

01 

MODERATION
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MODERATION

*You know what they say,
“Everything in moderation!”*

This grouping of values is all about looking within. How can I make myself more content, humble, and internally balanced? By living a lifestyle that emphasizes moderation and allows for self-reflection.

Challenge #1: My Many Faces

Relevant Value: Contentment (Histapkut)

Get those art supplies ready! Invite an age group or bunk to gather around a group of tables. Hand each participant a print out of a paper mask. (No purchase needed here! Print an online template, instruct them to cut it out, use a hole punch to make a hole on each side, and tie a piece of string to both sides - and you've got a mask!)

Part One: How I See Me. On one side of the mask, ask the participant to take some quiet, personal time to draw or write how they would describe themselves - they can write the word "musical" or they can draw music notes, or both! Tell them to be as honest as they would like, no one will see this side but them. When they are done they should write their name on the blank side and leave the mask, blank side up, on the table.

Part Two: How You See Me. Spread the masks out around the space and invite every person to add something to the blank side of every mask that represents the person whose name is written on it (If your group is large, split participants up into groups of 6-12)

Part 3: Showing Off My Face. Gather participants back to discuss the experience. What is the nicest thing someone wrote on your mask? What is one compliment you really want to give a fellow participant? Challenge the participants to wear the masks for the rest of the hour or day, with their favorite side facing forward, showing they are content with who they are and are ready to share it with the world.

Challenge #2: Not to #humblebrag...

Relevant Values: Humility (Anavah), Modesty (Tzniut)

We all have our "things" - activities we are great at or patterns we fall into (like always being the first to volunteer). Ask participants to write at least three "humblebrags." Have them share these with the group (or a partner) and have the group identify the one that is most prominent. Challenge each individual to give up that thing for the day or week. Meet back to reflect after the challenge is over.

Possible Reflection Questions:

- Did you actually refrain from your humblebrag?
- Did anyone keep you accountable?
- How did it feel to live in moderation for this aspect?
- Did you gain any time or new skill in the meantime?
- Did you learn anything about yourself?

Challenge #3: Mensches Wobble But They Don't Fall Down...

Relevant Value: Balance & Inner Beauty (Tiferet)

It is time to hit the lake! Does camp have a blob? Gather a bunch of balls (gator balls or beach balls work nicely - something soft!) and get ready to simulate the stresses of life. A prominent concept of Jewish prayer is the balance of Keva (routine) and Kavannah (intention). How can an individual follow their intention (in this case their intent to be mensch) while the routine of life keeps throwing stuff at them? Simulate that struggle! A volunteer tries to get from one side of the blob to the other, while these balls (representing homework, video games, social media etc.), thrown by the other campers, try to stop them on their quest to Mensch-dom!



CHALLENGE ACCEPTED?

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LOOKING FOR MORE?

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02



SPIRITUALITY

קְדוּשָׁה

KEDUSHA

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SPIRITUALITY

“We do not need more intellectual power, we need more spiritual power. We do not need more of the things that are seen, we need more of the things that are unseen.”

— Calvin Coolidge

A mensch is connected to the people and world around them. The Spirituality grouping of middot emphasizes amazing elements like wonder, joy, and gratitude, which bring people together and make us happier, connected, and more down-to-earth beings.

Challenge #1: Ecstatic Dance

Relevant Value: Joy (Sameach)

It's time for a dance party! Challenge your campers to embrace true joy by joining in an "ecstatic dance party" where everyone dances on their own and moves wherever the music takes them. Success can be found with these simple steps:

Step One: Create a freeing, fun, fabulous playlist.

Step Two: Set up some simple ground rules (1) no talking, (2) no touching, and (3) embrace the music and dance like nobody's watching!

Step Three: Reflect! When we dance and engage our bodies we release endorphins that scientifically make us happy. After dancing what is your current mood? What do you want to do with your happiness? How could you use this energy to spread your joy? It's contagious!

Challenge #2: Wonderwall

Relevant Value: Wonder (Malchut)

The average child five years to nine-year-old asks 65 questions a day - can you challenge your campers (regardless of their age!) to record their questions and engage with others about the answers? Create a "wonderwall" in each bunk or in a public space in camp. Provide fun colored Post its and markers so everyone can write down all the things they are wondering about - from the meaning of life to what will be for lunch tomorrow - and others can share their answers!

Challenge #3: Wonderful Nature Walk

Relevant Value: Wonder (Malchut)

Why is the sky blue? Why is the grass green? Nothing incites wonder like nature. Challenge your campers to explore the natural world around camp and ask questions about what they see. Grab some magnifying glasses, some clipboards, and pencils/paper and head into the wilderness. Observe the ground, the creatures, the colors, the scents, and the air. How do they make you feel? What ideas and questions do they inspire? When you've completed your walk, what are you still wondering about?

