

### Working With Younger Campers *Specialty Track*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Chana Rothman
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	In this session we will learn and explore ways to support younger campers to develop and trust their own mind using text, creativity, and play.
<b>ABC GOALS:</b>	<p><b>Affective:</b> Participants will feel...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspired to create young people-centered spaces</li> <li>• Equipped to create young people-centered spaces</li> <li>• Transformed by the concept of young people’s liberation</li> <li>• Joyful and childlike from getting to play freely</li> </ul> <p><b>Behavior:</b> Participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define young people’s liberation in the context of Jewish values</li> <li>• Describe how young people’s liberation impacts them as a counselor and as a young adult</li> <li>• Identify three different types of play (child-led, adult-led, mutually-led) and describe where it happens at camp</li> </ul> <p><b>Cognitive:</b> Participants will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That parenting and being a counselor have a lot in common</li> <li>• They are capable of listening deeply to their campers, as long as they also feel they are being heard on a deep level</li> <li>• That Jewish camp is a great place to focus on young people’s liberation – our tradition has frameworks for this</li> <li>• Young people’s liberation can be joyful, playful, and vibrant.</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	This track is for Cornerstone Fellows but could be adapted for any camp staff.
<b>TIMING:</b>	<p>Session 1: 90 minutes</p> <p>Session 2: 90 minutes</p> <p>Session 3: 90 minutes</p>
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<p>Session 1:</p> <p>Session 2:</p> <p>Session 3:</p>

<p><b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b></p>	<p>Session 1: Large chart paper Markers Play-doh (enough for each participant) Slide projector</p> <p>Session 2: For the free play section of the session: Activity areas/stations that cover the following activities: Music (so whatever instruments you have around), Building materials (blocks, magnetic tiles, rocks and branches from outdoors), Dance (music, speakers, hula hoops), Physical Outlets (hula hoops, jump ropes, gymnastics mats, etc), Dress Up (costumes or accessories such as sunglasses, necklaces, scarves, hats), Outdoor Play (select a spot adjacent to your program space which you have pre-vetted as a safe outdoor play space)</p> <p>Session 3:</p>
<p><b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b></p>	<p>Session 1: A space conducive to hands-on play-doh usage, either a table with cover that can get messy, or a space outdoors. If using slides, the space should have indoor availability and there should be a projector.</p> <p>Session 2: Room with access to the outdoors and enough space to run at least four activity areas/stations (some of these can take place outdoors). Tables and other set up should be done ahead of time for each of the activity stations. If using slides, there should be a projector.</p> <p>Session 3: A space conducive to dialogue as well as a hand-on art project. The project for this session could be using sidewalk chalk in an outdoor cemented area, or it could be modified for indoors. If using slides, the space should have indoor availability and there should be a projector.</p>

### SESSION 1

Make:

Brit Kavod

Mitzrayim

Materials:

Poster paper

Markers

### 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:**

0:00-0:20 - 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?

#### **Brit Kavod (translation: Covenant of Respect)**

Facilitator introduces the idea that we are creating a community together. We will be intentional about this by expressing our needs and what we can offer. This is also can be an important way for them to begin their summer with their campers and co-counselor.

Each person traces their hand onto a piece of paper. Inside the outline of their hand, they write what they can give to the group. In the space between hands, they write what they need from the group.

0:20-0:35 - 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 6, 9, and 11) 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):**

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 from the outdoors that you have nearby, depict that place. (If this is done indoors, you can use fabric, blocks, art supplies, play-doh, photography, household objects or things found around camp.)

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

0:55-0:65 - Debrief/framing

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

0:65-0:75 – Chevrutah Listening pairs – think/pair/share

0:75-0:90 - 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:

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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

## SESSION 2

### SESSION TIMELINE

0:00-0:10 - Warm-up (includes games, going over Agenda/Goals, check-in)  
0:10-0:30 - Big idea/framing (includes video, text study, break out rooms)  
0:30-0:55 - Hands-on activity  
0:55-0:65 - Debrief  
0:65-0:75 - Debrief through hands-on activity

0:75-0:90 - Wrap up / Bring it back to camp (includes time for questions, processing, adaptations/modifications)

### **SESSION OUTLINE:**

#### **0:00-0:05 - Warm up game:**

Session facilitator starts with one or two games.

#### **Throw the Imaginary Ball**

One person throws something to the next person. It's an imaginary object. The person "catching" the object can pretend the object grew, or shrank, or became a dirty sock, or an alligator, etc. Each person passes to someone who hasn't gotten the object yet. Game ends when everyone has had a turn. (Explicit behind the curtain – any game like this can be made inclusive by making sure each person has a turn before ending the game or giving someone a second turn).

#### **0:05-0:10 - Review goals and agenda, Reflections/questions from last session**

Session facilitator shares outline with stated goals and agenda for the day. Session facilitator asks if there are any questions and offers a space for reflection on yesterday's topic of young people's liberation. It's important to take some time on that piece because today's topic is directly related to young people's liberation.

Goals:

(see above "Goals" section in this document)

#### **0:10-0:30 - Big idea/theory about PLAY!**

Session leader shares slides that encapsulate the big secular and Jewish ideas behind free play. Session leader allows time for questions and reflection in small groups.

