

CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

Jewish Nature Hike: Exploring our Roots

Elective

AUTHOR(S):	Josh Lake
SUMMARY:	We explore how Jews are inextricably connected to the natural world. From playing games, finding wild edibles and building natural structures, we will get our hands clean with dirt! - <i>Submitted by Josh Lake</i>
TOPIC(S):	Nature
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	To make nature a Jewish classroom.
AUDIENCE:	5-35 participants, age 6+
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	The Apple Trees Discovery, Radical Amazement quote by Heschel
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Copy of the Apple Trees Discovery, an apple and a knife.
SET-UP DETAILS:	Take your participants and head into the woods!

- **5 minute intro.** Pekiach Ivrim: We explore a tree and see what a tree can show us about opening our eyes. We say the Blessing for Opening the eyes of the blind (Pekiach Ivrim).
- Have one of the participants read quote: “Our goal should be to live life in radical amazement...get up in the morning and look at the world in a way that takes nothing for granted. Everything is phenomenal; everything is incredible; never treat life casually. To be spiritual is to be amazed. -Abraham Joshua Heschel
- “Learning *about* the natural world is one thing. Learning *from* the natural world is something else entirely.”
- Dr. Janine Benyus: Biomimicry's surprising lessons from nature's engineers (Ted Talk)

Oak Gall and Torah

Here is a way that Jews have used bio mimicry. AMAZING!

This is what wasps have learned to do:

They have learned to genetically manipulate a tree to grow a house/nursery around their babies!

Jews have derived Torah from this amazing interaction! Torah is *Eitz Chaim He!*

Now that you know about the oak gall, what can we learn from the oak gall?

What does it mean in Jewish terms? Learning about Torah is one thing; learning from Torah is something completely different. Share logic from *Bal Tashchit*.

Bal Taschit

Comes from Deuteronomy 20:19

19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou may eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee?

(10 minutes)

Start nature walk

- Along trail Identify plants and animal tracks
- White pine
- Oak (*Alonim*)
- Mullein
- Etc.
- (Learn 3-4 plants on camp. Get an ID book. Don't learn too much! Burn out!)

Debris shelter for Barbie, along the trail

Debris shelters are one of the oldest types of shelters humans employ.

Build a debris shelter as an example. Place ridgepole on a tree. Put "ribs" off ridgepole to ground.

Cover with leaves. This could save you/or your camper's, lives. Story about Michigan students.

Other types of structures in Judaism (Chupa, Sukkah (one of the original Jewish Survival Shelters, Mishkan, etc.)

Camouflage: Play on trail in a SAFE area

One person yells, "CAMOUFLAGE" They close their eyes and count backwards from 15. (15, 14

13...). Everyone scatters and needs to camouflage (hide) themselves before the counter gets to 0.

The counter opens her/his eyes and attempts to locate as many people as possible, but cannot move except on a pivot foot (like in basketball). Everyone needs to be able to see the counter with at least 1

eye. After 2 minutes, counter closes their eyes and counts down from 10 (10, 9, 8...). People need to move closer now, but be camouflaged before 0 is reached. Counter opens their eyes and tries to find

people. After another 2 minutes counter screams, "THE CHASE IS ON!" Everyone else tries to tag the counter's hand. First person to tag the counter's hand wins game and gets to call camouflage next (they need to get permission for where and when to call it).

Apple Trees Discovery

Take an apple on the hike.

Find a shady place to sit under a tree.

Read The Apple Trees Discovery by Peninah Schram.

At end, cut apple across midriff to expose the star.



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Bringing it back to camp

Hevruta up. Who, what, where, how at your camp. Design a program to take back to your camp.

Wolf Howl!

The howl is our communal Amidah. It is better than any language because you can let your feelings come out and not be embarrassed because of the language. For feelings are meta linguistic!

Lech lecha!

Go forth and do good this summer!

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

10 minutes

Bringing group together.

What is in a Journey? The journey is connecting synapsis. Our goal is to create synapsis for our campers. We can do that by bridging gap between nature and Judaism, by launching our campers on journeys.

Wolf howl to close the program!