

SESSION

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# Cultivating a Culture of Generosity

February • Purim



**JOURNEY OF GROWTH**  
Exploring Jewish Values  
and Inspiring Action

In partnership with



Ministry for Diaspora Affairs  
and Combating Antisemitism

This session  
was created in  
collaboration with



**Jewish  
Federations**  
of North America

## VALUE

# Generosity

## *Chesed v'Tzedakah*

This session is about more than fundraising. **Rooted in the Jewish Federations of North America's (JFNA) teaching on cultivating a culture of philanthropy, it's an invitation to think about generosity as something built on relationships.** With Purim as our backdrop, we'll explore how acts of giving like *mishloach manot* (food gifts), and *matanot la'evyonim* (gifts to those in need), can transform celebration into connection, and connection into commitment. Like Esther, we're called to speak up for our values and invite others to join us in something meaningful.

This session isn't about becoming fundraisers. It's about shifting our mindset from scarcity to possibility, and about asking a new question: ***Who can I invite into this vision with me?***



## TIMELINE: 90 MIN

BEGIN WITH INTENTION | 5 MIN

FRAME THE SESSION | 5 MIN

GROUP CONVERSATION | 15 MIN

CORE CONCEPTS IN MOTION | 15 MIN

DEBRIEF 1: REFLECTIONS | 10 MIN

THE POWER OF 90% | 20 MIN

DEBRIEF 2: INSIGHTS & APPLICATION  
| 10 MIN

BRING YOUR LEARNING HOME | 5 MIN

END WITH MEANING | 5 MIN



## WHO FACILITATES THE SESSION

This session can be led by the Community Leader, by volunteer participants, or as a shared effort between the two. The most important thing is that the session feels **participatory, warm, and grounded**. Important things to remember as the facilitator:

- Keep time and help move the group through each section.
- Draw on your own experience and voice, even if you don't have experience with fundraising.



## MATERIALS

- Large posters to make the "5 Pillars" signs, each with its definition. (See p. 15)
- Sticky notes and markers



## FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- **Read** through the entire session outline and familiarize yourself with the flow.
- **Review** the five pillars of a culture of philanthropy and their definitions.
- **Prepare** pillar posters (see p. 15) and gather materials in advance.
- **Ensure** you're familiar with the 90% Rule. See p. 16-17.



## VIDEO GUIDE

Want a helping hand (and heart) from Momentum Educators on how to facilitate this session? Follow this QR code to access the [training video](#) library:



## PART I

**Begin with Intention**

5 MIN

Looking for ways to start your session with purpose?

Turn to **Begin with Intention** on p. 4 for simple, meaningful ideas to open your gathering with presence, connection, and shared energy.



## PART II

**Frame the Session**

5 MIN

This session invites us to explore what it takes to nurture a culture of philanthropy, a concept drawn from JFNA's teachings that centers connection and celebration around giving. Through the lens of Purim, we'll reflect on fostering environments of generosity and encouraging others to give and engage with purpose.

**Introduce the core idea:**

True philanthropy takes generosity. Not just any generosity, but a generosity infused with courage and heart. This special kind of philanthropy requires the sacred willingness to share your story, to build relationships rooted in trust and purpose, inviting others to make dreams happen through generosity. On Purim, we remember Esther, who embodied this when she invited others to join her in a three-day fast, and stepped forward with quiet strength, changing the course of our people's future. Like her, we each have moments when we're called to step forward and act with purpose and heart. Generosity isn't just financial; it's about creating a culture of belonging, where giving becomes a shared expression of care, connection, and commitment.

**OPTIONAL:** *Need a quick Purim refresher? Read this short synopsis aloud together to ground your group in the story and its themes.*

The story of Purim, told in the Book of Esther, unfolds in ancient Persia under King Ahasuerus. Esther, a young Jewish woman, is chosen as queen, but she keeps her identity hidden. When Haman, the king's advisor, plots to destroy the Jewish people, Esther's cousin Mordechai urges her to act. Risking her life, Esther courageously approaches King Ahasuerus to speak up for her people. Her bravery, paired with the community's fasting, prayer, and solidarity, leads to Haman's downfall and the Jews' survival. Purim reminds us that courage, collective responsibility, and acts of generosity, whether time, presence, or resources, can change the course of history.





### PART III

## Group Conversation



15 MIN

**Move into small group conversation.** If your group has 8 or fewer people, you can stay together as one group. If you're in a larger group, divide into smaller groups of 3–4 to ensure everyone has time to share.

**You will choose from two prompts.** Each one highlights a different kind of courage and generosity. Read both options aloud and decide which one your group wants to explore:

- **Prompt 1: Giving with Courage**

Share a time when giving, whether of your time, resources, energy, love, or wisdom, required courage. What made it hard, and what moved you to act anyway?

- **Prompt 2: The Generosity of Invitation**

Share an experience that changed your life because someone generously invited you to be part of something meaningful. Who invited you into that experience, and how did they ask? What was it about their invitation that compelled you to say yes?

