

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

Israeli Dance *Specialty Track 1*

AUTHOR(S):	Erica Goldman
SUMMARY:	Israeli dances and methods for teaching them, as well as how to utilize Israeli dance to teach about Israeli culture and Jewish values. - <i>Submitted by Erica Goldman</i>
TOPIC(S):	Dance-Movement, Community Building, Arts and Culture, Israel
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will learn Israeli dances (both classics and modern ones), tips on how to teach them, ideas on how Israeli dance can be used as a ritualistic bonding activity for a camp group, ideas on how Israeli dance can be used to teach aspects of Jewish and Israeli culture and history.
AUDIENCE:	Group size: 6-60 people
TIMING:	70-90 minutes
APPENDICES:	Israeli Dance-Handout1.docx
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Sound system and music, plus handouts
SET-UP DETAILS:	Usually larger, non-carpeted indoor spaces, with open space to dance but some places to sit during discussion components as well

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

5 MINUTES - SIMON SAYS WARM UP

10-15 MINUTES – A FEW CLASSIC DANCES

10 MINUTES – YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW HOW TO DANCE TO DO A DANCE

10 MINUTES – CIRCLE DANCES

15 MINUTES – CONVERSATION ABOUT RITUALS AND COMFORT

15 MINUTES – LINE DANCES

10 MINUTES – MIXER

Simon Says Warm Up [Five Minutes]

Leader will invite everyone to spread out in the room and face the leader for a quick game of Simon Says (with no “outs”; everyone keeps playing even after mistakes.) The idea is to get everyone moving a little bit and feeling comfortable moving. After a few minutes, leader will ask if it really felt terrible when someone accidentally did the wrong movement or moved when they weren't supposed to, and hopefully participants will say No, or it's just a game, or it doesn't really matter. Leader will point out that Israeli dancing should feel the same way: there is no “cost” to doing the wrong step or using the wrong foot, it's ok to make mistakes, and teach people the mantra: “You don't have to know a dance to do a dance” – the communal idea of all folk dancing, including Israeli dance, is just to participate and learn as you go by following the leader (everyone around you) and having fun, more than focusing on getting it right or wrong. The idea is to play the game.

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Leader can also ask participants to think of other reasons why Simon Says is a good game to open an Israeli dance activity. Good answers may include: it gets people into a “follow the leader” mode with their minds and bodies, and establishes who the “leader” is; it warms up the body; you can use it to teach some steps/vocab (jump vs hop, for example); it gets the room organized in a good way for teaching (everyone facing the leader); and more.

2. A few classic dances [Ten-Fifteen Minutes]

Leader will introduce the format of all three Israeli dance sessions: learning/doing a few Israeli dances followed by an activity and conversation, then some more dances, then another activity, and so on.

Teach: mayim step, with mention or eliciting that the word mayim means “water” and that the step flows continuously and smoothly in one direction like water. Teach “correct” way to hold hands at some point, with left hand over and right hand under, but no explanation yet of why. (Trick: where are the leftovers? They’re right under the bread!). Teach the dance Mayim Mayim and then do it with the music. Without stopping or teaching, lead the dance Nigun Atik, calling out instructions as necessary but during the dance, while the music is already playing. Stop after this one, teach the tzerchessia step, pointing out that it comes from the Caucasus Mountains in Russia (as does the word Caucasian) and that Circassians are a minority group living in Israel today, and teach and do the dance Od Lo Ahavi Dai.

3. You don’t have to know a dance to do a dance [Ten Minutes]

Leader will lead a short conversation about the experience of doing Nigun Atik without being taught it and how that felt, pointing out that anyone who didn’t know it at all at the beginning slowly learned it over the course of the dance and had mastered it by the end. Discuss what about these dances make them good “folk dances” and what folk dances are, including a) circle formation allows any number of people to join in b) holding hands help people who don’t know the steps to go in the right direction and learn what to do c) repetition makes it easier to learn, remember, practice d) simple steps so teaching in advance not necessary d) social aspect of circle allows everyone to see each other, feel physically connection to entire community, make eye contact with anyone else at any time, etc.

