

*Middot V'Harpatka'ot* [Values and  
Adventures]: A Resource Guide for Jewish  
Adventure Course Education

**Author: Eric L. Abbott**

Advisor: Dr. Lisa D. Grant

April 4, 2016

NY SOE Capstone

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
Description of the Topic and Content.....	4
Identified Setting .....	5
Intended Audience.....	5
Learning Materials and Facilitator Knowledge .....	5
Rationale .....	6
Background .....	6
What Jewish Adventure Course Education Is and Is Not .....	11
Scope.....	12
Desired Results.....	12
Priority Goals.....	12
Enduring Understandings .....	12
Essential Questions .....	13
Learner Outcomes .....	13
Sample Lessons with Core Concepts.....	13
Acceptable Evidence for Learning.....	15
Overview of Assessments and Evidence of Learning.....	15
Evidence for learning .....	16
Suggested Tools to Collect Evidence of Understanding .....	17
Process for Determining Evidence .....	18
Learning Experiences .....	18
Learning Activities.....	18
Developmental Issues and Inclusivity .....	18
Teacher Note: How to Use this Guide.....	19
Background .....	19
Depth in Applying Jewish Values .....	20
How to Teach Jewish Adventure Course Education .....	21
Using this Guide .....	23
Training Staff.....	24
Final Thoughts: Facilitating Deep Meaning.....	25
Lesson 1: <i>Lech L'cha</i> Out of Your Comfort Zone .....	26
Lesson (with notes).....	26
Handout: Text Study .....	34
Handout: Zones.....	35
Lesson 2: <i>Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Ba-Hula</i> Hoop.....	36
Lesson (with notes).....	36
Lesson 3: Discovering that We Are All <i>B'tzelem Elohim</i> .....	44

Lesson (with notes).....	44
Handout: Text Study .....	52
Appendix A: Glossary .....	53
Appendix B: Partial List of Jewish Values with Corresponding Elements .....	54
Appendix C: Partial List of Elements with Corresponding Values.....	55
Appendix D: A More Complete List of Jewish Adventure Values .....	56
Appendix E: Games/Activities Mentioned, with Brief Descriptions .....	57
Appendix F: Teaching Methods .....	62
Appendix G: Facilitating Low Ropes Courses in General .....	63
Bibliography .....	65
Selected Resources for More Information.....	65
Selected Annotated Bibliography .....	66
Complete Bibliography .....	68

## Introduction

### **Description of the Topic and Content**

This capstone serves as a resource bank or toolkit to bring together adventure course activities with informal Jewish education, what I am calling “Jewish Adventure Course Education.” Specifically, it builds this bridge in two ways: by either adding Jewish content to secular ropes course principles, such as reading the story of Jethro’s advice to Moses in Exodus 18 to explore the concept of problem-solving, or by presenting Jewish values<sup>2</sup> as an integral part of ropes course education, including concepts such as *Lech L’cha* (facing the unknown), love thy neighbor (related to concepts such as teamwork), and *b’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God). These Jewish values will stand upon Jewish sources such as texts, traditions, stories, and history.

Facilitators will bridge these concepts through low ropes elements. For instance, if participants need to develop teamwork skills, the facilitator may bring them to the element called Whale Watch, in which participants must work together to balance on an unstable platform. After completing the activity, the group will debrief, and the facilitator may choose to teach the concept of *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* (all of Israel is responsible for one another).

One important note on the content and structure of this curriculum is that it is a resource guide or toolkit, not a sequential set of lessons. That is, the curriculum presents big ideas on team-building and personal growth and how they relate to Judaism, and provides examples of how to bring those to a ropes course (sample “lessons”). Ultimately, however, every group is unique, with different needs and capabilities, and so each facilitator will have to mix and match appropriate Jewish values, team-building principles, and low ropes elements to meet their group’s needs.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> For a definition of values, see the Rationale.

<sup>3</sup> See the Teacher Note for more information.

**Identified Setting**

This capstone stands upon my work at the adventure course at URJ Eisner Camp, which had an excellent ropes course program—complete with personal and group challenges and teambuilding education—yet often lacked Jewish content. Therefore, while any ropes course located at a Jewish institution or used with Jews could benefit from this curriculum, this toolkit focuses on Reform Jewish summer camps. Furthermore, often ropes courses involve both low and high elements, and while adventure directors can apply the general principles and broad concepts to any form of challenge course, this curriculum mainly targets initiative games and low elements.