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03



HONOR

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KAVOD

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HONOR

“I would prefer even to fail with honor than to win by cheating” – Sophocles

To give honor to someone means not only that someone is recognized as an exemplar for others, but also that the person being honored understands their responsibility as a role model. It is hard to uphold the mantle of honor and it takes a community to sustain a person in this role. Along with compassion, kindness, and loyalty, a person deserving of honor pursues the peace and leadership necessary for the health of the community.

Challenge #1: Field of Mensches

Relevant Value: Loyalty (Ne'emanut), Kindness (Chesed)

Hit the field, court, or trivia stage. Have your campers play some sort of game or sport in teams - they should create a team name, cheer, and hand shake. They should enjoy the experience of working together - but their challenge comes later. Can they remain loyal to their teammates? Throughout the rest of the day or week, challenge them to remain loyal to their team by doing nice deeds for one another, doing their hand shake when they see each other, and cheering when one of them does something of note.

Challenge #2: Can You Even Lift, Mensch?

Relevant Values: Leadership (Manhigut), Loyalty (Ne'emanut)

The Hebrew word for Honor, "Kavod" has the same root as the Hebrew word for heavy, "Kaved." Can you challenge your campers to embrace that connection? Hold a weightlifting contest that mimics the holding, carrying, and raising of the Torah using any heavy things you may have at camp (gallon water jugs, stacks of books, bundles of firewood, etc.) Play this game as a relay to get everyone involved, for example, which team can lift the weight, while also honoring the "Torah." Remember - traditionally, if the Torah falls, the congregation has to fast - so if the "Torah" drops, the whole team must go back to the starting line. Leaders may emerge who find a more excellent way to complete the tasks, but the weight must be carried by each person at one point.

Challenge #3: Quiet on Set!

Relevant Value: Pursuit of Peace (Rodef Shalom)

Camp is place ridden with noise. Challenge a group of campers to create and embrace some quiet as they pursue the possibility of peace. Assign a few campers as "Peace Pursuers" while the rest of the group is given instructions to make unique noises at various times. Can the Pursuers convince the rest of the group to quiet down and embrace the calm?

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04



WISDOM

חכמה

HOCHMA

HO



WISDOM

Who is wise? The one who learns from every person. (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

Wisdom, or Hochma, is a key aspect of being a mensch! At camp we learn from each person we encounter and gain wisdom along the way.

Challenge #1: Busy As a Bee!

Relevant Value: Sensibility (Da'at)

Challenge your campers' sensibilities! In teams, the campers play a game of running spelling or math bee. Line up teams of four to six on a field – on each team, three players face their other three teammates across a distance. Give each team a word to spell or problem to solve, while they run to their fellow teammate. Correct spellers tap the hand of the next teammate who gets a new word or problem. Participants who miss sit at the back of the line. That last team standing wins!

Challenge #2: The Tank Race

Relevant Value: Understanding (Bina)

Challenge your campers to see how different the world is when we have a deeper understanding of what is going on around us.

Round 1: Two people kneel on all fours on the ground. A third person climbs on top of this “pyramid base” to make a tank. The bottom two are blindfolded, so only the top person can see and direct the team through an obstacle course.

Round 2: After all your teams have participated, have them do the same activity, now without the blindfolds. Then reflect on the difference in the experience. What happens when we understand what we are a part of and can “see” in an enlightened sense?

Challenge #3: Don't Be Scared to Ask

Relevant Values: Creativity (Yetzirah) and Curiosity (Histakr'nut)

Challenge your campers to get creative and curious. Give everyone a small container of Play-Doh and ask them questions that they answer by molding the clay!

Example Questions:

1. How are you feeling today?
2. What is an important thing in your life?
3. What did the alien who landed in your backyard look like?
4. What are you most curious about?

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05



COURAGE

אומץ לב

OMETZ LEV

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COURAGE

“All dreams can come true if you have the courage to pursue them” – Walt Disney

When we have courage, or ometz Lev, we learn to embrace our role as a mensch. With the ample opportunities to get outside of our comfort zone and test our courage at camp, we get to stretch our mensch muscles!

Challenge #1: Reach for the Stars

Relevant Values: Courage (Ometz Lev)

Encourage your campers to confront their fear and highlight their aspirations with a great night-time challenge! Gather around a small campfire and have the campers write down their fears on note cards. If they are comfortable, have them read their fear to the group and then throw the note cards into the fire. If the fire is small, and you deem it safe, they can then jump over the fire.

Once everyone has had a turn, take the campers to lay down in their own personal space and look at the stars as they imagine their dreams and goals for camp, their year ahead, and their future. Have them write down their dreams and goals on a notecard.

Bring everyone back together to share their dreams. When they return to their cabins that evening, have them place their dream notecards above their bunk or by their head, so they see them before they go to sleep, and when they wake up in the morning.

