

Nighttime Journey Through Nature, *Evening Experience*

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SUMMARY:	Experience a nighttime journey through nature that will wake up your senses and your soul. Participants will go on a night hike, participate in a guided meditation, learn new songs and melodies, perfect their howling skills, and build campfires and community.
TOPIC(S):	Nature, Community Building
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<p>Fellows will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience nature during daylight and darkness • Learn new songs and stories to share at their camps • Feel more confident when it comes to facilitating nighttime nature and campfire programs • Participate in guided and self-directed meditation and <i>Hitbodedut</i> • Enjoy being together outdoors in nature, form connections with new people
AUDIENCE:	Up to 40 people ideally, can also split into smaller groups if necessary
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Story Text (Baal Shem Tov), song lyrics, passage on Hitbodedut from Reb Nachman of Breslov
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Firewood for building one fire, matches or lighter, candles (shabbat length or longer, not tea lights), string lights (if access to electricity), smudge stick (incense, preferably sage).
SET-UP DETAILS:	No indoor room required. Set-up is simply to prepare campfire for easy lighting.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

00:00-00:10 - Welcome and Framing (10 min)

00:10-00:25 - Nature Walk (15 minutes)

00:25-00:35 - Guided Meditation (5-10 min)

00:35-01:10 - Chevruta sharing, lead into campfire story and songs (35-40 min)

01:10-01:30 – Hitbodedut intro and self-guided Hitbodedut, walk back up to camp, howl! (20 min)

Welcome and Introduction (10 min)

Give introduction to nighttime nature activities at camp. Present concept of *Pokeach Ivrim* – opening our eyes, giving sight to the blind, seeing something without understanding it. This activity will provide an opportunity to both explore and understand what it means to see and experience things that are not on the surface, both when it comes to nature and larger camp experiences.

Walk to Nature Place (10-15 min)

Group will walk from starting place down to an area near the stream or lake. Set intention for walking, connected to *Pokeach Ivrim*. Have group walk slowly, with intention, paying close attention to sights, sounds, and scents.

Guided Meditation (5-10 min)

Upon arrival, group will sit down, spread out enough that they are not touching anyone next to them. They will be led in a guided meditation.

Chevruta (partner) Sharing and Campfire (35-40 min)

In partners (*hevruta*), share a meaningful nature moment.

Sample trigger questions:

- Can you think of a moment when you were particularly connected to nature? Why was it?
- If that moment was in camp, what made it special? Could it be shared here and replicated in some way?
- Can you think of both a group and solo moment in nature that was meaningful? What made it meaningful to you?
- Have you ever witnessed a nature program in camp that was powerful? If so, can you articulate it in 2-3 sentences?

After a few minutes of sharing, ask if anyone wants to share with the larger group. Once they've shared, they will receive a candle that they will light and hold onto. After a few people have shared, they will all bring the candles together to light the fire.

Fire will already have been prepped in advance, so shouldn't take too long to light. While it's being lit, give brief explanation of the "ingredients" of a successful fire (a quick how-to build a fire tutorial), e.g safety, durable surface, crowd management).

Once fire is lit, everyone will listen to story of Baal Shem Tov in the forest. Abridged version of the story can be found here: Smudge the group as the story is told. <https://jewishcamp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Cmon-Baby-Story-2.pdf>

After the story, we will transition into singing. The first song will be a *niggun* (a melody without words) so that people feel comfortable even if they aren't familiar with a particular song. Participants will be encouraged to gather sticks or rocks to use as instruments. Practice of listening while also contributing to the rhythm and the music.

Song list:

- Mozi's nigun - Ana B'Koach by Joey Weisenberg: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-00rsOb_2eI&index=3&list=RDHMcJYq5THeE
- Ozi V'zimrat Yah
- Olam Chesed Yibaneh- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHp-jcPIKIY>
- Adamah V'Shamayim
- Other songs that participants want to sing

Hitbodedut & Walk Back to Camp (20 min)

At conclusion of singing, we will introduce the concept of *Hitbodedut*. Hitbodedut is an unstructured, spontaneous, individualized form of meditation or prayer that could even involve talking out loud or yelling in the middle of an empty forest. It is a concept introduced by Rebbe Nachman of Breslov).



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Participants will be given a few minutes to find a space for their own Hitbodedut practice, and will then be encouraged to walk up the hill back to camp in silence as they continue their practice, focusing on the sights, sounds, scents of the physical space around them as they walk. Just before reaching the top of the hill, everyone will re-group and be led in a cathartic wolf/coyote howl.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Each element of this program is usable with campers or staff members at camp. Can be used together as a whole program or in parts.