

Nature Specialty Track 3 *Jewish Nature Hike*

AUTHOR(S):	Josh Lake
SUMMARY:	We will explore how nature can become a Jewish exploration zone filled with fun games and exciting activities. - <i>Submitted by Josh Lake</i>
TOPIC(S):	Nature. Meaningful fun in the woods.
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	To learn a few of the open secrets that we can use and enjoy on a Jewish nature walk. To learn how/where Judaism and nature are intricately connected. To equip ourselves to lead campers/others outdoors in joyous rapture with nature!
AUDIENCE:	4-99+ years of age. Ideal group size is 10-20
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Bandanas, <i>The Lorax</i> by Dr. Seuss, Neuron map, oak gall,
SET-UP DETAILS:	Ideally this is done in the woods with beautiful nature around as a backdrop.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

00-03 Intro, Tapping Qi Gong (Introduce camouflage)

03-20

Meet a Tree (*The Lorax*)

Have someone read:

She is a tree of life to those who hold fast to her, and all her supporters are happy.

-Proverbs 3:18 (Describing Torah as a tree of life)

Instructions to start playing the game: (Suggested wording below)

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- We are going to play a game now called “Meet-A-Tree.” What do you think we are going to do in this game?
- Have participants pair off and give each pair a blindfold.
- Explain these directions:
 - One person in each pair will be blindfolded.
 - The sighted participant leads their “blind” partner to a tree that interests them – s/he should lead his/her partner to the tree in an indirect way to make it more interesting.
 - **Make sure the sighted participant takes care of their sight-impaired partner. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**
 - Have fun with this:
 - You can walk your participants over imaginary logs or under imaginary branches.
 - You can spin them around once or twice (but no more than that!) before they remove the blindfold.
 - The blindfolded participant should use their other senses to “see/experience” the tree. Later, when the blindfold is off, they will have the chance to locate their tree by sight.
 - Encourage the participant’s exploration by suggesting that s/he:
 - Feel for plants growing on or around it.
 - Feel for signs that animals use the tree.
 - Feel the bark. How thick is it? Is it rough or smooth?
 - Feel for interesting branches or knots in the tree.
 - Put your arms around the tree to measure it. How wide is it?
 - Smell the tree.
 - Did you walk up hill or down hill to the tree?
 - To add humor, you can suggest participants can lick the tree, kiss the tree, hug the tree, speak with the tree, tell the tree a secret... etc.
 - Once the blindfolded participant feels they know the tree well (after 2-3 minutes), their sighted partner will lead her/him back to the starting place.
 - Take a different route away from the tree, stepping over imaginary rocks, ducking under pretend branches, etc. – make it a fun challenge (but not too hard) for the blindfolded participant to find his/her tree.
 - Once back at the starting point, remove the blindfold. The newly sighted participant tries to find the tree with his/her eyes open by walking around the trees and trying to find their tree.
 - Encourage them to do everything they did before with the blindfold on (feel, lick, talk to, hug the tree) in order to locate their tree.
 - When they find their tree, or after a few minutes, the partners switch roles and play the game again.
 - When everyone has had their chance to ‘Meet-A-Tree,’ gather everyone together to debrief the activity using the questions below.

21-75 Nature walk

Activities:

1. *Pokeiach Ivrim*. Seeing with a tree. Guessing how tall a tree is, seeing *Shoreshim* (roots).

2. Play Shomer Shabbat Camera

How to play:

Split the group into pairs. Ask them to find a partner they have not worked with or do not know. Pull one person from group as an example. "Can I have a volunteer as a *dogma* (example)? Thank you _____, this will be painless (I hope)."

Explain to the group, "There are many types of vision. For today's exercise, we will limit ourselves to 3 types of vision: 1. Direct object vision. 2. Peripheral vision. 3. Splatter vision.

Here is a very brief description of each.

1) Direct object vision: Some people see an object and can describe that object. They look at an animal, tree, flower etc. and can describe exactly what they see.

2) Peripheral vision: Some people look and see how one thing may effect or affect something else. For instance, they see a tree casting a shadow. They see the tree, but they are noticing something on the periphery of that tree, namely its shadow.

3) Splatter vision: Splatter vision is not seeing any direct object, or any object that affects something else. Splatter vision is a blurring of the picture in front your eyes; sort of like taking a snap shot of everything. Your eyes focus on nothing in order to pick up movement or changes in the scene.

3. Martin Buber: I-Thou Ich Du into *Hitbodedut*

4. (5 minutes) Neuron map and mycelium map Introduction (handout)

What is this? (Hand out pictures). And what does this have to do with what we are going to do today and this summer? We are going to grow this (point to Neuron map) and appreciate this (point to mycelium map).

5. Camouflage!

Activity/Play:

- Explain that on the trail we will be playing a game called "camouflage."
- Here are the rules of the game and how to explain it to your participants:
 - At some point on the trail I am going to yell out "CAMOUFLAGE!"
 - I will then close my eyes and count from 15 backwards to 0. You have 15 seconds to hide.
 - You must drop everything in your hands and find a place to hide from me.
 - At the end of 15 seconds, I'll open my eyes and try to find you. I cannot move from my location, but I can pivot on one foot (as in basketball)
 - I am the prey, and you are the predator. You need to keep me in your sight, if you don't, I could get away from you.
 - At all times, you must be able to see me with at least 1 eye.
 - If I call your name, or describe what you are wearing, or describe your location, you must come out and return to me. You have been caught; you have lost your "prey." Do not talk to other people on your way out or even look at them, because you will give their location away to me if you do.
 - You can hide in any direction from me, 360 degrees. Remember, I can also pivot my foot and look in all directions.

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- After I have “found” as many people as I can, I will again close my eyes and count from 10 to 0. You must move closer and hide (camouflage) from me. But do not tag me; you must hide again.
- Again, I’ll open my eyes and try to find you. I cannot move from my location, but I can pivot on one foot (as in basketball), as in the first round.
- If I identify you by name, clothing, or location you must come back.
- After I have identified as many people as I can, I will close my eyes, raise my hand and say, “GO!”
- The first person to tag my hand is the successful predator and catches her/his prey. You have outwitted both the prey and the rest of the predators.
- The person who “wins” by catching the prey will be the next prey and will be able to call “CAMOUFLAGE” the next time we play. You must ok the time and location of the next game with me. Do not call “camouflage” without my permission.
- Be safe out there! This is only a game and it is not worth getting hurt in order to find the best hiding spot or to avoid being captured!

76-85 Hevruta text study

How do we take what we have learned here (go over all three days’ activities) and apply it to our lives and our camps? What have you learned/felt/done? Is it applicable to us? Is it NOT applicable to us? Comeback for a debrief.

85-90 Communal group howl with story.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

- Consider doing any one or these activities as a standalone activity.
- Consider doing all these activities as a unit over a week, or a few days. Make sure campers remember what they did in the previous session. Repetition is the best educator!