

Name of Session:	Should We Break the Bubble? Bringing the Outside World Into Camp
Core Curriculum Pillar:	Ritual, Tradition and Programming
Website Description: (Who, What, Why?)	In this session, we will work to find the right ways to bring an awareness of the outside world into camp. Without necessarily breaking down the alternate-reality quality that makes camp its own special world, how can we incorporate a commitment to the rest of the world as it continues on beyond the camp gates? We will develop models for camp rituals and programs that open up an awareness of the ongoing problems in that beyond-camp world and create ways for the camp community to work together towards broader social change.
Outcomes: What participants will be able to do at camp	Plan, lead and/or train others to plan and lead social justice programs rooted in current issues and a substantive understanding of those issues; bring social justice awareness (and general awareness of world events and issues) into camp culture through ongoing activities
Knowledge to be Acquired:	How to stay aware of world issues even while in the camp “bubble”, how to effectively and respectfully bring that awareness into camp culture and programming
Jewish Texts and/or Contexts:	<i>Birchot Hashachar</i> , Heschel, Rambam (see handout)
Materials Needed:	Access to computers, flip chart, markers, handouts
Space Needs:	Room to sit in a circle (ideally in chairs), computer access
Maximum Number of Participants:	25
<p><u>Opening Activity</u> <u>Time: 10 minutes</u></p> <p>**Note: All texts/quotes are on the handout</p> <p>Start by putting the word “bubble” on the flip chart with two columns underneath it. Brainstorm two lists of words associated with or describing the concept of camp as a “bubble” – one positive list, one negative list.</p> <p>Give two examples – one that values the bubble, one that points towards the problem of the bubble:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of bubble: Thoreau – “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach...” (Quote on handout). If needed, clarify: Thoreau removes himself from the pressures of everyday society because he believes it will allow him to live a simpler, purer, more 	

meaningful life.

- Discuss: How is this way of valuing the bubble a part of why camp is such a special environment? What does our choice to live away from the bounds of “normal” society help us to do/feel differently?
- Problem of bubble: Zell Kravinsky – Philanthropist who gave away nearly all his money (\$45 million) and donated a kidney to a stranger because he believes that whenever we have the opportunity to do good, we should think of ourselves as obligated to do so, and that we have that opportunity essentially all the time (i.e. whenever we have more than we need while others do not have what they need, we should be trying to share it). In an interview, he said “It isn’t that I think people are evil. But it’s a fact that our actions, and in some sense our thoughts, let some people live and some people die” (quote on handout). If needed, clarify: Kravinsky is pointing out that we can sometimes choose not to think about the suffering going on around us, and when we do, there are genuine consequences.
 - Discuss: How is the “bubble” a uniquely privileged environment? When we are less aware of what’s going on in the world (and therefore, less aware of what we could do to help), are we passively harming others?
- Frame premise for session: Let’s think of the bubble as an opportunity to create a kind of utopian society, rather than a retreat from society. Because we are getting the opportunity to live in such an ideal environment, we have even more time and energy than usual to consider those who don’t have these kinds of privileges – and to be a part of education and actions that work towards a more just world for everyone.

Step-by-Step Session Description

- Read through *Birchot Hashachar* (blessings said as part of daily morning service).
 - Discuss: Looking at this list, what broader principles can we draw about what we’re supposed to value in our daily lives? What’s the relationship between the very specific things (clothes, sight, etc) and the more holistic blessings (made in God’s image, all my needs, etc)? **(8 min)**
- Tell participants to get into pairs, sit facing each other and close their eyes. Tell participants to take turns listing what they’re aware of in the immediate present moment – how they feel, what they hear or smell, what’s going on in their brains, etc. Each person gets one full minute (tell them when to switch). Now, repeat the exercise, except this time list what they tend to find themselves aware of more often than other things – what do they most often notice in their daily observations? What issues, ideas, people, etc take up most of their thoughts? What do they find themselves thinking about in idle moments? **(7 min)**
- Read the Heschel and Moore quotes. Discuss: What is the relationship between awareness and wonder/amazement? What connects an appreciation of the world to a sense of obligation?