**Be mindful of time and make space for everyone's voice.**

**Transition:** As we move from personal stories into broader concepts of communal giving, let's turn to Purim. In Esther 9:19, we read that the holiday was first celebrated as “a day of happiness, of feasting and festivity, and of sending one another good things to eat.” But a few verses later, Esther and Mordechai formalize Purim for future generations as “days of feasting and happiness, and for sending one another good things to eat, **and giving gifts to the poor**” (Esther 9:20–22).

The act of giving, especially to those in need, transforms a celebration from a day of joy into a meaningful, lasting Jewish practice. On Purim, the gifts to the poor are given quietly, often anonymously, reminding us that generosity is not about recognition, but responsibility. **This layer of purpose and generosity makes Purim a model for how we pass values forward through time: by turning joy into justice, and celebration into an act of care for others.**

### PART IV

## Core Concepts in Motion



15 MIN

Before we can ask others to give, we need to create the kind of environment where giving feels natural, valued, and shared. JFNA identifies five key pillars that make up a true culture of philanthropy: **Belonging, Transparency, Empowerment, Collaboration, and Celebration.**

Each one helps build a space where generosity can thrive as an expression of connection and care. In this next activity, we'll get up, move around, and reflect on how these values show up in our community, and where we still have room to grow.

**Invite participants to visit five different stations, each representing one of the pillars, and to engage with two guiding questions:**

- Where do I already see this happening in our community?
- Where is there room to grow and how might I contribute to such growth?



## Step 1: Set the Space

Post five large signs around the room, one for each of the following pillars. Include these brief definitions:

### 1. BELONGING

People feel genuinely welcomed, seen, and included. They experience community as a place where they matter.

### 2. TRANSPARENCY

People trust your process. Communication is open, honest, and clear. Decisions and priorities are shared, not hidden.

### 3. EMPOWERMENT

People see themselves as part of the mission. They feel invited to contribute in *meaningful* ways and believe their voice makes a difference.

### 4. COLLABORATION

People feel they're in it together: working toward common goals, with a spirit of partnership and shared ownership.

### 5. CELEBRATION

People feel appreciated. Contributions are recognized, milestones are honored, and generosity is uplifted with joy.

## Step 2: Move + Reflect + Write or Draw

Circulate around the room, stop at each station, and reflect on:

- Where do I already see this happening in our community?
- Where is there room to grow?

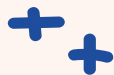
**Write or draw your reflections on sticky notes or directly on the poster paper**, keeping in mind that others will be reading and viewing your contributions. Use clear writing, thoughtful images, or meaningful words and symbols to express your ideas. You can also comment on what others in the group have written or drawn.

PART V

## Debrief 1: Reflections



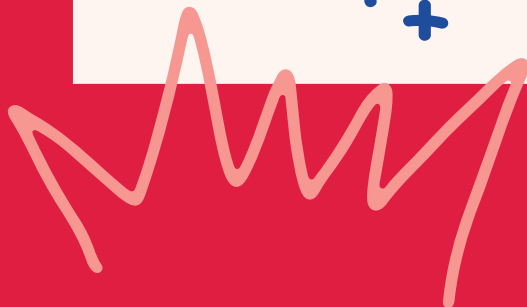
10 MIN



Return to the full group and guide a conversation using these questions:

- Which pillar feels strongest in our community?
- Which one revealed the biggest opportunity for growth?
- Did anything surprise you about what others shared or wrote?

Encourage participants to listen for patterns and name challenges honestly.



PART VI

## The Power of 90%



20 MIN

Ninety percent of successful giving happens before the ask. Like Esther, who prepared carefully before approaching the king, preparing for meaningful giving is not only about spiritual readiness, but making a plan for emotional readiness, clarity, and relationships. **The 90% Rule reflects the preparation that gives our acts of generosity their power.**

Let's explore four practices that help set the emotional and relational groundwork for meaningful giving and then apply them to real-world scenarios.

### Step 1: Learn

5 MIN

#### SPARK THE HEART

Before any ask is made, focus on creating emotional resonance. Use stories, expressions of gratitude, shared values, and reflection to begin imagining how you will build a mood that opens the heart. What will make your future audience feel inspired, seen, and connected? People give when they feel something. This is about planning how to kindle that emotional spark before ever mentioning a gift.

#### CLARIFY THE ASK (IN ADVANCE)

Think ahead: what exactly will you be asking for? Whether it's a donation, a volunteer commitment, or help sharing a message, your planning now should focus on how you'll make that ask clear, respectful, and fitting a purpose important to those you'll be addressing. People are more likely to say "yes" when they feel the request is thoughtful and aligned with *their* values.

#### NAME THE TENSION

Fundraising is often uncomfortable for both the asker and the asked. As you prepare, think about how you'll acknowledge this tension. What fears or hesitations might surface? How can you normalize them and create space for honesty and even humor? Planning for this step builds trust and helps you model openness before the moment of the ask.