Session facilitator shares three big ideas through Jewish and secular text study (texts are available on the google slides linked in this document above under "Appendices")

#### **BIG IDEA #1**

Children need free play. It is their right as young people. Play is a basic human right that is being taken away in many societies around the world.

Supporting texts:

- Paragraph by Chana Rothman
- Text defining "free play" (source: <https://www.pgpedia.com/free-play>)
- Text from "Children's Play Policy Forum"
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### BIG IDEA #2

There is a framework from Jewish tradition of respecting and recognizing that children learn through play.

Supporting Text:

- Jewish text from Proverbs 22:6: “Educate a child according to their way. When they get old, they will not stray.”

### BIG IDEA #3

There are three main types of play:

- Child-led play (Free play)
- Counselor-led play
- Mutually-led play

### **0:30-0:50 - Hands-on activity: FREE PLAY!**

Facilitator strongly encourages participants to go outside for this free play time.

*“We are going to take time to experience free play ourselves. I encourage you to find a buddy and go together to an area or activity. Feel free to try something you always wanted to try and ask your buddy to come along and support you. We are modeling supportive presence during free play. You can then be a buddy and supportive presence as your partner or partners try something.*

*There are outdoor areas and a few activity areas. These activity areas set up for you to play freely. You are also invited to interact with the others who have gravitated to that area. We will gather again in about 10 minutes. ”*

Facilitator defines this type of free play as “Child-led play.” Define the play we just did as *child-directed, child-centered* or *child-led* play. **Notice the term ‘child’ comes before the rest - that is the main focus.**

Reinforce the concept of young people’s oppression and young people’s liberation.

Facilitator visits each group, observing and documenting with photos and taking notes, checking with each individual for permission to take photos.

Here are some possible materials for each activity area:

- Pile of sticks, leaves, rocks
- Paper and markers
- Building blocks
- Pipe cleaners
- Nature area - going into the woods
- Basket of scarves
- Mud pit with bucket of water and sticks

### 0:50-0:55 - Group Discussion

Group discussion questions:

- How was this experience for you? Did it feel like free play?
- When does free play happen in your life?
- What are the benefits of free play?
- When and how often does free play happen at your camp?
- SELF-REFLECT: What is your role as a counselor in facilitating free play?
- How is free play connected to young people's liberation?

### 0:55-0:65 - Break into chevrotah for play-based learning (text study).

Instead of sitting and talking, each chevrotah pair can choose an area to play and interpret the texts in their own way.

Some options:

- Building Blocks and other building materials
- Art: paper, paint, paintbrushes, water, scissors
- Costumes
- Option to go outside
- Cozy sitting area with pillows and sheets (possible to build a fort)
- music for free dance

#### **Text 1:**

Mishlei/Proverbs 22:6 "Educate a child according to his/her/their way; even when s/he grows old, s/he will not turn away from it."

#### **Text 2:**

"30 Reasons why Free Play Benefits Child Development"

In play-based, creative chevrotah, explore the following questions:

- What is the difference between *child-led or free play*, *counselor-led play* and *mutually-led play*?
- What is the difference between *free play* and running around wild, driving your camp director crazy?
- What is the role of the adult/counselor in following the campers' lead?
- What would it look like to be more child-centered in your bunk?
- What would you need in order to make that happen?



- What questions do you have about free play at camp? About the text from Proverbs?
- What is Jewish about free play?

### **0:65-0:75- Wrap up - large group discussion**

Session facilitator asks what came up in the text study. What was it like to do text study in a hands-on way?

Session facilitator asks for input towards Session 3. Session 3 will be about synthesizing the concepts of young people's liberation and child-led play, and looking at them through the lens of Jewish camp.

### Bringing it back to camp

- Different age groups (youngest campers, older and oldest campers, teenagers, young adults/counselors, senior staff and directors)
- The continuum of *child-led*, *adult-led*, and *mutually-led play*. Where can you give the children more voice?
- Where can you advocate for your campers and yourself to your supervisors? (reference text study and UN Declaration)
- Outdoor free play - how can we make this more part of camp? When does this happen at camp?
- How can we make free time more meaningful and engaging?

1. On Jamboard, list the play continuum (*child-led*, *mutually-led*, *counselor-led*) and offer participants opportunity to draw or write ideas for where this child-led and mutually-led play happens or could happen at camp.

2. Young people's commitment: "I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will never again treat any young person, including myself, with anything less than complete respect. This means that..."

### **3 Minutes for notes**

Facilitator: *Take 3 minutes to reflect and write down 1 take-away from this session for your own life, and 1 take-away for you at camp this summer.*

*Facilitator brings the group outside.*

Ask the group to form a circle.

Ask each participant to share something they are taking from this session together: a memory, an idea, a question, an inspiration.

Thank each participant for coming, for being a teammate to their campers and all the campers and contributing to young people's liberation. What an exciting project!

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

Many of these can be adapted for in person or online.  
In person, there can be stations set up around the room.

