Food Justice High Holiday
Host Guide

An initiative of Repair the World
DEAR HOST,

The Jewish High Holidays are a time for reflection, community gathering, and setting intentions for the coming year. This year, as we gather to enjoy the season’s bounty, we know the food system in our country is broken. We acknowledge that even when our intentions are good, we remain part of this unjust and inequitable food system.

On behalf of the team at Repair the World, a national nonprofit that mobilizes Jews to volunteer, we want to THANK YOU for hosting a Turn the Tables Shabbat Dinner as part of Repair the World’s “A Different Kind of High Holiday Service” campaign.

We’re inspired by your passion to give your time, energy, and dollars to create the space for people to have meaningful conversations. Throughout the month of September, thousands of people across the country will be dining together and engaging in important dialogue about issues of food injustice impacting their communities.

This campaign focuses on how we can work toward food justice through service – fostering stronger local food systems, self-reliant communities, and a healthier environment. We believe that structured yet creative dialogue about critical social issues is a key catalyst that leads us to action. We encourage you to keep “action” in mind as you use this guide.

This Food Justice Host Guide contains several different activities to help you facilitate constructive and meaningful conversations. Please use the activities that most resonate with you and your guests. While some activities are designed to be Shabbat-friendly, feel free to adapt the activities to best meet all customs and personal needs.

We hope that you and your guests leave your dinner with a heightened AWARENESS about food injustice in your local community, having had the opportunity to SPEAK UP about complex issues surrounding hunger and access to healthy food, and feel driven to TAKE ACTION by volunteering your time to bring about food justice. Find opportunities to volunteer or create your own service project by visiting weRepair.org/InspireService.

It’s because of leaders like you that the world can change: table by table and city by city.

Thanks again for all you do – and all you did to make this dinner possible!

The Repair the World team
weRepair.org

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PREPARATION

A Turn the Tables Shabbat Dinner has several ingredients: a tasty meal, some meaty (or vegetarian) conversation about important issues, and an opportunity to get involved.

GETTING STARTED

1. Read through the Host Guide in its entirety.
2. Collect and print the necessary materials and supplies as outlined throughout the Host Guide.
3. Print a copy of the Respectful Conversations sheet to have on hand through your dinner and to review in advance. It offers guidelines for facilitating fair and meaningful discourse about sensitive subjects.
4. As you read through the guide, be mindful of the space and environment in which you will host your dinner.

SIMMER, DO NOT BOIL.

Productive Discomfort is encouraged.

Feeling slightly uncomfortable and stretching a bit out of your comfort zone can generate learning and growth. Before starting the program, take a few minutes for your guests to understand your intention in maintaining a safe space that allows each of you to experience some productive discomfort during the evening. You might consider sharing the Respectful Conversations sheet with everyone present.

WHET YOUR APPETITE

Serving the Appetizer: Opening Activity

We believe that setting intentions for our conversations about food justice is critical to fostering a productive and participatory experience. The BREAD FROM THE EARTH? activity asks you to begin your dinner by reflecting on the very food we are preparing to eat during our Shabbat meal. The goal is to recognize the extent of our inextricable connection to our food system, and therefore consider our responsibility to make that system more just.

Choosing and Digesting your Discussion Entrée

Select the Entree you’d like to chew on. Feel free to mix and match pieces from different entrées during your meal.

- Discussion Entrée Option 1: Mapping the Problem: The Deserts Among Us
  This entrée has guests explore USDA food desert maps as the jumping off point for a discussion about food access in our communities.

- Discussion Entrée Option 2: Food for a Week: An Interactive Scenario
  This simulation asks guests to take on the role of someone who is trying to provide food for their family while living in or at risk of hunger and poverty.

- Discussion Entrée Option 3: Making the (Food) Desert Bloom
  This entrée explores some of the creative initiatives, successes and challenges of trying to bring better food access into food deserts.

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Discussion Entrée Option 4: The Fight Against Hunger
This option paints two different pictures of hunger, by having guests read first-hand accounts from individuals experiencing food insecurity and by engaging with national statistics.

Discussion Entrée Option 5: Kosher Food Justice: Bringing the Holiness Back to Eating
This entrée discusses how Jewish spiritual practice can help us live out our values and commitment to food justice in our everyday lives.

Discussion Entrée Option 6: Create Your Own and Additional Resources

Concluding with Dessert: Closing Reflections
Just as we conclude our meal on a high note with dessert, we want to conclude our conversations with an opportunity for reflection and gratitude.

TAKE ACTION!
This season's Inspire Service with Repair the World campaign focuses on encouraging the Jewish community to volunteer around issues of food justice: working to foster stronger local food systems, self-reliant communities, and a healthier environment, during the High Holidays. This campaign is a part of Hunger Action Month in September.

We believe that structured yet creative dialogue about critical social issues is a key catalyst that leads us to action. As a result of your Turn the Tables Shabbat Dinner, we hope that you and your guests will feel moved to go out and act for food justice.

Take a look at Repair the World's growing map to find an upcoming opportunity near. Don't see anything in your area? Already have a food justice volunteer project that you'd like us to feature? Become a Repair the World Movement Leader and add your project to our map.

And don't forget to tell us how it goes! Email us at inspireservice@werepair.org. Or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram @RepairtheWorld, #TurntheTables

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT
While we can't help you cook dinner, we can help you prepare for your Turn the Tables program. Have a question, need clarification or want to get more involved with Repair the World's campaigns? Contact Amy and Jamie at inspireservice@weRepair.org.

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RESPECTFUL CONVERSATIONS

The ultimate measure of a person is not where they stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy.
– Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

OVERALL TIPS

The first step to fixing our broken food system is to talk open and honestly. Talking about food justice is challenging, which is why this section about HOW to have the conversation is much longer than the actual discussion questions! As the host you are responsible for creating a safe space in which guests can express their opinions honestly, ask difficult questions, and where the feelings of the group are valued and protected.

- Acknowledge that injustice in our food system is complicated and far-reaching; we may not cover all aspects of this issue.
- Appoint a facilitator.
- Acknowledge that you or your guests might have moments of discomfort— and that it’s okay.
- Establish group ground rules.
- Do not tokenize people— everyone should only speak from their personal experience.
- Ensure that everyone who wants to speak, gets a chance to speak.
- Be respectful of introverts— and of silence.
- Avoid the terms “right” and “wrong.” Try not to use charged language.
- If you’re offended, share— don’t blame. Use “I” statements to avoid blame.
- Provide context.
- Don’t get stuck in facts.

DIGGING IN

APPOINT A FACILITATOR. Before your meal, decide among your guests who should lead the discussion. The best leader is likely you, but ask a friend if you’re not comfortable in that role. A facilitator guides the discussion— s/he doesn’t dominate it. If things get out of hand, or if voices are being blocked out, the facilitator intervenes.

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR GUESTS MIGHT HAVE MOMENTS OF DISCOMFORT. It can oftentimes be the elephant in the room, but in many cases, it helps to say out loud what others are feeling: “I know we don’t usually talk about food justice at the dinner table, and it might make you or others feel uncomfortable, and that’s ok.”

