

What Does a Men's Club Do?

- **Offer Programming for Men**
- **Support Congregational Youth Financially and Through Programs**
- **Enhance Jewish Observance at the Synagogue and at Home**
- **Increase Involvement in the Jewish Community**
- **Work on and Expand Projects to Support the Congregation**
- **Create Camaraderie and Ruach**
- **Set a Positive Example for Your Children**
- **Provide Social and Recreational Activities**
- **Enhance an Understanding of World Jewry and its Problems**

So You Want to Start a Men's Club!

Although a Men's Club, by its very name, is an organization centered around the men of a congregation and their needs and interests, there are other people in the congregation who are key to getting things started. Probably the most important of these is the synagogue clergy. While much of your programming might ultimately be in the social and recreational realm, it is important that you show your clergy how the Men's Club will assist them by providing more committed men for various synagogue activities.

You should also discuss the formation of a Men's Club with your congregation's Executive Director, the Education Director, and the Youth Director. All of these people will have a stake in what your Men's Club will be doing, so it doesn't hurt to get them on your team from the start. The Federation of Jewish Men's Club's Executive Director and our Chairman of Club Services will be glad to talk to you and your rabbi to explain what a Men's Club can do.

Next, you need to have a small cadre of men, perhaps a few of your friends, who share your feelings about forming a Men's Club. These men will be able to help you get things started and to brainstorm on getting your first few events off the ground.

With the support of congregational clergy and a few other men, you will be well on your way to starting a Men's Club.

Getting the Word Out

It's time to spread the enthusiasm for a Men's Club to the rest of the men in your congregation by having your first activity. Remember that many of the attendees will not know each other, so make it an event that men will feel comfortable attending. Avoid heavy topics and fundraising but do something a little out of the ordinary. You want to impress upon people that your Men's Club will be a breath of fresh air and will be filling a void in congregational activities. You might consider building the activity around food or a recreational activity. Regardless of what event you decide on, it is very helpful for the clergy to attend and lend support.

To expand your base beyond your initial committee, enlist the rabbi to make phone calls to 10 or 15 men in the congregation who the two of you think are real leaders in the synagogue. This will ensure that you have a good turnout of enthusiastic men at your first event. Send invitation letters to the rest of the congregation. Talk to men at Shabbat services. Pass out flyers when parents drop off their kids for Religious School. And ask the rabbi to promote your opening activity from the *bimah*. You might even ask the Sisterhood President to hand out flyers at a Sisterhood function. Usually, if the wife is involved in Sisterhood, the husband is also involved in the Men's Club.

Adding the Bells & Whistles

After one or two of these introductory events, you're ready to put things together a little more formally. Take no more than eight of the men who have shown a lot of interest thus far and make them the Men's Club's steering committee.

Let this committee brainstorm about possible activities your Men's Club might offer. Be sure to have a variety that includes some that are religious-oriented, others that involve community service, and some that are social or recreational. Send this list to everyone who attended one of your introductory programs and ask them to indicate which activities they would be more likely to attend and which they would work on. Better yet, call them on the telephone!

Organizational Meeting. Schedule a meeting to draw up the organizational structure of the Men's Club. By this time, one of our FJMC officers or consultants will have contacted you. Make sure that you consult with him before your first meeting to get some ideas. You may even want to invite him to attend your opening meeting. We have sent you a sample of a Men's Club by-laws. This is for illustrative purposes only. Some clubs start out a little looser and adopt by-laws later. Some clubs adopt them right away.

Officers. At a minimum, you will need a president and a treasurer. Most clubs have 3-5 additional officers. The major areas that should have an officer heading them are

programming, membership, religious affairs, community service, and communications, though the importance of these aspects varies from club to club. Try to include men from different age groups and diverse demographics because you will want to appeal to the widest group of men possible.

Dues. Yes, few things in life are free. It will probably be necessary to talk about dues, and \$25 a year is probably just fine to start off with. Once you have things going, you might want to consider having a fundraiser, and many clubs do charge some kind of admission to programs to cover the cost of food.

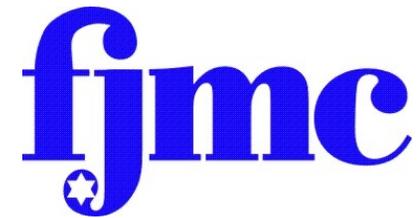
Program Schedule. Put together a program schedule for the year but don't overload it. Make sure that you have the personnel and the interest to run a program before you schedule it. And be sure that it is well advertised.

You're a Men's Club!

Your club will be whatever your membership wants it to be. If you have men who are interested in one facet but not others, don't fret. This is not a sign of failure; this is a sign of diversity. Just go with the flow.

Remember that FJMC officers and consultants are available to assist you every step of the way! We look forward to welcoming you and your men into our family. So, go to work and enjoy the *ruach* you are about to awaken in your congregation.

A GUIDE TO FORMING A MEN'S CLUB



**Federation of Jewish
Men's Clubs, Inc.**

475 Riverside Dr., Suite 832
New York, NY 10115-0022
USA

Tel: 212-749-8100
Fax: 212-316-4271

E-Mail:
International@FJMC.org