

### Way Beyond the Pages: Adventure in Jewish Time Travel *Elective*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Meir Balofsky
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	Learn to use theater acting and visual art games to bring the Torah alive! You will find ways to connect to your heritage no matter your personal level of Jewish education. – <i>Submitted by Meir Balofsky</i>
<b>TOPIC(S):</b>	Jewish History, Visual Arts, Theater
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b>	Participants will learn new tools using visual art and drama to access new ways to relate to ancient texts and characters.
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	All ages – Group of up to 25. Very basic knowledge of Jewish tradition and biblical stories is an asset.
<b>TIMING:</b>	90 minutes
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	None
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	Cards from the game Dixit
<b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>	Large room with space to move around – no furniture

#### SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

**STEP 1:** Everyone is to sit in circle. Ask: If you could have dinner with anyone from ancient Jewish History who would it be. It must be someone whose story you are familiar with, so you could ask real questions to. Can be a very well-known person or relatively obscure. Everyone is to share their name, camp and the person they chose to have dinner with.

**STEP 2:** Break up into groups of 4-5. The person whose birthday is next in each group is selected to be the director. Have all directors stand up. Declare to the directors: “I want you to think of a moment in Jewish History that you would have loved to be a witness to and see for yourself. You are gifted with these fine props – referring to the other people in your group and anything else you see in the room to create a Tableau or ‘Freeze Frame’ of that moment in history. Explain your moment in time and your vision to your group and prepare the tableau. Once ready – the other groups will have a chance to guess what the scene is that is being portrayed.

**STEP 3:** Give 3 minutes to prepare the tableau and then do the go around where they guess each other's.

Then the next person whose birthday it is, is the next director

**STEP 4:** In the same groups give out the Dixit cards – 5 per person. Each group also gets 5 slips of paper face down. The five slips read

- a) Exodus from Egypt
- b) Respecting Parents / Elders
- c) Tzekada / Charity
- d) Torah Study
- e) a visit to Jerusalem

**STEP 5:** The third person whose birthday is next becomes the Judge (whoever is next after the director game) chooses a slip and reads it out. Each person in the group - EXCLUDING the judge is to choose a card from their hand that best suits that slip title. Each person then takes a turn explaining why their card is the best fit for the title. The judge then decides which the best fit is and they get a point (like apples to apples)

Then the fourth person becomes the judge and repeat step 5. Repeat again for the 5<sup>th</sup>

### **STEP 6: THE INSIDE OUT EXPERIENCE**

Have the 5 faces of the inside out characters in a bag (if there are 25 people, have 5 sets etc)  
Play the opening scene from Inside out so the participants are reminded / are familiar with the personalities

Verbally teach the short version of the patriarch Abraham.

READ ALOUD – SET THE SCENE

**Sit – close eyes – you're Avraham Avinu**

**Forefather – trailblazer –Educator**

**Abraham – you taught a pagan world what it means to understand that there is only one God.  
You spent your life teaching the worlds that God does not want child sacrifices.**

**You suffered unfathomable oppression, being the lone voice of your convictions and only at  
the age of 75 did God reveal Himself to you.**

**At the age of 100, after being unable to bear a son with your dear wife Sarah, God granted you  
this gift of gifts.**

**Now...36 years later...**

READ THE FOLLOWING WITH A MIC – OR A MUCH DEEPER NARRATIVE TONE

### Genesis Chapter 22

**1** And it came to pass after these things, that God did test Abraham, and said unto him: 'Abraham'; and he said: 'Here am I.' **2** And He said: 'Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.' **3** And Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he cleaved the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

- You are Abraham. You have 3 days to wander with this instruction to sacrifice your only son. If you do this, you will fulfil the word of God. If you do this, you'll be seen as a hippocrate to the nations you taught over your life – as you've always preached that there is only one God and God does not want human sacrifice.

We are now inside Abraham's head. You have one of the voices inside Abrahams head (the inside out voice they chose) .

- Write a few sentences stating what your voice is saying.
- When ready – have everyone stand, walk around the room and meet other voices – share their opinions.
- Then have them all meet each other from the same voice and compare / merge their ideas
- Call up one rep from each voice to stand on the stage of Abrahams head to debate their position. Interruptions welcome. (have large cut outs of each voice for each voice to hold while speaking)

### Step 7 – PARODY MUSIC EXPERIENCE

Have the participants listen to the following and think about how they are responding to what they are about to hear.

Sing parody for Passover Boemeian Rhapsody

<p>Is this the real life- Is this just fantasy- A bush that does not burn Has no place in reality- The people have cried They've looked up to the sky to be free I'm just a sheppard boy, I don't do diplomacy How will I face Par'oh And tell him to let my people go, How will I tell the wife that Hashem and chosen me, Chosen me</p> <p>Par'oh ,my staff's a snake Let my people go , It's the right thing for your own sake, Par'oh, the plagues have begun And now your people will thirst for 7 days- Par'oh ooo, Frogs and lice will make you cry Wild beasts and then your animals will become Carrion, carrion, Hashem is getting madder...</p> <p>Too late, the shechin has come, Got boils down my spine- Body's aching all the time, Take cover everybody-It's hailing now Locusts eating our crops and darkness too Paro' ooo- Your son is gonna die, You'll wish you had never enslaved us at all</p>	<p>Bring a korban pesach, gotta go and get a lamb On the door, On the door, and we will be passed over Bake a ton of matzah,-very very very quickly. we are leaving , we are leaving, We are leaving, we are leaving We have finally gone... I was the Pharoah and my nation was mighty He was the Pharoah and now he is a nobody Freeing the slaves was a catastrophe Moses said to let them go-, how could I let them go- Bris-millah! NO! how could I let them go-let them go- Bris-millah! how could I let them go-let them go- Bris-millah! how could I let them go-let them go- Could I let them go-let them go Could I let them go-let them go No,no,no,no,no,no,no- Ayay Moses Ayay Moses Ayay Moses let them go- I'll take my army and bring them back to me, to me, to me.....</p> <p>So you think you can just walk out on me... Now I've got you all cuz you're trapped by the sea Oh baby-what is happening baby You all got through and the water crashed down on me</p> <p>Hashem is the true King, Anyone can see, Israel has left me-they are now truly free.</p>
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**Discuss.** What was your experience listening to it? How can this be an educational tool?

When writing an original song you need to sell the tune as well as the content. Many people don't even listen to the words. In a parody song, people are already invested in the music and focus entirely on the content.

**Try it:** take a chorus of a song you know well and try your hand at writing a parody about Passover (or any other jewish topic)

### **Step 8 (If you have time!)**

#### Cocktail party

Everyone is to resume the seat in the big circle and is told to think back to the person they wanted to meet for dinner. Now think of a particular important or challenging moment in their lives

Close eyes - What are you thinking - feeling -

Take on the thoughts and feelings of that person

Walk as their character – Facilitator to freeze the room and ask a few of the people who they are and what's on their mind.

In conclusion – Point out how for the most part the content was generated here by everyone's previous knowledge of the Jewish sources. This can be modified to use newly learned content. For the most part though, this program is designed to enable participants to access their creativity and apply it to material that otherwise may have been taught in a more mainstream manner.