

Developing Empathy and Friendship: Creating Bunk Name Signs

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SUMMARY: Participants will use listening and empathy skills to develop lasting and deep connections with peers in their bunk. Using the Hebrew text, *V'ahavta l'reyecha kamocho* (love your neighbor as yourself) as the guiding inspiration, participants will create signs *for each other* that reflect their newfound understanding of each other.

GOALS:

- Participants will feel closer to each other.
- Participants will be able to identify what makes each member of the bunk unique.
- Participants will know the Jewish text: *V'ahavta l'reyecha kamocho*

AUDIENCE: Any age, and the size of the group is only limited by the supplies you have available.

TIMING: 60 minutes

MATERIALS:

- 1 copy of the [V'ahavta Study Sheet](#) for every 2 people.
(For an audience under 11, you may consider a [children's book](#) instead of a text study)
- [1 copy of the Interview](#) questions per person
- [1 plaque or cardboard rectangle](#) (8.5 x 11 or a bit smaller) per participant OR lots of cardboard boxes I can cut up into rectangles for participants.
- Markers, [paint pens](#) - anything to draw/paint with
- [Stickers, Sequins, gems](#) (anything will do for embellishment)
- Tacky Glue (or White PVA glue)
- Magazines to cut out letters and pictures if possible

SET-UP: Anywhere with a flat surface where participants can spread out to work (the floor, tables, concrete). If they use paint, they should either have a space that can get dirty, or they should have newspaper or something under their work to keep the space clean.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 - *What We Are Doing Today*
- 00:05-00:15 - *Text Study of V'ahavta*
- 00:15-00:25 - *Interview Your Bunkmate*
- 00:25-00:50 - *Create the name sign*
- 00:50-00:55 - *Present the name sign*
- 00:55-01:00 - *Clean Up*

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:05 - What We Are Doing Today

Session leader sets the tone for the activity by explaining that getting to know others is an important way to build community in the bunk and that Jewish tradition offers us the text *V'ahavta l'reyecha kamocha*, love your neighbor as you love yourself.

00:05-00:15 - Text Study of V'ahavta

The session leader passes out the copies of the [V'ahavta Study Sheet](#) and puts the participants into pairs (preferably pairing up people that don't usually interact or don't seem to know each other well).

The session leader asks pairs to read through each section of the text/story and answer the questions. Ask them to think about:

1. What does it mean to love your neighbor/others?
2. What does it mean to love yourself?
3. How can you change your own attitude to reflect these values?
4. What is the meaning of a name you earn for yourself?

Give them 5 minutes to talk.

Come back together as a group and ask a few pairs to share their answers to the questions above.

Session leader wraps up by sharing:

"The Torah teaches us: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18) because it is thought that each human being was created in the image of God. If we are all created in the same image (or all come from the same atom, or cell), when we disrespect someone else, we are actually disrespecting ourselves. We need to be sure to love ourselves and let that love shine out to others. It's like the old golden rule, treat others as you want to be treated. This text from the Torah also teaches us to celebrate each individual's uniqueness and to recognize that we each bring something important to the world. We have names given to us and we have the name we make for ourselves in the world through our actions and contributions."

00:15-00:25 - Interview Your Bunkmate

The session leader asks participants to define the word "empathy".

Empathy: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another and the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling.

Session leader presents the project today: "Using our empathy skills, we are going to create something for someone else that THEY will love. Taking into consideration the things they like, the

things about them that make them special, and the things that will bring them joy and comfort. In the spirit of appreciating and acknowledging uniqueness, your partner will be creating a special bunk name sign for you. This bunk name sign should be a reflection of the things you like and the name you have earned— it should show pride and confidence in the amazing person you are today! We are going to get to know each other a bit more so we can better empathize with our partners and see the world through their eyes. With your partner, take turns interviewing each other and answering the questions. Write down answers or sketch ideas as you go. Once you've gone through all the questions you may get to work making them a name sign for their bunk.”

Session leader hands out the [interview questions](#).

00:25-00:50 - Create the name sign

Participants create the name signs using all the materials listed above. Session leader walks around to ask questions about the details in each sign being created:

- What does this represent?
- Why did you choose this color?
- What do you think is important to include in the sign?

00:50-00:55 - Present the name sign

Ask each participant to present the sign they made to the partner. Share what you chose to include and why. Hang up the signs on your bunks.

00:55-01:00 - Clean Up

Session leader selects a designated space for supplies to be collected. Participants help clean up and put materials back.

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

This is easily done in the bunk but can also be done outside or in an art space. The signs can also be drawn/painted on recycled cardboard, found pieces of wood, or even just made of construction paper. Any materials will do!