ESTABLISH GROUP GROUND RULES. Before your dinner program begins, collectively establish a set of rules for your discussion. These could be formal, such as “whoever holds this spoon speaks,” or “if you agree, snap your fingers.” These rules could also be informal, including “whatever is said in this room, stays in this room.”

DO NOT TOKENIZE PEOPLE. Individuals can only speak to their own experiences. Do not look to others to speak on behalf of their race, gender, or ethnicity. For example, there is a great deal of diversity within the Jewish experience, and not one single individual can speak to its totality.

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ENSURE THAT EVERYONE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK, GETS A CHANCE TO SPEAK. Very frequently, individuals who are most comfortable expressing their opinions out loud can dominate conversations. The facilitator should respectfully ask for the opinions of others if a few voices begin to dominate the conversation.

BE RESPECTFUL OF INTROVERTS – AND OF SILENCE. Make sure the facilitator is noticing who is not speaking. Encourage those individuals to contribute, but do not force them. Similarly, if the conversation reaches a point of silence, do not push people to speak. Be respectful of reflection.

IF THE DISCUSSION BECOMES HEATED OR UNCOMFORTABLE:

AVOID “RIGHT” AND “WRONG.” While some opinions are commonly accepted as “right,” it is unproductive to cast someone’s statements or beliefs as “wrong.”

IF YOU’RE OFFENDED, SHARE – DON’T BLAME. Ignorance is not animosity. Use the “I felt....when you...” format to discuss how you personally perceived someone’s statement. You could say, for example, “I felt offended when you said that your grandfather worked himself into the middle class, and therefore anyone could achieve the American dream if they tried hard enough. I felt that you might not have thought about the impact of institutional racism on the outcomes of immigrant and minority families.”

TRY NOT TO USE CHARGED LANGUAGE. If someone says something offensive, assume that they simply do not realize that they have said something hurtful. Calling them a racist is one surefire way to make the situation a lot worse. Use the opportunity to educate.

PROVIDE CONTEXT. Even though it’s difficult, try to explain why you believe what you believe. Provide examples, facts, and stories to illuminate your opinions, and encourage others to do the same.

DON’T GET STUCK IN FACTS. People often claim truth or fact to back up their opinions. Remind people that this is a conversation. Everyone’s personal experience matters. Recommend that people share information to deepen the discussion, not to shut down the conversation.

Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny. This second, we can turn the tables on resistance. This second, we can sit down and do our work. -Steven Pressfield

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APPETIZER: OPENING ACTIVITY

BREAD FROM THE EARTH?

Items Needed:

- Copies (one per person) of Friday Night Blessings for Shabbat sheet
- Your Shabbat dinner menu
- Shabbat candles, matches, wine/grape juice, challah/bread, hand-washing station

Framing:

The complexities of food justice, working to foster stronger local food systems, self-reliant communities, and a healthier environment can be found in every bite we take. By pausing to reflect on the food before us with our BREAD FROM THE EARTH? activity, we recognize that we are inextricably connected to our food system, and so we should be responsible for making that system a just one. With this intention, we prepare ourselves for the conversations we will have tonight.

Host Instructions:

In advance of your dinner, prepare a basic menu of the food and drink that will be served. You don’t need to list out every ingredient, but a general description of the dish will be helpful. (For example: Mixed green goat cheese salad, three-cheese lasagna, apple pie, fresh fruit, red wine, apple juice.) If you are hosting a potluck dinner, please ask each guest to also bring a description of their dish.

At the beginning of the dinner, we encourage you to begin with the Shabbat rituals of lighting candles and making kiddush to set the tone for your shabbat meal (you can find the Friday Night Blessings for Shabbat sheet here). Feel free to also bring in other Shabbat customs that you or your guests have. A friendly explanation of these rituals, as you understand them, is usually appreciated by at least a few people at the table.

Before saying Hamotzi, the blessing over the bread, we encourage you to pause and facilitate the following activity.

NOTE: There is some God language and Jewish ritual in the following activity and blessings. Invite your guests to interpret it in the way that both feels comfortable to them and encourages them to explore different perspectives. If the Shabbat rituals aren’t your thing, feel free to do the activity by itself.

Share with guests:

The blessing over bread thanks God for bringing forth bread from the earth for us to enjoy and for sustaining us with this meal. The phrase “brings forth bread from the earth” implies a process. Logically, bread does not spring up from the earth in its final form, and this blessing assumes a world where reciters are intimate with the processes by which their bread was created. More specifically, reciting Hamotzi takes for granted that we know and can appreciate each step, from seed to table, that it took for our bread to arrive at this table.

We must then ask the question: are we intimate enough with our food system today to still know and
appreciate where our food comes from?

Have your guests divide up into groups of two or three, ask each person to pick one dish from tonight’s menu (pass around copies to each group) and see if they can trace back the origin story of each ingredient in that dish as far as they can. Where was it produced? How many people helped create it? Was it processed? Where was it purchased? How much did it cost?

Have the group come back together, and if the group is a reasonable size, have each person pick one ingredient from the dishes on the table. Each person should then introduce themselves by sharing their name, what brought them to this dinner, the ingredient they’ve selected, where they think it originated, and the path that brought the ingredient to this evening’s meal.

After everyone has shared, ask for a few reflections on what justice issues they know of that are linked to the food on our table. After a few have been shared, wrap up by reminding the group that this exercise is an opening to conversations they will have over the course of dinner. Now that we’ve grounded ourselves in the ways in which every bit of food we encounter connects us to the larger food system, our intention is to delve into learning more about that system so we can become better equipped to bring about more just change.

Conclude by inviting people to ritually hand-wash and say Hamotzi all together.
DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 1

MAPPING THE PROBLEM:
THE DESERTS AMONG US

Items Needed:

- Copies (one per every two guests) of the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Desert Locator Map for your neighborhood, city and Country.
- Copies (one per guest) of Source Sheet: Option 1

Framing:

“Maps tell many kinds of stories. They can summarize a situation, trace a route, and show change over time. They can examine causes and effects and reveal interrelationships. They can show patterns of movement and compare and contrast places. They can help people make plans, predict or model the future, and support decisions. They can explain, reveal, and propagandize.”

– Telling Stories with Maps: A White Paper

In this activity, we will look at food desert maps from the USDA to orient ourselves to the food landscape in our neighborhoods, cities, and countries. Exploring the food deserts around us will show us the disparities of access in our communities. We will also explore issues beyond the surface of the map by reading an excerpt from the American Civil Liberties Union and the NYU Racial Justice Project entitled, “Unshared Bounty: How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts.”

Food deserts are defined by the USDA as:

> Urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, amongst other far-reaching impacts.

Facilitator/Host Instructions:

We believe it is important to be locally rooted in the issues we are working to change, and to know how those we share a community with, our larger social networks, and perhaps even some of us around this table are affected by an issue. This activity will help clarify the disparities of food access in your city and make it easier to see where basic resources are lacking in your city.

