

Divrei Hokhmah for 5774

CONVERSATION STARTER I

Introduction: The **Mishpachah: Modern Jewish Family Project** focuses our attention on the diversity of the families that make up our communities. Who are they? What do they look like? How welcoming and inclusive are we no matter the family structure?

The first step in promoting pluralism is to understand the importance of our communication, whether in direct conversation, when speaking about each other, or when we write or email, etc.

Many of these Conversation Starters are from the personal experiences of diverse families in our communities and are found in the August material, “Beginning the Conversation.” Others were taken from everyday sources such as synagogue bulletins and conversations.

Over the next year, as we become more attuned to the effects of language, we will reinforce the wisdom of Proverbs: *mavet ve-chayyim beyad lashon* (death and life are in the power of the tongue). In other words, language counts!

Thanks to the members of the PAC for creating these discussion questions.



Read the Conversation Starter before a meeting or event and then open it up for discussion. You will be amazed at the response.

Lesbian families, unlike ‘straight’ families, still have to be accepted.

Discussion questions

- Why are we *still* calling them “lesbian” families?
- Do we usually use the term “heterosexual” family?
- What does it mean to be “accepted” and why is it important?
- Is there an implied judgment in the process of acceptance?
- Why do children accept differences easier than adults?