

Theater: Creating Something from Nothing (Part 1) *Specialty Track*

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SUMMARY:	This specialty track will delve into the awe of what it means to create, to have created, and to have been created. Together, we will learn camper-friendly methodologies to help shape and develop your theater specialty and how to go from the "formless void" to your audience walking out saying "this was good!" - <i>Submitted by Melissa Shaw</i>
TOPIC(S):	Theater, Storytelling
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will gain performance vocabulary and skills to create original material with campers.
AUDIENCE:	6 th grade and up, 20 max
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Creation Text Appendix
MATERIALS NEEDED:	N/A
SET-UP DETAILS:	A theater or large empty space with a half circle of chairs

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

(10 minutes) Welcome and over view of the track

- We are here to think playfully and make choices with intention
- The Hebrew word *kavanah* comes from the root of the word to direct.

(10 minutes) Name game

Quick chat about why names are so important Jewishly and humanistically:

That is the name by which Adam called Me; it is the name that I have accepted for Myself; and it is the name on which I have agreed with My creatures." ([Numbers Rabbah 19:3](#))

Conversation about Creation looking at this text:

הָאֲרֶץ: וְאֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵת אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא בְּרֵאשִׁית

When God began to create heaven and earth—

הַיָּמִים: עַל־פְּנֵי מְרַחֶטֶת אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ תְּהוֹם עַל־פְּנֵי וְהַשָּׁד וּבְהוֹ תְהוֹ הַיָּמִתָּה וְהָאֲרֶץ

the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—

וַיְהִי־אֹר: אֹר הָיְתָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֵּאמֶר

God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

הַקֶּשֶׁד: וַבַּיּוֹם הָאֶרֶץ גֵּיזוֹ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְדֵּל כִּי־טוֹב אֶת־הָאֹר אֱלֹהִים וַיֵּרָא

God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness.

(פ) אָחִיד: יוֹם וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב לַיְלָה קָרָא וְלִהְשֵׁוּ יוֹם לְאֹר | אֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא

- What do you notice in regards to how creation is written about ?
- What does it mean to see that it was good *after* it was made?
- Discuss: What is the harm in critiquing while creating?

(5 minutes) Yes and circle

Do not judge it. Do not control it. Your intention is to let it be what it is and unfold.

(20 minutes) Fill the Formless Void

Fellows take turns hoping up into “the void” (the stage) and creating first still images and then movement. Choices we put on stage tell a story. Theater doesn’t start with words, or sets, or music. It starts with the very first body on stage.

The word *kavanah* comes from the Hebrew root word “Direct” When you are creating theater at camp or otherwise what are some of the skills that go into directing?

(15 minutes) Drawing Trios

Your intention is to get the last person in your trio to draw what you saw.

Break participants into 3’s (into a 4 person group if needed for adjustment) one person steps out of the room to view a drawing and will only be able to communicate non -verbally what they saw outside the room. The second person will be asked to watch the non-verbal communication of the first and to communicate using only words, what the drawing included. The person recreating the image is not allowed to turn around and can only receive information without asking questions from the verbal communicator.

Unpack:

What does this teach you about communication?

Now think of this as if you were the “director?” or “the actor?”

How does this relate to our campers?

(10 minutes) Emotion work

In theater actors are asked to call up emotions on stage at any given minute. It's part of the paint box of an actor's tools. If we think back to the text of Genesis we read: "the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—"

The deep to me makes me think of emotional body. It's very easy to hide our depths in darkness but working in this medium allows us to bring them out. We need them for good storytelling. Every good story helps us feel something.

'Gifts of emotion -A short repeatable gesture on a given theme. Facilitator calls out an emotion in a circle at the same time all

"Shock"

"Whatever"

"Joy"

"I'm in charge here"

"Surprise"

"freedom"

"blessing"

"bye"

"mysterious"

"awe"

(15 minutes) Collaboration Machine

We are going to build a machine that solves a problem. Fellows rotate through creating machines through sound and gesture and collaboration.

(5 minutes) Closing Circle and assignment

You must create something between today and tomorrow. It can be a sculpture out of silverware at lunch or a tableaux with your bunkmates or a poem. Take a picture and be ready to share it tomorrow at the top of session. You can't be wrong.