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Before the meal, go online to the Food Desert Locator map. Print three maps:

1. Map of the United States
2. Map of your city
3. Map of your neighborhood in which your dinner is taking place

If you know in advance of any additional neighborhoods your guests are arriving from, you can include those as well. If you have access to a color printer, you can add multiple layers highlighting transportation limitations, as well as proximity of supermarkets. You are welcome to use any of the measurements of food access available on the map tool.

At your meal, share the above framing with guests and then hand out copies of the maps of your neighborhood and city.

Ask for any and all observations: What impressions do they have of the map? Any initial surprises? Were they surprised to see more areas of the map labeled a food desert than not? More not than a food desert?

Ask your guests about what factors they think contribute to food deserts in the area you are focusing on.

If you are comfortable, share with guests what you know about food access in your neighborhood: Are there grocery stores? Corner stores? Farmers markets? Community gardens? Restaurants? Fast food? Ask your guests if they'd be willing to share about food access in their neighborhood.

If there is time, move on to the national map to compare urban and rural food deserts.

To conclude this portion of the discussion, you can discuss these questions:

- How does seeing a physical map change the conversation? Add to it?
- How does a map as a medium help? What does it not get at?

After you've oriented yourself to food deserts through the maps, ask people to form small groups and read the selections from the ACLU and NYU's Racial Justice Project's 2012 report on structural racism and food deserts. Have the groups discuss the guiding questions together. Then have the whole group come back together, and ask guests to share some of their conversation and if there was one particular question that sparked interesting dialogue.

**SOURCE SHEET**


**Introduction:**

The following text is a series of selections from “Unshared Bounty: How Structural Racism Contributes to the Creation and Persistence of Food Deserts,” a report produced in 2012 by American Civil Liberties Union and the NYU Racial Justice Project. These selections do not go into the methodology and data of their findings, but merely summarize the findings. Footnotes have been removed for ease of reading.

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Food touches everything and is never just food: “it is also a way of getting at something else: who we are, who we have been, and who we want to be.” Above all, food “marks social differences, boundaries, bonds and contradictions.” In America, these social differences, boundaries and contradictions are starkly reflected in the fact that 23.5 million Americans currently live in food deserts, urban and rural communities with no access or severely limited regular access to healthy and affordable food... located more than 1 mile from a supermarket. African Americans are half as likely to have access to chain supermarkets and Hispanics are a third less likely to have access to chain supermarkets. Area-specific studies have found that minority communities are more likely to have smaller grocery stores carrying higher priced, less varied food products than other neighborhoods...Detroit, which is 83% African American and 6% Latino, has no major chain supermarkets. In Los Angeles, predominantly white residential areas have 3.2 times as many supermarkets as predominantly African-American areas and 1.7 times as many as predominantly Latino areas. Residents of predominantly African-American neighborhoods in Chicago have to travel the farthest distance to get to a grocery store as compared to white or even racially diverse neighborhoods. In Washington D.C., the District’s two lowest income neighborhoods, which are overwhelmingly African-American, have one supermarket for every 70,000 residents compared to 1 supermarket for approximately every 12,000 residents in two of the District’s highest income and predominantly white neighborhoods.

The lack of supermarkets within low-income inner-city minority communities is not a demographic accident or a consequence of “natural” settlement patterns. Rather, government policies and their resulting incentives have played a significant role in shaping the segregated landscape of American cities... Supermarkets, along with many other types of businesses, followed white middle-class incomes to the suburbs. ...The scarcity of supermarkets within the inner city continues to impact minorities living in low income urban neighborhoods. African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans living in these neighborhoods travel farther, have fewer choices, and pay more for food than their counterparts. When minority families shop locally for groceries they find a grocery store that is “2.5 times smaller than the average grocery store in a higher income neighborhood” with higher priced food, less fresh produce, and more processed food.

Guiding Questions:

● What information does this report add that you were not able to glean from reading the maps?
● How do your favorite places to shop for food fit with the picture painted in this report?
● What are the consequences, communal and individual, of only having access to higher priced food, less fresh produce, and more processed food?
● What other inequalities and injustices are at play in food deserts besides access to food? Why are food deserts referred to as a food justice issue?
● Thinking about our role as change makers in ending food deserts. How can direct service help improve food access? What are the limits of direct service in confronting the injustices described in this report?
● How do you balance the need for direct service and advocacy when confronting injustice in the world?
DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 2

FOOD FOR A WEEK: AN INTERACTIVE SCENARIO

This activity is adapted from “Food for a Week: Interactive Hunger Simulation,” a resource of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Items Needed:

- Pens
- Calculators (or phones with calculator applications)
- Print one copy of each
  - Station Signs
  - Participant profiles (there are 28 individual profiles. Choose fewer or duplicate roles based on your number of guests, but ensuring each guest is part of a complete household)
  - SNAP Benefits Chart (to be held by the host)
- Print one copy per household (see below)
  - Grocery Store Food Item Cards
  - Food Pantry Food Cards - we suggest printing these on a different color paper than what you used for the grocery cards to more easily distinguish the two
  - Your state’s SNAP application (for U.S. only)
- Print one copy for each participant
  - Meal Planning Sheet

Framing:

The goal of this “Food for a Week” simulation is to explore issues of food access and availability. Each guest will take on the role of someone who is trying to provide food for their family while living in or at risk of hunger and poverty. Guests will learn about some of the most common food assistance programs and understand the opportunities and challenges associated with each program.

Suggested Structure:

If you are serving multiple “courses,” you might consider breaking up the simulation by course. For example:

- Before serving the main course:
  - Facilitator presents the simulation framing and goals
  - Facilitator distributes participant profiles (1 per person)
  - Facilitator ask guests to move their seats to be seated by household

- While eating the main course:
  - Guests read their character descriptions with their household.
  - Households discuss the challenges they may run into while trying to adequately feed everyone

- Between the main course and dessert:
  - Facilitator explains the simulation instructions

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Guests “rotate” through each station (food pantry, grocery, human service office) and attempt to acquire as much food as they can to meet their family’s caloric needs.

- Guests complete “Meal Planning Sheets” to see how they met/did not meet their caloric goals

**Over dessert:**
- Debrief the simulation using the questions provided below

Move to **Dessert: Closing Reflections**

**Host/Facilitator Instructions:**

This discussion entree is intended to take 60-90 minutes. Be sure to read through these instructions and print the resources listed in “Items Needed” several days before your dinner.

**Setting up your dinner:**

Using the [Station Signs](#), set up three stations around the room as follows:

- **Grocery store**
  - Display the [Grocery Store Food Item Cards](#), allowing enough space for guests to find them easily
  - Put out calculators/phones to be used when totaling the costs of their purchased groceries.

