

Digging Into Dreams

AUTHOR(S): JessAnn Smith

SUMMARY: In this session we will examine some famous biblical dreams (and some of our own if we want to!) using Talmudic sources, psychological analysis, and our own innate wisdom to see what these elusive, nighttime visions can tell us about how we show up in our waking lives.

GOALS: Participants will learn multiple perspectives of dream analysis. Participants can explore how different approaches might be used in their own (or others') dreams. Participants will enjoy dreaming as a form of storytelling and wonder. They will gain some tools for the next time a 'bad dream' or 'nightmare' comes along!

AUDIENCE: For teens and adults (ideally ages 13 & up), 10-20 people

TIMING: 45 mins (can be extended)

MATERIALS: Digging Into Dreams Appendix (1pp), [Cute Animal Mini Notebooks](#) (1pp) (If not available, put at least 3 different and random stickers on the front of each notebook, or see additional options below), pens/pencils/writing utensils for people to have options.

SET-UP: The space should be contemplative and cozy, so a quieter, more removed and covered space will work well. A club room or lounge with tables or chairs would also work, or any indoor closed room with chairs for each person (and maybe some tables) would be fine, but they also need to be able to have a little space to go off in pairs or alone for part of the session. Try to find a space that inspires wonder!

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Intro/Framing
- 00:05-00:15 – Text Study and Breakout Groups
- 00:15-00:20 – Debrief & Reframe (the flip)
- 00:20-00:35 – Journal Activity (alone or in pairs)
- 00:35-00:45 – Share and Close

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:05 – Intro/Framing

The session leader introduces session topic and passes out notebooks (see below if you have more time and don't have exact notebooks listed). Ask participants to choose one image on the front of the notebook ("whichever one you choose first is the right one!").

As they go around the circle introducing their name & pronouns, their camp, what symbol they chose, and what it makes them think of. (Ex "I'm Bob, I use they/he pronouns, and I chose this carrot which makes me think of a racetrack!"). This should not be too drawn out!

Explain that dreams are compiled of images, ideas, and sounds that we absorb throughout the day, and we aren't even always aware of it. Dreams' meanings and interpretations can vary based on who, where, and when they are, where we come from, and what we're going through!

00:05-00:15 – Text Study and Breakout Groups

Pass out the *Digging into Dreams* handout. If you have time, have participants volunteer to read aloud each quote. Have folks split into groups of 2 or 3 to discuss the handout:

- Which text spoke to you loudest?
- Was there a text you did not agree with? Why?

00:15-00:20 – Debrief & Reframe (the flip)

The session leader asks a few participants to share thoughts that came up during discussion.

Instruct the participants to draw a large number "6" on the back of their notebook. Explain that in Judaism, 6 often symbolizes working, creation, and the physical body (or one might say the "face value"). Now have them turn it upside down – now it's a 9! In Kabbalah, the number "9" can symbolize the truth in Jewish mysticism and "the hidden good," according to the Zohar. Dreams often "say" one thing - and mean another!

00:20-00:35 – Journal Activity (alone or in pairs)

Session leader now instructs participants to take the next 10-15 minutes to choose a recent dream they had (or they can use the Genesis 28 handout if they don't want to use their own) and journal or draw a 'Dream Interpretation' using the following prompts and the quotes on the sheet:

- Start by listing images, colors, actions, sounds, etc., that were present in your dream (or Jacob's)
- Circle 2-3 that stand out to you. Whatever you decide to circle is the right thing to look at for right now!
- Journal or draw what these 2-3 things might symbolize or what they might be telling you. Where can you find the "hidden good" in what your dreams are telling you?

00:35-00:45 – Share and Close

Session leader invites participants to rejoin the group and facilitates a discussion using the following prompts, while reading the room to draw further discussion:

- Was there a part of your dream analysis that surprised you?

- How else can you practice finding the “hidden good” in your dreams?

If there is time, the session leader can close the discussion with one or two more shared thoughts from the group and then read the poem by RUMI.

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

Dreams affect everyone differently and some folks don't dream at all! Make sure to remind folks to be gentle when thinking of their own dreams to analyze – if it seems too scary or intense, then it's not the right dream for right now!

The dream from Genesis 28 in the handout is totally optional, but it's important to have at least something ready to provide an alternative for folks who don't dream or who don't want to analyze their own dreams. You can also use different dream examples from the Tenakh or midrash, or any other stories! Make sure to use an example of a **dream** and not a **vision**.

For the notebooks, if you have a little extra time and you don't have the exact notebooks with graphics already on them, you can do an activity in the beginning where everyone chooses one blank notebook and sits in a circle. Instruct them to draw a small object or symbol on the front then pass it to the right. Repeat this two times so there are 3 images on the notebook. Then pass it to the right one more time, and that will be their new notebook!