

Creating Intentions and Discovering Imperfections with Clay

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SUMMARY: In this session we will get our hands dirty and play with clay while setting intentions for our summer and admiring the beauty that can be found in imperfections.

GOALS: Participants will explore what imperfections mean to them and how to respond. They will have the chance to set intentions for their summer. They will experience how to use playing with clay as a tool for learning.

AUDIENCE: All ages, 15-30 participants

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Pens & paper
- Air dry clay (either white, or different colors will work)
- Bowls with water
- Sponges
- Wooden modeling tools, wood or plastic ribs
- Sheets of paper with the discussion questions (not necessary but nice to have)

SET-UP: Tables you don't mind getting dirty (or with paper covering), chairs, and water available

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Introduction
- 00:05-00:10 – Discussion about imperfections
- 00:10-00:15 – Explain the project, brainstorm, and draw out the project
- 00:15 -00:25 – Create your clay project
- 00:25-00:30 – Partner suggestions and implementation
- 00:30 -00:45 – Reflection and closing discussion

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:05 – Introduction

This session is about playing with clay, creating some intentions and exploring what imperfections are and how we can use them.

00:05-00:10 – Discussion about imperfections

- What does the word imperfection mean to you?
- What about beauty?
- What do you think of when someone says something you created is im-perfect?
- What kinds of imperfections may happen at camp this summer?

00:10-00:15 – Explain the project, brainstorm, and draw out project

Let's start our art project while keeping in mind beauty, imperfection, and our summer!

Today we are going to be working with Air dry clay. This clay is not food safe and will not be fired in a kiln, but instead will dry out on its own. We are going to be creating a project today that you can keep with you at camp.

There are a few clay methods you can use. You can coil (show example of a coil), you can pinch (start with a ball, push into the center to create a hole in the middle, start pinching your way around to widen the hole) or you can experiment and build another way with the tools you see in front of you).

- Start with paper and a pen. Draw out what your intention for your art project is, and what you'd like it to look like when you're finished.
- Or, if running short on time, you can have them close their eyes and envision what they'd like their project to look like.

00:15-00:25 – Create your clay project

Now that you've set the intention, create your clay project! The facilitator should walk around answering any questions and making sure the participants have everything they need.

00:25-00:30 – Partner suggestions and implementation

Now that you've drawn out your ideal project and had some time to start creating it, I'm going to throw a wrench in your plan. Turn over your drawing face down and partner up with someone near you. (If this part of the process causes some discomfort or anxiety, I'm here to help and support, just try to the best of your ability – that's all we can ask!)

- Each partner should suggest something they think would make the others project even better
- After each partner has given their suggestion, you'll have a few minutes to implement them. Please make sure to implement it to the best of your ability!

00:30-00:45 – Reflection and closing discussion

Discussion Prompts – Gather in groups of 2 (same as before or new groups are welcome) to discuss the following prompts

- Does your clay creation look exactly like your intention?
- What's one imperfection you can point out?
- What is beautiful about that imperfection?
- How did you feel about getting someone else's input? (Going from intention to reality)

Discussion (or journal prompts) as a group all together:

- How can we apply this to camp?
 - When thinking forward to your summer, what are some imperfections that might lie ahead for you?
 - How might your intentions for the summer be changed throughout?
- How does imperfection come into play at camp and how can we embrace the beauty in it?
- How can we overcome the anxiousness and uncertainty that comes with the stigma of imperfection and turn it into something that we embrace?
- Take a few minutes, close your eyes if you're comfortable, and set a moving intention for your summer: how will you handle the imperfections and curve balls at camp this summer?

Just because we have a plan or a model to follow doesn't mean things will turn out as expected, or that outside influence won't change our path/plans!

We can embrace our differences, accept that not everything will go to plan, embrace others' point of view, and we can learn to view imperfections as a lesson that got us to our final masterpiece.

Keep your imperfect masterpiece with you at camp this summer to remind you of all the things we talked about: imperfection, beauty, and how to keep these seemingly diametric qualities in mind while setting intention for the summer.

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

This program can be replicated with other modalities of creation: drawing, painting, woodworking, jewelry, collage, sewing, etc. You can adapt this to reflect on balancing intentions with imperfections for other things beyond the summer. This program could also be shortened by taking out some of the discussions if working with different groups or ages. You could also replace the discussion with text study and pull texts where imperfections lead somewhere beautiful in the Torah. Take and adapt what works for you and leave the rest!