

## Israeli Dance High to Low

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**SUMMARY:** End the day with a few favorite jump-around Israeli dances and then a transition to beautiful, slower, and deeply soulful dances to wind down for the night.

**GOALS:** Participants will release remaining energy to up-tempo dances and then relax to softer, gentler dances. Participants will feel joyful and connected by having danced in community. Participants will leave knowing some that Israeli dance can be a warm-up or a cool-down and will be able to dance or follow a range of simple dances.

**AUDIENCE:** Groups of any size. Age range will determine choices of dances.

**TIMING:** 60 minutes

**MATERIALS:** Music: the dance cuts of any songs to be played, plus a method to play them (computer, Bluetooth speaker, sound system) and any other hardware needed to make that happen (playing music from an iPhone on a speaker? Make sure the speaker is Bluetooth enabled and/or that you have the correct wires to connect the devices, etc.)  
Water and cups are always helpful at dancing.

**SET-UP:** Any large flat space. Best indoors on sprung floors (like a gym) but could be done anywhere there is room to spread out, a surface to dance on, and a sound system to handle the size of the space. Be sure participants have a place to put belongings (jackets, notebooks, bags, phones, whatever) out of the way so they are not in danger of being stepped on/broken or a distraction.

## SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – *Simon Says Warm Up*
- 00:05-01:00 – *Dancing*

## SESSION OUTLINE

### 00:00-00:05 – Simon Says Warm Up

The leader will invite everyone to spread out in the room and face the leader for a quick game of Simon Says (with no “outs”; everyone keeps playing even after mistakes). The idea is to get everyone moving a little bit and feeling comfortable moving.

After a few minutes, the leader will ask if it really felt terrible when someone accidentally made the wrong movement or moved when they weren’t supposed to, and hopefully participants will say no, or it’s just a game, or it doesn’t really matter.

Leader will point out that Israeli dancing should feel the same way: there is no “cost” to doing the wrong step or using the wrong foot, it’s ok to make mistakes, and teach people the mantra: “You don’t have to know a dance to do a dance” – the communal idea of all folk dancing, including Israeli dance, is just to participate and learn as you go by following the leader (which is really everyone around you) and having fun, more than focusing on getting it right or wrong. The idea is to play the game.

Depending on the size of the crowd, facilitator may then invite everyone to introduce themselves and say either their favorite dance or make a request of a dance they’d like to do in this session.

### 00:05-01:00 – Dancing

This is a fun, low-stakes, short Israeli dance session. If possible, both classic and modern dances should be included, as well as a mix of styles (circles and lines, for example). The leader will honor requests when possible and do quick “walk-throughs” when appropriate for participants who don’t know the dances.

A few energetic dance options include: Hora Or, Mocher Prachim, Hora Habika (all circles) / Sieben Sieben, Huna Huna (lines) / Yesh Lanu Tayish (partner).

Some slower wind-down dances include Erev Ba, Ma Navu, and Ashrei Haish.

To make the connection to Prayerful Moments, consider discussing the words to Mayim Mayim, which are from Isaiah and are said during *Havdalah* – dance this dance as the *Havdalah*/separation between high-energy and wind-down dances.

The words to Ashrei Haish are from Psalm 1, Ma Navu is also from Isaiah, and you can choose other dances that have connections to prayer.

Leader will be sure participants can take breaks and drink water if needed.

## BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

Depending on the camp context, dances can be chosen to serve different purposes. For example: they could be lesser-known or less popular dances, to give people a chance to do those; or it could be a chance to review or practice a more challenging dance that's new to camp or the group; or it could be dances around a theme for the day or week that will play out in other ways throughout camp; etc.