- Explain: Heschel saw religious observance as a natural outgrowth of wonder – that if we are genuinely awed by the world around us, we will naturally feel a sense of gratitude, and from there will spring a desire to “give back” to God as the one who created the world we’re so awed by (in Heschel’s worldview), and that we give back by following God’s laws (again, this is Heschel’s worldview).
- Now let’s talk about a more concrete type of “giving back” – Moore says that wonder naturally becomes concern. How does concern for the world spring from an appreciation of our own blessings? How can it also spring from a less positive kind of awareness, a choice to be conscious of the world’s suffering? **(7 min)**
- Split into two groups, both to bring current issues to our attention. **(3 min to explain and split)**
 - Group One: Making sure that current issues stay relevant while at camp (This group will focus on what we could do with events that come up in the world while we’re at camp).
 - Group Two: Bringing outside interests into your work at camp (One of the most “aware” groups of people in the world are college students – you guys know a lot about what’s going on in the world and what people are doing to address injustice. What are issues that you’re involved with or care about during the year?)
 - Group Three: Awareness of privilege. This group will think about aspects of the camp environment that they particularly value and will look up information about how to make those resources (food, education, etc) more available to those who can’t afford them.
- Within groups, split into pairs and trios. Each pair/trio should go to a computer and spend some time doing basic research about a specific issue. Use the handout for some basic guidelines in how to identify and approach an issue. Once they’ve chosen one that fits their category, they should brainstorm an idea for how they would bring this issue into camp in a meaningful way. Make sure to consider where the link could be between awareness and action (not only about making sure people are aware and well-educated, but that we actively engage in the issue – what can we *do*?) **(15 min)**
- Come back together, share issues and brainstormed ideas. **(10 min)**
- Read Rambam text together: “The needy who is your relative should be helped before all others; the needy in your neighborhood come before the needy in your city; the needy in your city come before the needy around the world.” (Rambam, Gifts to the Poor, 7:13)
 - Discuss: How could someone use this text to argue that we should be focusing our efforts on “our own”? How could someone use this text to argue that we are primarily responsible at this point in time towards the wider circles? Consider

the ways in which the world has changed since Rambam. How does our knowledge of need go farther now that we have such extensive media? How do our personal actions and choices impact wider circles than they did then? How does that change our responsibilities? How does that change who we think of as our “relatives” or “neighborhood”? (5 min)

Planning for Camp

Time: 5 minutes

Review “Social Justice Programming at Camp” handout together. As you move through the suggestions for considering each “circle” of need (based on Rambam text; explained on handout), share goals for changes Fellows want to make in their camps this summer – a few for each of the circles.

Closing Activity

Time: 5 minutes

Hold hands. Read quotes:

- “The seismograph has taught us that a tremor in any part of the world can be felt by a sufficiently sensitive instrument everywhere else in the world. The same is true of a person’s deeds. One should not think that his actions do not affect others. Everything one does in some way affects everyone else in this world.” – Yerucham Levovitz
- “We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.

- To close: While it’s become cliché, it’s true that we’re all connected, in ways that can cause great pain or which can cause great beauty. We can’t forget that when we “go to the woods” at camp this summer – rather, we can be inspired by our incredible opportunity to be somewhere so beautiful and idyllic to make sure that everyone has greater access to such joys.

Recommended Follow-Up:
(By Liaison or Faculty)

Each participant should bring one new area of awareness into their work that summer – they can design a program on an issue, give a *drash*, make posters, etc – using the principles we discussed to raise the level of education AND action on this issue.

Should We Break the Bubble?

Bringing the Outside World into Camp

Text Handout 1

1. "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach..." (Henry David Thoreau)

2. "It isn't that I think people are evil. But it's a fact that our actions, and in some sense our thoughts, let some people live and some people die." (Zell Kravinsky)

3. Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe:
Who enables us to distinguish between night and day;
Who made me in God's image;
Who made me a Jew;
Who made me free;
Who gives sight to the blind;
Who clothes the naked;
Who releases the bound;
Who raises the fallen/downtrodden;
Who creates the heavens and the earth;
Who provides for all my needs;
Who guides us on our path;
Who strengthens the Jewish people with courage;
Who crowns the Jewish people with glory;
Who restores vigor to the weary;
Who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids.
(*Birchot Hashachar*, daily morning blessings)

4. "The root of religion is the question what to do with the feeling for the mystery of living, what to do with awe, wonder and amazement." (Abraham Joshua Heschel)

"That awareness of the divine, which begins first with a sense of wonder, silently grows until it overwhelms us with a feeling of concern, forcing us to care for things we ordinarily would not care about and for goals which go beyond our self-interest... Religion comes about as a result of what one does with ultimate wonder. It is not awe or wonder or amazement that is the root of religion, but rather the question of what one does with the sense of awe, wonder and amazement that kindles within us the experience of indebtedness. Wonder above all is "the state of our being asked." (Donald J. Moore, on the above quote)

5. "The needy person who is your relative should be helped before all others; the needy in your neighborhood come before the needy in your city; the needy in your city come before the needy around the world." (Rambam, Gifts to the Poor, 7:13)

6. "The seismograph has taught us that a tremor in any part of the world can be felt by a sufficiently sensitive instrument everywhere else in the world. The same is true of a person's deeds. One should not think that his actions do not affect others. Everything one does in some way affects everyone else in this world."
(Yerucham Levovitz)

7. "We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly." (Martin Luther King, Jr.)