

## CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

### Justice, Justice You Shall Pursue: Young People's Liberation! *Specialty Track 1*

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| <b>AUTHOR(S):</b>        | Chana Rothman   |
| <b>TOPIC (S)</b>         | Young Children, Leadership Development, Managing Challenging Behaviors  |
| <b>SUMMARY</b>           | Thinking well about younger campers is challenging - how much do we trust and respect their minds while keeping them safe with healthy boundaries? When young people are fully engaged - when their voices are heard, their opinions matter, and their unique perspective is respected - they commit themselves to making their cabins, their communities, and their own lives better.  |
| <b>GOALS:</b>            | Participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Define young people's oppression and young people's liberation</li> <li>- Identify instances of young people's oppression and young people's liberation in their own lives and at Jewish camp</li> <li>- Reflect on how their own childhood experiences inform their actions as counselors/role models</li> <li>- Name one Jewish text and/or framework that supports young people's liberation</li> </ul> |
| <b>AUDIENCE:</b>         | Fellows - can be tailored to other audiences  |
| <b>TIMING:</b>           | 75 minutes  |
| <b>APPENDICES:</b>       | Slide show (google file: <a href="https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18gM_s9zwRpcf31WK0d7TyPFrhDIYwvJ44e4diP6FsUY/edit#slide=id.gc94fceccd3_0_34">https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/18gM_s9zwRpcf31WK0d7TyPFrhDIYwvJ44e4diP6FsUY/edit#slide=id.gc94fceccd3_0_34</a> )  |
| <b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b> | This is a flexible session in terms of materials. Since it is being facilitated online, the session leader will be asking people to use what they have around their home.   |
| <b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>   | This session takes place online. It could be modified for any space with a little creativity!   |

### SESSION TIMELINE

0:00-0:15 - Introductions (includes Brit/Covenant, going over Agenda)

0:15-0:35 - Thinking about younger campers

0:35-0:45 - Big Idea/Framing

0:45-0:55 - Hands-on activity

0:55-0:60 - Debrief activity

0:60-0:75 - Wrap up (includes time for questions, reflections, and adaptations/modifications)

### SESSION OUTLINE:

0:00-0:15 - Introductions (includes Brit/Covenant, going over Agenda)

#### **Introductions:**

Session facilitator introduces herself.

She gives a brief overview of who she is and why she cares about this topic.

She introduces the agenda and goals.

#### **Icebreaker Introductions:**

Go around and say your name, age of campers you're working with this summer, and what was your favorite toy when you were a kid?

0:15-0:35 - Thinking About Younger Campers

#### **Nothing About Us Without Us: A Word from Actual Campers (5 min)**

Session leader shows a 5-minute video from the session leader's children (ages 5, 8, and 10) that describe what it's like to be those ages.

Session leader asks participants to reflect on the reality of being a young camper. Session leader asks participants to think about the age of the campers they will be working with this summer. Session leader asks participants to remember what their life was like at that age. (5 minutes)

#### **Hands-on activity (10 min):**

Participants do a quick search in their immediate environment to find something that reminds them of that time in their life (when they were the age of the campers they will have this summer).

0:35-0:45 - Big Ideas/Framing

#### **Session leader presents the big ideas of this session (7 min):**

- Young people experience oppression based on their age
- Jewish values teach us to be pursuers of justice
- When young people learn to resist being mistreated based on their age, they learn to fight injustice

- Counselors are like parents for the campers this summer
- Therefore, Jewish parenting wisdom can be a helpful guide

These ideas and texts are written in the google slides for visual learners:

- paragraph by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson
- paragraph by Ayelet Waldman
- paragraph by Chana Rothman (session facilitator)
- cartoon of Calvin and Hobbes by Bill Waters

Session facilitator pauses for questions and thoughts from participants.

0:45-0:55 - Hands-on activity

### **A Narrow Place/Mitzrayim**

Instructions are written on the google slide for this hands-on, creative activity. Session leader breaks participants into groups to have company while working independently on this creative and introspective task.

Prompt:

*Think of a time when you were a young camper (or young child) and you felt you were being treated unfairly. You were in Mitzrayim/Egypt - a narrow place. Using items that you have nearby, depict that place. You can use fabric, blocks, art supplies, play-doh, photography, household objects.*

*Optional: You may also depict your process of getting free from that narrow place.*

0:55-0:60 - Debrief/framing

Participants return from small groups into large group. Session facilitator offers space for participants to share what they created.

0:60-0:75 - Wrap up (includes debrief, questions for tomorrow, and adaptations/modifications)

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

This program is designed to be online. The agenda and texts can be printed and given out to participants. If technology to show video is not available, the session leader could print the dialogue out as a script and have participants read the script as a role play.

### Texts:

There's a human way to parent, and then what's distinctively or additionally Jewish on top of that. Human parenting is a combination of two core Jewish values: *chesed* [compassion] and *din* [justice]. The first opens up new horizons, teaching children that they can be self-surpassing, showing them that they can break through and do things they never thought possible, thereby giving them the courage to risk doing things they've never tried before. The second is to provide appropriate boundaries: those areas we never transgress, lines we never cross. Those have to be few and far between, but they have to be absolutely inflexible: issues of human dignity and inclusion. The Jewish manifestation of parenting is that the Jews are the heirs of an ancient tradition of wisdom and holiness. We must give children the vocabulary and the cultural structure to be able to know that each of them is a child of God. That's really what the Jewish life cycle, what the holidays, the mitzvot, and the myriad Jewish practices are all about: teaching and reminding us that we were brought out of slavery to be able to shine in the world.

- Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson

I really don't believe there is a special Jewish way to parent. But there are elements of Judaism that I try to bring into my parenting. The most important one is the concept of tikkun olam. We have tried to raise our children with a sense of the importance of tikkun olam, to teach them that to be a mensch in the world is very important. There are actually aspects of what we think of as traditional Judaism that are in conflict with how I want to parent. A perfect example of this are the communities where Orthodox Jews take over school boards and vote to strip local schools of finances and resources in favor of shuttling those resources off to yeshivas. To many of those people, a secular Jew like me isn't even really Jewish. To me, they shouldn't be allowed within a mile of a child. But here we are, both saying we possess a deep knowledge of what it is to be Jewish, and what it means to be a Jewish parent. For her bat mitzvah drash, my younger daughter researched domestic violence, specifically the concept of shalom bayit [peace in the house]. She learned that this idea has sometimes been used in haredi communities to stifle and ostracize women and children who come forward with allegations of abuse. But the concept of tikkun olam that we had been teaching her all of her life gave her a rubric with which to understand this second level of abuse—to say that this is not what Judaism is. We feel one of our jobs is to encourage our children to discover the things that will inspire them. We teach them about the world, setting an example, but we encourage them to discover things for themselves and come up with their own interpretations. To me, that's a very Jewish way to approach parenting.

- Ayelet Waldman

For the chat:

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Thinking about younger campers

Big Idea/Framing

Hands-on activity

Debrief activity

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