

## CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

### Israeli Dance *Specialty Track, session 1*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Erica Goldman
<b>TOPIC (S)</b>	<i>Dance and Movement, Israel Programming, Camp-wide/Large Group Programs</i>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	Israeli dances and methods for teaching them, as well as how to utilize Israeli dance to teach about Israeli culture and Jewish values
<b>GOALS:</b>	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.
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	Any group size (6 or more is best), age 11+
<b>TIMING:</b>	75 minutes
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	N/A
<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	Music: the dance cuts of any songs to be played, plus a method to play them (computer, bluetooth speaker, sounds system) and any other hardware needed to make that happen (playing music from an iphone on a speaker? Make sure the speaker is bluetooth enabled and/or that you have the correct wires to connect the devices, etc.) Water and cups!
<b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>	Any large flat space. Best indoors on sprung floors (like a gym) but could be done anywhere there is room to spread out, a surface to dance on, and a sound system to handle the size of the space.  Be sure participants have a place to put belongings (jackets, notebooks, bags, phones, whatever) out of the way so they are not in danger of being stepped on/broken or a distraction.

### SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 - Simon Says Warm Up
- 00:05-00:25 - Intros and 2 Line Dances
- 00:25-00:45 - Meaning behind the Movements
- 00:45-00:60 - 3 Classic Circle Dances
- 00:60-00:75 - Rituals and Comfort

### SESSION OUTLINE:

- 00:00-00:05 - Simon Says Warm Up

Leader will invite everyone to spread out in the room (Zoom: or stand up and position their cameras so they can still see and be seen as much as possible) and face the leader for a quick game of Simon Says (with no “outs”; everyone keeps playing even after mistakes.) Leader will be sure to take a few seconds to explain the game. After a few minutes of playing, leader will ask why we are playing Simon Says, and why it might be 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.

One important answer to point out: 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.

- 00:05-00:25 - Intros and First Dances

Leader will introduce themselves and invite everyone to introduce themselves, perhaps sharing their names, pronouns, camps, and maybe a favorite dance. Another good ice breaker question for this session is: What is something you once couldn’t do, but now you can do? No one can repeat the thing a previous person has said.

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

In person, the first dances to be taught would be circle dances. In an online format, some line dances will be done first instead, and groups should engage in discussion about why that’s the case.

Leader will:

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. Make it clear these particular dances will be discussed more later on.

- 00:25-00:45 - Meaning behind the Movements

Take a break from dancing to discuss the meaning behind the dances and how that plays out at participants' camps. Shift to imagining the larger meanings behind the dances, to why the dances are the way they are. Talk about what might make some dances 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 physical connection to entire community, make eye contact with anyone else at any time, etc.

Teach the way that Israeli dancers hold hands (right over/left under) and the reason behind that. Conversation can include a discussion on how people design their societies to reflect what is important to them and their histories, and arts of all kinds reflect that as well. When it comes to social dancing or folk dancing, the way people interact is a physical *embodiment* of their values. In the folk dances of some European countries, for example, the men and women (gender binary historically upheld; speaking from that perspective, not our position now) always have different steps; the men have "macho" showy steps with lots of clapping and boot-slapping while the women have dainty steps and use their skirts to make patterns. In English country dancing, all dances are done by couples and the woman's hand is always placed on top of the man's hand. Leader will ask what we know about the values of Israeli society given what we know about Israeli dancing, allowing participants to make some guesses and put forth some theories. Leader will include the following ideas in the discussion:

Many of the pioneers ("chalutzim") who built pre-state Israel lived on *kibbutzim* (communal settlements based around economic and social equality) and were strongly committed to ideals of socialism and equality. This is represented in the dances they made: the formation is the circle, a symbol of equality and a formation that allows everyone to participate the same way without some dancers getting to be in "special" positions closer to the front or the center. The hand-hold specifically embodies the equality value by not allowing anyone to dominate or be pushed out of the circle: everyone has one hand on top and one hand on the bottom, whether old or young or rich or poor or male or female, etc. The same idea applies to why everyone does the same steps.

- 00:45-00:60 - Circle Dances

Teach the 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 the dances Mayim Mayim, Nigun Atik, and after teaching the tzerchessia step, Od Lo Ahavti Dai.

Be sure to point out that the tzerchessia comes from the Caucasus Mountains in Russia (as does the word Caucasian) and that Circassians are a minority group living in Israel today. Ask participants to apply what they learned about the elements of folk dances to these dances - what do they notice, feel, and understand about how they are constructed and what they do.

- 00:60-00:75 - Rituals and Comfort

Leader 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...) How did those rituals change in the summer of 2020? Are there new rituals that campers will now expect that have never physically happened at camp? What kinds of opportunities does the "break" from tradition (of having camp online last year) afford camp this year?

Make the broader connection to dancing and how it may be scary the first time but it is very repetitive and therefore becomes comforting. Introduce the idea 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, 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. Also, allow participants to think about how it might feel to do a specific dance in small pods at camp until those important moments when pods are joined, as is the plan for many - what if Israeli dance was the tool that camp used to mark those moments of expanding the circle?

Throughout: leader will be sure participants can take breaks and drink water as needed!

### BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

In person, after Mayim Mayim, leader could let Nigun Atik play right away and lead participants through it, without teaching it first - then later talk about what it

In person, including Bim Bam Bom or other partner-mixer is appropriate for the first day, to introduce the three formations (circle, line, and partner) of dances.