

CORNERSTONE 2016 RESOURCE

We're Going to the Zoo!, *Elective 1*

AUTHOR:	Asya Gribov
SUMMARY:	Participants will study Jewish virtues by visiting a mock zoo and look to the animal world to learn about admirable character traits. Participants will create their own hybrid animals that exemplify their most desirable virtues. - <i>Submitted by Asya Gribov</i>
TOPICS:	Identity, Jewish Text, Jewish Values, Leadership Development, Managing Challenging Behaviors, Nature, Teen Programs, Visual Arts, Young Children
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will gain a greater understanding of Jewish virtues (midot). Participants will reflect on their own character traits and think about traits they would like to improve.
AUDIENCE:	campers of any age; staff; 10-30 participants
LENGTH:	90-120 Minutes
APPENDIXES:	Asya Gribov Elective 1 Visiting the Zoo Document 1 Asya Gribov Elective 1 Visiting the Zoo Document 2 Asya Gribov Elective 1 Visiting the Zoo Document 3 Asya Gribov Elective 1 Visiting the Zoo Document 4 Asya Gribov Elective 1 Visiting the Zoo Document 5
MATERIALS:	Animal Stickers (optional) pencils (enough for each participant) black Sharpies (enough for each participant) Water color art paper Water color paints Speakers to play music (optional) Printed materials: Document 1- to share between few people Document 2 - enough for each participant printed on sticky paper (optional) Document 3- enough for each participant Document 4- 1 copy in color Document 5- enough for each participant / or to share in pairs
SETTING:	N/A

Session Description:

Room Set Up:

Prior to participants arriving, display or hang images of animals around the room. Keep animals covered to reveal later.

Introduction/Ice Breaker: (15 minutes)

1. Participants gather in a circle, taking turns introducing themselves and saying their favorite animal and explaining why.

Or

2. Facilitator sticks an animal sticker on the forehead of each participant so that participants can see other animals but not their own. (variation: use post its, and write animal names, or have participants



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write animal names, collect and redistribute) Participants take turns asking yes or no questions in order to guess what animal is on their forehead. Facilitator should suggest some questions: Does the animal have 4 legs? Is the animal dangerous? Is the animal domestic? Does the animal live in the jungle? etc.

Large or small group discussion: (15 minutes)

- What are some admirable character traits?
- What is a virtue/midah?
- Brainstorm a list of Jewish virtues, or admirable character traits or look at Making Mentsches: A Periodic Table (document 5)
- From where do Jewish people learn about virtues?
- How do we (Jewish people) know what is virtuous and what is not?

Our Rabbis teach that even if we didn't have the Torah to teach us midot (good character traits), we could deduce how to act by watching animal behavior.

Read quotes: (10 minutes)

Document 1

Can we think of some animals that we know act in a certain way? Possibly good or bad? (think about similes, fairy tales, Disney movies)

Zoo Visit: (20 minutes)

Document 4

Participants walk around the space looking at the animals. Using the designed midot stickers (document 2), participants label each animal with character traits that they think the animals exhibit. (Variation: participants can use blank post-its and write in their own characteristics.) There are not wrong answers as long as the participant can explain their thinking.

Suggest music to play:

Man Gave Names to All the Animals – Jason Mraz or Bob Dylan

At the Zoo – Simon and Garfunkel

Going To The Zoo - Peter, Paul & Mary

Joy to the World (Jeremiah was a Bullfrog) – Three Dog Night

Gather Together and Discuss: (5 minutes)

- What are some of the desired characteristics or virtues of the animals we saw today? (It is ok if not all characteristics discussed are Jewish midot, any admirable traits will do.)
- What characteristic from each animal would you borrow?
- What characteristic from each animal would you want to see in a friend? In a spouse? Not want to see?

Make Your Own Hybrid Midot Animal: (30 minutes)

Participants pick three midot that they think are the most valuable, or they would like to focus on. Which animals exhibit these midot? (not necessarily the ones in the 'zoo')

Participants will plan and combine these characteristics into one hybrid animal (Document 3).

Invite participants to think about how these characteristics are embodied in the animals- cheetah legs, to be as fast as a cheetah, owl head, smart as an owl.)

Participants should name their hybrid animal.

Participants will use the provided art supplies to create their own creature that reminds them of the characteristics they wish to improve in themselves.

Keeping the conversation going/ Additional Activities

- What would be a terrible hybrid animal that portrays negative characteristics?
- Write the 10 Commandments based on animals:
 - “Be like the elephants and show compassion to the mourning”
 - “Be like the zebra and stay with your community”
- Use the created hybrid animals like Pokémon cards. Create situations that need to be solved and invite campers to “play” their hybrid animal to solve a particular situation.

Resources:

- <http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/publicat/hazon/tzedaka/teachers.htm>
- <https://avikatzorlow.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/making-mensches-periodic-table.pdf>
- <http://www.windlegends.org/animals.html>

Additional Notes for Bringing it Back to Camp:

Activities can be adapted to different ages, and group sizes.

APPENDIXES:

ASYA GRIBOV ELECTIVE 1 VISITING THE ZOO DOCUMENT 1
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ASYA GRIBOV ELECTIVE 1 VISITING THE ZOO DOCUMENT 3
ASYA GRIBOV ELECTIVE 1 VISITING THE ZOO DOCUMENT 4
ASYA GRIBOV ELECTIVE 1 VISITING THE ZOO DOCUMENT 5