Example:

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

- Finding a place with large walls to hang up the texts
- Planting some counselors amongst the texts to observe camper's reactions
- Bringing everyone into a circle for the discussion where everyone can see everyone else

[Please provide a very brief listing of the sections of your program and their timing. Please be sure to replace the example]

Example of a multi-session experience:

- 00:00-00:05 - Introductions, setting group norms
- 00:05-00:15 - Gallery Walk
- 00:15-00:30 - Group Discussion

### **SESSION OUTLINE:**

[Please provide a DETAILED step-by-step breakdown of how to run this program based on the timing above. Please be sure to replace the example]

Example:

00:00-00:05 - Session leader introduces session topic and leads group in a round of introductions (name, pronouns, camp, favorite spot on camp). The group creates a group bit & sets group norms on jamboard [link to jamboard].

00:05-00:15 - Session leader leads group in a gallery walk on examples of Jewish text about the power of dance (documents for gallery found in Appendix I). Participants explore the texts on their own while relaxing music plays (you can use whatever you think participants might enjoy!)

00:15-00:30 - Session leader facilitates a group dialogue using the following prompts and reading the room:

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- Which text spoke to you loudest?
- Was there a text you fundamentally did not agree with? Why?
- Was there a text that surprised you? How could you explore it further?

### **BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP:**

[Use this space to recommend possible adaptations, modifications, creative twists, or other suggestions. Please be sure to replace the example]

Example:

- At my camp we do not have specialist counselors, so we would be responsible for this session in bunk as there is no one person focused on Israeli dance - if you have someone who focuses on this at your camp, you could share this specifically with them to run!

### **SESSION 2 – PLAY (CHOICE TIME)**

#### **SESSION TIMELINE**

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#### Example:

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### **SESSION 3 – MAKE MIZRACH**

#### **SESSION TIMELINE**

0:00-0:10 - Warm-up (includes games, going over Agenda/Goals, check-in)

0:10-0:30 - Big idea/framing (includes video, text study, break out rooms)

0:30-0:45 - Hands-on activity

0:45-0:60 - Debrief/framing

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

#### **SESSION OUTLINE:**

**0:00-0:10 - Warm-up** (includes games, going over Agenda/Goals, check-in)

Session facilitator also offers participants the opportunity to lead an icebreaker. If no one engages, session facilitator runs the following game:

“Red Light, Camera Off”

The person whose turn it is finds something around them that is red, and something that is green. They hold up the red item and sing “Red light, camera off!” Everyone except the leader turns off their camera. Then the leader sings “Green light, camera on!” and everyone turns their camera back on. Then another leader is selected.

Sometimes participants will add other colors, like “Yellow light, go slow” or “Blue light, super speed,” etc. (I co-created this game with a 5-year-old in the class I was teaching.)

**0:10-0:30 - Big idea/framing** (includes video, text study, break out rooms)

Session facilitator offers time and space to process the previous two sessions' worth of material. Specifically, the facilitator asks if anyone has had any questions or new ideas about free play/child-led play.

Looking through their daily camp schedule, participants reflect on which type of play happens at the moments throughout the day. Participants and facilitator reflect on the questions:

1. Where are the places we can build child-led (free) play into camp?
2. What would you need in order to create more opportunities for child-led play at camp?
3. How do you frame this in terms of young people's liberation and Jewish values? What language do you use with co-workers, supervisors, and campers?

### **0:30-0:45 - Hands-on activity**

Take some time to jot down:

- What you will need in order to create space for youth-led approaches and spaces at camp
- 
- Anything you're wondering
- Things you want to remember
- Contact info of other people from this session
- Next steps for you
- Goals and vision for the kind of counselor you want to be this summer within the framework of young people's liberation (supporting young campers' leadership)
- Any "aha" moments

In small groups, participants create a "Mizrach."

A Mizrach (Hebrew for east,) refers to a wall hanging designating this direction to help people pray facing east, or toward Jerusalem.

In this case, the Mizrach will remind them of their spiritual Jerusalem - the place they want to be heading as a counselor of younger campers. What are the reminders they want to make visible and beautiful?

Participants can make their Mizrach in many ways:

- using whatever art supplies they have nearby
- using an online art platform like Canva or Jamboard
- using found objects outdoors or in their immediate environment and taking a photo

### **0:45-0:50 - Debrief/framing**

Participants share Mizrach art pieces in the larger group. Participants are invited to add anything to their piece as they listen to others describe their visions, dreams, goals, and reminders.

### **0:50-0:75 - Wrap up**



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This is the final session. Session facilitator encourages participants to use this time for reflection, plans, goal-setting, any lingering questions, processing.

Closing slide reads:

Thank you for doing this work! Your campers are lucky to have you as their “parent” for the summer. Please get/stay in touch!

I love to hear:

- Questions
- Success stories
- Challenges
- Anything else you want to share!

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

This session includes multiple ways for participants to process big ideas and how to incorporate them into their life as people and specifically as counselors at their Jewish camp.

Participants can shift these modalities around for use in different settings:

- Mizrach / wall hanging
- Games to reinforce relationships
- Jotting down notes to remember big ideas
- Giving participants the opportunity to facilitate and take leadership

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