



WOMEN OF REFORM JUDAISM
stronger together

October 2011

Thank you for your commitment to the WRJ Speakers' Bureau program! It is one of the most valuable resources for our sisterhoods. It not only helps to educate and involve women in the projects of WRJ, but it also meets individual sisterhood requirements – giving them hands-on guidance from the most experienced WRJ leadership.

Each visit is tailored towards the sisterhood's needs and goals. We know these visits take much preparation on your behalf. It's our job to make this experience both enjoyable and rewarding for you as a WRJ representative.

In the enclosed packet you will find speakers' bureau guidelines, including:

- How to best prepare for your visit
- Ways to maximize your time with the sisterhood
- Follow up steps for after your visit

Of course, if you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact Rachel Jurisz, manager of the Department of Service to Sisterhoods and Districts, at 212.650.4063 or rjurisz@wrj.org.

Remember, we are a resource for YOU. Happy travels!

Sincerely,

Joan

Joan Blum
Chair
WRJ Speakers' Bureau

Sharon

Sharon K. Benoff
Vice President
Service to Sisterhoods & Districts

Rachel

Rachel Jurisz
Manager
Service to Sisterhoods & Districts

WRJ Speakers' Bureau Guidelines

Preparing for Your Speakers' Bureau Visit

You've been asked to visit "Temple Aleph Bet Sisterhood" in three months! Now what? Visiting a sisterhood, whether it's for a few hours, a day, or weekend, takes some advance preparation. What must you do to make sure that you are fully ready for this trip?

(1) Get to Know the Sisterhood and Congregation

- Make yourself familiar with as much information about the sisterhood as possible:
 - When were they founded?
 - How long have they been affiliated with WRJ?
 - How many members do they currently have?
 - Have they given to the YES Fund or WUPJ?
 - Have they received any awards from WRJ (YES Fund, Or Ami, etc.)?
 - Do they have WRJ/District board members in their congregation?

- Go to the congregation's website to find out more about the temple and sisterhood:
 - Temple
 - Familiarize yourself with the temple's history.
 - Who is the rabbi? Executive director? Temple president?
 - What is important to the temple?
 - What is the size of the temple? Look this up on the URJ website at www.urj.org.
 - Sisterhood
 - Familiarize yourself with the sisterhood's history.
 - How does the sisterhood support the temple?
 - What type of programs, projects, and fundraisers does the sisterhood have?

- Call the sisterhood president and ask her questions:
 - How is the sisterhood functioning?
 - What are their current goals?
 - In what areas have they been successful?
 - In what areas do they need help?
 - What would they like to accomplish during your visit?
 - Would they consider inviting nearby sisterhoods for part of the visit?

(2) Outline Your Visit

Once you get a sense of the sisterhood's needs, goals, and what they'd like to accomplish during your visit, create an outline of items you are going to present to them.

This may include:

- Giving a sermon or d'var Torah from the bimah
- Delivering a speech at a sisterhood event
- Leading Torah study
- Facilitating a training or series of workshops
- Schmoozing with sisterhood leaders and members

- Having a meal with a target group of women (i.e. dinner with the board or breakfast with new members)

If you are a WRJ representative visiting for two-three days (district representatives visit for shorter periods of time), be sure to incorporate the following activities during your weekend:

- Address the congregation at a Shabbat service
- Schedule time with the clergy
- Meet with the sisterhood board and facilitate a training of some sort

(3) Prepare Your Materials

Next you'll need to prepare materials for your visit.

If you are writing a sermon or D'var Torah, be sure to highlight important events and projects occurring at WRJ and intertwine that with the Torah portion. Also, make sure to bring greetings from the WRJ president and executive director.

If you are leading a Torah study session, please use *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* for ideas. Study guides are available for many of the Torah portions and can be found on the WRJ website at www.wrj.org/studyguide. Be sure to point out the excellent reference material in the front and back of the book. You can also use the Union's website as a reference at www.urj.org/learning/torah.

The possibilities for workshops are endless. Below are just a handful of workshops that WRJ representatives have given during sisterhood visits:

- Leadership training
- Increasing membership
- Sisterhood programming
- Fundraising and fiscal management
- Identifying and developing new leaders
- Marketing your sisterhood
- Strategic planning
- Conflict resolution
- YES Fund (Youth, Education, and Special Projects)
- WRJ programming and advocacy
- History of resolutions and social justice advocacy
- WRJ highlights and history

When you are preparing these materials, understand that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. WRJ has a library of workshops that you can utilize and adapt for your own visit. For more information, contact Rachel Jurisz, manager of Service to Sisterhoods and Districts, at 212.650.4063 or rjurisz@wrj.org.

Finally, be sure to use WRJ branding on your materials. The WRJ logos, colors, and style guide can be found on the leadership section of the WRJ website (you will need to log in to gain access). If you have questions about these items, contact Helene Dunbar, manager, Marketing and Communications, at 212.650.4049 or hdunbar@wrj.org.

