



COMMUNAL POETRY THROUGH “*B’TZELEM ELOHIM*”

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OBJECTIVES:

- Participants will be able to share the song *B'tzelem Elohim* with their camps.
- Participants will participate in an activity that they can lead for other staff members.

GOALS:

- Learn the concept of B'tzelem Elohim.
- Reflect on religious diversity at camp.

SET-UP

- Everyone starts seated in whatever configuration is comfortable.

MATERIALS

- Printed lyric sheets
- Assorted writing utensils
- scissors
- Tape

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:18 – Icebreaker
- 00:18-00:23 – Song Teach
- 00:23-00:31 – Writing Exercise
- 00:31-00:35 – Handshakes Continued
- 00:35-00:42 – Debrief
- 00:42-00:50 – Music

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:012 - Icebreaker

- Conduct Handshakes opening (Thanks to Brett Gurwitz for helping us fall in love with this game):
 - Ask everyone to find a partner (trios are fine if needed) and create a brief handshake. Once everyone has a partner state: “This is your number one partner. When I say number one, you need to find your number one partner and do your handshake. Let’s try that out.”
 - Ask everyone to find a second partner and create another brief handshake. Once this is set state: “This is your number two partner. When I say two, you need to find your number two partner and do your handshake. Let’s try that out.”
 - Ask everyone to find their third and final partner and create another brief handshake. State “This is your number three partner. When I say three, you need to find your number three partner and do your handshake.”
 - Ask everyone to make eye contact with each of their partners to ensure they remember and do a quick run through of each handshake. Explain that you will now start calling out random numbers and get progressively faster and that their task is to keep doing the coinciding handshakes.
 - After a few rounds of the random numbers, have participants pause with one of their partners and answer the following: The rest of our activity is going to connect to the fact that all of our camps, and most Jewish day camps, are unique Jewish spaces because they tend to have a lot of non-Jewish staff and campers in the community. Discuss with your partner, what is exciting to you about leading Jewish content in a diverse community?
 - Call out another number and have partners do their handshakes then discuss: What is challenging to you about leading Jewish content in a diverse community?
 - Call out the last number and have partners do their handshakes and then discuss: How do you personally feel about showing up with your unique set of identities at camp?
 - Invite everyone to sit back down but remember their partners!
 - Lead the group in a brief discussion, asking if anyone wants to share a highlight from their partner discussion.

00:10-00:15 Song Teach

- Intro that one of the songleaders in the group is going to lead us in the Dan Nichols song: B'tzelem Elohim. Does anyone know what this means?
- Say: I think about the questions you all were answering before a lot. Asking myself: Who do I cater to? How do I find a balance between all these different backgrounds and relationships to Jewish content? And I think this song and this concept really opens up this discussion, and can be a great way to demonstrate that *all* members of your camp community, Jewish or not, are important, valued, connected, and equally contribute to the same Jewish camp community – especially if you're utilizing some of this training with staff.
- Pass out song lyrics.
- Songleader teaches/leads B'tzelem Elohim.

00:15-00:23 Writing Exercise

- Pass out writing utensils to each participant.
- Invite participants to create “blackout poetry” with the B'tzelem Elohim song lyrics – they can cross out anything that they would like, resulting in a new piece of written work created by the letters and words that are left.
- When there are three minutes left, participants will be asked to tear off an empty corner of their page. On this corner, they should write one word, phrase, sentence, or drawing that they would *add* to this song. Other people will be seeing this.

00:23-00:35 Handshakes Continued

- Everyone is invited to get up! Tell participants to keep their torn corner with them.
- Tell everyone that we will be revisiting our partners from earlier! Also say: Everyone can take a second to look around the room and remember their partners and handshakes. This time, when I call out a number, you're going to find your partner, do your handshake, and also swap your torn sheets of paper.
- Call out random numbers, getting progressively faster.
- After the game concludes, invite everyone to sit back down and add the words they received from the game somewhere into their original blackout poem. They can also tape the paper somewhere onto the poem if they prefer!
- Invite two to three people to share their final project with the group.

00:35-00:42 Debrief

- Bring the group together to discuss:
 - What was that like? Any thoughts?
 - Could you take any of this to camp? The activity, the song, the concept of b'tzelem elohim?
 - Any thoughts on how this activity did/didn't make you think about accessible Jewish content for a diverse camp population and/or what we create in our communities by each showing up with our unique identities?

00:42-00:50 Music

- Songleader wraps things up by leading everyone in singing B'tzelem Elohim again!
 - After singing through the song once, songleader asks if any participants want to improvise singing the new text they created to the tune of the song.