**Intended Audience**

As mentioned above, this capstone curriculum could fit with any group of Jews who are participating in a challenge course program, as long as facilitators tailor it to any specific group's needs. For instance, this curriculum could be adapted for pre-*b'nai mitzvah* students in a religious school program or for adult lay leaders on a board retreat. That being said, it helps to ground this toolbox in reality, and therefore these lessons focus on post-*b'nai mitzvah* youth. Thus the target audience of the sample lessons is rising-ninth graders at a Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) summer camp.

**Learning Materials and Facilitator Knowledge**

Jewish Adventure Course Education and this capstone both rely heavily on three main types of resources: general adventure course education, Jewish values education, and sources of Jewish content.<sup>4</sup> As for facilitator knowledge, this curriculum will assume that the facilitator knows or will be trained in proper safety and operations of a ropes course, regardless of Jewish knowledge. Receiving proper training is a necessity before embarking on applying these resources, and I must emphasize that this curriculum does not count as safety training, instruction, or certification. Please refer to proper

---

<sup>4</sup> If you would like more information on any of these types of resources, please see the bibliography.

training/instruction as well as your own Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Local Operating Procedures (LOPs), which take precedence over this capstone regarding safety, maintenance, standards, and so on. That all being said, the stronger the facilitator’s background in ropes course facilitation and management, the better off s/he will be. Furthermore, while there is no need for the facilitator to be a Jewish scholar, the stronger his/her background in Judaism is, the better off s/he will be when it comes time to teaching these values. Ultimately, a training program that includes safety, ropes course facilitation, *and* Jewish education will be the best way to create a strong and effective Jewish ropes course program.<sup>6</sup>

## Rationale

### **Background**

One of the primary reasons that Jewish children attend summer camp, and why parents send their kids there, is that Jewish camping is fun.<sup>7</sup> Because it is fun, Jewish camping is ripe for creating meaningful and lasting educational experiences. As Sales and Saxe put it, “If children come to associate Jewish life with sweetness—the smell of pine trees, the closeness of friends, laughter in the bunk—what they practice and learn at camp will remain with them for a lifetime.”<sup>8</sup> Or, as Zeldin puts it, “Camp is magic. Children who go to camp escape the pressures of the school year, leave the city behind, and enter an entirely different reality.”<sup>9</sup> If children have fun, it means they are building connections, and if there are connections, there is a better chance for learning.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> See the Teacher Note and Appendix G for more information.

<sup>7</sup> Sales, Amy L. and Leonard Saxe. *“How Goodly Are Thy Tents”: Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2004. p.55.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Zeldin, Michael. “Making the Magic in Reform Jewish Summer Camps.” *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, ed. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2006. p.89.

<sup>10</sup> Falk, Beverly. *Teaching the Way to Learn*. New York: Teachers College Press. p.23.

That being said, parents also send their children to Jewish summer camps because these institutions serve as invaluable resources for both educating and socializing (or acculturating) children about Jewish life. At camp, young Jews not only acquire Jewish knowledge, values, and skills, but they also socialize, developing relational and interpersonal skills.<sup>11</sup> Jewish camping also includes both formal and informal education.<sup>12</sup> A variety of programs exist in both realms of formality, including *limud* (Jewish learning)<sup>13</sup> in the former and “teachable moments” in the latter.<sup>14</sup>

Based on my own experience and research, Reform summer camps frequently have two challenges with these realms: first, they frequently emphasize socialization over education, and second, the education is often compartmentalized. As Sales and Saxe demonstrate with their description of one Reform camp’s goals, “Asserting that camp is mainly about ‘doing Jewish things with Jewish people,’ [one Reform camp director] emphasizes the social aspects of the camping experience over the formal educational aspects.”<sup>15</sup> If you look at many URJ camp websites’ activities pages, the number of “secular” activities generally outweigh the number of “Jewish” activities.<sup>16</sup>

One could argue, of course, that socialization over education is not a terrible decision to make when operating a Jewish summer camp. However, when it comes to forming Jewish identity, this problem is further exacerbated by the notion that many Reform summer camps compartmentalize Jewish education. That is to say, Jewish education often appears “siloeed,” separate from other programmatic aspects of the camp. From my own experience at a URJ summer camp, I noticed that camp programs frequently limited education to *limud* programs, *t’filah* (worship), Israel experiences,

---

<sup>11</sup> Sales & Saxe, 69.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 55.

