

# MAINTAINING A BUNK AFTER CAMP

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Every year, campers return home at the end of the summer missing some of their closest friends in the world—their camp friends. Depending on their age and access to social media and technology, campers often attempt to keep in touch with one another once the summer ends to maintain the unique bonds they formed at camp.

Unfortunately, many campers fall out of touch with their bunkmates over the course of the year until the following summer. Other campers have more success staying connected and when they do take it upon themselves to host reunions throughout the year, they can potentially be exclusive and hurt those who are left out.

This packet proposes a variety of ideas to provide campers with the continued support to maintain their connections to each other, their counselors, and their camp throughout the year. Included are both smaller and larger scale suggestions to help camp friends stay connected.

*Before taking on any of the following initiatives, counselors should discuss their ideas with their respective camp directors to ensure that the activities are allowed both legally and according to individual camp boundaries.*

We hope that in addition to strengthening connections formed at camp, these activities also allow you to enjoy keeping your bunk chants and traditions going long after the summer ends!

## VIRTUAL REUNIONS

### 1. Zoom Sessions:

- Find a time that works best for the majority of the group.
  - Offering options of times before scheduling or sending out a virtual “save the date” ensures less conflict regarding coordination.
- Each person share a “news flash” something exciting that may have happened since camp.

**\*Counselor note:** Ensure that sessions are not monopolized by a certain individual or group in order to help everyone feel like they have space to contribute.

**\*Counselor note:** Make sure to keep the conversation appropriate!

### 2. Kahoot:

- Favorite camp memories/activities?
- Random trivia about campers and counselors.
  - *Ex:* What is Joey’s secret talent? What is Maya’s favorite subject in school?
- “Name That Place” in camp: Participants will be given clues about certain camp locations and must guess the location.

**\*Counselor note:** Make sure the Kahoot is appropriate and does not become derogatory, embarrassing or hurtful. Invite campers to share facts about themselves instead of making assumptions.

**\*Counselor note:** Make sure when picking places for Kahoot game, choose locations that are communally known to make the game accessible and give everyone a chance to participate.

### 3. Fun camp activities

- Cooking/bake-off
  - Be sure to send out ingredient list and material requirements in advance!
- Scavenger hunt
  - Campers will be asked to speedily find 5-10 household items by a moderator -this can be done a couple of times if time permits.
- Follow along craft project
  - Projects should be easy to follow.
  - Be sure to send out materials list in advance.

**\*Counselor note:** Ask for camper suggestions for what they would like to do together in advance.

### 4. Icebreakers/catch up questions

- What was your favorite memory from camp last summer?
- What is something cool or exciting that happened recently?
- Is anyone going anywhere interesting soon or doing something fun during a school break?

- Questions should be fun and interactive.

**\*Counselor note:** This should be an informal and relaxed atmosphere for campers to catch up.

## **5. Escape the Zoom**

- Create or find puzzles and schedule a zoom session to either work together to solve the puzzles or split them into breakout rooms and have them compete to see which groups can solve them first.
  - You can occasionally give them hints as needed.
  - Set timer and have a blast!

**\*Counselor note:** By sharing different pieces of the puzzles or riddles with different campers, it forces them to work together to solve them.

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# **NEWSLETTER**

## **1. Upcoming birthdays**

- List some birthdays for the month (or “watch out for these upcoming birthdays”).

## **2. Funny comics/jokes**

- Make sure these are appropriate!
- Encourage camper-drawn comics.
- Zits, Calvin and Hobbes, Sherman’s Lagoon, and many other classics comic strips are available online.
- Have a joke section with space for appropriate camper submitted jokes.
- Puzzles or riddles that can be answered in the following newsletter.

**\*Counselor note:** Be careful not to make riddles too difficult/easy so people remain engaged.

## **3. Shoutouts, congratulations, and “mazel tovs”**

- Have an announcement section with celebratory notes.
- Be conscious of space so newsletter doesn’t become too long.

## **4. Shabbat *Dvar Torah***

- A short paragraph about the week’s torah portion and how it relates to our lives or camp.
  - Encourage campers to write them!

## **5. Camper Highlight**

- Choose campers in advance and ask them to submit a silly photo of themselves and answer a few fun questions.
  - *Ex:* Favorite place on earth, favorite food, secret talent

**\*Counselor note:** Make sure that campers are comfortable being spotlighted and be transparent about how campers are selected so that no one feels overlooked.

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## WHATSAPP GROUP CHAT

- 1. More consistent catch-ups.**
    - Stickers, gifs, and funny banter make for great relationship maintenance.
  - 2. Moderated by counselors.**
    - Important to ensure the chat only features fun, uplifting discourse and does not embarrass or ostracize.
  - 3. Birthday announcements!**
    - If Birthdays are on the agenda, be sure to have a list of each camper's name and birthday.
  - 4. Shout-outs and congratulatory announcements.**
    - *Ex:* Way to go Wilma on qualifying for regionals in gymnastics!
  - 5. Invites to reunions.**
    - This platform can help campers who live near each other connect offline.
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## BUNK INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT RUN BY COUNSELORS

- Camp photos and videos.
  - Shabbat Shalom and Holiday posts.
  - Funny memes and relatable content.
  - Important emotional empowerment.
  - Flyers to reunions and camps events during the year.
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## CENTRALIZED REUNION WITH FOOD AND GAMES

### 1. Location

- Meet at a coffee shop, a pizza place, someone's home, or even a public park!
- The ideal location is accessible to all members of the bunk and relatively central.

### 2. Choose fun games!

- Games should be age appropriate such as:
    - Simon says, follow the leader, frisbee, capture the flag or twister.
  - Can choose to play several smaller board games, depending on the numbers, and enjoy a board game night.
  - Can also play games for prizes like bingo.
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## SHABBATON/WEEKEND RETREATS

### 1. Work with camp

- **\*\*ALL** of this should be done with knowledge, approval, and even aid of camp. **\*\***

### 2. Location

- Work with a local or camp affiliated synagogue to help facilitate coordinate the event.
- Try to pick a central location that works for most people.
- Be sure that campers who are traveling in for the shabbaton have a place to sleep.

### 3. Food

- Be sure to ask about allergies, kosher, and other food restrictions.

### 4. Programming throughout weekend

- Plan activities for the weekend.
  - These can but don't have to be similar to your camp Shabbat routines.
- Print and share with families and campers ahead of time.

## 5. Parental Agreement

- Send out forms with all the details and necessary information to parents.
  - Make sure that campers have parent/guardian permission to attend.
  - Check with camp director ahead of time about liability and legality.
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# FUNNY IMOVIE

## 1. Write script/story

- Anything you want!
  - Make it appropriate and relevant.
- Be sure to include each camper who wants to be included.
- Be humorous! Don't be afraid to reach out to other counselors for ideas or contributions.

## 2. Collect videos

- Kids contribute by volunteering to submit videos.
- Once they volunteer, share the scripts or details for their respective scenes.
- Feel free to ask head counselors, senior staff, and even the director to send in content too!

## 3. Edit and check

- Edit the videos together.
  - You can use iMovie or other video editing software or apps
- Once editing is complete, share with camp leadership to ensure video is appropriate before sending out.

## 4. Send it out!

**\*Counselor note:** Include a credits section at the end with all contributors' names and roles. Don't forget yourself!