

Name of Session:	Giving Sight To The Blind – You Will Learn To See in Ways You’ve Never Imagined
Core Curriculum Pillar:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jewish ConTEXT • Role Modeling and <i>Ruach</i> • Relationships and Community
Website Description: (Who, What, Why?)	Participants will learn how to open up their senses and awareness in nature using Jewish texts in conjunction with simple yet powerful games and exercises that will get all of the limbs moving, and excite all of the senses. These skills not only will help gain new insights into the natural world, but they can also be used to help with skill building for groups of all ages.
Outcomes: (What participants will be able to do at camp?)	Replicate the techniques to help develop awareness in nature Lead group building activities for all ages at camp.
Knowledge to be Acquired:	Deeper understanding of “creation”, and how to tune into it by quieting the self. Techniques such as Deer Ears, Solo sit, Wide Angle vision, Fox walking. Awareness games such as Know a Tree, and Camera. Relevant Jewish Texts.
Jewish Texts and/or Contexts:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pokeach Ivrim</i> (giving sight to the blind) • <i>Shema, Etz Chayim Hee</i> (Tree of Life)
Materials Needed:	Blindfolds
Space Needs:	Outdoors
Maximum Number of Participants:	20-30 (less is better)
<p><u>Opening Activity</u> <u>Time: 5 minutes</u></p> <p>Deer Ears –Participants start by cupping their hands behind their ears, closing their eyes, and mouths. They will hear all the surrounding sounds amplified. As they turn their bodies, see how the sounds change. A good debrief is to talk about the <i>Shema</i>. Why is it of all the senses, we are told to LISTEN! Israel...</p> <p><u>Step-by-Step Session Description</u> <u>Time: 50 minutes</u></p> <p>All of the games and techniques that are described in this section help train our senses to work at a higher sensitivity. When done over a long period of time, a profound sense of awareness can be cultivated.</p>	

Wide Angle Vision - Participants start by looking ahead of themselves, relaxing their vision. Make sure to always be aware of peripheral vision. This can be done by extending both arms out in front of the body with the hands together, and the pointer fingers pointing upward. Slowly spread the arms out towards the side of the body, keeping the arms straight, and the eyes on the fingers. An important point is to sense movement more than detail. By combining Wide Angle Vision with Deer Ears, a new state of consciousness is quickly heightened and the sounds and sites of the forest will come alive in a new way.

Fox Walking – A technique to use the feet as eyes. Instead of romping over the ground with out looking, this method helps the whole body turn into an awareness machine. First ask the participants to remove their shoes. (Make sure that the path is adequate for this, removing any major obstacles or sharp objects) Participants should imagine that they are walking on a balance beam, reach one leg forward, and touch the ground with only the side of the foot. Place no weight on this leg. The entire person’s weight should be on the stable leg. Once the participant feels that there is nothing dangerous under the side of the foot, then slowly roll the foot down. Still, no pressure should be put on the foot. Only when the foot is completely sure that it is safe to step should the participant transfer weight to that leg. As they gain confidence in Fox Walking, they will no longer need to look down while stepping, leaving their vision open to take in the scene ahead.

Know A Tree – Ernie picks Bert for a partner. Ernie put’s a blindfold on Bert. Ernie chooses a tree in the area (but keeps it to himself). Ernie then guides Blindfolded Bert, using a combination of hands-on guidance and vocal commands (i.e. With hands on shoulders, saying “Take a step over a branch that’s in front of you). Ernie safely guides Bert to the tree. Bert then must use his senses to get to “know” the tree. Hug it, touch it, smell it, lick it. Feel its branches, feel it’s roots. Etc. When Bert is done, Ernie guides him back to their starting place. Bert removes his blindfold. He must now go and find his tree. This is also a great chance to talk about the idea of *Etz Chayim Hee*.

Great follow up: Have campers come back during various parts of the summer, and continue to do activities with their tree. Next time, they do a tree rubbing, or write a story or poem about their tree, bring a tree identity book, and have the kids identify the type of tree. In short, we are creating a relationship between a person and a specific tree.

Great follow up questions: What does Judaism compare to a tree? *Etz Chayim Hee*. What does Torah have in common to a tree? What do the Jewish people have in common with a tree? Would you be able to find your tree next time? What follow up question would you come up with?

Camera – Similar to Know a Tree, except this time, Ernie must spot something that would make a good picture. Like a crazy knot in a tree, or a grouping of wildflowers. Now Ernie must guide Blindfolded Bert toward the scene, and position Bert so that they have a good view of the scene. When Ernie is ready. He takes off Bert’s blindfold, and says Click. Bert opens his eyes, then shuts them, so he gets a snap shot of what’s in front of him. NOTE: What Bert focuses on may

not be what Ernie had in mind when choosing the scene. It makes for good discussion. TEXT: Talking about *Pokeach Ivrim*, giving sight to the blind. What does this concept mean in relation to this activity?

Solo Sit – A great activity to get a group contemplative. Works best with kids sixth grade and up. In short, have them choose spots by themselves in the woods. Not too far that they are out of view, but far enough that they will not be tempted to talk to their friends. It's very important to set the mood for this, by giving an intention beforehand, or telling a calming story. Have the kids do a *Shema* sound map, where they draw, or write all the sounds that exist around them. Talk about why the main prayer calls upon our sense of hearing (as opposed to our other senses). For extra contemplation points, do a Solo Sit at night! Many kids will come back with mind blowing observations about their lives and the world after such an activity.

Camouflage – A game of tag, while honing the senses. The cute fuzzy bunny is surrounded by predators. The cute fuzzy bunny (CFB) closes her eyes and yells CAMOFLOGUE! The rest of the kids scatter into the woods and hide. But they can't go far, because they have to always have at least one eye on the CFB at all times. After all, the predator does not want to loose its prey. The CFB counts to 20 out loud, and then opens her eyes. She can't move far, but she can pivot on one foot, basketball style to look for those who would stalk her. If she sees a predator, she points, calls them by name, piece of clothing, location, etc. They are then out, and have to come back and sit down. BUT NO HELPING THE CFB! Remember that she has to do it herself. Once the CFB gets to the point where she can not find any more predators, then she closes her eyes and yells "COME CLOSER" At this point, the predators must choose a new location closer to the CFB. She counts to 10, opens her eyes, and then proceeds to try and find the predators that would have her for lunch.

Finally, after she can no longer find any more predators (assuming that she hasn't found them all) Then she yells "TAG ME" and raises her hand. The first predator who reaches her, and tags her gets to be then next CUTE FUZZY BUNNY.

Planning for Camp

Time: 15 minutes

Think about the natural setting of your camp. Be aware if there are any undesirable spots, either filled with too much debris, or poison ivy, etc. Try these activities at camp with friends to get a better feel for the land. Write a plan for a nature program at your camp.

Closing Activity

Time: 5 minutes

Everyone go around and say one way that their eyes were opened in a new way during this activity. Challenge them to use these techniques throughout the rest of the seminar and their lives!

Recommended

Follow-Up:

(By Liaison or Faculty)

Check in with the Fellows about the Judaic content of the programs. Most often, for those who are uncomfortable with the texts, that is the easiest thing to let slip through.