- **Food pantry**
  - Set up this station in a different room from the other stations or a part of the main room that may be a little difficult to find or get to so guests get an idea of what it is like to search for a food pantry
  - Display the [Food Pantry Food Cards](#) (each sheet represents one “bag” of items)

- **Human services office**
  - Display copies of the state’s SNAP application
  - Put out several pens
  - Place chairs at the station, if possible, so guests can be seated while completing the application
  - Do not display the [SNAP Benefits Chart](#); the host/facilitator should hold onto it and refer to it as they “look over” completed SNAP Applications

**During your dinner:**

1. **Open the program by sharing the following framing with guests:**

   *Tonight we will be participating in a “Food for a Week” simulation that asks you to take on the role of someone who is trying to provide food for their family while living in or at risk of hunger and poverty. The goal of the simulation is to provide an experiential opportunity that explores issues of food access and availability. By participating in this activity, you will learn about some of the most common food assistance programs and understand the opportunities and challenges associated with each. This simulation is an opportunity to enter into dialogue about food access and availability, and will hopefully inspire you to respond to the issue of food security in your local community.*

2. **Then ground the conversation by sharing definitions of hunger and food insecurity:**

   Tell guests that all of the people they are “playing” in the simulation have very low food security.

   **Hunger:**

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Hunger includes both a feeling and a state or situation. There are a few definitions such as, “a compelling need or desire for food,” or “a painful sensation caused by lack of food,” or “a shortage of food; famine.”

Food Security:

In recent years, both the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prefer to talk about more measurable food security rather than hunger. Both organizations have a similar way of defining food security.

- **FAO**: Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.
- **USDA**: Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life; includes at a minimum:
  - The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods.
  - Assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

Since 2006 the USDA has tried to identify a food security continuum, ranging from high food security to very low food security. They used these categories to conduct a national annual survey of U.S. households to measure the number of people living with marginal to very low food security. The continuum is characterized as follows:

- **High food security**: Households had no problems or anxiety about consistently accessing adequate food.
- **Marginal food security**: Households had problems at times or anxiety about accessing adequate food, but the quality, variety and quantity of their food intake were not substantially reduced.
- **Low food security**: Households reduced the quality, variety and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted.
- **Very low food security**: At times during the year, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food.

3. Hand out one **Participant Profile** and one **Meal Planning Sheet** to each guest. Ask guests to move their chairs as needed to be seated by family/household units.

4. **Eat dinner by household.** While eating all guests should review their profiles aloud with their household. The profiles provide biographical and financial information.

5. **After groups are finished eating, gather attention and share the following goal:**

   **Throughout the simulation your goal is to feed all members of your household for one week (estimating three meals a day). You will need to acquire as much food as you can using your allotted income and any assistance you are able to receive. You must meet everyone’s caloric needs.**

6. **Explain the three stations.**

   There are three different stations around the room(s), each representing different places or services one might use to acquire food. You may visit each station to try and fulfill your household’s caloric needs:

   - **Grocery Store**
     - All can chose different kinds of foods represented by food cards that replace what would be grocery store merchandise.

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All are welcome to purchase food here and may purchase multiples of any item.

All guests should keep track of their items purchased and calculate the total cost before leaving the Grocery Store Station.

If guests have visited the Human Services Station before visiting the Grocery Store Station, they should have received their SNAP benefit amount. This amount should be taken into account when doing the weekly shop.

**Food Pantry**
- This station is purposely out of the way and hard to find to indicate the actual challenge that oftentimes occurs when finding food pantries.
- Guests will find food pantry card sheets that replace what a household would get each week at a food pantry.
- Guests can collect one food pantry card sheet of items per household.

**Human Services Office and Volunteer**
- Guests can apply for SNAP benefits for their household here using the applications from the state in which the dinner is occurring. This is the actual application that someone seeking nutrition assistance in the state would fill out.
- Guests will fill out the form as completely as possible and then bring it up to the facilitator/host to look over. The facilitator/host will determine the size of the monthly benefit the household will receive based on the state’s requirements.
- Guests should write this benefit down on their profile and use it when visiting the Grocery Store.
- Guests may have questions for the facilitator about the application. It’s okay if you do not know the answers; in reality, confusion about the application process is unfortunately very common.

After obtaining as much food as possible to meet the household’s weekly caloric requirements, guests will return to their seats and plan their meals for the week.

**7. Share the following points with guests:**
- The profiles in this game are fictional, however their stories are very true to the realities faced by individuals who are living in or at risk of hunger and poverty. We ask that you treat these stories with kavod, or respect, as if that individual were in the room with you.
- The math in this game may feel challenging. While not letting this get in the way of experiencing the simulation, acknowledge that budgeting can be highly stressful, especially for individuals living in or at risk of hunger and poverty.

**8. Begin the simulation with guests visiting the stations.**

**9. After visiting the stations, guests fill out the Meal Planning Guide.** The Guide will help them determine the meals they can serve for their household. Guests can look at the food they obtained in the simulation to find out if it is enough to last their household for a week.

**10. Serve dessert.** While eating, facilitate a closing discussion using the following debrief questions. Use the questions that feel most relevant to your and your guests’ experiences in the simulation.

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Debrief Questions:

1. How did it go? Were you able to feed your household on just your income?
2. What felt most challenging? Did anything feel too simple?
3. What felt most like real life? What didn't feel accurate? What other challenges might people face?
4. What additional barriers can you imagine take place in reality that were not part of the simulation?
5. Were the SNAP and Food Pantry benefits helpful?
6. The actual processing period for SNAP benefits is two to four weeks or more. How would that change the situation you experienced in the simulation?
7. What do you think about using games and simulations to teach about issues of food justice? What are the benefits and what are the risks?
8. Did any new complexities and/or nuances come up that you haven't explored before? What are you left thinking about? What did you learn that you would want others to know?
9. What are you inspired to do now?

Additional Debrief Questions (Optional)- time permitting, here are more points for discussion:

There are both government and community responses to hunger.

- What did you think when you noticed how much money you had for food each day?
- What were some of the barriers you faced in obtaining the food you needed?
- How did you feel about filling out the benefits application?
- Think about what kinds of food you obtained:
  - What kinds of meals were you able to make?
  - Were the meals nutritious?
  - Did you meet the caloric requirement needed for your household?
  - If you were not able to get all the food your household needed for the week, what else do you think you would have to do?
  - One of the USDA characteristics of food security is the “assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.” In your scenario, would going to a food pantry be considered “socially acceptable”? What about relying on benefits? Discuss some of the issues here.
  - If you qualified for SNAP benefits, what difference did the benefit make to you and your household?
  - If there were children in your household, how important would school lunch and breakfast programs be? What would this mean for weekends and summertime?

There are issues of time and transportation that did not arise during this simulation:

- You had the advantage of being able to access the grocery store, social services office and food pantry all within a short distance and manageable amount of time. The reality is that these places are not always so accessible for those who need the services, and can be especially difficult to get to for those who do not have a vehicle. Many people who rely on or qualify for benefits are employed as well, and a food pantry or human services office may only be open while a person is at work.
- Time is also an issue. The food pantry may only be open one day a week and for a limited amount of time. The human services office may be difficult to find and, depending on the process, there may be a significant waiting time.

