

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

Coming to America – Late 20th Century *Elective*

AUTHOR(S):	Asya Gribov
SUMMARY:	Explore artifacts to uncover the personal story of a Russian Jew escaping The Former Soviet Union and emigrating to the United States in the early 1990s. - Submitted by Asya Gribov
TOPIC(S):	Russian- American, Jewish History Culture and diversity among Jews Immigration Telling personal narrative
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learn about the immigration of Soviet Jews to The United States at the end of the 20th century - get a glimpse of the history of Jews in the Former Soviet Union - discuss stories of contemporary immigration and celebrate each other's cultures and traditions - experience the modality of using artifacts for sharing personal narratives/ camp narratives
AUDIENCE:	Ages: 9- 18 Group Size: 12-20
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	- Artifact printouts - See, think, wonder handout sheet - Artifact explanations - Historic moments documents
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Print out of artifacts Used sponge or cleaning glove Nails, banana sticker
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any location. Prior to session, collect necessary materials and print and cut out documents. Place the artifact into an envelope or box. Create a timeline on a wall or flat surface.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Historic Timeline

As participants enter the room, they can walk around and explore the displayed timeline on the wall.

Introductory Discussion -Get the giggles out.

Now is the time to address stereotypes, misconceptions, etc.

- What do you know about Russians? What do you know about Russian- Jews in America?
- What do you want to know? What are some of the stereotypes or caricatures?

Not that we got our funnies out, I want to share something with you.

When cleaning out an apartment of a woman, we came upon a small box in which it seemed she kept some items that were important and meaningful to her. It seems that this woman came to America from another place and she kept a record of her journey as well as some other peculiar items. We will investigate these items to see what we can learn about her experience and see what else we might discover about our own heritage.

Artifact Investigation

Model Artifact Investigation (especially for younger groups)

Remove 1 item from the envelope and observe together with whole group.

- What do you see? (literally see, without making conclusions. Ex: date, name, words, images, etc.)
- What do you think?
- What do you wonder?

Split participants into small groups of 3-5 people.

Hand each group 2 artifacts.

Each group should use the clues on the artifacts to figure out:

- relevant dates and times
- what might it be
- how was it used

After 5 min, switch the artifacts around so that everyone can see more items. Repeat as necessary and as time allows.

Coming back together as 1 group, work to arrange the items in chronological order.

What do you think might be the first item in the sequence?

Who has an item with the earliest date on it?

As each item is being placed in chronological order on the timeline, share relevant information about the history of Jewish in Russia and the Soviet Union.

Group Discussion:

- Which artifacts were most surprising to you and why?
- What artifacts might you have expected to have found, but are not there?
- What else would you like to know about this person?
- How is this story similar or different to your families?

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Follow up activities:

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- share your personal story of immigration
- pack a suitcase if you were immigrating
- write a journal entry from this persons perspective at a time during this journey

Additional Resources

History of the Jews in Russia- Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_Russia

History of the Jews in the Soviet Union- Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Jews_in_the_Soviet_Union

How a Quest to Save Soviet Jews Changed the World.

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130936993>

Documentary Films:

Refusnik

<http://www.refusenikmovie.com/about.php>

Stateless

<http://www.stateless.us/>

Books:

Arrival, by Shaun Tan (children)

A Backpack, a Bear, and Eight Crates of Vodka: A Memoir, by Lev Golinkin (adult)