

Gender & Sexuality: Creating a Culture of Equity & Consent

Specialty Track 2

AUTHOR(S):	Caroline Rothstein
TOPIC (S)	Gender, Sex & Sexuality; Identity
SUMMARY	Through writing and discussion, we will consider, unpack, and expand our lens around gender, sexuality, and identity at camp and beyond using text and storytelling.
GOALS:	To explore how we can cultivate and expand space for ourselves and our campers to be their true selves with regards to gender, sexuality, and identity.
AUDIENCE:	Staff and campers of any age and any group size.
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talmud page • Video of Caroline's Rothstein's "My G-d Is a Queer G-d" (Optional) • Tech/AV to share a poetry video at beginning (Optional)
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Pens/pencils/writing utensils • Clip boards or surfaces for writing
SET-UP DETAILS:	Any indoor or outdoor space where participants can sit comfortably in a circle on the ground/floor and/or around tables whereby everyone is still in a circle.

SESSION TIMELINE

- Introduction - 5 minutes
- Exploring “Bereshit” - 25 minutes
- Talmud Writing Activity - 25 minutes
- Share Out - 10 minutes
- Bringing It Back to Camp / Debrief - 5 minutes
- Closing - 5 minutes

SESSION OUTLINE:

- **Introduction (5 minutes)**
 - Welcome participants back
 - Session goal: To explore how we can cultivate and expand space for ourselves and our campers to be their fullest selves with regards to gender, sexuality, and identity.
 - Session agenda:
 - Introduction
 - Exploring “Bereshit”
 - Writing Activity
 - Share out
 - Bringing It Back to Camp / Debrief
 - Closing
 - Note that the group agreements remain. Copy/paste into chat.
 - Group guidelines and agreements:
 - Use “I” statements
 - Confidentiality / privacy
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Meet risk with risk
 - It’s ok to be messy
 - Self-regulate self-care
 - Facilitator is available after
- **Exploring “Bereshit” (25 minutes)**
 - Caroline performs her poem “[My G-d Is a Queer G-d](#)”
 - Read Joshua Jennifer Espinoza’s “[The Moon is Trans](#)”
 - Ask participants their reactions:
 - What resonated?
 - What did you notice?
 - What stood out?
 - [Share verse \(Genesis 1:5\)](#) on screen and read and discuss it with the group.

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וַיִּקְרָא אֱ-לֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

Vayikra E-lohim la'or yom velachoshech karah laila, vayehi erev vayehi voker yom echad.

God called the light Day and the darkness G-d called Night. And there was evening, and there was morning, the first day. - **Genesis 1:5**

- What comes to mind at first glance?
- What are your thoughts on the framing of dark and light?
- Discuss the notion of “twilight” and refer back to Genesis 1:5:
 - What is twilight?
 - Share notion of dusk and dawn and cyclical nature of twilight.
 - What is liminality?
 - Offer how Jews have historically been a “liminal” people in their experiences, identities, and uses of time / space.
 - Consider where else in Judaism **liminality** shows up. (i.e. Havdalah, Shabbat, lunar calendar and marking of time, etc.)
 - Liminal comes from the Latin *limen*, which means “threshold.”
 - In what ways were the “My G-d Is a Queer G-d” and “The Moon is Trans” poems an example of twilight?
 - In what ways were the “My G-d Is a Queer G-d” and “The Moon is Trans” poems consistent with, connected to, or in conversation with the Genesis text?
- **Talmud Writing Activity (25 minutes):**
 - Share [STORY TALMUD TEMPLATE](#).
 - Ask participants to talk about a time when they felt stuck in a category / space / experience that didn't feel right for them with regards to gender and/or sexuality.
 - Write it in the center of their STORY TEMPLATE.
 - Invite participants to think about this in terms of camp, though not a requirement.
 - After they write, ask participants to underline something in what they wrote that surprises them.
 - Ask participants to star something in what they wrote that they especially like.
 - Ask for volunteers who want to share what they underlined and/or starred.
 - Ask participants to break into hevruta pairs (via break out rooms on Zoom).
 - Ask participants (in hevruta) to take a look at their “fixed story” on their STORY TEMPLATE.

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- Ask participants to share their fixed story with their partner. Reiterate privacy from group guidelines and agreements, and let participants know it is okay to share only pieces of their stories if they would prefer.
- Ask the pairs to discuss / talk about ways they could break out of the box / fixed story, and offer one another ideas on how to do so.
- Ask participants to return to working alone.
 - Ask participants to write a list of three ways they can break out of their box at camp and/or in general. How can they “queer” their experience, and/or expand it into a space of twilight and/or liminality?
 - How can they live/exist in the twilight and/or liminality?
- Invite participants to write (poem, prose, letter, etc.) in the spaces around the box in a way that explores ONE of these three ways in full - it can be a story, it can be a poem, it can be a letter to someone or something, their choice.
- **Share out (10 minutes)**
 - Invite volunteers to share their stories.
- **Bringing It Back To Camp / Debrief (5 minutes)**
 - Ask participants:
 - How might you see yourself bringing this back to camp as an idea? As a practice?
 - What are specific programs at your camp that offer space to live in the twilight? (What exists)
 - What are programs at your camp for which you can infuse twilight and liminality by queering any current limitations? (Where you can improve)
 - What are programs that happen literally at twilight at camp? How can you take advantage of that time of day
 - How can you use this as a bunk activity?
- **Closing (5 minutes)**
 - Ask participants to share one word to describe either something they’re feeling, something they learned, or something they’re taking away.

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

- Here is [an audit](#) for people to use at camp when thinking about equity and liberation.
- Here is a resource list of [additional resources](#) available to use.
- I encourage you to replace my poem “My G-d Is a Queer G-d” and/or Joshua Jennifer Espinoza’s “The Moon is Trans” with any other poem, text, or piece of art, including something you write and share yourself!
 - Here are some poets and poems I recommend to start:
 - [“Treyf”](#) by sam sax
 - [“The Mandalorian is clearly a trans allegory, or maybe it’s just me”](#) by G Kagan-Trenchard

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- [“The Haggadah Hits Different This Year”](#) by G Kagan-Trenchard
- [“Pride”](#) by Joanna Hoffman
- [“Somewhere Real”](#) by Shira Erlichman
- [Faylita Hicks](#)
- [Alexis Aceves Garcia](#)
- [Danez Smith](#)
- [“Let’s Get One Thing Halfway Straight”](#) by Adam Falkner
- [“Poem For the Kicked Out”](#) by Kay Barrett
- [“A Litany For Survival”](#) by Audre Lorde
- Here’s an additional writing prompt to use in place of or in addition to the Talmud activity:
 - Read [“Let’s Get One Thing Halfway Straight”](#) by Adam Falkner
 - What have you been hiding?
 - Make a list of 3 to 5 things.
 - What are you no longer willing to hide?
 - Make a list of 3 to 5 things.
 - Look at the two lists.
 - Make a list of 3 to 5 feelings that you have.
 - Make a list of 3 to 5 people, or spaces, or things that help you feel brave or supported by the prospect of coming out of hiding.
 - Make a list of 1 question you have.
 - Write a poem that undresses, unmasks, unclothes, unveils, reveals, and/or disrobes the costumes and/or masks you no longer want to wear.
 - Share out.