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What challenges would someone in your geographical area face if they did not have a vehicle?

- If the only time the food pantry or human services office was open was during work hours, what impact would this have on the person in your profile?

- Estimate how much time it would actually take if you had to do all of these activities in one day.

- What logistical issues would you face if you had to run these errands with children?

- What would be some ways that we could support those for whom time and transportation are significant issues in obtaining food?
DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 3

MAKING THE (FOOD) DESERT BLOOM

Items Needed:

- Internet-capable device to play heritage radio network podcast
- Speakers
- Copies of source sheets

Framing:

Tackling the problem of food deserts has recently become more of a priority for federal and local governments. Federal incentive programs have allotted millions in recent reays to encourage grocery stores to locate in places they had avoided. Many states and cities have their own programs, aimed at getting more grocery stores and farmer’s markets into poor neighborhoods where the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables is low and obesity rates tend to be high.

In addition, many communities and nonprofits have started up urban gardens and farms in formerly vacant land, bringing fresh local produce directly to underserved areas. Despite these steps, there are still huge inequalities in access to healthy food for many people, rampant food insecurity, and obesity diabetes and other health disorders in low-income communities.

This entrée explores several voices discussing the the ups and downs of trying to bring better food access into food deserts. We will begin by listening to a first hand account of the difficulties of gaining access to healthy food by Dekendra Dazzell, a high school Junior in Far Rockaway, Queens. Dekenda interviews her neighbors about the obstacles to obtaining healthy, unprocessed food and her experiences of a community garden changing unhealthy patterns of life. Afterwards, we will discuss excerpts from three articles in chevruṭah, the first presenting some disturbing data in the effectiveness of increased access to healthy food combating the justice issues of food deserts. The last two articles are quantitative examples of creative initiatives that might provide some helpful solutions to these challenges.

Host Instructions:

Gather guests around an audio device and play the Heritage Radio Network Podcast by Dekendra Dazzell*. Use the Share your experience with us! Tag and post your photos, stories, or videos with @RepairtheWorld #TurntheTables
Guiding Questions below to facilitate group conversation about the audio clip. Afterwards, ask guests to find a Chevrutah, or partner, read study the three articles on the source sheet. We are going to begin with a news summary from the New York Times that presents findings from several recent quantitative studies that casts concern on the effectiveness of several popular measures to combat food deserts (mainly- increased access to healthy food). Guests will then read two articles about qualitative examples of initiatives in food deserts that seem to address some of the concerns of the studies cited in the New York Times piece. Guests will have the chance to discuss all three articles and the podcast in conversation together in chevrutah before coming back together.

A note about chevrutah learning- chevrutah literally means “friendship” or “companionship”. It is the traditional rabbinic approach to Talmudic study in which a pair of students analyze, discuss, and debate a shared text. Unlike a teacher-student relationship, partnered learning puts each student in the position of analyzing the text, organizing their thoughts into logical arguments, explaining their reasoning to their partner, hearing out their partner’s reasoning, and questioning and sharpening each other’s ideas, often arriving at entirely new insights into the meaning of the text.

Read each source out loud together. Spend some time wondering about it out loud together before referring to the guiding questions. Read the guiding questions together. Allow space for each partner have the opportunity to share a response. This is a dialogue and a conversation!

There is no right or wrong amount of time to allow for the chevrutah learning. If it seems like the energy is waning, take a temperature check and ask if folks are ready to come back together. If they are, bring the group back together to share pieces of what they discussed and their general reactions.

*NOTE: Some more observant Jews refrain from engaging with technological devices on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. If either you or your guests are traditionally observant, feel free to omit listening to the podcast. Feel free to adapt any of the other activities accordingly.

**SOURCE SHEET**

**Guiding Questions after listening to Heritage Radio Network Podcast:***

*A Note about Guiding Questions:* The Guiding Questions listed at the end of the texts are a jump-off point for your conversation. They are not meant to constrain your conversation but to provide a trigger for a deeper, more organic dialogue with a partner.

- What are the obstacles to obtaining healthy food described in the podcast?
- What do the list of recipes at the end of the podcast teach us?
- Dekendra several times mentions the lack of community coming together and the fast pace of life in Queens as barriers to healthy eating. How does poverty exacerbate these factors?
- What do you think of her idea that gardens will bring people together and slow folks down?
- Did this podcast shift they way you think about community gardens and farmers markets?

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Article 1:

Giving the Poor Easy Access to Healthy Food Doesn’t Mean They’ll Buy It

MAY 8, 2015, Margot Sanger-Katz, New York Times

[There appears to be] a growing body of evidence that merely fixing food deserts will not do nearly as much to improve the health of poor neighborhoods as policy makers had hoped. It seems intuitive that a lack of nearby healthy food can contribute to a poor diet. But merely adding a grocery store to a poor neighborhood, it appears, doesn't make a very big difference. The cost of food — and people's habits of shopping and eating — appear to be much more powerful than just convenience.

Another study, published this week...looked across the country and found that no more than a tenth of the variation in the food people bought could be explained by the availability of a nearby grocery store. The education level of the shoppers, for example, was far more predictive.

Tackling the problem of food deserts has been embraced by the federal government and many local governments. The federal government’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative has handed out more than $500 million in recent years to help encourage grocery stores to locate in places they had avoided. Many states and cities — like New York — have their own programs, aimed at getting more grocery stores and farmer's markets into poor neighborhoods where the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables is low and obesity rates tend to be high.

Still, all that investment may not pay off in the form of healthier communities. The recent paper looked at the buying habits of families...that allowed the researchers to track what people bought according to their incomes and education levels, as well as their neighborhoods.

The research, like the work that initially described the food desert concept, noted that lower-income neighborhoods tended to have less healthy food nearby and that their residents tended to eat less healthy diets. The researchers set out to see whether those disparities could be explained by access issues, or by more entrenched preferences for particular kinds of foods.

It turned out that food preferences dominated. When the researchers looked at shoppers with lower levels of income and education living in richer neighborhoods with more accessible healthy food, their shopping mimicked that of low-income, less educated people in poorer neighborhoods. (And the reverse was true, too: Richer, more educated shoppers in poor neighborhoods looked more like rich shoppers in rich neighborhoods.)

“When we put supermarkets in poor neighborhoods, people are buying the same food,” said Barry Popkin, a professor of Nutrition at the University of North Carolina... “They just get it cheaper.”

It's possible that poverty itself explains a lot of the shopping variation. In general, fresher, healthier food is more expensive to buy than less healthy processed food. It also takes more time and resources to cook, and keeps for fewer days.

If people can't afford healthier foods, then it would be reasonable to think that just giving them a better store wouldn't solve their problems. But Ms. Handbury's paper found that the education of the shoppers was much more predictive
than their incomes. Poorer families bought less healthy food than richer ones. But a bigger gap was found between families with and without a college education. Those results, Ms. Handbury said, suggest that improving people's diets will require both making food accessible and affordable and also changing people's perceptions and habits about diet and health.

