



CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

This American Summer Camp (Using This American Life's Notes on Camp),

FJC Knowledge Center Resource

AUTHOR:	Sara Beth Berman
SUMMARY:	Using a section from This American Life's Notes on Camp, examine your own feelings about your camp experience, and how your camp experience has impacted your life outside of camp. - <i>Submitted by Sara Beth Berman</i>
TOPICS:	Communication Skills, Community Building, Identity, Storytelling, Writing
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will enjoy self-reflection and learning moments while comparing their camp stories to others'.
AUDIENCE:	Smaller group of older kids is better to be done in small groups - bunk-sized. But unit is achievable. It's great for staff as well.
LENGTH:	20-30 Minutes
APPENDIXES:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/109/notes-on-camp (Specifically, 52:52 - 56:00) 2. http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/109/transcript
MATERIALS:	Audio to play the podcast, but you can also have campers read the transcript excerpt if you'd like.
SETTING:	N/A - just make sure you can hear the podcast

Session Description:

Activity // Time: 20 minutes This American Summer Camp

1. Grabber (15 minutes): So you may have noticed that I'm really into podcasts. This time, we're going to listen to a clip from This American Life, which was released in 1998, from an episode called "Notes on Camp." In this clip, we're going to hear some people's feelings about how they feel at camp vs. how they are at home, and thoughts about the summer ending.

[This American Life Notes on Camp](#) & [Transcript](#)

Jamie

Also I think it's hard, maybe not for you, but for me, since this is my last year, these are my last three days of ever being a camper. And it's so weird, it's like this is my last Tuesday at camp. This is my last dinner with my cabin. This is my last time ever being in a cabin with my friends. And it's like, that's what's so weird about it, because you're just thinking about the last this, last that.

Like, I'm kind of scared to go home in a way, because my friends at home are so different from my friends here. And it's going to be scary.

Lexie

They're so dull. I don't mean that as in like-- I mean, I love my friends to death, but when you think of the things that we go through here, we're not really living at home. We go to school, and we go out, and it's not their fault, but the environment is so different that it's dull living at home.

- a. Grab a pencil and your notebook, and scrawl some free-written answers to the following prompts:
 - i. How would you compare these kids' reflections to the way you / your campers /



CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

your directors / your alumni would talk about Tefillah...

1. ...at your camp?
 2. ...in Israel?
 3. ...at Hillel or Chabad at school?
 4. ...at their home synagogue?
2. Discussion questions (5 minutes):
- a. What stuck out to you in this clip?
 - b. What's sticky about your own camp experience?
 - c. How does this clip remind you of your story? Another story shared in this track so far?
 - a. If you were successful in implementing some of the stuff we've done at Cornerstone so far, how would the reflections from campers / alumni etc., change after this summer?
 - b. This entire episode is amazing - there's stuff about dating, tradition, cultural appropriation, in addition to very real stuff about camp life vs. home life. Even if you aren't a podcast person, I would highly recommend listening to this particular episode.

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

It's easily adaptable - could be used for a board meeting, too!



CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

This American Summer Camp (Using This American Life's Notes on Camp)

Handout 1

[This American Life Notes on Camp](#) & [Transcript](#)

Jamie

Also I think it's hard, maybe not for you, but for me, since this is my last year, these are my last three days of ever being a camper. And it's so weird, it's like this is my last Tuesday at camp. This is my last dinner with my cabin. This is my last time ever being in a cabin with my friends. And it's like, that's what's so weird about it, because you're just thinking about the last this, last that.

Like, I'm kind of scared to go home in a way, because my friends at home are so different from my friends here. And it's going to be scary.

Lexie

They're so dull. I don't mean that as in like-- I mean, I love my friends to death, but when you think of the things that we go through here, we're not really living at home. We go to school, and we go out, and it's not their fault, but the environment is so different that it's dull living at home.