

Virtue – Cleanliness

נְקִיּוֹן

Ni-ka-yon / cleanliness
noun / clean'li•ness / klĕn'lĕ-nĭs
habitually and carefully neat and clean

Guide For Your Circle

1

ICE - BREAKER

Ask each person to introduce themselves, and to share with the group:

(a) their name; and

(b) a part of their day they would like to bring with them as they begin this conversation, and/or a part of their day they would like to leave behind

2

RECAP LAST MONTH'S VIRTUE

Ask the group to reflect on how they fared with their commitment from the last month

- Did you achieve your commitments around this virtue?
- What challenges did you face?
- What surprised you about the experience?
- Did your understanding of the virtue change over the month?

3

DISCUSS NEXT MONTH'S VIRTUE

Compare Ben Franklin's definition of the virtue with the passage from Pirkei Avot. Use the questions below to help guide the conversation.

4

MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT:

Before your meeting ends, set a goal for yourself for how you can better live that month's virtue. Share it with the group and plan to follow up on how you did at your next meeting.

Example: For cleanliness, could you commit to doing one household chore you neglect? Making your bed everyday? Leaving the kitchen sink empty? Setting time to do your laundry?

Side-By-Side: Ben Franklin And Pirkei Avot

BEN FRANKLIN'S DEFINITION:

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes or habitation.

PIRKEI AVOT

(PA 3:14)

He would say: The human being is beloved, for he was created in the image [of God]; even greater love [was shown by God] in that the human being is informed that he was created in the image [of God], as it says: "For in the image of God, God created the human being."

Questions To Ask The Group

- The Talmud* states that anything created in the image of God has three qualities: infinite value, equality and uniqueness. How might this connect to Ben Franklin's definition of cleanliness?
- Franklin included cleanliness on his list of 13 *civic* virtues. Why do you think he included cleanliness?
- Is cleanliness a Jewish virtue? What are ways cleanliness factor into Jewish life and practice?
- How does cleanliness relate to the concept of self-care? Is self-care a Jewish value? How can you practice more self-care?
- How can we turn the concept of cleanliness outward to help improve the community?

*Sanhedrin 37a