

Jewish Survival in the Woods (Part 2) *Specialty Track*

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SUMMARY:	We take to the woods to learn hard survival skills, as well as spiritual survival, while sojourning in nature. - <i>Submitted by Josh Lake</i>
TOPIC(S):	Nature
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Gain skills and understanding of how to be in the woods.
AUDIENCE:	Ages 10 and up.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	N/A
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Matches, bow drill, water for emergency use.
SET-UP DETAILS:	In the woods!

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

7 minutes Qigong Process

3 minutes Introduction:

Sacred Order of Survival: *Pikuach Nefesh*-The Mitzvah of saving a life. Saving your own, or someone else. Triage a situation.

Rule of 4s, how long can we go without each?

- Air-4 minutes
- Shelter-4 hours
- Water-4 days
- Food-4 weeks

15 minutes: Exploration of Sacred order of survival

Air:

In creation this is day 2, the rekiah. Air is mostly assumed. If you can't breath, don't worry about the rest of the sacred order of survival. Triage, fix and go...!

Building a shelter: Debris hut

We will explore our shelters by building them. We will create a debris shelter. We will make this for a 6-inch Barbie and Ken to get the idea, and to not be crazy intensive on land resources.

Find a long stick and place it in the notch of a tree. This will be the backbone of our shelter. Now short sticks, these will be the ribs of the shelter. Lay the ribs from the backbone onto the ground. Now find even smaller, longer branches and weave them into the ribs. Now cover the whole thing with about 2-3 feet of leaves/grass/other natural detritus. This is our survival shelter.

Story about 2 girls surviving a raging storm inside a haystack!

What is purpose of shelters?

Now, go spiritual. What is purpose of Chuppah? What is purpose of Tallis? What is purpose of Sukkah?

10 minutes Water:

Water cycle boogie! Do this by a water feature, such as a lake, river, stream, spring, etc.

Ask participants, "What purpose does water play in our lives?"

Possible answers.

We are 85% water, we need it to survive

Making almost anything requires water (even diapers, let alone steel for building bridges, etc.)

Water grows our food.

Water cleans us.

How do we respect our water?

Teach them the water cycle boogie!

Explain the life cycle of water.

"Evaporation!" (Bring your arms up and over your head and clap)

"Condensation!" (imitate a cloud getting bigger and bigger)

"Precipitation!" (Make rain motions)

"Filtration!" Water moving down rivers/being filtered by rocks and then ending up in the ocean

Water in Judaism

Prayer	Meaning	Ideas
Prayer for dew/ <i>tel</i> Prayer for Rain/ <i>Geshem</i>	On Passover we stop reciting the prayer for rain [in the Amidah], for rains that fall at the end of Nissan are considered to be a bad sign for the world, the time for the grain harvest has begun and rain will cause the sheaves of grain lying in the field to rot, instead, we pray for dew to fall and moisten the crops without harming drying grain. The first day of Passover was destined from Creation as the time for dew to fall.	Judaism recognizing the power of water in the cycle of our lives. Prayer for rain=From Sukkot to Passover Prayer for Dew=From Shmini Atzeret to Passover=Prayer for Rain

20 minutes: Fire: Making fire Jewish

Let's learn to make fire! Break into Hevruta

What is fire? Literally what is it?

Why is it important to us? As humans? As Jews?

Fire Occasions in Judaism	meaning
Shabbat	kindle fire
Havdallah	Separation
Nir Tamid	Everlasting light
Signal fires	Relay Holidays/Rosh Hodesh
Burning Bush	Fire symbolizes something special/unique.
Story of Bal Shem Tov and fire	

I will argue that we all need to light a fire in our *Neshama's*, our souls. We then need to take this fire and light other people's fires. These other people are your loved ones, your future spouses and kids. But the reason you are here, now, is to learn to light the fires of your camper' *neshamas* this summer! So, let's learn how to literally light the fire!

Hevruta style fire lighting.

Tinder, Kindling, Fuel. It takes all strengths to collect.

10 minutes: Food

Prayer: Ha Motzi

Wild Edibles:

- Sassafras
- Grape vine
- Other's?

15 minutes Spiritual survival/*Hitbodedut*:

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

There are 2 approaches to looking at relationships. Martin Bubar, a Jewish philosopher, in his book *Ich-Du, I Thou*, sums up these 2 approaches:

- The first type of relationship is an I Thou relationship. This is where you value the person you are in a relationship with. You have love for that person, respect, appreciation, etc. This might be your mother, father, boyfriend, girlfriend, etc. But you can have an I thou relationship with a non human also. A pet, dog, cat, etc. You can have this relationship with a tree, even a stone. This is a relationship you value and has a value in the relationship. (As an aside, I think that relationships are were we find God too.)
- The second type of relationship is between you and someone who has little value to you, for instance a waiter at a restaurant, or a bar tender (though these are important relationships, after all!). You can have an I-It relationship with a tree, with a rock, etc. Likely this is what many people, if not most people, have with the natural world. A commodity worthy of only money you can extract from it. Unfortunately you can also have an I it relationship with a parent, significant other, etc. These are usually undervalued and relationships that need to be nurtured.

For us, now, I'd like to develop our relationships with the earth into an I thou. How do we do this. I'd like to send you back to Hitbodedut. But as you approach your space, from yesterday, or a new space, as permission of the area/tree/rock for you to be there. Become sensitive to your surroundings. This will add another layer of how you can journey in nature to your time out here.

5 minutes

Divide group into *Hevruta* partners, 2-3. (Teach the Hebrew word *haver*-friend. *Hevruta* comes from the root *haver*).

Questions to ask the group: (30 seconds-45 seconds per question)

- What was the goal of this program?
- Is this a goal that could be useful for a program at your camp?
- Which activities/parts of the program did you like the best?
- Can you see using any of these activities in your camp? Where? With whom?
- When would you do the activity?
- Which programs would you not use in your camp? Why?
- What could you do in place of this/those activities?

Reconvene and share any epiphanies.