<sup>13</sup> At URJ Eisner Camp, for example, *limud* consisted of a daily 50 minute learning session, which often blended formal and informal education. Campers learned about Jewish concepts from rabbis, cantors, and educators in an outdoor, sometimes experiential setting.

<sup>14</sup> Sales & Saxe, 69.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 57.

<sup>16</sup> c.f. “Activities.” *URJ Eisner Camp*. 19 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://eisner.urjyouth.org/summer/summer-at-eisner/activities/>>. c.f. “A Typical Day.” *URJ Camp Harlam*. 19 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://harlam.urjcamps.org/camplife/typicalday/>>.

and a few other moments here and there. Jewish education seemed practically absent from Adventure, Waterfront, and Sports, and was only minimally involved with *Teva* (nature) and arts-and-crafts. Sales and Saxe give another example—out of a few—of one camp which has the materials to make Judaic content at their arts-and-crafts booth, but chooses not to do so.<sup>17</sup>

Unfortunately, this lack of Judaic content at program centers means that there are countless missed opportunities for Jewish learning. “Informal activities...are experiential, sensory, and group-based. When done well, they are also interesting, involving, and fun.”<sup>18</sup> Yet by not connecting these program centers to Jewish education, Jewish camps miss the chance to connect Jewish content with experiential learning.

Adventure programs are one such area lacking in Judaic content, despite having “fun” as part of their core values.<sup>19</sup> In my own experience at URJ Eisner Camp, there was only a casual, bare-minimum attempt to connect Jewish education to the ropes course experience. In conversations with peers, other URJ summer camps also tend to lack this connection.<sup>20</sup> As a rabbinical student who loves camp, Judaism, and ropes courses, this pains me.

Therefore, there is room to infuse Jewish education with adventure courses. Adventure courses—also known as ropes courses or challenge courses—provide opportunities for both individual and group development. Almost every activity, especially with low ropes elements, happens in a group setting. They allow for fun, experiential learning. Adventure courses are noncompetitive and encourage participants of all ages and abilities to do their best. They promote values such as communication, planning, teamwork, trust, leadership, and more. Furthermore, ropes course programs can help further

---

<sup>17</sup> Sales & Saxe, 73.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 66.

<sup>19</sup> "Project COPE Director Instruction Session." National Camp School, Boy Scouts of America. Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation, 402 Blue Mountain Rd, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972. 31 May 2008. Lecture.

<sup>20</sup> Foster, Chase and Rachel Heaps. Personal Interview. 9 Nov. 2015.



a camp's goals and mission.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, this curriculum will take Jewish values and apply them to and integrate them with these developmental opportunities.

What exactly are Jewish values? Rabbi Telushkin describes Jewish values as teachings that influence how we act toward others and how we understand our purpose in life.<sup>22</sup> He lists countless values, including loving the stranger, sanctifying God's name, loving yourself, and others. According to Louis Jacobs, Jewish values are concepts that receive special emphasis in Jewish tradition and that play a role in guiding Jewish life.<sup>23</sup> He includes in his list of values study of Torah, love of God, humility, compassion, truth, and more. The JCC of Chicago, on a webpage explaining Jewish values, describes them as ideas and beliefs that define what truly matters to us and that shape our behaviors, actions, and attitudes toward ourselves and others.<sup>24</sup> Finally, Susan Freeman considers values to be ideas, traditions, or belief that we hold central to our identity; they shape who we are, how we act, and how we view the world.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, two key features of teaching Jewish values must be addressed. First, while Jewish values often have universal application, they are derived from Jewish tradition and are used to support Jewish actions and beliefs.<sup>26</sup> They may be akin to secular values, but they remain distinct. In teaching Jewish values, one must therefore be wary to not simply equate Jewish and secular principles, lest the importance and relevance of Jewish teachings be lost.<sup>27</sup> Second, the concept of "Jewish values" is inherently vague. As Jacobs points out, there is no "monolithic system of Jewish values," rather there

---

<sup>21</sup> *Project Cope Manual*. Irving, TX: Boy Scouts of America, 2008. Print.

<sup>22</sup> Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living*. New York: Bell Tower, 2000. Print. p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Values*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd., 1960. Print. p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> "Jewish Values." *JCC Chicago*. Web. 2 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.gojcc.org/jewish-life/jewish-values/>>.

<sup>25</sup> Freeman, Susan. *Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities*. Springfield, NJ: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 1999. Print. p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1. Jacobs, p. 7. Also: Ingall, Carol K. *Transmission & Transformation: A Jewish Perspective on Moral Education*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1999. p. 37.

