



Building a Synagogue Culture Survey

There are many reasons to take a survey of congregational culture. Perhaps it is trying to discover how congregants see the community. It could be learning more about what speaks to the membership. It could be a tool to help a search committee describe the congregation. Often congregations seeking a merger will take surveys to see if they are, at core, compatible.

No matter the reason, surveys need to be designed for the congregation and its particular needs at a given time.

United Synagogue has designed a basic core on-line survey from which a custom survey for your congregation can be built. A print out of that survey follows.

Contact Rabbi Paul Drazen, Chief Program Development Officer [646-519-9310, drazen@uscj.org] to review, customize and put your congregations survey on-line.



United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism survey tool.

Describing our synagogue's culture

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism has developed this survey to aid us in helping you better understand your synagogue's culture and the implications that come from it, with regard to strategic planning.

1 Our congregation is, within the spectrum of the Conservative Jewish world:

| Very left | Moderately left | Center | Moderately right | Very right |
|-----------|-----------------|--------|------------------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2 Our congregation is egalitarian:

| Totally | Torah only | Not at all |
|---------|------------|------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |

3 We hold daily **morning** services ["minyan"] Check all that apply.

- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

4 Our morning attendance normally is

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|----------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| not quite a minyan | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| a minyan | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| minyan and plenty to spare | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

5 We hold daily **evening** services ["minyan"] Check all that apply.

- Sunday
- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday

6 Our evening attendance normally is

| | 1 Sunday | 2 Monday | 3 Tuesday | 4 Wednesday | 5 Thursday |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| not quite a minyan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a minyan | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| minyan and plenty to spare | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7 Our **daily** services are:

- Conducted exclusively by synagogue staff.
- Run by synagogue staff with lay davenners.
- Conducted exclusively by lay leaders.
- Other, please specify

8 Our **Torah Reading** [daily] is:

- chanted **exclusively** by synagogue staff or paid readers.
- managed by synagogue staff with lay readers.
- managed and chanted **exclusively** by lay leaders.
- Other, please specify

9 On **Shabbat**, we normally have *Check all that apply.*

- Sunset / early Friday services
- Late Friday services
- Shabbat morning - one service
- Shabbat morning - multiple services
- Shabbat mincha / ma'ariv

10 Our typical Shabbat attendance [without simcha crowd] is:

| | 1 Early Friday | 2 Late Friday | 3 Shabbat morning main | 4 Shabbat morning alternative | 5 Shabbat mincha |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| up to 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 51 to 100 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 101 to 150 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

151 to 200

1 2 3 4 5

201 to 250

1 2 3 4 5

250+

1 2 3 4 5

11 Our **Shabbat and holiday** services are:

- Conducted exclusively by synagogue staff.
- Run by synagogue staff with lay davenners.
- Conducted exclusively by lay leaders.
- Other, please specify

12 Our **Shabbat and holiday** services are:

- Highly participatory - much singing and davenning aloud - mostly Hebrew
- Highly participatory - much singing and davenning aloud - Hebrew and English
- Mix of participatory and presentation styles - mostly Hebrew
- Mix of participatory and presentation styles - Hebrew and English
- Presentation style - mostly Hebrew
- Presentation style - Hebrew and English
- Other, please specify

13 For our **Torah Reading** [Shabbat] we:

- chanted **exclusively** by synagogue staff or paid readers.
- managed by synagogue staff with lay readers.
- managed by synagogue staff with lay *and* professional readers.
- managed and chanted **exclusively** by lay leaders.
- Other, please specify

14 Our **Torah Lessons** are, most often:

- sermons
- divrei Torah
- discussions
- Other, please specify

15 For our **Torah Reading** [Shabbat] we:

- read the full parashah
- read the RA / USCJ triennial cycle
- use a different triennial cycle
- Other, please specify

16 For our **Siddur** we use: [check all that apply]

- Sim Shalom [classic]
- Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Holidays
- Sim Shalom for daily
- Other, please specify

17 For our **humash** we use: [check all that apply]

- Etz Hayim
- Hertz
- Other, please specify

18 The percentage of our regular Shabbat attendees who walk to services is:

- | less than 10% | about 25% | about half | about 75% | nearly everyone |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |

19 Our congregation expects the **rabbi** to:

- be involved SOLELY in the congregation
- be involved in the Jewish community at large
- be actively involved in the general community
- no specific expectation about community involvement

