

CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

Israeli Dance - Session 2, *Specialty Track 2*

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SUMMARY:	Israeli dance lesson combined with lessons on how to teach and how deliver content lessons on Israel and Jewish identity in addition to the dances themselves. - <i>Submitted by Erica Goldman</i>
TOPICS:	Camp-wide/Large Group Programs, Community Building, Dance and Movement, Global Jewish Community, Israel Programming, Jewish Culture, Jewish Values, Music and Rhythm, Teen Programs
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will learn some Israeli dances (both classics and modern ones) and tips on how to teach them, ideas on how Israeli dance can be used as a ritualistic bonding activity for a camp group, and ideas on how Israeli dance can be used to teach aspects of Jewish and Israeli culture and history.
AUDIENCE:	Any size of group, ages ten and up.
LENGTH:	90-120 Minutes
APPENDIXES:	Israeli dance specialty 2 handout.doc
MATERIALS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound system • One copy of "Israeli dance specialty 2 handout.doc" per participant • Microphone if large group and/or large space
SETTING:	Open 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 just like in Session One with the addition of “mayim” and “tzerchessia” as movements along with “touch your head” and “touch your toes” etc. Goals are the same as Session One and should be explicitly mentioned. After, point out that “Ritual Comfort” effect as discussed in Session One probably kicked in when participants walked in and understood that this day would start out the same way as day before.

2. Three Dances With a Theme [Fifteen Minutes]

Do Mayim Mayim, Or, and Shemesh (from Session One), and talk briefly about how the names of these dances represent something about where they come from: they mean “Water”, “Light”, and “Sun” and are reflective of a the main concerns of people living in a desert. Give a short history of the dance Mayim Mayim: in 1937 on Kibbutz Na’an in then-Palestine/”Eretz Yisrael” (before the State of Israel) after a prolonged search for a source of water to sustain the community, a source was found and this dance was done in celebration. The movements of the mayim step mimic that of water, the jumping up and down is reflective of the joy of the discovery, and the words of the song are Biblical, so at that time (in 1937) the dance combined the emotions of that specific moment, the events of that moment, and reminded everyone of their roots of Judaism through the lyrics. Today it ties dancers to the history and emotions of the founding of the state of Israel as well as their Judaism.

Explain about global nature of these (and all the other) Israeli dances; the same choreography is done to

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this music everywhere around the world that Israeli dancing is found, including Australia, Poland, Venezuela, etc. Even if someone didn't know speak any French or know any French people, if they show up to an Israeli dancing session in Paris on a Thursday night and if the dance leader played Mayim or Od Lo Ahavti Dai, everyone would be doing the same exact steps as the person learned at camp in the US, or in Israel, or anywhere else.

3. Teach all or part of challenging dance

Teach all or parts of Adama Vshamayim, a dance from 2008 by Gadi Bitton. This dance is much more challenging than the previous ones, so it will take more time and may be split into parts. Introduce terminology of "yemenite step."

4. Do Debka Kafrit again and maybe Od Lo Ahavti Dai with variation

(You could substitute in other dances that are done holding hands.) Od Lo variation is to make smaller inner circle and bigger outer circle, if there are enough participants. Inner circle faces out, takes hands, and does the exact same dance as choreographed/learned previously (starting crossing right foot over left etc), just facing out. Outer circle faces in as normal, also doing same steps. Result is that inner circle rotates counter clockwise while outer circle rotates clockwise. On part two when dancers walk forward, instead of clapping they give the opposite person a high-five. Important: no other steps are modified in any way. (Afterward, point out that for this to work, inside circle must be smaller than outside circle and suggest ways to facilitate this with groups at camp.)

5. The way the arts reveal national character and values

Lead a discussion on how people design their societies to reflect what is important to them as well as their history. In the folkdances of some European countries, for example, the men and women always have different steps; the men have "macho" showy steps with lots of clapping and boot-slapping while the women have dainty steps and use their skirts to make patterns. Men in some militaristic cultures connect to one another by using the belt hold; it is literally a "show of arms" because that kind of strength and power was important in their culture. In Victorian-era dancing, all dances are done by couples and the woman's hand is always placed on top of the man's hand – this comes from a culture in which the strength of men as supportive to women, who needed supporting, was valued – these values are literally *embodied* by the dancing styles. Ask what we know about the values of Israeli society given what we know about Israeli dancing, allowing participants to make some guesses and put forth some theories. Include the following ideas in the discussion:

Many of the pioneers ("*chalutzim*") who built pre-state Israel lived on *kibbutzes* (communal settlements based around economic and social equality) and were strongly committed to ideals of socialism and equality. This is represented in the dances they made: the formation is the circle, a symbol of equality and a formation that allows everyone to participate the same way without some dancers getting to be in "special" positions closer to the front or the center. The hand-hold, learned in Session One, specifically *embodies the value of equality* by not allowing anyone to dominate or be pushed out of the circle: everyone has one hand on top and one hand on the bottom, whether old or young or rich or poor or male or female, etc. The same idea applies to why everyone does the same steps.

Invite participants to share some ways their camp's culture reflects what is important to them: one camp might have their basketball courts and baseball fields right in the center of camp because they are very



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sports-oriented, another might point out that their dining room is huge because it's important for them that everyone in the entire camp eats meals together as a community, another might say that the only air-conditioned or carpeted room in their camp is where they hold services because it's important to them that everyone feels physically comfortable while praying, etc. These can be used as examples if participants are having trouble coming up with their own, but they should be given the time to think of some before too many examples are given by the leader.

6. Back to Dancing

Review/do the dance Or again, learned in Session One, being sure to point out the connection between word and movement on “koach” (strength/power). Finish teaching or review Adama V'Shamayim. (Point out how dances get easier not just with practice but also with time off for the learning to settle in. Even though no one was thinking about the steps to Adama Vshamayim during the last half hour, suddenly it's easier to do or to remember. If participants are not feeling this effect yet, tell them they will feel it the next day.]

Distribute the lyrics to Adama Vshamayim or, if everyone knows the words, just talk through them, pointing out the connection between the movements and the words, and also making the connection to the nature theme of the songs discussed before (light, water, sun) and this one (earth and sky), and how this also shows the connection of Israelis and their love of the land.

If there's any extra time, do Bim Bam Bom (the mixer) again and any other dances the participants wish to repeat or review.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

The arts-reveal-values part of this activity can be used as an introduction to a lesson or other activity about kibbutzim and the ideals of equality, or as an introduction to aspects of contemporary Israel, like the national anthem or the design of the flag, with the tie-in that these symbols reflect beliefs and values. Mayim Mayim (and/or the other nature-themed dances) can be used as an introduction to a lesson or activity about water conservation in modern Israel, or a lesson or activity about tree-planting in Israel.

APPENDIXES:

ISRAELI DANCE SPECIALTY 2 HANDOUT.DOC