<sup>27</sup> Zeldin, 103.

exists only a complicated system of what Jews consider “truth.”<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the JCC of Chicago mentions that while most educated Jews are taught the importance of values such as *chesed* (loving-kindness) or loving thy neighbor, not all Jews apply those values in the same way.<sup>29</sup> In the end, these difficulties actually prove helpful, as they mean that a multitude of Jewish values, representing a myriad of sources, traditions, and beliefs, can be applied to a variety of activities at URJ summer camps, including adventure courses. They are thus similar to teachable moments, in the sense that it matters less what specifically is taught and more that values are being taught at all.

Therefore, in light of all of this background, this capstone presents the following definition of Jewish values as a foundation of learning:

Jewish values are fundamental concepts or teachings that Jewish tradition emphasizes, that play vital roles in our daily lives, and that shape our understanding of the world and our place in it.

Thus, in light of the opportunities that adventure courses provide and the worthiness of teaching Jewish values, ropes courses are an excellent way to infuse camping experiences with Jewish content. As John Dewey writes, “all life educates,” and that “above all, [educators] should know how to utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worthwhile.”<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, as Zeldin points out, people learn best when they use their social and physical environments to communicate the camp’s core values.<sup>31</sup> Ropes courses, with their physical activity, social dynamics, application for the future, and opportunities to have fun, are perfect examples of experiential education. They are ripe for Jewish content. They are an excellent setting to pursue a URJ camping vision and to integrate Jewish values. Therefore, this curriculum aims to infuse low ropes courses at URJ summer camps with Jewish content, aka Jewish Adventure Course Education.

---

<sup>28</sup> Jacobs, 9.

<sup>29</sup> “Jewish values.” *JCC Chicago*.

<sup>30</sup> John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier, 1938). Quoted in Zeldin, 98.

<sup>31</sup> Zeldin, 98.

### What Jewish Adventure Course Education Is and Is Not

The impetus for creating this curriculum came from an experience I once had at a ropes course. There, I saw half-painted signs with Jewish stories, places, or legends written on them. Though at that time these signs lay cast aside as an abandoned project, the original intent was for the ropes course staff to hang them on the various low ropes elements. A sign with the words “*Migdal David*” (the Tower of David) would hang upon the Team Wall element, a depiction of Noah’s Ark would have sat on a tree next to the Whale Watch element, and so on. This, someone told me, was how that ropes course was going to make the adventure program Jewish. Unfortunately, this concept was shallow; it lacked meaning. While that is one way to do Jewish Adventure Course Education, that is not the intent of this curriculum.

Instead, this resource guide envisions Jewish Adventure Course Education as truly synthesizing Jewish values with ropes course activities. It is not enough to label elements with Jewish names. It is not even enough to replace secular challenge course principles with their synonyms in Hebrew (e.g., instead of saying “patience” one says “*savlanut*”). Rather, this curriculum aims to teach that Jewish values are inherent to ropes course education. On the one hand, one can find secular ropes course values within Judaism, such as leadership (e.g. Moses, Aaron, and Benjamin Netanyahu) or communication skills (e.g. prophecy). On the other hand, there are Jewish values inherent to adventure courses. The concept of *b’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God) is also an adventure course value, as is *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* (all of Israel is responsible for one another). When a camper demonstrates problem-solving on the Nitro Swing element, a facilitator may point out that Jethro also practiced problem-solving by giving advice to Moses. Ultimately, the values we learn on the ropes course are not just secular values, they are also Jewish values.

## Scope

Although other aspects of URJ summer camps, such as sports, could also benefit from Jewish content, this curriculum only focuses on low ropes courses. Furthermore, the content will cover Rosenak’s three criteria for Jewish curricula:<sup>32</sup> Judaism will be expressed via concepts such as *anavah* (humility) and *Lech L’cha* (going forth into the unknown); Jewishness through stories of Jewish leaders, such as Moses or Yonatan Netanyahu; and Jewry—emphasized in the group aspect of low ropes—by love thy neighbor, *b’tzelem Elohim*, and *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*.

All in all, ropes courses, which provide experiential learning as they foster individual and group development, are ripe for integration with Jewish content across all three of Rosenak’s lenses of Judaism, Jewishness, and Jewry, all while furthering the Jewish summer camping goals of education, socialization, and fun.

## Desired Results

### Priority Goals (Generic URJ Camp)<sup>34</sup>

- To provide opportunities to strengthen individual growth and community development.
- To explore and develop Jewish identity in real life experiences.
- To explore the Jewish past so we can build a better future.