#### WALK THEM IN

Don't plan to make an ask and then disappear. Instead, strategize now about how you'll accompany people, how you'll show what you're inviting them into is a meaningful relationship, not a transaction. People are more likely to respond generously when they sense they're joining something bigger, and their role in it matters. Prepare now to show how you'll continue walking with them after the ask.



## Step 2: Apply

15 MIN

*Let's apply what we've learned by working through real-life scenarios using the four practices of the 90% Rule. Go around the room and assign yourselves a letter in repeating order: A, B, C, A, B, C... Everyone with an A will form **Group A**. Everyone with a B will form **Group B**. Everyone with a C will form **Group C**.*

*Each group will work with a different scenario below. Once you're in your group, read your assigned scenario aloud and discuss:*

- How would you apply each of the four practices to this situation?
- What would you say or do to prepare the ground for a meaningful "yes"?
- Where might you hesitate or get stuck, and how can the group help you work through it?

*Be ready to share one insight or strategy with the full group when we debrief.*

### SCENARIOS

#### A. From Involvement to Investment

You are working with the chair of a committee at your organization to get ready for the new fiscal year. You want, and need, those around the table to be invested in the work ahead. Each member of the committee will also be asked for a minimum gift to the organization's campaign this year. How are you going to approach this?

#### B. From Engagement to Generosity

You are part of an organization with lots of people involved, but few contributing to your fundraising efforts. How do you begin to create the kind of culture needed to inspire more people to become givers?

#### C. From Attendance to Ownership

You are gearing up for your community retreat and want everyone to see themselves as part of your development and fundraising work. How will you challenge each person to think about their role in this new way?



PART VII

## Debrief 2: Insights & Application



10 MIN

Invite each group to briefly share one key insight or strategy that surfaced during their conversation. If helpful, use one of the following prompts to spark reflection:

- Which of the four practices felt most natural to apply? Which felt hardest?
- How did the scenario shift once you viewed it through the lens of the 90% Rule?
- What would it look like to bring more connection into your real-life giving conversations?

PART VIII

## Bring Your Learning Home



5 MIN

### MODEL GENEROSITY

Invite your family into conversations about giving, not just money, but also time, energy, attention, and love. Ask your child: “What’s something we could give this week that would make a difference to someone else?” This simple question helps nurture their capacity for generosity and purpose. You can brainstorm ideas together like inviting a new friend to join a game, donating a toy, writing a kind note, making a phone call, or helping a sibling with something hard. Whether it’s time, attention, or creativity, help your child see that giving isn’t just about money, it’s about noticing others and choosing to act with care.

### TELL STORIES

Share a personal story at dinner about a time when giving or being asked to give felt meaningful or difficult. Ask others: “When have you felt proud of giving something that mattered?”

### BLESS THE GIVERS

Write a short blessing or note of gratitude to someone in your life who gives generously of their time, wisdom, warmth, or support. Share it with them or read it aloud as a family.

### CELEBRATE PURIM!

On Purim, we’re commanded to give gifts to those in need. This year, involve your children in preparing your Purim gift to someone in need. Let them help choose what to give, decorate the packaging, or write a note. Use it as a moment to talk together about why we give, and the generosity it takes to show up for others, especially when it’s not easy or convenient. You can also begin planning now for *maot chittim* (gifts to the poor before Passover), reinforcing the value of thoughtful, proactive generosity. Let each family choose a way to give meaningfully.



## PART IX

**End with Meaning**

5 MIN

As we close, may we leave remembering that generosity is one of the ways we become agents of hope, choosing to respond to the world's needs with courage, care, and commitment.

Head back to p. 4 for thoughtful ways to close your gathering with reflection, gratitude, and a sense of shared purpose.

## PART X

**Continue the Journey**

**Practice Daily Giving:** Join a global community of Jews giving together every single day. Through Daily Giving, your \$1 a day is pooled with thousands of others to support dozens of vetted Jewish organizations, including Momentum. Daily Giving embodies the Momentum value of *chesed v'tzedakah* by transforming generosity into a shared daily practice that builds the collective power of small acts done consistently. Learn more or sign up at [dailygiving.org/Momentum](https://dailygiving.org/Momentum)



Continue growing your skills as a Jewish communal leader through the **Momentum Fellowship**, an opportunity for listening, learning, mentorship, and meaningful leadership development.



For deeper reflection, we recommend *The Art and Practice of Living Wondrously*, especially the third section on “Being an Agent of Hope.” It offers inspiration and context for the depth of meaning that giving offers. [Order your copy here.](#)

**About Our Content Collaborator**

[The Jewish Federations of North America \(JFNA\)](#) represents 146 Jewish Federations and over 300 Network communities, raising and distributing more than \$3 billion annually for social welfare, educational, and humanitarian needs. As the backbone of Jewish communal life across North America, JFNA supports a vibrant network of services that strengthen Jewish identity, care for vulnerable populations, and advocate for the safety and well-being of Jewish communities at home and around the world. Through its leadership, JFNA plays a critical role in shaping the future of Jewish life globally.

