

Finding Your 'Fit: Jewish Wearable Wisdom, *Start Your Day*

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TOPIC (S)	Jewish ritual garb, Prayer-alternative
SUMMARY	Exploring the sensation of wearing tallit and tefillin by trying on different articles of clothing and related objects. How does what we wear help us have the kind of day we want to have?
GOALS:	Participants will be able to describe how they feel wearing tallit and tefillin-like articles of clothing, and how they feel when wearing different things.
AUDIENCE:	This session can work for all ages, but might be most easily grasped by campers 12 and up, and/or staff. Ideal group size is under 10 but it can work with a larger group as well.
TIMING:	30 minutes
APPENDICES:	None
MATERIALS NEEDED:	yarn or string cut in 3-4 foot pieces, blankets, hats, headbands, or other headwear (enough of all of these for each participant to have their own)
SET-UP DETAILS:	This can take place anywhere that participants can have room to spread out in smaller groups. Since they may be using blankets from their beds, it's best to be somewhere that will prevent them from getting dirty. No other setup needs.

SESSION TIMELINE

00:00-00:05- Welcome

00:05-00:15- Trying Things On

00:15-00:25- Unpacking the Experience

00:25-00:30- Final Thoughts and Close

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:05- Welcome

Once the group has gathered, but before doing anything else, ask participants to take 30 seconds (literally!) to grab an article of clothing that makes you feel like your absolute best self when you wear it. (If that item is not nearby, choose anything that can represent that article of clothing.) Participants can either put on or hold the item.

On the count of three, ask all participants to show their clothing item at once. (Take a screenshot for fun!)

In groups of 2-3, ask participants to share about their chosen article:

- What is it?
- What effect does it have on you? Why?

00:05-00:15- Trying Things On

Upon return, ask participants to gather:

A blanket or large scarf

String/yarn/cord/anything similar that is at least 3 feet long

A hat, headband, or anything else that can be worn on the head.

Explain:

We are going to try on these different items. Pay attention to how they feel on your body, and how you feel in your body.

Guide participants through donning the different objects and invite them to respond to the prompts in the chat or out loud if the group is on the smaller side. (A helpful tool might be the Center for Nonviolent Communication's [Feelings Inventory](#).) Play calm music during this part of the activity if you'd like.

1. First, place the hat, headband, etc loosely on your head (so that it is just balancing but could fall off if you move too much).
 - What do you notice? What feels different? How does it feel different?Place the object more snugly or comfortably on their heads. Ask: any difference?

2. Keeping the hat/headband on, pick up the blanket or scarf: wrap it around you and let it drape over your shoulders.
 - What are you feeling in this moment? What is one word to describe what you are feeling right now?

3. Finally, keeping the previous items on, pick up the string/yarn/cord. Push up the sleeve of your shirt on your non-dominant arm, and wrap it 2-3 times around your bicep (tuck the end in so it stays in place). Continue wrapping the string below your elbow, counting seven times. Wrap the string around the palm of your hand. Now in and around your fingers. Finally, tuck the end of the string wherever it will stay put.
 - What are you noticing? What is one word to describe what you are feeling right now?

00:15-00:25- Unpacking the Experience

Notice all three items now:

- Something on your head
- Something around your shoulders
- Something around your arm

Without thinking too much, strike a pose, and hold it for 15-20 seconds. (Another good opportunity for a screen shot!)

In groups of 2-3 ask participants to show their pose and answer the following questions:

- How would you describe your pose?
- Why do you think you chose to pose that way?
- What does that pose communicate?
- What kind of day do you think you will have based on what you're feeling right now?

Return to the larger group and debrief.

Ask for insights from the smaller groups, and ask: do these items that you put on seem familiar to anyone?

(Many participants will likely have guessed that these items replicate kippah, tallit, and tefillin.)

00:25-00:30- Final Thoughts and Close

Explain: Some Jews wear a kippah, tallit, and tefillin when they pray in the mornings. There is plenty of religious symbolism to those items, but today we are focusing on the sensation of wearing them.

Review those sensations by asking participants to remember the words they used to respond to the prompts over the course of the activity.

(Some participants who have experience wearing these items may want to share more about their relationship with them at this time as well.)

(For information on how to put on these items, you can learn about tefillin [here](#) and tallit [here](#). There is no blessing for putting on a kippah)

**Wearing certain items, even temporarily, can help us answer the following questions:
What do you want this day to be? What do you want to wear to help that happen?**

[Note: even though we are talking about clothing, we are NOT talking about fashion. This conversation is about what makes us feel like our best, not what other people tell us looks good.]

To close, ask participants to share one word to describe the day they hope to have.

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

With more time, it could be meaningful to explore the blessings for putting on tallit and tefillin to see how the words of the blessings themselves might inform how they are meant to make us feel.

This session can function as an introduction to wearing these traditional Jewish prayer items, especially in a camp where this practice is mandatory or widespread.

In person, ask participants to have all of these items gathered in advance of the session (you may want to provide the string, but they should use their own hats and blankets!).