
INCLUSION TRAINING GUIDE FOR JEWISH SUMMER CAMPS

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CHAPTER 6: TEXT BASED JEWISH VALUES FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

The value of inclusion is profoundly Jewish and resonates with our people's soul. The Torah teaches that the whole Jewish people stood at Sinai: men, women and children, regardless of ability or difference. And Deuteronomy 5:2-3 says that even those who are not yet born, all of us, "stood" there at that time. Being Jewish is for all of us. Yet, being Jewish, in our history of exiles and wandering, has meant being excluded or oppressed. All too often, our people have been the outsider: We understand well the stigma of exclusion, the damage of isolation.

There are many traditional Jewish texts which speak of differences and disabilities. We can turn to these texts to open our hearts and minds. Some will provoke us, some will encourage us. All will provide an opportunity for us to talk together about this shared value of inclusion. It is our hope that communities of camp lay leaders and staff members will provoke, challenge, and encourage each other in this study and in our work to recognize each other and welcome each other for who we are: different and yet of one people.

How Do Jewish Texts Approach Individuals with Disabilities?

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ; וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם,
וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ, וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ, הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ, בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ: זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה, בָּרָא אֹתָם

And God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. - Genesis 1:26-27

כל איש ישראל חייב בתלמוד תורה, בין עני בין עשיר, בין שלם בגופו בין בעל יסורים,
בין בחור בין זקן גדול

Every Jew is obligated in the study of Torah, whether rich or poor whether healthy or suffering with ailments, young or very old. –Rambam Hilchot Talmud Torah 1:8

הבריות את משנה העולם מלך אלקינו ה אתה ברוך

Blessing upon seeing someone who is different: Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, who makes G-d's creations different. –Based on Blessing from Tosefta Brachot 6:1

ויאמר משה אל ידוד בי אדני לא איש דברים אנכי גם מתמול גם משלשם גם מאז דברך אל עבדך
כי כבד פה וכבד לשון אנכי: ויאמר ידוד אליו מי שם פה לאדם או מי ישום אלם או חרש או פקח
או עור הלא אנכי ידוד:

And Moses said to the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither yesterday nor the day before, nor since you have spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said to him, Who has made man's mouth? Who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I, the Lord? –Exodus 4:10-11

חנך לנוער על פי דרכו גם כי יזקין לא יסור ממנה:

Teach the youth according to his way; and when he is old, he will not depart from it. -Proverbs 22:6

“Who is considered to be a *shoteh*: one who is repeatedly referred to as one who is free from the commandments and any punishment, whose purchasing is invalid and whose selling is invalid.”

Rashi's Commentary on Haggigah 3b

ויקרא פרשת אמר פרק כא

(יז) דבר אל אהרן לאמר איש מזרעך לדרתם אשר יהיה בו מום לא יקרב להקריב לחם אלהיו:

(יח) כי כל איש אשר בו מום לא יקרב איש עור או פסח או חרם או שרוע:

(יט) או איש אשר יהיה בו שבר רגל או שבר יד:

(כ) או גבן או דק או תבלל בעינו או גרב או ילפת או מרוח אשר:

(כא) כל איש אשר בו מום מזרע אהרן הכהן לא יגש להקריב את אשי יקוק מום בו את לחם אלהיו לא יגש להקריב

17) Speak to Aaron saying: any man from your offspring that has a blemish should not come near to offer the food of G-d.

18) Any man with a blemish should not come close—any blind man, lame man, or man whose nose has no bridge, or man who has one limb longer than the other.

19) Or a man who has a broken foot or hand 20) Or a man who has abnormally long eyebrows, or a membrane on his eye or a blemish in his eye or a dry skin eruption, or a moist skin eruption, or who has crushed testicles

21) Any man with a blemish from the offspring of Aharon the Priest shouldn't approach to give the offerings of G-d. He has a blemish—he shall not come close to sacrifice. (adapted from English translation of Leviticus 21:17-21 in the ArtScroll/Stone Edition)

כל איש ישראל חייב בתלמוד תורה, בין עני בין עשיר, בין שלם בגופו בין בעל יסורים,
בין בחור בין זקן גדול. אפילו עני המחזר על הפתחים, אפילו בעל אשה ובנים, חייב
לקבוע לו זמן לתלמוד תורה ביום ובלילה, שנאמר: והגית בו יומם ולילה (יהושע א, ח).

Every Jew is obligated in the study of Torah, whether rich or poor whether healthy or suffering with ailments, young or very old. Even the poor who have to beg at the doors, whether married with children (or not) is obligated to establish set times for the study of Torah either day or night as it says, "And you shall meditate on it day and night." -Joshua 1:8

הוא היה אומר אל תהי בו לכל אדם ואל תהי מפליג לכל דבר שאין לך אדם
שאין לו שעה ואין לך דבר שאין לו מקום :

Ban Azzai taught, "Do not disdain any person. Do not underrate the importance of anything—for there is no person who does not have his hour, and there is no thing without its place in the sun." -Pirkei Avot 4:3

תני תנא קמיה דרב נחמן בר יצחק : כל המלבין פני חבירו ברבים כאילו שופך
דמים.

A Tanna retold this before Rabbi Nachman son of Yitzchak: One who embarrasses another in public, it is as if he shed his blood. -Babylonian Talmud, Baba Mezia 58b, American Jewish World Service translation)

"Imagine a World..."

By Diana Pastora Carson

Imagine a world where everyone is special.

Imagine a world where respect for all exists.

Imagine people of all races, colors, and abilities valued and loved the same.

Imagine people of all appearances, beliefs, and backgrounds esteemed and honored each day.

Imagine a world where differences are like instruments, bringing unique sounds to a symphony.

Imagine humanity generously dancing and singing along in harmony.

Imagine seeing others' "differentness" with appreciation and with grace.

Imagine recognizing creation's ingenious way of designing the human race,

Where everyone is great as they are and no one is better or less;

Where every person has her place in making the world its best.

Imagine us making a difference in the lives of our fellow men

By letting them be who they are and supporting them how we can.

Imagine a world where everyone is special.

Imagine a world where respect for all exists.

Imagine this world and create it now.

Imagine it.

Be it.