Challenge #2: Stepping Out

Relevant Values: Will Power (Gevurah), Integrity (Yosher)

Challenge your campers to confront opposition, and find the courage to give in. When we are willing to compromise and work with one another we emphasize the value of integrity (being *yosher*). Pair your campers off. Each pair is placed standing inside a hula hoop (or using rope create a circle with just enough room for two people to stand facing each other). The pairs are tasked with convincing their partner to step out of the circle without touching the other person. Can your campers come to the ideal solution: they leave the circle together (at the same time).

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06



JUSTICE

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DIN

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JUSTICE

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The pursuit of justice, or Din, allows us to become a mensch and create a fair world! Surrounded by others at camp, we are provided with opportunities to learn about fairness and the correct way to treat others.

Challenge #1: Yes AND...

Relevant Values: Compassionate Criticism (Tochecha)

Challenge your campers to use this classic drama/improv exercise in their everyday lives. The game is simple: with partners or in a group, continue creating a “story” by agreeing with the previous statement and then adding another statement and another and another. The idea is to work with your partner or group.

Can your campers incorporate this mentality in their daily activities and lives? Dedicate the whole rest of the day or week to this kind of thinking - the campers have to begin their speech with, ‘yes, and...’ especially if they disagree with one another.

Challenge #2: Age is Just a Number

Relevant Values: Community Mindedness (Areyvut), Social Responsibility (Achrayut)

Challenge your campers to think about the community around by pairing them up with others they community mindedness (areyvut), the idea of this challenge though not specific, is to integrate different age groups to work together on a project for camp. The idea is to foster more interaction between campers of varying ages and put their time and creativity to good use.

Potential ideas:

- Writing thank you notes for behind the scenes camp professionals (kitchen staff, grounds staff, etc)
- Art project, everyone works on a piece that comes together (mural)
- Camp wide clean up (pick up trash)

Challenge #3: Where You Lead, I Will Follow

Relevant Values: Social Responsibility (Achrayut), Justice (Din)

Challenge your campers to take leadership within the bunk to positively impact the community. Appoint a camper as the “leader” of the day. Each camper should have a turn to be the leader of the bunk. Counselors should decide how much the leader can control or decide - but they should have a role in being responsible for the community and ensuring there is justice for their peers. The idea behind this challenge is that it fosters a sense of leadership giving as much direction (as possible) to the camper in charge.

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MAKING MENSCHES: A PERIODIC TABLE

KEY:

- WISDOM
- HONOR
- TRANSCENDENCE
- MODERATION
- COURAGE
- JUSTICE



These 7 Middot, or character traits, are keys to success, according to Paul Tough in his book, *How Children Succeed*.



Jewish ethics are based on the idea that we are created in the Divine image. The Kabbalah imagined that HaShem is revealed in a number of attributes, or *sfirot*, which correspond to our highest aspirations for human character.



The highest *sfirot*, attribute, not understood in a human context.

01 WISDOM חכמה WI	02 COURAGE אומץ לב CO					03 WONDER מלכות TR	
04 UNDERSTANDING בינה WI	05 ZEST & ZEAL זריזות CO	06 DECENCY & SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE דרך ארץ HO					07 REVERENCE & AWE יראה TR
08 SENSIBILITY דעת WI	09 CONFIDENCE בטחון CO	10 COMPASSION רחמים HO	11 JUSTICE דין JU	12 CALM & COMPOSURE מנוחת הנפש MO	13 CONTENTMENT הסתפקות MO	14 LOVE אהבה TR	
15 CURIOSITY סקרנות WI	16 DISCIPLINE & WILL POWER גבורה CO	17 KINDNESS חסד HO	18 COMMUNITY MINDEDNESS ערבות JU	19 ORGANIZATION & ORDER סדר MO	20 HUMILITY ענוה MO	21 GRATITUDE הכרת הטוב TR	
22 CREATIVITY יצירתיות WI	23 CONVICTION אמונה CO	24 LOYALTY נאמנות HO	25 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY אחריות JU	26 PATIENCE סבלנות MO	27 MODESTY צניעות MO	28 JOY שמחה TR	
29 APPRECIATION OF OPPOSITION הערכה של מחלוקת WI	30 PERSEVERANCE & GRIT נצח CO	31 PURSUIT OF PEACE רדף שלום HO	32 COMPASSIONATE CRITICISM תוכחה JU	33 FORGIVENESS מחילה MO	34 PIETY חסידות MO	35 WHOLENESS & PEACEFULNESS שלמות TR	
36 FORESIGHT רואה את הנולד WI	37 INTEGRITY יושר CO	38 LEADERSHIP מנהיגות HO	39 RIGHTEOUS צדק JU	40 AMENABILITY הד MO	41 BALANCE & INNER BEAUTY תפארת MO	42 GROUNDENESS יסוד TR	
						43 MAJESTY כתר WI	