

CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

Israeli Dance (Part 2) *Specialty Track*

AUTHOR(S):	Erica Goldman
SUMMARY:	Israeli dances and methods for teaching them as well as how to utilize Israeli dance to teach about Israeli culture and Jewish values. - <i>Submitted by Erica Goldman</i>
TOPIC(S):	Dance-Movement, Community Building, Arts and Culture, Israel
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will learn Israeli dances (both classics and modern ones), tips on how to teach them, ideas on how Israeli dance can be used as a ritualistic bonding activity for a camp group, ideas on how Israeli dance can be used to teach aspects of Jewish and Israeli culture and history.
AUDIENCE:	Group size: 6-60 people
TIMING:	70-90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Israeli Dance Handout (Lyrics to Adama V'shamayim)
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Sound system and music
SET-UP DETAILS:	Usually larger, non-carpeted indoor spaces, with open space to dance but some places to sit during discussion components as well

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

1. Simon Says Warm Up [Five Minutes]

Invite everyone to spread out in the room and face the leader for a quick game of Simon Says just like in Session One with the addition of “mayim” and “tzerchessia” as movements along with “touch your head” and “touch your toes” etc. Goals are the same as Session One and should be explicitly mentioned. After, leader will point out that “Ritual Comfort” effect as discussed in Session One probably kicked in when participants walked in and understood that this day would start out the same way as day before.

2. Three Dances With a Theme [Fifteen Minutes]

Do Mayim Mayim, Or, and Shemesh (from Session One), and talk briefly about how the names of these dances represent something about where they come from: they mean “Water”, “Light”, and “Sun” and are reflective of a the main concerns of people living in a desert. Leader will give short history of the dance Mayim Mayim: in 1937 on Kibbutz Na’an in then-Palestine/”Eretz Yisrael” (before the State of Israel) after a prolonged search for a source of water to sustain the community, a source was found and this dance was done in celebration. The movements of the mayim step mimics that of water, the jumping up and down is reflective of the joy of the discovery, and the words of the song are Biblical, so at that time (in 1937) the dance combined the emotions of that specific moment, the events of that moment, and reminded everyone of their roots of Judaism through the lyrics. Today it ties dancers to the history and emotions of the founding of the state of Israel as well as their Judaism.

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Leader should also explain about global nature of these (and all the other) Israeli dances; the same choreography is done to this music everywhere around the world that Israeli dancing is found, including Australia, Poland, Venezuela, etc. Even if someone didn't know speak any French or know any French people, if they show up to an Israeli dancing session in Paris on a Thursday night and if the dance leader played Mayim or Od Lo Ahavti Dai, everyone would be doing the same exact steps as the person learned at camp in the US, or in Israel, or anywhere else.

3. Teach all or part of challenging dance [Thirty Minutes]

Leader will teach all or parts of Adama Vshamayim, a dance from 2008 by Gadi Bitton. This dance is much more challenging than the previous ones, so it will take more time and may be split into parts. Leader will introduce terminology of "yemenite step".

4. Do Debka Kafrit again and maybe Od Lo Ahavti Dai with variation [Five Minutes]

(Leader could substitute in other dances that are done holding hands.) Od Lo variation is to make smaller inner circle and bigger outer circle, if there are enough participants. Inner circle faces out, takes hands, and does the exact same dance as choreographed/learned previously (starting crossing right foot over left etc), just facing out. Outer circle faces in as normal, also doing same steps. Result is that inner circle rotates counter clockwise while outer circle rotates clockwise. On part two when dancers walk forward, instead of clapping they give the opposite person a high-five. Important: no other steps are modified in any way. (Afterward, leader will point out that for this to work, inside circle must be smaller than outside circle and will suggest ways to facilitate this with groups at camp.)

5. On My Planet activity [Thirty Minutes]

Leader will invite everyone to sit in a circle and will introduce the new game: On My Planet. Leader will say, "On my planet, Erigold, everyone is happy. The weather is great and there is a big outdoor space for dancing in every city. Every house is designed with built-in bookcases; at least one wall in every room has some built-in bookcases in it. Everyone wears gold-colored clothing all the time, and on Mondays no one works and everyone eats ice cream. The local currency is books; they are valued and traded like dollars or silver are in some other communities." Leader will choose someone to be the "alien reporter" and will ask that person to file their report on the planet Erigold. (This person should be chosen and coached in advance!). Alien reporter will say something like, "here is what I learned from my visit to the planet Erigold about their culture: They believe reading and dancing are very important activities, I can tell because the architecture of their cities and houses reflects that and includes special spaces to facilitate those activities. They wear a lot of the color gold and the planet's name includes the word gold, so I believe someone important in their history must have had that in their name, perhaps the founder or discoverer of the planet was named Goldberg or Goldstein or something, but I will need to do more research to fully understand that aspect of their culture. Also, they really like ice cream."

Then the leader will split the group into teams of four or five and announce that each team represents the civilization of a different planet and they should spend the next eight or so minutes defining what life on their planet *looks* like. Leader will choose one group and tell them they are the planet of anthropologists, aka Alien Reporters. They have two jobs: a) they also should think of some aspects of their planet's culture that reflects what they do and b) each one of them will assigned to visit a planet and report on it. (Leader should also assign who will report on which planet/team but reporters don't do anything about that yet, they stay with their own group.)