**Article 2:**

**Why A Philadelphia Grocery Chain Is Thriving In Food Deserts**

Maanvi Singh, May 14, 2014, NPR

When Jeff Brown opened his first grocery store in a low-income neighborhood in Philadelphia back in 2004, it seemed like a long shot.

Most people thought he was crazy to even attempt to make money in a food desert like Southwest Philly, he says. Other grocers had tried and quickly gone out of business.

But Brown...tried a different approach: "Before we did anything, we brought together a group of community leaders, and we just asked them to tell us exactly what it is they were looking for in a neighborhood grocery store."

It worked: Brown's company now operates seven profitable supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods in and around Philadelphia. Along the way, he's learned a thing or two about what it takes to change shopping and eating habits in food deserts.

...When it comes to selling fresh produce, Brown says he likes to take cues from higher-end stores like Whole Foods, which put lots of effort into marketing it. He says he has his employees at every store take extra time to hand-stack fruits and veggies "into little pyramids — because it avoids bruising and it's eye-catching."

He also invests in skilled butchers, fishmongers and in-store chefs. And that's how he's managed to tempt customers into choosing healthier food, he says, like "fire-grilled chicken" instead of fried chicken.

"It's grilled right in the store, so people can smell it. And it makes this popping and cracking sound," he says.

Selling groceries also takes lots and lots of market research. "Before we open a store in a neighborhood, we work with community leaders ... learn about their background, religion, where their families came from," Brown says. In areas with larger Muslim populations, his stores have a separate department for Halal meat.

"In some parts of Philly, we also have lots of African American families coming from the South. But Southern food and ingredients aren't so easy to come by in these areas," he says. So the ready-to-eat sections of stores in those areas offer collard greens (cooked with smoked turkey instead of pork, as a healthy touch). "And now we're famous for our Southern sweet potato pie. We bake them in-store, and they're really authentic."

But Brown doesn't just want people to shop at his stores – he wants people to spend time there. After all, foot traffic is key to sales.

So he started by making sure his stores were easy to get to. "We lobbied the transportation authority to put bus stations near our stores," he says.

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And then he added other services and perks, like community centers, which locals sign up to use for meetings and events. Some stores also have credit unions, staff nutritionists, social workers and health clinics.

Almost all of these services are free, and they are often provided in partnership with local non-profits. "It's a win-win – because by stationing in our stores, the non-profits get access to more people in need," he says. "And from our standpoint, each broken social thing hurts business."

In the case of the health clinics, Brown noticed that lots of his customers were going to the emergency room because they didn't have access to primary care practitioners. So he started his own non-profit health service, called QCare. And the organization now serves any supermarket across the country that's interested in providing low-cost health services.

"Different things work for different stores," Lempert says. "In the end, it's really about putting the supermarket at the center of the community."

**Guiding Questions:**

- Do you think Brown's innovations respond to the challenges posed by the New York Times piece in a compelling way?
- Are there conflicts between community health and the profitability of Mr. Brown's business model?
- If you were a community organizer and wanted to replicate this model a food desert you were organizing in, what steps would you take? Who would you have to get on your side?

**Article 3:**

**What Will Make The Food Desert Bloom?** Dan Charles, MAY 01, 2012, NPR's “The Salt”

...The Food Trust [that originally set up farmers markets in Philadelphia] is shifting gears a bit. Instead of just trying to bring in supermarkets, it's working with the owners of hundreds of little corner stores - the kind that are common throughout low-income areas of the city, but have a reputation for selling mostly junk food.

The Polo Food Market at the corner of 10th and Brown Streets has a new, colorful refrigerator. It's on loan from The Food Trust, and it's stocked with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Store owner Salinette Rodriguez says...dozens of kids come in here every morning and leave with fruit: Apples, oranges, and lots of bananas. "Once they see something, they'll take it. If they don't see it, they won't take it."

We've reported before that simply moving fresh foods up to the front of the corner store or improving grocery store lighting attracts more buyers.

But making this food available is only the start of this new campaign. On several store racks, there are signs that rate products green, yellow, or red, based on how nutritious they are. And there are flashy little cards with recipes for how to use some of the most nutritious ingredients. Each of these meals should feed a family of four and cost about five dollars....

Barry Popkin, from the University of North Carolina, says this is the sort of effort that really can work. But changing food habits won't happen quickly, he says. Powerful economic incentives got us into this situation over the course of
the past half-century. "In 1950, low-income Americans ate the most healthy diets in our country," he says. "In 2010, they ate the least healthy diets. And that's because the least healthy foods are the cheapest."

Discussion Questions:

- Do you think The Food Trust's innovations respond to the challenges posed by the New York Times piece in a compelling way?
- What are the characteristics of successful initiatives described in these articles combating the health challenges of food deserts?
- Looking together at these examples in the podcast, and article 2 and 3, do you think these are just creative examples or have principles that can be replicated for larger scale systemic change?
- How do we reconcile the excitement of local grassroots initiatives with data-driven nation-wide trends?
DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 4

THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

Items Needed:

- Internet capable device to play "Bucket brigades and the fight against hunger" TEDx talk
- Screen and speakers
- Copies of Mazon's “Quick Facts About Hunger in America” Sheet
- Copies of a few of Mazon's “This Is Hunger” Narratives
- Copies of sources sheets with discussion questions

Framing:

When we engage with the many aspects of the movement for Food Justice, it's important to remember that millions in this country have limited access to food of any kind. In this entree, we will explore the state of food insecurity in America today. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Although often used interchangeably with “hunger,” the metrics of food insecurity provide some useful information about the economic and social contexts that may lead to hunger but do not assess the extent to which hunger, a physiological state, actually ensues.

While no one story can encompass all experiences of food insecurity, we will begin by reading several stories collected by Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger that shares first hand account of food insecurity, before engaging with statistics. We invite you to treat these stories with kavod, or honor, in the same way you would if the storyteller were in the room with you. These folks have shared their stories bravely and we have a responsibility as listeners to not make assumptions about any additional aspects of the storyteller's life. To conclude we will watch a podcast by Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger and a leader in the anti-hunger movement in America.

Host Instructions:

Before your meal, go to Mazon's “This is Hunger” site and read through the narratives. Pick which stories you think will be most meaningful for your group to hear and print out enough copies for every guest. Try to pick at least two or three different stories to have folks engaging with a variety of material. In addition, print out one copy of the “Quick Facts about Hunger in America” Source Sheet and cut the paper up into strips, one for each numbered sentence. As you greet your guests upon arrival, hand them a slip of paper and ask them to hold on to it until later.

**Part 1:** During your meal, begin by framing the space and emphasizing the importance of using “I statements” when talking about food insecurity and not making generalizations for the group. Pass around a “face of hunger” narrative to each person and ask them to read their story silently to themselves. Do an initial go-around, asking everyone to share the name of their person and one way that food insecurity impacts their lives. After the go-around, open up the floor

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for discussion:

- What surprised you most about the story you read?
- Did you find yourself holding any assumptions about food insecurity that this story contradicted?
- What were the themes that we heard amongst the stories about the impact of food insecurity?
- What resources did the individuals have available to them? What resources didn’t they have?

