



CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

A Time To Dance, *Elective 2*

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SUMMARY:	Some basic Israeli dances and tips on how to teach them - <i>Submitted by Erica Goldman</i>
TOPICS:	Camp-wide/Large Group Programs, Community Building, Dance and Movement, Global Jewish Community, Group Dynamics, Holidays and Celebrations, Israel Programming, Jewish Culture, Jewish Values, Music and Rhythm, Performance
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	To teach some easily accessible Israeli dances, give some guidance on how to teach them, and explore what larger lessons can be delivered by way of Israeli dance
AUDIENCE:	Everybody! Seriously, ideal for groups of any size larger than four and any ages older than nine.
LENGTH:	75-90 Minutes
MATERIALS:	You need a sound system (speakers that an ipod or similar can be plugged into). A white board or poster paper would be helpful so you can write the names of the dances for participants to see. A microphone might be necessary for a big group in a large space.
SETTING:	A clear space with no chairs or tables

Session Description:

1. Simon Says Warm Up

Invite everyone to spread out in the room and face you for a quick game of Simon Says (with no "outs"; everyone keeps playing even after mistakes.) The idea is to get everyone moving a little bit and feeling comfortable moving. After a few minutes, ask if it really felt terrible when someone accidentally did the wrong movement or moved when they weren't supposed to, and hopefully participants will say No, or it's just a game, or it doesn't really matter.

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Explain that Israeli dancing should feel the same way: there is no “cost” to doing the wrong step or using the wrong foot, it’s ok to make mistakes, and teach people the mantra: “You don’t have to know a dance to do a dance” – the communal idea of all folk dancing, including Israeli dance, is just to participate and learn as you go by following the leader (everyone around you) and having fun, more than focusing on getting it right or wrong. The idea is to play the game.

2. Teach the dances:

Modern line dances:

- a) Shemesh (aka Leolam Beikvot Hashemesh, aka the Penguin Dance)
- b) Or
- c) Hineh
- d) Hafinali
- e) Sieben Sieben

Classic circle dances:

- a) Mayim Mayim (mayim step)
- b) Od Lo Ahavti Dai (tzerchessia step)
- c) Nigun Atik (aka Zemer Atik)

Easy mixers (partner dances in which you switch partners):

- a) Bim Bam Bom
- b) Ba La

Point out helpful bits of teaching pedagogy while teaching / “fishbowling”. For example:

- Point out how to engage many learning styles at once including demonstrating the steps (for visual learners), saying the names of the steps in rhythm (for the aural learners), counting the rhythm of the steps (for those that relate more easily to music but don’t

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know dance terminology), allowing the participants to practice/try it out (for kinesthetic learners), etc.

- Give suggestions on how to set up partners for mixers like 1) letting dancers choose 2) having them line up in two lines and then instructing each line face each other and take hands across 3) using the “magic circle” in which leader turns to the person to their left and declares that person their partner, then pairs up the next two people and the next two people going around the circle in order but saying everyone has to wait until the magic circle gets to them, they can’t choose or anticipate which person (to their left or right) will be their partner.
- Talk about role modeling excitement and positivity even for dances one might secretly think are easy or boring or may personally dislike, pointing out that in a context where the participants are specifically being told to “do what I do” in terms of following the leader’s steps and movements, they will also naturally follow the leader’s facial expressions and mood.
- Explain the value of ending on a high note; it is common for inexperienced dance leaders to start with the easiest dances and end with the hardest, but that sometimes causes people to end on a discouraged note, or to walk away feeling like so-called “bad dancers”, since the last memory is of something hard that they may not have mastered. Instead, a dance session, even a short one, should have an arc from easy to more challenging and then back to easy or accessible so that participants leave feeling accomplished and happy about dancing.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

Israeli dancing can be used as a staff activity to introduce, teach, or reinforce the lesson of role modeling how to learn. Staff can be encouraged to go ahead and make mistakes in front of campers, so that campers see that mistakes don’t hurt and that they don’t stop the counselors from participating – it’s a great lesson for a camper to see a role model try something, make a mistake, try again, fail, laugh, improve, try again, succeed, etc.



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This process, and feeling comfortable with it, can be an even more valuable lesson than the particular content of the activity.