

Can We Learn Everything Like We Learn Torah?

Start Your Day

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TOPIC (S)	Prayer-alternative
SUMMARY	The Pardes method of studying Torah is structured to bring the learner from the literal plot of a text to its deep symbolism. If we took this approach to pop music, would we find that TSwift has insights into how to be a better person?
GOALS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective: Fellows will feel a bit goofy, inspired, and like the barrier to traditional Jewish text study has been lowered. • Behavioral: Fellows will experience the PRDS method of traditional text study and will be able to use the method for other text learning with their campers and peers. • Cognitive: Fellows will explore a pop culture song through the PRDS method, learning its simple, meaningful, and secret undertones.
AUDIENCE:	8th grade +, group size <25
TIMING:	30 minutes
APPENDICES:	Music Lyrics
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Lyrics of a pop song, printed for all to see
SET-UP DETAILS:	Anywhere -- make sure there is room to sit in a circle together.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00 - 00:10 - Introductions and framing
- 00:10 - 00:25 - PRDS method
- 00:25-00:30 - Closing and Debrief

SESSION OUTLINE:

Hook: Spectrum - Can you learn any text the way you learn Torah?

Zoom poll, let's try it out. Which of these songs do you want to "learn" this AM?

- Willow by Taylor Swift
- Brown Eyed Girl, Van Morrison
- Sorry, Justin Beiber

Frame the session by introducing the big question (Can we learn any text the way we learn Torah?) and the goals (to become familiar with a particular Torah study model as a way to dig into any text).

- Reading music lyrics as if they are serious life wisdom can get goofy, and it might get weird. But we've got to pledge to stay "in it". Ask campers/staff to raise hand and pledge to be "in it".

Watch the music video (with lyrics if possible) for the song selected.

Share [source sheet](#) with the lyrics to the song and do seder style *dramatic* reading (with order in chat) of the lyrics. Ask participants to underline/note lines or words that stick out to them.

Chat the words/phrases that spoke to them. If there is a common one, we'll use that as our example.

Introduce the PaRDeS model and explain what it is -- an acronym whose letter spell the Hebrew word for field, a wide open space for exploration, setting down roots, and watching things grow.

- Pshat - simple meaning: What is happening in this line?
- Remez - deeper meaning: what does it mean? To the singer? To you? What might it bring up for your parents? Grandparents?
- Drash - the sermon inspired by this line: imagine you were giving an inspiring speech to a congregation about this - what would you say?

- Sod - secret meaning: read the line three times emphatically and then silence for 1 min. What is the secret of the line?

Takeaways: What was one new thing you learned about this song, yourself, or the world?

Spectrum: Return to the earlier spectrum with the same question: Can we learn anything like we learn torah? If there is anyone who has moved on the spectrum, ask them to share why.

Closing: PRDS can be a tool that we can use anytime to find deeper meaning in texts we're working with/reading.

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

- Instead of an annotated spectrum on Zoom, you can set up the room with an “agree / disagree” spectrum, asking people to stand where they are on the spectrum.
- Have printed copies of the song lyrics that you're going to use, and if no screens/music is allowed at your camp, skip the part of playing the song itself. Instead, after you've finished the PRDS method, you can close by having everyone sing the song together with its new inspired meaning.
- Choose any song that is alive and exciting for your campers. Especially if working with a younger group, be sure to choose songs that have appropriate lyrics to explore.