Part 2: Now that you’ve heard some human stories of food insecurity, let’s add some statistics. Ask the group to read “Quick Facts About Hunger in America” (from Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger), rotating among guests for each paragraph. Feel free to stop and discuss after a particularly compelling statistic. After the statistics have been read, facilitate a full group discussion:

- What can statistics tell us about food insecurity that narratives can’t? What do narratives tell us that statistics can’t?
- How does the breakdown of organizations and services to combat domestic hunger compare to what you knew before?
- If you were to share one of these facts with your representative or legislator, which one would it be and why?

Part 3: To conclude, have the group gather around the internet capable device and screen, and watch Joel Berg’s “Bucket brigades and the fight against hunger” TEDx talk.

On the back of the source sheets you will find discussion questions about the video. You can either have folks break up into small groups to discuss or stay in one large group. It’s likely some may feel uncomfortable, or even personally offended by Berg’s dismissal of the importance of hands-on service in food pantries and soup kitchens. Encourage folks to lean into that discomfort and discuss the merits of direct service and advocacy to end food insecurity.

We invite you to offer that both direct service and advocacy are important methods of social change when trying to end food insecurity, and that they are most effective when done together.

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1 NOTE: Some more observant Jews refrain from engaging with technological devices on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. If either you or your guests are traditionally observant, feel free to omit listening to the podcast. Feel free to adapt any of the other activities accordingly, or you might use some of the fact sheets Mazon has prepared to facilitate a more in-depth conversation about the numbers of food insecurity.

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Guiding Questions for TEDx Talk:

● Berg makes the assertion that to end every major national goal - fixing public education in America, cutting obesity, restoring the middle class, cutting crime and incarceration, reducing healthcare spending, protecting the country from our enemies, and slashing poverty - to end any of those things we have to end hunger. Based on that assertion, explore how hunger might be a root cause of each of these issues. Does this new framing change your understanding of food insecurity as a social justice issue?

● What other social issues do you know of that have had government services replaced with “Bucket Brigades?” How are these issues interrelated with food insecurity?

● If food drives are not ending hunger, why do them? (hint: there are many good answers that Berg would agree with).

● At his climax, Berg says, “Claiming we can end hunger with a bit more charity is like saying we can fill the Grand Canyon with a teaspoon. But the Grand Canyon will always erode faster than we can fill it and hunger will always increase faster than charity. And lets not kid ourselves, we’re not going to end hunger either with more seasonal community gardens or farms, more cooking nutrition classes or some sexy new app. Sorry, its true. Sure, some of those things can help at the margins, but lets be clear that the only thing that can truly end hunger in America is a fundamental paradigm shift that replaces charity with justice.”

○ How do you find the balance as a volunteer to help those on the margins and work for the fundamental paradigm shift required for true food justice?

○ How can we make our service part of a larger movement for change?

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DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 5

KOSHER FOOD JUSTICE - BRINGING THE HOLINESS BACK TO EATING

Items Needed:

- Copies of Source Sheet with “Judaism on my Plate” and “Ethical Consumption Kavanah”

Framing:

Jewish tradition is filled with sources relating to food justice - there are injunctions to have food pantries in every town, laws requiring farmers to leave the edges of their field unharvested for the poor, obligatory tithing of one's harvest to charity, and on and on. The project of incorporating the values inherent in these ancient laws is an important and pressing one, that many of you may already be working on (and will have an opportunity to do with service).

There is also an important spiritual dimension in Judaism of examining our relationship to our food and food system through the practice of reciting brachot, or blessings, before eating. Reciting *brachot* is a regular mindfulness practice to connect to the many values of ethical consumption. Like our opening activity, reciting *brachot* allows us to pause before eating and consider all those whose lives were affected to allow us to take this bite. In this activity, we will read an essay by Dasi Fruchter, a rabbinical student and social justice activist, who asserts that “Kosher” should be more than just a label certifying a foods’ compliance with Jewish dietary laws. It should encompass an ethical relationship to the food we eat that is *Yosher* - upright and just.

We will also study a kavanah, or intention, to be recited before eating (in this case before eating dessert), and explore the ideas this practice can offer in building a sustained commitment to working for food justice.

Host Instructions:

This entree discusses how Jewish spiritual practice can help us live out our values and commitment to food justice in our everyday lives. Have your guests read “Judaism on my plate” in small groups, or all together if you prefer, and discuss the questions following. Please feel free to provide more information on the Tav HaYosher ethical certification.

Before eating dessert, have the group do a go around of one thing they might incorporate into their daily lives to remind them of the importance of food justice, and then recite the *ethical consumption kavanah*. While eating, you can discuss how reciting the *kavanah*, or intention, affected your experience of eating.

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SOURCE SHEET

Justice on My Plate, By Dasi Fruchter

Dasi Fruchter is the former director of tav/food justice community engagement at Uri L'Tzedek. She currently resides in Brooklyn, NY, and is working towards her ordination as an Orthodox clergy member. When she’s not teaching or learning, Dasi spends much of her time connecting with those trying to help create spiritually strong, vibrant, and world-changing communities, doing Orthodox feminist organizing, and hosting extravagant Shabbat meals.

It left a sour taste in my mouth to know that my food could be technically kosher but have unjust origins. I wanted another dimension for my brakhah.

I vividly remember learning the specific brakhot (blessings) for food in my Modern Orthodox upbringing: I can still see the flash cards decorated with colorful pictures of all types of food, from shiny hallot to crunchy bowls of cereal. We had to guess which brakha matched which food, and to be the proud winner of the Brakha Bee was the high point of anyone’s school year. At home this ritual—a meditation thanking God for our food before eating—was even further emphasized. I always admired my mother as she closed her eyes and with great intention said a blessing over a beautiful, steaming plate of food.

As I grew older and began to learn more about the production of food, I felt conflicted about the nature of some of the brakhot. Yes, I was grateful to God for what I was eating, and I felt undeniably lucky never to have to choose between my food and my health or between physical sustenance and having a roof over my head.

But I also had begun to learn about injustices related to food, especially through my work with Uri L'Tzedek's Tav HaYosher program. (Tav awards a special "ethical" seal to food establishments that, in addition to meeting the requirements for kashrut certification, also abide by the basic standards of labor law.) I had become aware that many restaurant employees, in non-kosher and kosher restaurants alike, are subject to exploitative conditions. Their employers do not pay minimum wage, compensate for overtime, or even provide a safe and discrimination-free working environment. As a person who is strictly kosher, it left a sour taste in my mouth to know that my food could be technically kosher but still have unjust origins.

And so, in a world where it often seems that profits outweigh human relationships, I wanted to incorporate a kavannah that added another dimension to my brakhah before eating—a ritual that invoked rich biblical and Rabbinic texts and traditions protecting the rights of workers. I wanted something to meditate on when I chose to eat at a Tav-certified restaurant or get my produce from a farm where I know the workers are treated properly. I found what I was looking for in the ethical consumption blessing (see below).

