

Making a Jewish Fire

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SUMMARY:	Fire has been a place of gathering, refuge, ritual and prayer in cultures around the world. Imagine creating a fire that ignites your passion and empowers your Jewish <i>neshama</i> (soul). We will make fire and create a place to remember.
ABC GOALS:	<p>Affective: Participants will feel....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Creative • Connected to our ancestors <p>Behavior: Participants will be able to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a fire • Plan a fire for their campers <p>Cognitive: Participants will know...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That fire is an integral part of Jewish ritual (and has been for millennia) • Fire is both dangerous and life giving • That humans are the only creature on Earth that both has the knowledge to use fire, and needs fire to survive
AUDIENCE:	This is for any age or group size
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES :	The Bal Shem Tov's Fire
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Matches, fireboards (fat sticks), candles,
SET-UP DETAILS:	<p>In a place where folks can sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs and that won't distract other programs (it could/will get LOUD)</p> <p>Either no furniture or chairs in a circle or pillows on the floor</p>

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:10-Introductions, setting your Kavannah
- 00:10-00:60-Learning about fire and creating your own fires, song, howling around the campfire
- 00:60-00:75-Bringing it back to your camp

SESSION OUTLINE:

Light my fire:

00:00-00:10 Introductions

Today we are going to learn about how to make that fire that the BSHT (Bal Shem Tov) knew how to create.

What is your *Kavannah*/Intention during this activity?

- Purity of thought. Purity of action.
- *Korbanote* (offerings)

Ask participants:

How do we use fire in Judaism?

- Shabbat candles
- Havdalah
- Yom Tov (candles)
- *Nir Tamid*
- *Yahrzeit* candle
- Holidays in *Galut* (Lord of the Rings example)
- Warmth
- Cooking

What is the power of fire? Why do we like it so much?

- Energy
- Transformation of energy we can control
- Old gathering place (the hearth) (Abraham and *Het*, cave of Machpelah story)
- Safety
- Food around campfire (always tastes better than food indoors. Why?)

What do **you** know about fire?

- Heat rises
- Fire burns
- Other?

What do you need to make a fire?

- Oxygen
- Heat source
- Fuel

What do we know about oxygen?

If you're not breathing, don't worry about making a fire! Space, under water, in rain? Shelter!

Produced by trees and green plants, including algae, lichen, kelp, etc.

What are possible heat sources?

- Magnifying glass
- Matches
- Flint/steel
- Lighter
- Char cloth

What are types of fuel?

- Tinder (Fuzz sticks, pencil sharpener!)
- Kindling
- Fuel

Why not leaves and pine needles?

- Leaves/pine needles smoke a lot
- Smoke is incomplete combustion
- Smoke drives out oxygen
- Leaves and pine needles do not burn hot.
- Yes, if it's VERY dry, you can use them.
- Leaves/pine needles can't hold a match to birch bark or dry tinder.
- In the end, use what works!

Wood types:

- Conifers (cone bearing: Leaves stay on in winter, usually!) Soft wood. Burns hot and fast. Examples: Pine, cedar, spruce, fir,
- Deciduous (leaves fall off in winter, usually!) Hard wood. Burns warm, but long. Great for longer coals. Examples: Oak, Maple, avocado, poplar, sycamore,

Fire safety:

The purpose of this activity is to learn and have fun: No one is learning or having fun if they get hurt.

Set up safe fire circles:

- Durable surface:
- Gravel/cement
- Fire ring
- Making a fire circle in grass: dig out grass area. Keep sod away and able to be replaced. Keep sod moist.
- Perimeter: Sticks/rope on ground that kids don't come across.
- Sticks, once in fire, remain in fire. No tracers!

Types of fire: Build them in advance) and show examples of them: Fire tour!

- Lean to
- Tipi
- Box/log cabin
- Dakota fire hole

Lean to building and lighting

We will concentrate on a lean to: Why? Most basic, easiest to get a fire from. The basics of all the other fires.

- Durable surface
- Fire ring
- Lean to log

- Tinder on bottom
- Oxygen path (where is wind coming from?)
- Lighting path (where are you going to light the fire?)
- Lighting a match. (Start down low. Shield it from wind. Get wood caught)

00:10-00:60

Hevruta fire building (define *Hevruta* (Lit: friendship study. Traditional way Jews study Torah/text))

Separate into groups of 2-3.

Listen to instructions first: I'll tell you when to go.

- **Make a plan: Rule of p's. Preparation prevents problems.**
- Find suitable area: Durable surface.
- Make a fire pit
- Collect wood (tinder, kindling). We are not going to build any bigger than the middle stage. Collect enough wood!
- Build a lean to (air channel)
- Where will you light your fire from?
- Come get me when you are ready. I'll come over and give you my assessment of your fire making probability. I'll give you a match. Light your fire. My goal is getting into the one match club!
- At end of fire making, we will open source (ask questions) about values we learnt in making fires. Sit by your fire, either alone or in *Hevruta* think/talk about values in fire. Make a list.

Ready? Go

Observe and help

All groups as they set up their fire pits/build their lean tos. Give suggestions, encouragement, etc.

- Remind them about the direction of the wind.
- When a group is ready. Give the group match and box. Have them attempt to light the fire.
- If they get in 1 match club, write their name in 'one-match-club' plaque (carry it with you along with paint/marker/pencil so you can do it on the spot. Do it with enthusiasm).

Put out fires!

Make sure all fires are COLD OUT. They should drown them with water and step in them and be able to pick up ashes with their hands. Cold out means COLD!

Debrief:

Gather participants around the fire that is going. Collect enough wood to keep it going. You want this to burn into coal, so do not make this too big.

What can we learn from building a fire? Can we apply these lessons to our camp time/community? To life?

- Patience (*Savlanut*).
- Teamwork (every team member is important. No lesser person/position on team.)
- Respect (for nature, for fire, for each other)
- Observance of nature/surrounding (direction of wind, last time it rained. What can smoke tell us: Smoke is incomplete combustion. Lots of smoke=inefficient fire. Smoke hovering close to ground means weather system is moving in. Smoke traveling straight up is great weather!
- Rule of P's. Preparation prevents problems. (Collect tinder beforehand, plan for safety. Plan for fun.)
- God leading Jews out of Egypt is a pillar of fire (Exodus 21-22)
- God, Mt. Sinai, Moses was a "consuming" fire (Exodus 24:18)

00:60-00:75

Bringing it back to your camp:

- *Hevruta* up with people in your camp, if no one from your camp, any other people (groups from 1-5)
- Discuss: Who, what, when, where
- Who do you want to run the activity with?
- What tools/equipment do you need/want to run the activity?
- When would a good time be?
- Where is a good place to have fire activities in your camp?
- Create a program for your camp. Cornerstone is about applying what you learn/receive here and making a plan to give it back at your camp (also in life)