20 Based on what most of your members say, how important is it that the senior or only **rabbi**

- | | 1
Not at all | 2
Slightly | 3
Somewhat | 4
Rather important | 5
Very important |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| delivers engaging sermons | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| generates enthusiasm | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| provides a clear vision for the congregation | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| gets people to work together | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| gives spiritual direction to members | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| walk to synagogue on Shabbat | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| provides effective administration | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| leads people to give generously | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| recruits new members | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| provides pastoral care | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| engages youth and young adults | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

21 Based on what most of your members say, how important is it that the **assistant, associate or second rabbi**

| 1 Not at all | 2 Slightly | 3 Somewhat | 4 Rather imporant | 5 Very important |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| delivers engaging sermons | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| generates enthusiasm | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| provides a clear vision for the congregation | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| gets people to work together | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| gives spiritual direction to members | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| walk to synagogue on Shabbat | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| provides effective administration | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| leads people to give generously | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| recruits new members | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| provides pastoral care | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| engages youth and young adults | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22 Our congregation expects the **cantor** to:

- be involved SOLELY in the congregation
- be involved in the Jewish community at large
- be actively involved in the general community
- no specific expectation about community involvement

23 Based on what most of your members say, how important is it that the **cantor**

| 1 Not at all | 2 Slightly | 3 Somewhat | 4 Rather important | 5 Very important |
|--|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| present classic hazzanut within the service | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| present concerts for the congregation | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| generates enthusiasm | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| officiate at life cycle events | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| provides a clear musical vision for the congregation | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| gets people to work together | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| walk to synagogue on Shabbat | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| provides effective administration | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| leads people to give generously | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| recruits new members | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| provides pastoral care | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| engages youth and young adults | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |

24 Over the past 5 years, service attendance has

| | 1 early Friday | 2 late Friday | 3 Shabbat morning main | 4 Shabbat morning alternative | 5 Shabbat minha |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| decreased significantly | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| decreased | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| stayed about the same | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| increased | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| increased significantly | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| n/a | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |

25 How often are the following a part of your congregation's regular Shabbat services?

| | 1 Never | 2 Seldom | 3 Sometimes | 4 Often | 5 Always |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Choir | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| Musical Instruments - acoustic | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| Musical Instruments - electric | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |
| Recorded music | <input type="button" value="1"/> | <input type="button" value="2"/> | <input type="button" value="3"/> | <input type="button" value="4"/> | <input type="button" value="5"/> |

[Continue](#)

Describing our synagogue's culture

26 During the last 2 years, did your congregation provide any of the following services for your own members or for people in the community?

| | 1 No | 2 Yes - alone | 3 Yes - with another shule | 4 Yes - with another group |
|--|---------|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Food pantry or soup kitchen | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Cash assistance for individuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Voter education or registration | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Day care or pre-school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| after school programs beyond Hebrew school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Social justice programming | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Elderly or home-bound programming | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Employment counseling, job placement or training | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

27 Does your congregation have any of the following programs or activities? If yes, how much emphasis is given to the activity?

| | 1 No | 2 Yes - some emphasis | 3 Yes - much empasis | 4 Yes - our specialty |
|--|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Study groups - adult basic | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Study groups - adult advanced | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Tikkun olam projects - Jewish focus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Tikkun olam projects - general community focus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Intergenerational activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Young family activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| USY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Kadima | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Other youth group | | | | |

1 2 3 4

Hazak or other senior group

1 2 3 4

28 In the past 4 years, has your congregation applied for a Solomon Schechter Award?

YES NO

29 Which of the following technologies does your congregation use to communicate with your members or to make your congregation better known in the community? Check all that apply.

- E-mail
- Web site
- Blogs
- Social networking [Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn]
- You tube
- Other, please specify

30 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Our congregation:

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral / unsure | Agree | Strongly agree |
| is like a close-knit family | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| is spiritually alive and vital | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| has a clear mission and purpose | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| welcomes innovation and change | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| is working for social justice | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| wants more members | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| celebrates its Conservative heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| is clearly different from non-Conservative congregations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| is clearly different from other nearby Conservative congregations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| is seen as a spiritual beacon [ohr la-goyim] | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| holds strong beliefs and values | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

31 The three characteristics that are the core of my congregation are:

1

2

3

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Describing our synagogue's culture

32 My role / position in the congregation is: Please check the ONE which **best** describes your involvement.

- Member, no office or position
- Committee member
- Committee chair
- Board Member
- Executive committee member
- a Vice-President
- President
- Rabbi
- Assistant / associate Rabbi
- Cantor
- Executive Director
- other synagogue staff
- Other, please specify

33 I have been in / held the position noted above for

34 I am a member / staff of:

35 Additional comments or thoughts?

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