

Religion and Politics: A Conversation Amongst Friends
Evening Program

AUTHOR(S):	Jonah Canner, Ariella Rosen & Shalom Orzach
SUMMARY:	You are invited to join a conversation about showing up Jewishly in this moment. In this program, three of Cornerstone’s faculty will share diverse perspectives on how their Jewish lens informs their sense of responsibility as agents of change in the world today. You will be invited into the conversation as well, through your own stories and passions. This will be a space where we model and practice disagreement that reflects mutual respect and support. – <i>Submitted by Jonah Canner, Ariella Rosen and Shalom Orzach</i>
TOPIC(S):	Jewish Identity, Current Events, Justice, Community, Difficult Conversations
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will receive text and language for framing the way they respond to a political moment in their Jewish identity. Participants will experience and practice respectful and loving disagreement around value driven dilemmas.
AUDIENCE:	Staff: College students and older. Up to 30 participants
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	Text Appendix Handout
MATERIALS NEEDED:	None
SET-UP DETAILS:	Four nice chairs in front of the fireplace and a semi-circle of other chairs facing them

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Welcome and framing (10 min)

The participants will walk into a space where three panelists are sitting by the fire with one open chair next to them. The three panelists will introduce themselves and the flow of what the session will look like. “We will begin by modeling a conversation amongst friends. Once we’ve begun we invite any of you to come have a seat up here for a little while and join our conversation. We will then open it up further for you to have this conversation amongst yourselves.”

Modeling the conversation (20 min)

The three panelists will discuss how they are showing up Jewishly in this political moment: how their Jewish lenses influence the way they are showing up, what the core texts that frame their Jewish lenses are and what those lenses are calling them to do. Throughout this conversation participants will have the opportunity to take the empty seat and join the conversation.

Deconstructing the conversation (20 min)

The modeled conversation will come to a stopping point and the panelists will take a step back to open a discussion tracing the journey of where the conversation went and how it was able to get there. This will include discussion of personal relationships amongst the panelists, agreements about how the conversation would be approached and how the panelists rooted the conversation in shared values and core texts. The panelists will re-state what their core texts are and ask the fellows to think about (and perhaps jot down) what their core texts might be.

The participants will then receive handouts of the panelists’ core texts and have a chance to look through them together.



CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Opportunity to practice the conversation (15 min)

Participants will get into groups of three and have a conversation about how they are showing up Jewishly in this political moment. Participants are invited to root their conversation in any of the texts provided, any of their core texts, or any of their personal experiences.

Reflection (10 min)

Participants will share in pairs what this experience was like for them and have an opportunity to share a few key take-aways or questions.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

The ability to hold the space needed for this conversation and conversations like it requires deep relationships and practice having charged conversations around personal and political subjects. The pre-work of the facilitators is essential. If they have not already had experience in having values and text based conversations with each other and found a way to hold space and love while in disagreement, this activity will not go well.