4. Two more easy circle dances [Ten Minutes]

Teach and do Niguno Shel Yossi and Debka Kafrit, including the noises (like “shhhhh-tch-tch” in Debka Kafrit) and using “Cornerstone” and individual camp names during chanting parts.

5. Conversation about rituals and comfort [Fifteen Minutes]

Leader will invite everyone to sit down in a circle and will find out whose birthday is closest to that day. Declare today to be that person’s Cornerstone birthday and invite a few different people to explain how birthdays are celebrated at their camp, if they have particular rituals that everyone knows. Leader will lead a discussion on the ritualistic elements of birthdays and point out how campers find comfort in those rituals: they know exactly what to expect and what they need to do to participate. Leader will ask participants to think of other ritualized moments at camp and how the “always the same” aspect makes the activity more enjoyable or comfortable (for example, maybe their Friday night services always start with Lecha Dodi and end with Adon Olam, or perhaps the order of meals from Monday-Friday is always the same...) Make the connection to dancing and how it may be scary the first time but it is very repetitive and therefore becomes comforting. Introduce concept of “division dances” or specific dances “owned” by different age groups or bunks or however it might work for a particular camp. Key points are that that group should always start with that same dance, every single time, and that calling out words or making noises must be included. Leader will explain how not everyone may get the steps right but everyone can say “Cornerstone” or “Yeah!” at the correct time and therefore they have opportunities to be included and have success (just like people who are bad at or uncomfortable singing can find success in clapping, for example, during a song session), mixing up relevant abilities,

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learning styles, etc. Leader will invite participants to think of times at camp when doing their “bunk dance” might be a good way to warm up the group for another activity and help them feel comfortable, or energize them, or otherwise add a ritualistic moment to the course of a day at camp.

Do Debka Kafrit again, if there is time and group wants to, with ritualized aspects and vocal aspects now explicitly understood.

6. Two modern line dances [Fifteen Minutes]

Teach the line dances Shemesh (aka Le'olam Be'ikvot Hashemesh, aka the Penguin Dance) and Or. Be sure to point out “Shemesh” means sun and “Or” means light and that the movement matches the movement on the word “Koach” (which means strength/power) in Or.

7. A mixer [Ten Minutes]

If there is time, leader will point out that there are three formations of dances in Israeli dance: circles, lines, and partners. Participants have already done some circles and lines and now they'll learn a special kind of partner dance, one in which dancers switch partners every repetition – dances of this type are called “mixers”. Teach and do Bim Bam Bom.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

These specific dances can be used with almost any size group of any age starting entering-fourth grade and up. Specific camp-adaptations are included in the description above.

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Israeli Dance, Session 1

Nigun Atik

Ancient Melody

Od nashuva el nigun atik
Ve'hazemer yif ve'ye'erav
Od gavia meshumar nashik, nashik,
Alizei eiyanim ve'levav.

We will yet return to the ancient melody
And the song will continue
We'll raise another glass,
with bright and cheerful eyes.

Tovu, tovu ohaleinu
ki, ki hamachol hif'tsia
Tovu, tovu ohaleinu
Od nashuva el nigun atik.

Our tents are filled with goodness
because the dance lifts us up
Our tents are filled with goodness
as we return to the ancient melody.

Lyrics by Michal Kashtan

Music by Amitai Ne'eman

Dance choreography by Rivka Sturman 1955

Info and lyrics from: <http://www.hebrewsongs.com/song-nigunatik.htm>

Mayim, Mayim

Water, Water

Ushavtem mayim b'sason
mimainei hayeshua
Shavtem mayim b'sason mimainei
hayeshua

And you will draw forth water with joy
from the wells of salvation.
You will draw forth water with joy
from the wells of salvation.

Chorus:
Mayim - Mayim - Mayim - Mayim
Hey, mayim b'sason
Mayim - Mayim - Mayim - Mayim
Hey, mayim b'sason

Chorus:
Water - Water - Water - Water
Hey, water, joyfully!
Water - Water - Water - Water
Hey, water, joyfully!

Lyrics from Isaiah 12:3

Music by Emanuel Amiran

Dance choreography by Elsie Dublon/Kibbutz Na'an 1937

Info and lyrics from: <http://www.hebrewsongs.com/song-mayim.htm>