

JMR33 Mishpacha Groups

About Mishpacha Groups

JMR's Mishpacha Groups (Mishpacha means family) are small, facilitated groups of brothers that meet three times during JMR to create a sacred and confidential space that allows for active and attentive listening in a loving and supportive group.

The Mishpacha Groups experience is an opportunity to deeply reflect upon ourselves and situations among our supportive Brothers.. As we explore our own spiritual journeys that have led us to our current unique Jewish connectedness, we open opportunities to return to our homes and communities with a stronger sense of purpose, direction, and brotherhood.

JMR33's Theme

The Mishpacha Groups experience will explore JMR33's theme: **Realizing My Jewish Journey**. There is much wisdom to draw from this Shabbat's *parashah* (*Lech L'cha*), beginning with its opening *pesukim*:

God said to Avram, "Go away from your land, from your birthplace, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. [...] Avram went as God had directed him, and Lot went with him. Avram was 75 years old when he left Charan." (Genesis 12:1-2, 4; trans R. Aryeh Kaplan)

The words *Lech L'cha* may also be interpreted as an instruction to "Go into yourself, so it may be revealed in Divine connection where you need to go" (R. Shawn Zevit). This offers a more introspective perspective on Lech Lecha.

Akin to Avram's journey in *Lech L'cha*, which are both physical and spiritual, each of our Jewish journeys start with an inherited ancestry – a Jewish identity on which to base our lives and on which we share and teach our descendants with the hope of continuing after us.

Approaching Mishpacha Groups at JMR33

JMR33 offers each of us the opportunity to both envision Avram's Jewish journey and consider how it may relate to our individual Jewish journey. The Mishpacha Groups experience (as well as all JMR33) provides each of us – Jewish men, as Brothers – the opportunity to:

- Examine our journeys, expectations, and life experiences
- Explore how those align with our actions in our community
- Commit ourselves to working to build a more holistic, saner world
- Consider some of the obstacles and challenges facing us

Likewise, each of us has the potential to

- Soar
- Become blessings
- Have clarity about our destination
- Enlighten others



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- Step into, not away from, ourselves
- Be fully integrated
- Sustain the Covenant
- Reach the Promised Land

We offer the following focal points as a guide to our collective, and individual, Mishpacha Groups experience.

Session 1 (Friday Evening)

The first Mishpacha Groups meeting will focus on **Setting Up the Sacred Space and Getting to Know Each Other.**

Guideline and Reflections:

- Introduce the Sacred Space
- Introduce each man
 - Where are we in our personal and spiritual journeys?
 - Why are we here?
 - What's happening right now in our lives?
 - What do we hope to take from this retreat experience?

Session 2 (Saturday Afternoon)

Our second Mishpacha Groups meeting will ask the question **How Did I Get Here?**

Reflections:

- What have we brought here with us?
- What experiences and learning have formed us and shaped us?
- What tools have we developed on our own or received from others to help us in our journeys?
- What baggage, if any, are we carrying that we might like to put down?
- What obstacles have we discovered on our path?
How have we experienced striking out in an unknown direction, perhaps without a clear destination?

Session 3 (Sunday Morning)

Our third Mishpacha Groups session will ask the question **Where Do I Go From Here?**

Reflections:

- Where are we heading and are we satisfied with that direction?
- What might hold us back?
- What happens when the road we're traveling is not working/or has not worked for us, and what actions should we take to strike out on a different path?
- How can we make it our responsibility to reach out to the human community and make interconnectedness an urgent and central part of your life
- Who can we reach out to in our lives to help us?

As we conclude the third session, we will have the opportunity to share blessings with our Mishpacha Group Brothers as each continues Realizing his Jewish Journey.

