

Making a Mural: Creating a Collaborative Cabin Community, Specialty Track 1

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SUMMARY:	Participants will learn a technique to create a large scale mural based on existing artwork. We will be using paper and pastels, but the program can be adapted to a range of materials including paint on wood, or even glaze on ceramic tiles. - <i>Submitted by Daniel Abramson</i>
TOPICS:	Community Building, Group Dynamics, Visual Arts
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	By collaboratively creating a mural, participants will experience how each person impacts, and is impacted by, the people around them. The creative process will be a fun and memorable touchstone activity that counsellors can use to foster pride and unity in a cabin group.
AUDIENCE:	Ideal for campers in grades 7 and up. With different images this can be done with younger campers, and by altering the amount of squares that the original image is divided into, this can become a program for larger groups. If you want the end product to be displayed for a long time, you can use paint on wooden squares, or glaze on tiles to create permanent work. You may choose an image that is related to a specific topic or theme in order to adapt it to other contexts. For example, you can divide a map of Israel and assemble it to have a large artistic map that can be displayed to teach about Israel.
LENGTH:	30-60 Minutes
APPENDICES:	Abramson session 1 - Hillel quote divided
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black pastel paper (amount determined by desired size of finished mural). Finished work assembled like a mosaic, usually constructed with many smaller papers rather than by cutting one very large one. http://www.deserres.ca/en-ca/products/beaux-arts/papier-et-tablettes/pastels-et-fusains/tablettes/black-pastel-paper-pad/517/100746/ • Oil pastels - 1 box for every 2-3 participants http://www.amazon.ca/Pentel-Arts-Pastels-Color-PHN-50/dp/B0026SUCDE • Art Image (Norval Morrisseau or other) • 12" Rulers - 1 per participant • Yard stick - 1 for facilitator to measure the squares of black paper

Prepare All These Pieces in ADVANCE

Choose an image that you will cut into small pieces. The best images are those where each individual piece that will be cut out will have interesting colours, shapes or forms, but won't be easily recognizable. Impressionist and abstract art work well. I usually choose an image by Norval Morrisseau.

Cut the chosen image into as many pieces as there are participants. For example, if there are 12 campers and 2 specialists in a cabin, then cut the image into at least 14 even pieces. You can also cut the images smaller and give each person 2 pieces.

Measure one cut piece and multiply the dimensions by 4x or more to determine the size of paper that participants will copy and enlarge their small image onto. For example, if your small piece measures 2" x 3", then cut out pieces of the larger paper that measure 10" x 15"

Timeline (50 - 60 min. total)

5 minutes (Introduction and instructions)

Ask participants to look carefully at the image on the small square.

Tell them to look for details such as line, shape, colour, texture and to imagine what the whole image might look like if all the pieces were assembled.

Explain that in the end, each piece will be assembled together to see if we can make a large version of the original image, so each person is responsible for trying to get their piece(s) to fit in with the others to the best of their ability.

5 minutes (Practicing looking and copying)

Participants work independently for 5 minutes. They should look at their image and copy onto the larger paper.

5 minutes (Reflecting on the style and process as a group)

Participants to pause their drawing work.

Participants tell the group what they have noticed about the square that they are copying. Facilitator can ask "Can you describe specifics about the artist's style?"

Participants can guess what the whole image might look like based on their square. Facilitator can ask "What do you think this artwork is about? What is the story it is telling?"

Participants should share their enlarging strategies with each other before continuing.

5 Minutes (Introducing the guiding text)

Facilitator splits the participants into groups. Each group will get phrase of a text as a handout, and since there are three phrases in total, there should ideally be either 3 or 6 groups.

Facilitator will introduce the complete text in Hebrew and/or English translation.

אימתי, עכשיו לא ואם? אני מה, לעצמי וכשאני? לי מי, לי אני אין אם

Im ein ani li, mi li? U'kh'she'ani le'atzmi, mah ani? V'im lo 'akhshav, eimatai?

If I am not for myself, then who will be for me?

But when I am for myself, then what am I?

And if not now, when?

Facilitator explains:

"This is a traditional text by Rabbi Hillel in Pirke Avot. Usually we read it to talk about personal responsibility and our obligations to a bigger community. Today we are thinking about it as a way of figuring out how to work together on a specific project. I will give each group one little bit of this text and I want you to think creatively about how your artistic work connects to the text.

For example if you get the first line of the text
(If I am not for myself, then who will be for me?)

I want you to think about what responsibility you have to create your own artwork. What might happen if you don't finish your piece? Is it always most important to think about your own work first?

****NOTE:** Participants don't need to answer these questions specifically, rather they should try to create their own questions and connections to the text. We are really most interested in learning what the text makes participants think about rather than teaching them about how others have read this text.

15 minutes (Completing the individual pieces)

Participants continue copying their images onto the larger paper. They should talk about their phrase as they work. They should continue working until everyone is done their piece(s). If some participants finish more quickly, they might want to help others and reflect on how helping others fulfill their task feels.

The facilitator should circulate and ask about what the participants are talking about.

Facilitator can ask "How does it feel to work on a piece of art with other people? Are you nervous or excited about how your piece will fit in? How might you feel if your piece fits exactly with the pieces beside it in the final image? How might you feel if your piece doesn't fit with those around it?"

10 minutes (Assembling the pieces into a complete image)

Participants try to assemble the completed pieces into a large whole. This can be made easier by providing a copy of the complete image, or by suggesting that participants fit the small images together first as a model. The task can be harder if no guidance is given.

10 minutes (Reflecting on the completed image as an artwork and the process)

Facilitator will use some or all of the following reflection questions:

- What is this artwork about?
- What did you learn about working with other people to create something?
- How do you think Hillel's words connect to our experiences as a cabin camp? When at camp are we responsible for ourselves? When are we responsible for others?
- When Hillel asks "If not now, then when?" what do you think is the action that a cabin might need to do "NOW"?

Sample Work Here...

Original by Norval Morriseau

Created by campers

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

Ideal for campers in grades 7 and up.

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