With programs like Tav HaYosher, the landscape is changing. Those who keep kosher are beginning to think about the impact of their food on others. Consumers are uniting to tell restaurant owners it is important to them that food not only be prepared by the standards of kosher, but also by standards of yosher (uprightness). Over 90 restaurant owners so far have partnered with us as ethical trailblazers in the restaurant industry.

As for me, I've found that eating ethically has elevated my brakhah to a higher spiritual level. My enhanced
brakhah—layered with social awareness, spiritual activism and immense gratitude—feels completely different from the one I recited in elementary school.

### Discussion Questions:

- Whether or not you personally have the practice of saying brachot, or blessings, before eating food, what purpose could a ritual that draws attention to the origins of our food serve in your life?
- Do you have any personal rituals or kavanot that have similar intentions as what Fruchter is describing here?
- What other values or ethics in our food system do you think the system of kashrut should account for?
- How do spiritual practices support the work of social justice activists? Has a spiritual practice been an important part of the work you do in the world?

### Ethical Consumption Kavannah

Using this ritual, we can employ spiritual intention in becoming ethical consumers, both to acknowledge the centrality of justice and ethics in Jewish tradition and law, and to think about those individuals and communities who are deeply involved in ethical production. By ritualizing this, we make the act of ethical consumption a crucial, positive, and holy deed.

Whether “ethical consumption” means buying ethically sourced meat or eating from kosher establishments that have been awarded Tav HaYosher, it can be a powerful communal or personal experience to acknowledge that decision with a ritual kavannah, or meditation, to recite before using or eating something that was produced in an ethical way, and to acknowledge the workers who have helped bring that food from the farm to your table.

### English:

God, the One who does justice in the world and promotes a world of justice, may it be known that I am consuming something that was produced through just means, as I strive to obey the Torah law of “do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord” (Deut. 6:18). In the same way that this food item was prepared according to the upright tenets of Jewish law and tradition and in just and ethical working conditions, may the rest of the world eventually prevail with justice as it is written, “To repair the world under the sovereignty of the Lord”.

I appreciate and acknowledge those workers who have labored to bring this food to my table. May it be known that I commend those who have made conscious efforts to produce or buy this food in an upright way.

May they be blessed with the ability to do many more upright deeds and be partners with the Creator in making the world a more just place, as it is written, “The wicked man earns illusory wages, but he who sows righteousness has a true reward”. (Proverbs 11:18)

### Hebrew:

ה, ממל אבוב צדקה ו реша, המקודם של צדק, שיהיה יועד שאני אוכל/ת את האוכל הזה השלם וברכים,答复 שאני.

שאם/ת שלמר על חן התהרות "ועשה איש ותפוקה לפלק". באתה גור הושואך זה חון על פי עקרונות החוק והמשטרים הדתיים ובגידה, בניח pérdida, אני מצריח/ת ימין על כך, שמי הילתנוג בדרכ, כמי ששתנים/ת לאכול משלים, שיכ🔖.

אני מתייר/ת את הבדוחה הקשה של ביני アדום אServletResponseי יisdiction יאכל, ואר ייוד שעאני או/ת לאוכל, ואר עליך, ייוד שעאני או/ת לאוכל.

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בכל חוחי כי לנתים ולא הוולך הזה בנךיה יושה

ייחי את נשיאו ליבי אש ואלה את יכלהי פיות העבודה עבד ועבד והלא משך אהב זה ושחרש מחומם הזה לשער ו pozostał-wifeי והשבה עלום בשמךacement

למקום של צדק אמתי לכנס ש共青" motherboard: "הרש העשה פעולות תשרא בחקך יצוד ישרא

Discussion Questions:

● How do you think reciting this kavannah before eating would affect your relationship to our food system?
● Would you feel comfortable reciting this kavannah if you can't know for sure that every part of your meal was produced through just means? Phrased more generally, can a blessing be aspirational?

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DISCUSSION ENTREE: OPTION 6

CREATE YOUR OWN! (AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES)

Have you come across an engaging video, article or piece that you want to use as a prompt for discussion with your guests? Interested in facilitating a conversation without a source? Want to ask your guests to each bring interesting sources that they've come across with them to the dinner and use those to prompt discussion? Go for it!

We recommend creating Guiding Questions beforehand, or asking guests to bring Guiding Questions with them, and then wrapping up your discussion with the Closing Reflections.

Still looking for more inspiration? Check out these resources from our friends and partner organizations:

- **Feeding America**: Information on Hunger Action Month (September) and resources for talking about Hunger
- **Mazon**: texts on hunger in the Jewish tradition
- **Hazon**: download their guide, “Fit to Eat: Food Security and Justice - Resource and Action Guide for Jewish Organizations,” as well as other Jewish curriculum on Food justice
- **Truah**: Learn about their Campaign with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers; an anti-slavery campaign for workers rights in the tomato business.

If you do choose this route, please share your resources and customized activities with us - post using @RepairstheWorld #TurntheTables or email us at InspireService@weRepair.org.

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DESSERT: CLOSING REFLECTIONS

CLOSING THE DISCUSSION

After your entree discussion has concluded, we encourage you and your guests to reflect on this dinner experience and process the information presented in your discussion.

We recommend the Triangle-Square-Circle reflection method, which asks participants to share either:

- **Triangle:** Three points they took away from this discussion
- **Square:** Anything that “squares” with their thinking or anything they agreed with
- **Circle:** Something that’s still circling around in their head

CLOSING WITH MEDITATION

A shabbat meal is traditionally concluded the same way it began: by expressing gratitude for the food we ate. If it is your custom to recite the full *Birkat Hamazon* - Blessings After the Meal- at the end of your meal, first ask your guests to take a moment to recall the themes of connection to our food system we explored during the Opening Activity.

As an alternative to reciting the full *Birkat Hamazon*, you can ask your guests to reflect on these three lines from the last paragraph of the sephardic version of *Birkat Hamazon*:

May what we ate be a source of satisfaction,
what we drank be a source of health,
what we left be a source of blessing.

And then offer these questions:

- How do you relate to the last line “[May] what we left be a source of blessing”? How can leftovers be a symbol of hope and not waste?
- How can small moments of gratitude sustain a larger movement against injustice?
- How can this meditation be a reflection of our larger vision of a just and food-secure world?
- Are there post-meal additional blessings you would add to reflect your aspirations for this meal?

TAKE ACTION

We believe that meaningful and structured dialogue about community issues is the catalyst that leads to action. We hope that after tonight’s conversation you and your guests feel inspired to **TAKE ACTION** and volunteer around issues of food injustice and hunger.

Visit *[Repair the World’s Inspire Service page](#)*, where you will find a map of food justice opportunities happening in your region!

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Thank you for your participation!

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With gratitude to Micah Geurin Weiss for compiling and curating this guide.