

Spoken Word Prophet: Liberating Your Voice *Specialty Track 1*

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SUMMARY:	In this session, participants will learn how to use spoken word poetry and other storytelling and writing techniques to find their voices and consider their roles in liberating others from their own perceived barriers in feeling empowered at both at camp and beyond. - <i>Submitted by Caroline Rothstein</i>
TOPIC(S):	Writing, Storytelling
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	The goal of this session is for participants to explore, consider, and learn how to intentionally use their voices to feel heard and have a revolutionary and revelatory impact in their communities and the world at large.
AUDIENCE:	Any age range; recommended 20 people maximum.
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	"Exodus, Redemption, Liberators, et al"
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text and resource sheets • Poems/texts to use to spark discussion & writing prompts • Writing utensils for all participants • Paper/notebooks/something on which to write for all participants • Clipboards (if needed)
SET-UP DETAILS:	<p>This session should take space in a location, space, or room where participants can both sit in a circle (on the floor or in chairs), and also have space to spread out if they want some privacy during the writing workshop portion of the session. The writing workshop portion can also be done around tables (i.e. outside at picnic tables, the dining hall, bunk area, etc.).</p> <p>Another option is to simulate a setting that mimics being in the desert, and/or in the space of "revelation" at the bottom of Mount Sinai.</p>

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Welcome participants and share both specialty track and session one goals and agendas (10 minutes)

Begin opening activity and ice-breaker (5 minutes)

Performance (10 minutes):

Text study (20 minutes):

Writing Workshop (25 minutes):

Ask volunteers to share what they've written. (5 minutes)

Closing (5 minutes)

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- Invite participants to find a seat in the circle and each have a writing utensil, paper, and clipboard.
- Begin session.
- Welcome participants and share both specialty track and session one goals and agendas (10 minutes)
 - o Specialty track goal: To learn how to intentionally use our voices to feel heard and have an effective impact, both in our communities and the world at large.
 - o Specialty track agenda:
 - Session one: live performance, discussion, writing workshop
 - Session two: writing workshop, editing workshop
 - Session three: workshop, debrief & taking this back to camp
 - Offer this overall note: there will be opportunities where everyone will be invited to share throughout the three sessions both in small groups and with the group at large. First and foremost, you are the most important audience member, and you are encouraged to write first for yourself without feeling pressure to share anything you don't want to share.
 - o Session goal: To explore what it means to own and share our own stories and publicly share/name the things we value and for which we feel passion and purpose in life.
 - o Session agenda:
 - Introduction
 - Performance
 - Discussion/debrief
 - Text study
 - Writing workshop
 - Sharing
 - Closing
 - o Guidelines and group agreements for creating a brave and safe(r) space:
 - Use "I" statements
 - Confidentiality
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Meet risk with risk
 - It's ok to be raggedy
 - Self-regulate self-care (i.e. it's ok to step outside if needed)
 - Facilitator is available after
- Begin opening activity and ice-breaker (5 minutes):
 - o Ask participants to share their name, their pronouns if they feel comfortable, why they chose this specialty track, and one thing for which they're grateful today.
- Performance (10 minutes):
 - o Caroline shares two of her poems:
 - Framing for poems (and specialty track sessions):
 - Language can be a tool for getting out of Mizraim – the narrow spaces
 - We can use language as a tool for redemption
 - ["Holy On My Own"](#)
 - ["Fierce This House"](#)
- Debrief/discussion (10 minutes):
 - o What resonated?
 - o What stood out?
 - o What did you notice?
 - o What did you feel?
 - Did it liberate you to speak?
- Text study (20 minutes):
 - o Ask participants who knows what "Exodus" is:

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- Did you know it is a book of the Torah?
- What book is it and what does the story entail?
- What is the holiday associated with this story (and book)?
- Offer any additional contextualizing needed re: The Exodus story.
- Share “Exodus” source sheet.
- Read through “Exodus” source sheet.
- Discuss.
- NOTES for facilitator to consider in guiding the discussion:
 - Exodus: 3:9 - 14:
 - G-d says: The outcry of the Israelites has come up to me, I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them.
 - **In short: I heard their voices.**
 - Then G-d asks Moses to go and help free the Israelites.
 - Then Moses asks G-d – what do I say your name is?
 - G-d says – I am who I am (Exodus 3:14)
 - Exodus 4:1:
 - Moses – what if I say something and they don’t believe me?
 - Doubts himself
 - Exodus 4:10:
 - Moses says to G-d: “Please, O Lord, I have never been a man of words, either in times past or now that You have spoken to me; I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
 - Lots of interpretations of what that means exactly...
 - Not that many people can beat box that quickly
 - G-d says: your job is liberation and to be a liberator and Moses’ response is: I’m not the guy for the job...I don’t have the resume or CV... I’m not a man of words.
 - This fixed mindset – “I have always been this way” – are we not malleable to growth and evolution and change and learning new skillsets? I think we are.
 - At the burning Moses—in essence—says to G-d: I have a stutter and I am not a person of words, so who am I to lead this revolution?
 - In general, to consider, offer, or add:
 - Validating participants that they can come in with whatever they have and whoever they are, and still take on this role as best they can
 - Reassure participants about bringing this kind of thinking back to camp for other staff and campers who feel like they may not be capable of doing certain tasks or leading certain experiences, etc.
 - This is a tool – regardless of who you are and what you bring, you still have a seat at the table – we are empowering ourselves/each other
- Writing Workshop (25 minutes):
 - Consider: the definition of the word liberator:
 - “A person who liberates a person or place from imprisonment or oppression”
 - Ask (for the first time):
 - What is your role in liberating others? What does it feel like to be a liberator? Do you feel like your role as a counselor is connected to that as a liberator?
 - Freewrite
 - Underline something that surprised you
 - Star your favorite part
 - Volunteers share either what they underlined and/or starred
 - Prompt:
 - Consider, according to Exodus, the arch of the liberator saying:
 - I’m not good with the word thing



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- G-d pushes back
- Think about a time or times in your life at large, or at camp, when you were called to do something and you didn't know if you felt worthy of that call.
 - Make a list of 3 to 5 of those moments in your life.
 - Choose one to write about further.
 - What did that moment/experience feel like? Make a list of 3 feelings.
 - What did that moment smell like? Taste like? Look like? Sound like?
 - Make a list.
 - What question do you have regarding that moment?
 - Now, write a poem answering that question. Feel free to use the lists of other items you've listed – feelings, senses, etc.
- Ask volunteers to share what they've written. (5 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)
 - Ask each person to share one thing that is clear, and one thing that is lingering as they leave today.
 - Ask participants to please bring what they've written back with them for session two.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

Some recommendations, adjustments, and adaptations for bringing this back to camp!

- 1) Use your own poetry/writing to be the material that inspires both the discussion and writing!
- 2) If counselors / staff want to use a different theme for the writing prompt, it's recommended they keep the structure of the workshop the same, and change the following sections: the poem or art used at in the sharing opener, the nature of questions in the discussion, and the writing prompt.