worship, specifically, the question of how to establish a community within the worship service. Now I see that efforts must be made to recreate community within the congregation.

For several years I worked to create a sense of community within religious school classes. Teachers were encouraged to use the energies of the class members to develop constructive interaction, rather than

to use more authoritarian methods. It has been suggested that an experience is worth a thousand words. An experience in community or human relations is worth many lectures or sermons.

Our tradition suggests, "Who is truly wise - he who can learn from all other individuals". The group process, whether in a religious school class or adult human growth group, is an experience of this Rabbinic adage. Through the facilitating efforts of a group leader, each member becomes a teacher-learner.

This process is exemplified by the experience used to teach "and God saw it was very good". By having each member of the group contribute positive feedback to each other, the individuals received the benefit of many teachers. All the participants also learned the value of constructive communication, an experience in relational ethics.

The small group process for me is a human relations laboratory in which I ask participants to observe their own human behavior. They are encouraged to experiment with new behavior patterns. The talkative one is asked to try silence, and the silent one to attempt to participate more. The group becomes a personification of the sanctuary, a safe place in which to explore the self, to experience the possibilities contained in being created in the Divine image.

My emphasis is not on therapy, but on human growth. Therapy is a medical concept. An example: a woman in one group became aware of her ambivalent feelings about her seriously ill husband. She discovered her need to talk about what the illness was doing to her, how she suffered as well. By listening to her, and sharing with her their own experiences with ill spouses or parents, the group members not only

assured her that her reactions were healthy, but were able to express their own guarded secrets.

Neither this woman nor the group members were mentally ill, or in need of therapy, but simply needed to talk about their experience relating to chronically ill spouses or parents. How does one deal with the resentment caused by having to worry and care about the other no matter how much love there is. This is not a matter of therapy, but of accepting one's life situation.

It is quite an experience to discover that some of our real life issues are also those of others. While each of us deal with life on our own, it is comforting to be able to know that we are not alone. In one-to-one counseling, such an insight must be taken in faith. In a group, I often ask group members if "they ever felt that way!" No matter what the subject, there is usually quite a response.

Have you ever noticed what happens when a young child falls down? There is usually a pause, a pregnant moment during which the child gauges parental reaction. If the parent sends messages of being upset, the child starts to cry and scream. If the parent responds more calmly, the child reacts more calmly as well. The parallel is the question of therapy versus personal growth.

There is still by and large a climate of sickness - of crying and screaming - in relation to the problems of life. Admission of problems is tantamount to admitting the need for therapy. What a difference if we can create a climate of human growth and life as a learning experience.

A trial identification with the Tree of Knowledge yielded the following realization: Members of the group were able to accept that they have knowledge within them of both good and evil. Acceptance of

their own awareness, they can begin to utilize their awareness to create a better, fuller life for themselves.

Through such groups, members of our congregations learn through experience about the Jewish teachings about life and the sanctity of the individual. The synagogue becomes a real resource in their lives rather than the financial burden it appears to be for many.

In the next chapter, a program is outlined for the training of individuals of congregational members to take responsibility for such groups and programs as outlined here. At this point, however, it is suggested that group leaders are available within the community. Many groups offered within congregations are now led by Jewish Family Service staff members, private practitioners, or college instructors.

What follows are but examples of the types of group offerings that can be established within a congregational setting. The details are not spelled out here, only the conceptual framework is put forth:

1. Interpersonal Communications Workshop

An exploration of how we communicate with each other and the significant individuals in our lives. Participants are encouraged to experience the interpersonal communications process as it occurs within the group and to experiment with more constructive ways of communicating with others.

2. Discovering Your Own Uniqueness

Each participant will be encouraged to discover his or her own uniqueness within the group setting. By experiencing the process of learning responsibility for one's own life, the participants begin to shape their own lives.

3. Basic Encounter Group

What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be a

member of a community? This is an experience in discovering for oneself the answer to these questions. Participants learn first hand about being a member of a group of interacting individuals. The group is an environment in which to explore new ways of being.

4. Jewish Experiential Workshop

A series of structured experiences intended to facilitate exploration of Jewish identity. Participants are asked to explore their own Jewish potentials and the blocks that prevent them from deriving more from their Jewishness.

5. Exploring Ourselves Through Genesis

The Biblical text of the Book of Genesis is used as a resource for self-discovery. Imagination, role playing, and other techniques are taught as ways of experiencing the text and being enriched by the scriptural teachings.

6. To L.I.F.E. - Le Chayim - A Life-Planning Workshop

Living In the Future Effectively is the theme of this workshop in which participants learn to take more responsibility for their own lives. Through a series of structured questions and experiences, each person examines what he or she really wants out of life and ways of getting past the obstacles we may have placed in our own paths.

7. Couples Communications Workshop

We are not always able to make ourselves heard by our spouses. Through a series of experiments in communications, we learn how to enrich our marital relationship and its problem-solving ability.

8. The Sandwiched Generation

Being faced with growing children on the one hand and aging parents on the other is not easy. Participants are encouraged to explore their reactions to this "sandwiched" situation and their options for coping with it.

9. Being a Single Parent Is An Opportunity

Single parents can become a support group for each other without replicating the "dating scene". Single parents share with each other their own learnings and insights and might plan communal activities for themselves and their children. Divorcing or separating parents are encouraged to become part of this group to gain from the experience of those who have "been there".

10. Becoming Jewish

The factual knowledge required for Jewish naturalization is combined with an awareness of the emotional process involved in acceptance of a new life identity. Participants are encouraged to explore what they are experiencing as they contemplate converting to Judaism and giving up their previous loyalties.

11. Jewish Worship As an Experience In Community

This group is intended for those individuals who would like to get more out of the Jewish worship experience. Participants will explore the structure of the service and those issues, such as belief, language and others, which block our ability to feel part of the worshiping community. The group will evolve a Jewish worship format which is responsive to its own needs and might invite others to experience it as well.

12. Family Communications Workshop

An opportunity for several families to explore how they communicate and how they might discover new ways of being with each other. The emphasis will be on learning how to have fun together!

These are but some of the possibilities that are suggested by way of development of an adult Human Growth Group Program within a congregational setting. The next chapter will discuss the establishment of such a program and the training of individuals to take responsibility for its operation. What was presented here is the concept of and some ideas pertaining to the synagogue as a human growth center.

REINVESTING IN THE JEWISH FAMILY

OUTLINE

- 1.. One Rabbi's Agenda
2. But First a Sermon - The Family Crucible
3. Now the Theory - The Family As a Communications System
4. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah As a Creative Response To a Family Crisis -
a programmatic family preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah
5. Making Jewish Families Possible - Beginning
6. Adult Human Growth Groups and Programs
7. The Development of a Para-Professional, Para-Rabbinic Program -
to train facilitators to assume responsibility for these programs

Rabbi Nicolas L. Behrmann