Tour Israel in 20 Minutes – Anywhere!

Elective 2

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| **Author(s):** | Meir Balofsky |
| **summary:** | An engaging interactive Israel adventure that can take place anytime and anywhere. An amazing way to introduce Israel Education to new audiences of all ages.  *- Submitted by Meir Balofsky* |
| **Topic(s):** | Israel Programming |
| **Learning Objective:** | Learn how to open the Israeli experience for younger and older campers. Discover gateways for teaching Israel as a cultural, historical, spiritual, and recreational Jewish playground! |
| **Audience:** | 20 participants maximum |
| **TIMING:** | 90 minutes |
| **AppendiCes:** | Al HaMapa – PDF  Mt. Carmel Story – PDF |
| **Materials Needed:** | Hello My Name is stickers  Various spices / mardi gras beads / whatever else to make the shuk look nice  Faux Shekel bills  Sand  10 agurot coins – any Jewish items – (menorah, kippah…)  Plastic shovels  Picture of the Kotel  Papers and pens for note writing |
| **Set-UP DETAILS:** | Shuk station – Table with spices, beads, other knickknacks  Hat for the vendor  Archaeology station - outdoors – pile the sand and bury the ‘artifacts” – prepare the shovels nearby  Kotel station – print off a picture of the Kotel and post it on the wall. |

**Session Timeline & Outline:**

Begin by barking “next” from a podium until one participant stands and comes forward. Pretend to stamp a passport and them a name tag “hello my name is” and say, “Welcome to Israel.” Continue until everyone has entered.

Participants will walk in and be greeted by an airport greeter (the facilitator).

Introductions will include – Name; whether it’s their first time in Israel (or how many times they have been), and the part of Israel they’re looking forward to the most.

**First Stop**

The first experience will be at the shuk in Tel Aviv. Everyone will receive a faux 20 shekel bill and see a display of spices / fruits / knickknacks on a table.   
The airport greeter will become the vendor and put on the theatrics of a stereotypical shuk salesperson. Everyone will have a chance to "buy" something from the shuk.

**Second Stop**

The second experience will be on a hike in the Carmel mountains. The vendor will become the tour guide again and lead a short trail in the woods while discussing the history of the forefathers and mothers who walked in these footsteps. Tell the story of Elijah on Mt. Carmel: 1 Kings – 18:16-45. (Ideally do not read the story verbatim; pre-read the story and say it in your own words.)

**Third Stop**

The third experience will be an archaeological dig. The tour guide will become the archaeologist. Everyone will get a toy shovel and will be directed to the sandbox / dirt pile where several real Israeli 10 agurot coins will have been planted along with pictures of ancient Jewish items. Everyone will have a chance to dig for artifacts to add to the Israel museum's collections.

**Fourth Stop**

The fourth experience will be at the Kotel. The archaeologist will become a Rabbi who will greet the group and explain that the Kotel is one of the remaining retaining walls of the ancient Jewish temple and people come here from around the world to pray to the Almighty. Everyone will get a paper and a pen to write a note for the Kotel and have a moment for a prayer of peace in Israel.   
  
After the last stop everyone will sit down to journal their tour in Israel.   
Volunteers will be asked to share some highlights.

**Debrief**

1. Were there things you wished were part of this trip that we didn’t do?
2. Were there things we did that you wish we spend more time with? Why and how?
3. How could this format of program be used in your camp?

Acknowledge that Birthright by design does not get into the political and social challenges of Israel. It’s designed as 10 days of “candy” for newcomers to the Israel Experience.

What role could / should camp play in getting into the deeper issues?

**Introduce “Al HaMapa”**

Spread out the papers from Al HaMapa on the floor. Ask participants to choose one that they are curious about / connect to / fascinated with.

Go around and share what they chose and why. Repeat the process with a new picture

Ask – “Were there any pictures that made you uncomfortable? In what ways? Why?

**Conclusion**

There are many ways to open the Israel discussion. We need to consider our audience and what we as counsellors / educators think is important and what our audience will actually care about.

When people care about anything, especially Israel, they will feel invested and deeper ideas can then be introduced.