

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

Revolution and Renewal: Social Justice [Specialty Track 1]

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SUMMARY:	Exploration of how to do excellent social justice programming at camp - <i>Submitted by Sarra Alpert</i>
TOPIC(S):	Social Justice
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Fellows will learn a range of methods for approaching social justice content.
AUDIENCE:	Session is aimed at staff members. Content within session can be used with a range of ages and group sizes.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Handouts in process
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Post-its, large paper, markers, blindfold, pipe cleaners, art supplies
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any space is fine

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- 10 minutes: Activity #1
- 35 minutes: Activity #2
- 30 minutes: Activity #3
- 20 minutes: Project
- 10 minutes: Presentation

Explain that the track will center around the idea of developing a range of angles on how to come at one broad justice concept or value -- i.e. with varying levels of depth, or based on varying assumption of previous experience, or aiming towards varied types of community engagement and change.

- The first session will explore the justice value of Care.
- The second session will explore the justice value of Access.
- The third session will break down the various approaches that we took in the first two sessions and allow time for us to work together on using those ideas and approaches for the topics they're most excited to explore with their camps this summer.

Care:

Activity #1 (10 min):

Pin the Mitzvah on the Mensch

A mensch is a Yiddish term for a good, kind, helping-others sort of person. Come up with ideas for mitzvot that can be done with different parts of the body – mitzvahs for which you use your brain, your hands, your eyes, your feet, your heart, your mouth, etc. Put each one on its own post-it. Draw a large person on a piece of butcher paper – Manny/Malka the Mensch. Post Manny/Malka up on a wall. Get some sort of blindfold. Play “Pin the Mitzvah on the Mensch”!

Activity #2 (35 min):

Understanding Aid

Put the quotes below around the room:

- “We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “If you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time...But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” - Lila Watson, Australian aboriginal activist
- “Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Leviticus 19:18
- “I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.” – George Bernard Shaw
- “Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead. Just walk beside me and be my friend...”

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- “The next time you feel like complaining, remember that your garbage disposal probably eats better than 30 percent of the people in the world” - Robert Orben
- “Furthermore, only one person, Adam, was created for the sake of peace among people, so that no one should say to another, ‘My ancestor was greater than yours....’” – Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

10 min: Give everyone time to read them and write some notes around the margins.

10 min: Come back together to discuss the quotes and the responses.

5 min: Vote to narrow down to four quotes: two that the most people find themselves inspired by and two that the most people find themselves in disagreement with.

10 min: Then split into three groups to represent the conversation between those four quotes:

- Physical representations: come up with ways to physically show the different perspectives on aid (i.e. holding each other up, etc). Use pipe cleaners to illustrate the ideas.
- Artistic representations: use art supplies to show these ideas with color and images.
- Verbal: have someone take on each of the four quotes as if each quote was a person with that perspective. Have those four people develop an actual conversation between those four people, responding to each other’s perspectives and complicating each other’s ideas.

Activity #3 (30 min total):

Care through honoring memory and history:

- 10 min: Learn information about Bryan Stevenson’s “Lynching in America” project

Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, has been spearheading a project to mark the sites of lynchings in the United States (<http://www.eji.org/lynchinginamerica> or you can read [this article](#) about the project). Part of his inspiration for this is the range of memorials that have been installed all over Germany to mourn the Holocaust: “...We need to engage with this in a very different way. You can’t go to Germany, to Berlin, and walk 100 meters without seeing a marker or a stone or a monument to mark the places where Jewish families were abducted from their homes and taken to the concentration camps. Germans want you to go to the concentration camps and reflect soberly on the legacy of the Holocaust. We do the opposite here. We don’t want anybody talking about slavery, we don’t want anybody talking about lynching, and we don’t want anybody talking about segregation. You say the word “race” and people immediately get nervous. You say the words “racial justice” and they’re looking for the exits. If we’re going to change the attitudes of the judges who are making sentencing decisions, and police officers who are unfairly suspecting young men of color, and employers and educators who are suspending and expelling kids of color at disproportionately high rates, if we’re going to make a difference in overcoming the implicit bias that we all have, we’re going to have to deal honestly with this history and have to consciously work on freeing ourselves from this history.” (from [The Marshall Project’s interview “Bryan Stevenson on Charleston and Our Real Problem with Race”](#))

Discuss:

- Have any of you been to Germany or other parts of Eastern Europe? How did you feel when you saw the various memorials?
- How do you think American society would be different if we actively memorialized lynching and slavery and other acts of our own racism and oppression?
- How do you see change happen when we actively protest oppressive systems or practices in our society and communities?
- What do you think sometimes stops us from doing either of those things?
- Jewish tradition has a lot of ways that we mark both personal mourning (i.e. the customs of shiva) and moments of historical tragedy (i.e. Tisha B'Av). What ideas do you have for how you could use Jewish mourning practices to honor a particular tragedy from history or from current events.

20 min: Project

Plan a ritual or design a memorial for your camp space this summer in a way that can effectively and authentically keep this mourning and conversation going rather than letting these events fade into the background of what's happening in the "outside world."

10 min: Come back together to present your designs.