

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

Three Jews, Eight Opinions: Let's Work on Pluralism [Elective 2]

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SUMMARY:	Workshop on the idea of “engagement pluralism” - <i>Submitted by Sarra Alpert</i>
TOPIC(S):	Group Dynamics, Identity
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Participants will have ideas for how to try out opportunities for pluralism that push people with different needs and practices to learn from each other.
AUDIENCE:	Staff
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	“These and These” source sheet: https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/61049?lang=bi
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Handouts
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any space is fine as long as it's big enough for all participants to be in one big circle together.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- 10 min: Start with step in/out:
 - I have never belonged to a synagogue
 - I come from a family with multiple faith traditions
 - I engage in a regular prayer practice
 - Musical instruments are an important part of my religious practice
 - I have kept kosher for a period of time in the past or currently
 - I have Shabbat practices which play a meaningful role in my life
 - I had Shabbat practices which at one point played a meaningful role in my life
 - Gender roles in Jewish communities I have been a part of have been problematic for me

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- I celebrate Mimounah at the end of Passover
 - Experiences in Israel and/or Palestine have played or currently play an important role in my Jewish life.
 - Israel advocacy plays an important role in my Jewish identity.
 - Palestinian solidarity plays an important role in my Jewish identity.
 - I have Jewish traditions that are linked to my specific Jewish ethnic or country-of-origin identity or group
 - I can walk into a Jewish community space and feel that others do not see me as outsider
 - I can enjoy music at my synagogue that reflects the tunes, prayers, and cultural roots of my specific Jewish heritage
 - I have been part of a Jewish community that has been meaningful to me
 - I am searching for a Jewish community that is meaningful to me
 - I have felt alienated from Jewish texts, spaces, or traditions because of how they do or do not relate to queerness
 - I have ancestors who survived the Shoah (the Holocaust)
 - I have family members who died in the Shoah
 - I know of family members in the U.S. who participated in a boycott of stores that did business with Nazi Germany in the 1930s
 - I didn't even know that that was a thing or that it was controversial at the time
 - I think that the Jewish community doesn't think about the Holocaust enough
 - I think that the Jewish community thinks about the Holocaust too much
 - I think that the Jewish community doesn't think about the Holocaust in the *right ways*
 - Someone in my family has changed their name to sound less Jewish
 - Someone in my family changed their appearance to look less Jewish
 - I have ancestors in America who spoke Yiddish, but did not pass it on
 - I have ancestors in America who stopped certain religious practices in order to be more American
 - I have experienced anti-Semitism in America
 - People have said to me, "But you don't look Jewish," either seriously or as though it was funny, or meant it as a compliment
 - I feel motivated by Torah to organize for human dignity, social justice, and civic responsibility
 - I feel motivated by Jewish history to organize for human dignity, social justice, and civic responsibility
 - I feel motivated by family tradition to organize for human dignity, social justice, and civic responsibility
 - Any other prompts?
- 5 min: Personal journaling: Which of the prompts above were especially notable to you (maybe ones you'd never thought about before, ones that feel especially central to your Jewish identity, ones you want to learn more about, etc).

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- 10 min: Brainstorm lists together:
 - What do we gain from being in pluralistic community?
 - What are the challenges of being in pluralistic community?
 - What models have we seen of pluralistic community?

- 5 min: Explain idea of “engagement pluralism”
 - Pluralism in a lot of environments means having space for different people to do different things at the same time. Great approach for inclusion, but doesn't necessarily allow for much learning from each other.
 - An “engagement pluralism” approach means actively trying on pieces of each other's practices so that we can learn to be in community and relationship across our differences. The aim is for everyone to get some of what they need and want some of the time (and learn from the discomfort and discovery in the times that you're not getting exactly what you might want).
 - Most communities are pluralistic about some things but not about everything. There are core values or qualities that help a group define their mission and that therefore bring everyone into that group in the first place (and then enable that group to be able to get anything done without needing to evaluate each step every time). However, having a few elements that are more homogenous in your group doesn't mean that you can't seek out diversity and heterogeneity in as many other ways as possible.

- 15 min: Study the texts on the handout. Discuss the ideas presented in each text: what resonates? What troubles you? What is the ideal version of these approaches to pluralism and what are the dangers?

- 30 min: Generate at least three ideas for how engagement pluralism could work in a camp setting. Split into groups to flesh each idea out with more detail.

- 10 min: Closing activity:
 - Think of someone you've learned from who holds different beliefs or practices from your own.
 - In pairs, tell each other about that person and what you learned from them.
 - If you feel comfortable, take a moment to send a message to that person to thank them.