

## CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

### Words Create Worlds: Using Your Voice (Part 3) *Specialty Track*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Caroline Rothstein
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	In Judaism, we have a weekly poetry slam and open mic—it's called the Shabbat dinner table. In this session, participants will explore how to use Shabbat and Kiddush as a literal and figurative lens for using words, poetry, and storytelling to implement impactful change. - <i>Submitted by Caroline Rothstein</i>
<b>TOPIC(S):</b>	Storytelling, Shabbat
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b>	The goal of this session is to provide participants with tools for creating spaces—at camp and beyond—where performance, storytelling, and bearing witness to someone telling their story can have a lasting impact on positive change and growth.
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	Any size group, age, or camp role works, though especially ideal for bunks or small groups (10 to 20 people) of campers and/or staff.
<b>TIMING:</b>	90 minutes
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	Sabbath Texts
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text sheet</li> <li>• Scissors</li> <li>• Table</li> <li>• Chairs</li> <li>• Shabbat candle stick holders</li> <li>• Fake (or real!) challah</li> <li>• Kiddush cups</li> <li>• Paper plates</li> </ul>
<b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>	This session should take space in a space or room where participants can sit in chairs around a table, whether it's an area that already has table/chairs, or an open space where tables/chairs are set up in a way where all participants can see each other.

### SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- Invite participants to find a seat at the Shabbat table, which has been set to look like a Shabbat table (candle sticks, Challah (real or fake), cups, plates, etc.).
- Have “Shabbath Texts” cut out so that each quote is its own slip of paper. Have the pieces of paper (quotes) placed throughout the Shabbat table at random, but clearly visible for the participants to see.
- Agenda (for facilitator to know. I encourage you to not share the agenda for this session in order to create mystery/suspense and build towards something fresh and unique).
  - Read quotes from Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s “The Sabbath” (10 minutes)
  - Discussion on Shabbat as “the world to come” (15 minutes)
  - Open mic/sharing of poems from participants (25 minutes)
  - Debrief/discussion (20 minutes)
  - Bringing it back to camp (10 minutes)
  - Closing activity/ritual (10 minutes)
- Welcome participants to the Shabbat table. (10 minutes)
  - Offer this framing: In the introduction to her father Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel’s book “The Sabbath,” Susannah Heschel says, “The Sabbath is a metaphor for paradise and a testimony to God’s presence.”
  - Around the table, there are quotes from Heschel’s book “The Sabbath,” each with a number in front of it. We’re going to go around the table and popcorn style, read the quotes in order from 2 to 18, based on whatever text is closest to you, in numerical order.
  - Participants read quotes 2 through 18 in order.
- When finished, offer this framing: (15 minutes)
  - There is a long-standing tradition whereby the Rabbis teach us that Shabbat is a day of rest and a taste of “the world to come.”
  - Ask participants (after reminding that the group guidelines from previous sessions stand), to consider what it means if we are not waiting for the world to come, but rather, creating that world in which we want to live now.
  - Facilitate discussion on that notion, and then ask: so how can we use Shabbat as a frame for creating and living in the world in which we want to live now?
- Offer this framing: In Judaism, we have a weekly open mic/poetry slam – it’s called the Shabbat dinner table. (25 minutes)
- Offer this next framing: We are going to simulate a Shabbat dinner/Kiddush as an open mic, and each participant is going to share one of their poems from session one or two with the group.
- Something to consider before people start to share: Think about the kavanah (intention) of both the page and the stage: each word has to have intention and earn its way on to the page; so too each word spoken/shared publicly/out loud has to earn its way on to the stage.
- Also, consider how when we someone says Kiddush, they stand because they are giving witness to G-d’s creation of the world. The job of saying Kiddush is for our words to give witness to G-d’s world, aka the created world.

## CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

- Each participant shares one of their poems. Create a group ritual of clapping, snapping, or rubbing hands together after each person shares.
- After everyone has shared, welcome everyone back together for a debrief/discussion, addressing the following questions: (20 minutes)
  - What does it mean to be witness to someone else's creation?
  - What does it mean to stand in witness to the world you created with your words?
  - What is your job as an active listener to be witness to the world that's being created, even if you don't like it?
  - Think about the feedback exercises from session two. How do we get and give feedback from that place of witnessing?
  - What does it mean to have opened up and created a world with your words that can then become your reality?
  - What does it mean to metaphorically have a "seat at the table" on Shabbat? In life?
  - Closing thought: if you want to be a poet, host a Shabbat dinner. Make it a place for revolution. And at camp, Shabbat is a weekly open mic, already built in. For Heschel, it is revolutionary to measure our success not by the things we create or build, but by the time that we hold—with each other, and ourselves.
- Bringing it back to camp: (10 minutes)
  - Through discussion, have participants discuss the ways they can bring this specialty track—in any capacity—back to camp.
  - Additional questions to consider:
    - Do you need to be at a poetry slam or actual open mic in order to share poetry or political policy or prophesy? Where else can these things be done? At camp? In the world at large?
- Closing (10 minutes)
  - Ask each participant to share their final thoughts about something they are feeling, something they learned, or something they are taking away from this session and specialty track at large.

### **ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:**

- This session can be used on its own (and modified) to teach about Shabbat in general.
- For the section utilizing Abraham Joshua Heschel quotes, it's absolutely possible to substitute other quotes about Shabbat from various sources and/or texts about Shabbat.
- Here is an additional [songs/sources](#) to consider using.
- Feel free to use this session AS part of your ACTUAL Shabbat practice and/or programming!