(4) Utilize WRJ Materials

The WRJ office will prepare and send a package of WRJ materials to the sisterhood two-to-three weeks prior to your visit. Below is a list of WRJ materials that are sent for speakers' bureau visits.

- WRJ Resource Sheet
- Stronger Together WRJ Membership Brochures
- Critical Issues Brochures
- Critical Action Grids
- YES Fund Brochures
- YES Fund Pledge Cards
- YES Fund Distribution Sheets
- YES Fund Product Flyers
- Assembly or WRJ Sisterhood Leadership Conference Flyers
- Breast Self-Examination Cards
- WRJ Bookmarks
- WRJ-Twinning Brochures
- Social Action Rings Brochures

Make sure that you are familiar with all of these WRJ resources and refer to them throughout your visit. Talk to the sisterhood president to find out how best to distribute these materials to the participants. If it's a small group, she may want to make up folders for everyone with all of the materials included. Some sisterhoods also like to set up a display table so that individuals can peruse the materials during your visit.

If you have any questions about WRJ materials, please contact Rachel Jurisz, manager of Service to Sisterhoods and Districts, at 212.650.4063 or rjurisz@wrj.org.

(5) Share the Correct Information

Before your visit, make sure you are familiar with the basics of WRJ. This includes:

- **WRJ History** – www.wrj.org/About
- **WRJ Structure** – www.wrj.org/About/Structure
- **WRJ Staff and Departments** – www.wrj.org/About/WRJStaff
- **WRJ Leadership**
 - President – Lynn Magid Lazar
 - First Vice President – Blair Marks
 - Vice President, Development & Special Projects – Susan Bass
 - Vice President, Service to Sisterhoods – Sharon Benoff
 - Vice President, Programming & Advocacy – Edith Caplan
 - Vice President, Marketing & Communications – Sara Charney
 - Treasurer – Fredi Bleeker Franks
 - Secretary – Susan Pittelman

- **WRJ Publications and Materials** – These resources are mentioned in the section above. They can also be found on the leadership section of the WRJ website (you will need to log in to gain access). If you have questions about WRJ materials, contact Rachel Jurisz, manager of Service to Sisterhoods and Districts, at 212.650.4063 or rjurisz@wrj.org.
- **YES Fund (Youth, Education, and Special Projects)** – Be sure to look at the YES Fund brochure and distribution sheet. Also review the information on the WRJ website at www.wrj.org/YESFund. There is a YES Fund PowerPoint presentation available for download on the website which you can utilize for your visit. For more information on the YES Fund, please call 212.650.4056.
- **Programming and Advocacy** – Review the current issues brochure, critical action grid, and resolutions online at www.wrj.org/Advocacy. There are some wonderful WRJ programs that sisterhoods can utilize, such as WRJ/*Lilith* Salons, Social Action Rings, and the WRJ-Israel Twinning Program. Information on these programs can be found at www.wrj.org/Programs. For more details on this department, contact Carolyn Kunin, director of Programming and Advocacy, at 212.650.4066 or ckunin@wrj.org.
- ***The Torah: A Women's Commentary*** – A groundbreaking publication, which received the National Jewish Book Award in March 2008. Study guides are available for download on the WRJ website at www.wrj.org/studyguide.
- **WRJ Centennial** – WRJ will be celebrating its 100th year in 2013. A year of celebrations and projects will be kicked off at the WRJ Sisterhood Leadership Conference in Cincinnati in January 2013 and culminate at WRJ's 49th Assembly in San Diego in December 2013.

During Your Visit

When you visit the sisterhood, be sure to be respectful of the group's structure and how they operate. Each sisterhood is unique and functions in a different way.

As a WRJ ambassador to sisterhoods, it's important to be positive, knowledgeable, and energetic. Enthusiasm is contagious. Dress professionally and neatly. Remember, first impressions matter.

If someone asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, that's okay. Just let them know that you will follow up and get back to them with the information in a timely fashion.

Pay attention to potential leaders who we may want to target for district and WRJ North America development. You will be asked for their names on your post-speaking evaluation form.

Collect a copy of all materials that the sisterhood distributes. Also acquire a copy of the names and contact information of all attendees, if possible.

After Your Visit

Your job's not done once you get home. There are some key follow up steps after your visit.

Complete and send the following items to Rachel Jurisz (rjurisz@wrj.org):

- Post-speakers' bureau evaluation form*
- Expense form* and receipts
- Copies of any materials you used (workshops, speeches, etc.)

*These forms are available for download at www.wrj.org/ServiceToSisterhoods/SpeakersBureau.

Some additional follow up steps:

- Send a handwritten note on a Uniongram or YES Fund note card to the sisterhood president, rabbi, cantor, temple president, and other local women who may have been special hostesses or helpers
- Share any pertinent information you found out during your visit with the district president

Mazal Tov – You're finished! Thank you for representing WRJ!