

Blast From the Past: An Excellent Adventure in Jewish Time Travel *Elective 1*

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AUTHOR(S): | Meir Balofsky |
| SUMMARY: | Learn to use theater acting and visual art games to bring the Torah alive! You will find ways to connect to your heritage no matter your personal level of Jewish education. – Submitted by Meir Balofsky |
| TOPIC(S): | Jewish History, Visual Arts, Theater |
| LEARNING OBJECTIVE: | You will learn new tools using visual art and drama to access new ways to relate to ancient texts and characters. |
| AUDIENCE: | All ages – Group of up to 25. Very basic knowledge of Jewish tradition and biblical stories is an asset. |
| TIMING: | 90 minutes |
| APPENDICES: | none |
| MATERIALS NEEDED: | Cards from the game Dixit |
| SET-UP DETAILS: | Large room with space to move around – no furniture |

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

STEP 1: Everyone sits in a circle. Ask: If you could have dinner with anyone from ancient Jewish History who would it be? It must be someone whose story you are familiar with, so you could ask real questions. Can be a very well-known person or relatively obscure. Everyone is to share their name, camp, and the person they chose to have dinner with.

STEP 2: Break up into groups of 4-5. The person whose birthday is next in each group is selected to be the director. Have all directors stand up. Declare to the directors: “I want you to think of a moment in Jewish History that you would have loved to be a witness to and see for yourself.

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

You are gifted with these fine props – referring to the other people in your group and anything else you see in the room to create a Tableau or “Freeze Frame” of that moment in history.
Explain your moment in time and your vision to your group and prepare the tableau.
Once ready – the other groups will have a chance to guess what the scene is that is being portrayed.

STEP 3: Give 3 minutes to prepare the tableau and then do the go around where they guess each other’s. Then the next person whose birthday it is, is the next director

STEP 4: In the same groups give out the Dixit cards – 5 per person. Each group also gets 5 slips of paper face down. The five slips read:

- a) Exodus from Egypt
- b) Respecting Parents / Elders
- c) Tzekada / Charity
- d) Torah Study
- e) A visit to Jerusalem

STEP 5: The third person whose birthday is next becomes the Judge (whoever is next after the director game) chooses a slip and reads it out. Each person in the group - EXCLUDING the judge is to choose a card from their hand that best suits that slip title. Each person then takes a turn explaining why their card is the best fit for the title. The judge then decides which the best fit is and they get a point (like Apples to Apples).

Then the fourth person becomes the judge and repeat step 5. Repeat again for the 5th.

STEP 6: THE INSIDE OUT EXPERIENCE

Have the 5 faces of the inside out characters in a bag (if there are 25 people, have 5 sets, etc.)
Play the opening scene from Inside out so the participants are reminded / are familiar with the personalities

Verbally teach the short version of the patriarch Abraham.

READ ALOUD – SET THE SCENE

Sit – close eyes – you’re Avraham Avinu

Forefather – trailblazer –Educator

**Abraham – you taught a pagan world what
it means to understand that there is only
one God. You spent your life teaching the
worlds that God does not want child
sacrifices.**

**You suffered unfathomable oppression,
being the lone voice of your convictions and
only at the age of 75 did God reveal Himself
to you.**

**At the age of 100, after being unable to bear
a son with your dear wife Sarah, God
granted you this gift of gifts.**

Now...36 years later...

READ THE FOLLOWING WITH A MIC – OR A MUCH DEEPER NARRATIVE TONE

Genesis Chapter 22

1 And it came to pass after these things, that God did test Abraham, and said unto him: 'Abraham'; and he said: 'Here am I.' **2** And He said: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' **3** And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

You are Abraham. You have 3 days to wander with this instruction to sacrifice your only son. If you do this, you will fulfill the word of God. If you do this, you'll be seen as a hypocrite to the nations you taught over your life – as you've always preached that there is only one God and God does not want human sacrifice.

We are now inside Abraham's head. You have one of the voices inside Abraham's head (the Inside Out voice they chose) .

- Write a few sentences stating what your voice is saying.
- When ready – have everyone stand, walk around the room and meet other voices – share their opinions.
- Then have them all meet each other from the same voice and compare / merge their ideas
- Call up one rep from each voice to stand on the stage of Abrahams head to debate their position. Interruptions welcome. (have large cut outs of each voice for each voice to hold while speaking)

STEP 7 (if time): Cocktail party

Everyone is to resume the seat in the big circle and is told to think back to the person they wanted to meet for dinner. Now think of a particular important or challenging moment in their lives
Close eyes - What are you thinking? Feeling? Now take on the thoughts and feelings of that person.

Walk as their character – Facilitator to freeze the room and ask a few of the people who they are and what's on their mind.

STEP 8: In conclusion – Point out how for the most part the content was generated here by everyone's previous knowledge of the Jewish sources. This can be modified to use newly learned content. For the most part though, this program is designed to enable participants to access their creativity and apply it to material that otherwise may have been taught in a more mainstream manner.