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After eight minutes, leader will call everyone back to the big circle and will ask one planet to present what a visitor to their planet might *observe* on a visit there, being careful to explain what can be seen or experienced, not the *reasons* behind those things. After that first team goes (by one representative speaker or taking turns or whatever), the Alien Reporter assigned to that planet will be asked to “file their report” and should tell everyone: Here is what I learned about Planet _____. They believe in ____ (or they value ____), I can tell because _____. They really like _____. Etc. Reporters should try to draw conclusions based on what was described by the planet inhabitants. Leader will repeat this for each group (or the few who most want to go, if there are too many for the time constraints).

Leader will then lead a discussion on how people from planet Earth really do design their societies to reflect what is important to them as well as their history. When it comes to social dancing or folk dancing, the way people interact is a physical *embodiment* of their values. In the folkdances of some European countries, for example, the men and women always have different steps; the men have “macho” showy steps with lots of clapping and boot-slapping while the women have dainty steps and use their skirts to make patterns. In English country dancing, all dances are done by couples and the woman’s hand is always placed on top of the man’s hand. Leader will ask what we know about the values of Israeli society given what we know about Israeli dancing, allowing participants to make some guesses and put forth some theories. Leader will include the following ideas in the discussion:

Many of the pioneers (“chalutzim”) who built pre-state Israel lived on kibbutzes (communal settlements based around economic and social equality) and were strongly committed to ideals of socialism and equality. This is represented in the dances they made: the formation is the circle, a symbol of equality and a formation that allows everyone to participate the same way without some dancers getting to be in “special” positions closer to the front or the center. The hand-hold, learned in Session One, specifically embodies the equality value by not allowing anyone to dominate or be pushed out of the circle: everyone has one hand on top and one hand on the bottom, whether old or young or rich or poor or male or female, etc. The same idea applies to why everyone does the same steps.

Participants will be invited to share some ways their camp’s culture reflects what is important to them: one camp might have their basketball courts and baseball fields right in the center of camp because they are very sports-oriented, another might point out that their dining room is huge because it’s important for them that everyone in the entire camp eats meals together as a community, another might say that the only air-conditioned or carpeted room in their camp is where they hold services because it’s important to them that everyone feels physically comfortable while praying, etc. These can be used as examples if participants are having trouble coming up with their own, but they should be given the time to think of some before too many examples are given by the leader.

6. Back to Dancing [Twenty Minutes]

Review/do the dance Or again, learned in Session One, being sure to point out connection between word and movement on “koach” (strength/power). Leader will finish teaching or will review Adama V’Shamayim. (Leader should point out how dances get easier not just with practice but also with time off for the learning to settle in. Even though no one was thinking about the steps to Adama Vshamayim during the last half hour, suddenly it’s easier to do or to remember. If participants are not feeling this effect yet, leader will tell them they will feel it the next day.)

Leader will distribute the lyrics to Adama Vshamayim or, if everyone knows the words, just talk through them, pointing out the connection between the movements and the words, and also making the connection to the nature theme of the songs discussed before (light, water, sun) and this one (earth and sky), and how this also shows the connection of Israelis and their love of the land.

If there’s any extra time, do Bim Bam Bom (the mixer) again and any other dances the participants wish to repeat or review.

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ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

These specific dances can be used with almost any size group of any age starting entering-fourth grade and up.

“On My Planet” is best with a group that has already done some Israeli dancing and already has the sense of the circle dynamic, holding hands equally etc, already from another time and not from the same moment. It can also be adapted to teaching more about Israel by including lessons about what the name “Israel” means, why its flag (and those of other nations) looks the way it does (in this case, art materials for drawing flags should be given to campers when they are designing their own planets), why the national anthem is what it is and why. Instead of having alien reporters as a separate group, each individual participant can be told to use their journal to “file their report” on each planet after they present and then possibly share what values they thought they were seeing. This activity can also be used as an introduction to a lesson or other activity about kibbutzim, teaching what they were and how they functioned, each one self-sufficient (like a planet) and everyone having a job to contribute to the well-being of the whole, etc.

Mayim Mayim (and/or the other nature-themed dances) can be used as an introduction to a lesson or activity about water conservation in modern Israel, or a lesson or activity about tree-planting in Israel.

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Israeli Dance, Session 2

ADAMA VESHAMAYIM

Adama veshamayim,
chom ha'esh,
tzlil hamayim

Ani margish zot begufi,
beruchi, benishmati.

Heya...heya...heya...heya.....heya
Heya...heya...ho.....

EARTH & SKY

Earth and sky,
the heat of fire,
the sound of water

I feel it in my body,
in my spirit, in my soul.

Heya...heya...heya...heya.....heya
Heya...heya...ho.....

ושמים אדמה
המים צליל האש חום
בגופי זאת מרגיש אני
בנשמתו ברוחי

Hebrew lyrics adapted by Shimon Suissa
Recording used for Israeli dance by Lehakat Segol
Israeli dance choreographed by Gadi Bitton