

Count Your Blessings: Starting the Day with Gratitude *Start Your Day*

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TOPIC (S)	Jewish Values; Wellness
SUMMARY	This session will help participants cultivate an ability to notice the unnoticed blessings in our lives. We will also explore what we can learn about ourselves in the circumstances where saying thank you can be hard.
GOALS:	Participants will feel connected, grateful, and humble. Participants will be able to write a thank you note to someone they have deliberately not shared gratitude to before. Then, make an intentional decision, driven by personal values revealed to them in this session, as to whether or not they wish to send it. Participants will know how to think critically about gratitude as a Jewish value.
AUDIENCE:	This program is good for teenagers +. This program as it's written could be for any group size though for deeper conversation (which this program lends well to) I'd keep the groups around 10-12.
TIMING:	30 minutes
APPENDICES:	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Paper and pen or a computer with a space to write a letter.
SET-UP DETAILS:	A place with good wifi so you can watch the video uninterrupted. Acoustics should be good enough that people don't have to yell to be heard.

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SESSION TIMELINE:

- 00:00-04:00 - Welcome and introduction to session
- 4:00-11:00 - Video (skip 5:13-5:27 for language; end at 6:50)
- 11:00-18:00 - Video debrief - observations on giving/receiving gratitude
- 18:00-24:00 - Reflection: Writing your own thank you note
- 24:00-29:00 - Explanation of b'chira point/ opportunity to make intentional decision around sharing gratitude or keeping it to self + explanation of teshuvah (returning)
- 29:00-30:00 - Close and thanks

SESSION OUTLINE:

- 00:00-04:00 - Welcome and introduction to session
 - SAY: Today we are going to kickstart our day with some gratitude. At a most surface level, I think we can all agree that expressing our gratitude is a good thing - yeah? Give me a thumbs up/spirit fingers/etc. if you agree.
 - I know so many of our camps are really big on sharing gratitude as well, it can help keep spirits up and momentum going. What are some examples of where you see gratitude shared in your camp environments?
 - So at face value, it's safe to say we're familiar with the benefits/value of gratitude, but in order to deepen (or thicken) our understanding of this value, I want to offer up another definition: Noticing the unnoticed blessings in our lives.
 - In today's session, we're going to push ourselves to recognize when gratitude can be hard to express and what those moments teach us about values we hold. To get us in the zone, let's take a look at this video on the Science of Happiness. Here we go...
- 4:00-11:00 - Video (skip 5:13-5:27 for language; end at 6:50)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lq>
- 11:00-18:00 - Video debrief - observations on giving/receiving gratitude
 - What did you notice about the people who shared gratitude?
 - What did you notice about those who received gratitude?
 - Would you say it was easy or hard for them to share their gratitude?
 - Listen for it being hard. Probe for indicators. (Middot like vulnerability & self-preservation can come in conflict with the middah of gratitude... that can be when it gets tricky.)
- 18:00-24:00 - Reflection: Writing your own thank you note
 - PROMPT: Think of a person (you might know them directly, or not, they may be alive or dead) you are grateful for who doesn't know it. (Encourage them to think about someone to whom perhaps they have deliberately not shared gratitude). Write them a thank you note. You will NOT be required to send it to them, but we are going to protect time here now for you to write it.

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- Play reflective music in the background. Here's a nice option:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmRzT7HMS5k>
- If they're logged in virtually and writing their note with paper/pen, invite them to tilt their camera down so we can work independently but retain our sense of community while doing so.
- 24:00-29:00 - Explanation of b'chira point (choice)/ opportunity to make intentional decision around sharing gratitude or keeping it to self. Then, explain Jewish mindfulness notion of Teshuvah (Returning).
 - You have now gone through the step of identifying gratitude you have not shared in the past (deliberately or otherwise). You have reached a b'chira point, a "choice" point, where you can be intentional about whether or not you send this to the person you wrote it to.
 - Invite 1-2 participants to share what they think they will do with their thank-you notes and what this exercise has revealed to themselves about their values.
 - Teshuvah (returning) is practiced as you're able to return intentionally to what you've learned today about this middah/ Jewish value of gratitude.
- 29:00-30:00 - Close and thanks
 - Exit ticket is sharing in the chat 1 thing they learned today and/or 1 they are grateful for

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

In order to best adapt this program for in camp use I would suggest:

- If applicable, offer to mail the letters for the participants (i.e. if they write to their relatives or friends. This may also involve tracking down addresses for them)
 - You could also include a letter about the program they participated in to frame their letter for the recipient.
- If you have another 10-15 minutes, after you watch the video, you could invite a brave volunteer to test it out. Put a 1 minute timer on and have them imagine that a person they are grateful for is there with them. Have them speak directly to that person to share their gratitude (could place an empty chair/seat next to them imagining the person is sitting there). Have them speak *directly* to them (not about them).
 - After 1 minute, ask them to share what that experience was like for them. How did it feel to express their sentiments?
 - Then ask the others what they observed about the volunteer's expression of gratitude.