

The Power of Jewish Fire: Infuse your Fire Making with Intention

Elective 3

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| AUTHOR(S): | Josh Lake, Meir Balofsky |
| SUMMARY: | There is more to a campfire than lighting a match. Learning to make a proper campfire starts with proper intention. Fire is amazingly powerful and holy, and has the potential to be a transformative Jewish experience. We will not only learn to build a safe fire; we will also learn what makes fire a Jewish tool and how our ancestors used fire. From the power, magic and mystery of fire, to learning to harness its secrets to expand your programs, we will explore the inner eish (fire) in each of us. Together we will discover the physical fire through safe practices, the personal fire through breathing and meditation, and the communal fire through shared storytelling. – <i>Submitted by Josh Lake and Meir Balofsky</i> |
| TOPIC(S): | Fire Building, Community Building |
| LEARNING OBJECTIVE: | Participants will learn how to build a safe physical and metaphorical fire for their camp communities. They will learn to create a multi-sensory experiential fire-based program. |
| AUDIENCE: | 25 |
| TIMING: | 90 min |
| APPENDICES: | |
| MATERIALS NEEDED: | Candles, popcorn, oil, matches, pot for popcorn, dry wood, Hot Mits. |
| SET-UP DETAILS: | Fire pit near a wooded area |

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

(20 minutes)

Introduction - Circle Go around

Share information about yourself.

- What is your name?
- What is your camp?
- What is your association with fire at your camp?

As a group we will explore the Nadav Avihu Story - The Unauthorized fire. Respect fire and fire protocols (Lev 10:1)

Let's explore the building blocks of fire.

We need 3 physical things before we can make fire (the fire triangle)

- Oxygen-If you're breathing, then we have this.
- Heat-Friction, match, lighter, chemical reaction, magnifying glass
- Fuel-Wood, steel (under right circumstances), gas, etc. We will discuss the fuel being wood.
 - How do we gather wood?
 - Do we ask permission?
 - What wood are we "allowed" to gather? - Trees were there before humans etc.
 - Where in creation were trees created? (3rd day)

How do we gather wood for the fuel?

Trees were here before humans (review days of creation, trees=day 3, peoples=6th day)

- The tree supplying you wood today predates this specific human (me). Where do we get off just taking without permission? Kavannah/respect v unauthorized fire (Nadav story)

Fingernail analogy - you can take the branches but ask first

- What types of wood
 - Tinder
 - Kindling
 - Fuel
- Dead v living

Let's talk fire safety!

Almost all (90%!) of forest fires were human made! (And we aren't even talking climate change!)

- Here is what we need for a safe fire. If these can't/don't exist, consider cancelling or not starting the fire!
 - Durable surfaces
 - Ring of life (Fire ring)
 - What is the right size fire?
 - Putting the fire out
 - Water
 - Dirt
 - Spreading
 - Extenuating circumstances
 - Very dry
 - Windy
 - Lightening

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- Too few staff to camper ratio
- Too much dry wood in area
- Too wet/raining/storming

Some other considerations for having a safe fire

- Smores (how many campers can safely make smores at once?)
- Types of wood (soft wood v hard wood) How they burn. Soft=fast and furious, hard=long and good coals)
- fire circle out of inflammable materials (rocks, earth, bricks)

Let's make a fire with kavannah and safety in mind!

- Instructions for making your fire
 - Make/show example fire
 - Split group into pairs
 - Go find resources (wood, rocks, etc.)
 - Permission from the tree
 - Appreciation (180 degree Ma Rabu...)
 - Collecting wood - Pause in the woods for a "ma rabu maasecha Hashem" (Psalms 104:24) focus moment (I-It and I-Thou- Martin Buber)
 - Make a plan
 - We want to encourage a one match fire. We need to suspend our "knowing."
 - Lean to v. anything else
 - Where is the wind coming from?
 - Where/how do you light your fire?
 - Ground moist v. dry (platform)
 - How are you going to put this fire out? Water/dirt/stomp (peeing on fire is not a good method of putting it out.
 - **Fire needs to be DEAD out. Pick it up with your bare hands!**

(20 minutes)

We will now build a fire big enough to light your candle.

- Light your candle
 - Prophecy of Moses (Torah is likened to fire) Moses received the fire, he passed it onto Joshua, Joshua passed to elders
 - Torah still shines bright, it is not diminished, in fact it gets bigger! As you light your candle, we add it to the collective fire and start a bigger fire that more people can appreciate/learn from/warm themselves by.

After your candle is lit, bring it to the main fire circle and we will build a bonfire together (kumsitz/Madura).

(15 minutes)

Sit in circle around the fire.

Open group fire with Henay Ma Tov U'Manaim song

Question: Where do we see fire in Jewish life? Popcorn style (**Meir**)

- Nir Tamid
- Shabbat
- Havdallah
- Hanukkah
- Yom Tov

- Burning Bush
- Nadav and Avihu
- Signal fire for galut
- Lag B'omer

While this is happening, we will also make actual popcorn!

To make popcorn:

- Put about 1/4 cup of popcorn (for 10 people) in pot with lid
- Put about 2 tbs of vegetable oil in pot
- Shake so all kernels covered with oil
- Cover with lid. Put on flame.
- Move pot around continuously with hot mitts on your hands
- When popped, put popcorn in bag, add salt, shake.
- Distribute! Enjoy!

(5 minutes)

Josh - Baal Shem Tov Story

Meir Meditation - Lighting your inner fire/happiness - inner calm. Breathing techniques - using your senses.

(10 minutes)

What is your inner *eish*?

Eish is the Hebrew word for fire, but it can be the *eish* of your soul/life too. Each partner answer this:

- Pair up with a new partner.
- Discuss what lights your fire.
- What is your passion?
- What is your hope on your fire?
- What does fire mean to you?
- Have you had any transformative fire experiences.
- Stay on task, but this is a wide task!

Just as we lit our candles off our fires and then lit the communal fire...We light our metaphorical inner fire and bring it to our campers - and light theirs.

(5 minutes)

Rejoin the fire circle.

1-3 people/groups share their inner eish

(5 minutes)

Josh – Story (Grandma Spider)

(10-15 minutes)

Conclusion:

Pulling back the curtains. How did we come up with this?

- What is your kavannah for your fire?

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- Extreme value of planning your fires!
- You don't need to force it and you can feel it out, but nice to have a plan (rule of P's, planning prevents problems)
- What you saw in camp, though you might have thought it was spontaneous, likely it was not. Very likely there was a plan before the magic of a campfire.
- If you create a plan, you can deviate and be spontaneous, but start with a plan! This is true of the programs you will experience here at Cornerstone, but true of life too!

Pair up with someone from another camp.

- When do you have fires at your camp?
- When/where do you think there can be a fire at your camp?

- What are your ideas for fire at your camp?

Ask for 1-2 volunteers to share their vision of fires at camp

Put out fire!