

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

Bringing Our Full Selves: Teen Programming *Specialty Track 2*

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SUMMARY:	Camp can be an incredibly rich environment for exploring our own developing identities, learning from the journeys of those around us, and taking on big topics together. In particular, we can bring great joy to making space for older campers to enjoy and value their own evolving works-in-progress-ness. In these sessions, we will build programming that helps teen campers ask better questions of ourselves and each other, learn together, and celebrate all that we each bring to our community.
TOPIC(S):	Identity, Teen Programming
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will have a new range of teen-appropriate activities on identity, relationship-building, communication, and creating community.
AUDIENCE:	Teen campers
TIMING:	Each activity can range from 15-60 minutes and activities can be combined in many different ways.
APPENDICES:	Handouts - What Are Community Agreements, What I Am, These and These, Dreamscapes, Witness, Judgments Into Questions
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Lots of paper for journaling, pens, assorted art supplies, magazines to cut up, scissors, index cards, handouts
SET-UP DETAILS:	Most of these activities can be done in any quiet space with enough room for all participants to sit in a circle

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

The three sessions of this track will each relate to key growth ideas for teens:

- Bring in your full self: Share who you are, explore your various identities, and celebrate them.
- Reach out to each other: Get to know one another in honest ways, get past our assumptions, and build better ways to trust each other.
- Don't be afraid to dig in: Talk about the hard stuff. Learn from and with each other.

The camp environment can be an amazingly joyful, generative, creative, exciting place for teens to learn to better embrace their own identities, lean on each other and explore the scary topics together.

1) Freeze walk:

- Put on some slow-paced music and ask everyone to walk around the room/area at a leisurely pace, making as much eye contact as possible.
- When the music stops, get into a pair with whoever you're currently holding eye contact with (or find a partner if you weren't currently holding eye contact with anyone).
- Hold eye contact for 10 more seconds (tell them when time is up). Then introduce yourselves to each other, sharing your name and one of your favorite things.
- Repeat this at least six more times (or if you have time, you can do it as many times as there are people, so that everyone has a chance to meet everyone else this way. By later in the game, people will be consciously seeking out those people they haven't partnered with).
- Come back together and discuss: What felt uncomfortable about this? How did you push through that discomfort to stay present in the moment? How did you see differently than you might have otherwise? How did you feel differently after your encounter than you might have felt otherwise?

2) Ask participants to call out some of the assumptions that are commonly made about various shared characteristics within the Jewish community. For example: Jews are white, Jews come from Eastern Europe, Jews love bagels and lox, Jews aren't athletic, Jews are smart, Jews are well-off.

Share: We know that these assumptions are far from accurate. Within the Jewish community, there are people from many ethnic backgrounds, racial identities, Jewish beliefs and practices, gender identities, class backgrounds, sexualities, and personalities, with a wide range of Jewish rituals and customs, some of which are inherited and others of which are created.

(You can share a few facts as examples:

-- From the Pew Study: 20% of U.S. Jews report household incomes of less than \$30,000 per year; about six-in-ten Jews in this low-income category are either under age 30 or over age 65.

-- From the Institute for Jewish and Community Research: We estimate at least 20% of the U.S. Jewish population is racially and ethnically diverse, including African, African American, Latinx, Asian, Native American, Sephardi, Mizrahi and mixed-race Jews by heritage, adoption, and marriage.)

3) Give everyone a list of interview questions:

- What's an assumption that you think people make about you which isn't actually true?
- When do you feel most at home in our camp community?
- When do you feel like an outsider in our camp community?
- What's one way that you wish our camp community was better at meeting a more diverse range of needs or experiences?

4) Discuss: since these are challenging questions to answer, how can they help their interviewee feel most comfortable and appreciated? Then have everyone get into pairs and interview each other. After doing the interviews, see if there are any additional ideas for how to help your interviewee feel at ease. Discuss further: why is it powerful to learn one another's stories? How does it help us to build a better community?

5) Have each person pick one or two other people they want to go out and interview. Make sure people know that they should tell the interviewee right away about the topic and that they should make sure the potential interviewee knows they don't have to agree to answer any questions they'd rather not.

6) Bring the group back together. Read some additional stories from people who haven't always felt as if they are seen as "fitting in" to what others perceive as Jewish communal norms. Great examples of these stories can be found at the Jewish Multiracial Network's blog

(<http://www.jewishmultiracialnetwork.org/jmn-blog/>) or the Bechol Lashon “Real People, Real Stories” page (<http://www.bechollashon.org/resources/holidays/real/real.php>). Choose the right selections based on the age group you’re working with and the amount of time you have.

Regarding these stories and their interviews, discuss:

- What do you find especially eye-opening or thought-provoking about this person’s perspective and experience?
- How do we all benefit from proactively building communities where everyone’s varied perspectives, stories and identities are present, engaged and celebrated?
- What have people done for you in the past to help you feel at home in a new space?
- What could our camp community do to make sure that no one is made to feel as if they don’t belong here?

7) Get into small groups. Design a new ritual or activity or decorative item for camp that would have helped one of the people from your interviews or stories feel more fully “seen” and included at camp. (If time, you can also start this section by brainstorming a list of all of the places/moments around camp that aren’t currently as inclusive or multifaceted or accessible as they could be, so that people can start thinking about lots of ideas for how to better address that).

8) End with a game that’s a variation of “Who’s in the Room?” or “The great wind blows for...”:

- In the usual version of this game, everyone stands in a circle with one person in the middle. That person shares an “I statement” – e.g., I have brown eyes, I like to eat ice cream in the winter -- and everyone else who also identifies with that statement switches places within the circle, with someone new taking the center spot.
- In its original incarnation, the goal of the game is to identify commonalities.
- In this variation, we will alternate between finding commonalities and intentionally seeking out unique differences that we can celebrate.
- For the person standing in the middle, their mission is to find an “I statement” that is completely unique to them.
- Until that happens, they remain in the middle (other people who share the statements along the way still step in and switch places around the circle).
- Once the middle person finds a unique identifier, everyone applauds them and someone else takes their place in the circle.
- Either way, the goal is celebration of both what we share and what makes each of us utterly distinct.