### Enduring Understandings

- We can learn Jewish values and Jewish content via personal growth and team-building activities.
- We grow as individuals when we overcome challenges as a group.
- Group values can be Jewish values, and vice versa.

---

<sup>32</sup> Rosenak, Michael. “Education for Jewish Identification: Theoretical Guidelines.” *Forum*. World Zionist Organization. Winter, 1978, #28-29. pp. 120, 126.

<sup>34</sup> Based on the URJ Eisner Camp Mission Statement, URJ Camps OSRUI and Newman websites, and URJ Camping website. See Bibliography.

- Jewish values are fundamental concepts or teachings that Jewish tradition emphasizes, that play vital roles in our daily lives, and that shape our understanding of the world and our place in it.

### Essential Questions

- What Jewish values can we learn from adventure course activities?
- How can a facilitator apply Jewish values and ropes activities to specific groups and participants?
- How can Jewish texts strengthen our understanding of group dynamics?
- How do Jewish and secular principles complement each other in a ropes course setting?

### Learner Outcomes

- K: Learners will learn Jewish values connected to group dynamics and grounded in Jewish content.
- D: Learners will challenge themselves, both as individuals and as a group, as they participate in low ropes activities that focus on both mind and body.
- B: Learners will challenge preconceived notions on how their group functions as a dynamic web of interconnected individuals.
- B: After participating in low ropes activities, learners will feel a stronger sense of connection, closeness, and trust to their peers.

### Sample Lessons with Core Concepts

	Value/Principle	Corresponding Jewish/Secular Concepts	Jewish Text/ Content	Main Activity/ Activities	Core Concept
1	<i>Lech L'cha</i> – leaving one's comfort zone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge by Choice</li> <li>• Comfort/ danger zone</li> <li>• Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lech L'cha</i>: Genesis 12:1-6</li> </ul>	Trust activities: Wind in the Willows, (Group) Trust Falls	Just as Abraham left the comforts of his homeland in order to take a spiritual journey of self-growth, so, too, do we need to sometimes push out of our own comfort zones to mature and develop.

2	<i>Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kol arevim Yisrael zeh bazeh</i> (B. Shavuot 39a)</li> <li>• The Twelve Scouts (Numbers 13:1-14:38)</li> </ul>	Helium Hula Hoop	Sometimes we must work together as a team, with everyone in a group responsible for the well-being of the others, to overcome obstacles, thus living the value <i>kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh</i> (all of Israel is responsible for one another).
3	<i>B'tzelem Elohim</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusivity</li> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Kindness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genesis 1:26-28</li> <li>• Genesis 9:6</li> <li>• <i>M. Sanhedrin</i> 4:5</li> <li>• Rabbi Jack Bloom's teaching</li> </ul>	Various icebreakers: Namejective, Beach Ball Questions, Mail Call; Group Stretches	When we put effort into getting to know each other, we can find the worth and value of every individual, thus discovering that we are all created <i>b'tzelem Elohim</i> (in the image of God).
-	<i>Anavah</i> – humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humility; being part of a group; reliance on others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exodus 3:11</li> <li>• Einstein refusing the presidency of Israel</li> </ul>	Wearing blindfolds during Islands	Sometimes we must show <i>anavah</i> , humility, when we depend on others, recognize differences, and work as a group to achieve a task.
-	<i>Simchah</i> – joy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laughter</li> <li>• Fun</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashrei</li> <li>• Kohelet 3:12</li> </ul>	Haha!	We can grow as individuals and as a group when we experience activities with <i>simchah</i> (joy) and with fun.
-	Love Thy Neighbor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• <i>B'tzelem Elohim</i> (in the image of God)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leviticus 19:18</li> </ul>	Spider Web	When we recognize the humanity and worth of our fellows, thus epitomizing the text of Leviticus 19, we can accomplish challenging tasks.
-	<i>Manhigut</i> – leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership in the <i>Tanakh</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Exodus Rabbah</i> 2:2 (Moses</li> </ul>	Team Wall	People lead in a variety of ways, as demonstrated in the <i>Tanakh</i> , and even those who often identify

			and the lamb) • The story of Yonatan Netanyahu		as followers can find the ability to lead.
-	Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jethro's Advice</li> <li>• Listening to others</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>	• Exodus 18:13-26	Nitro Swing	Just as Moses relied on the help of another, Jethro, when faced with the challenge of judging all of Israel's problems, so, too, can we rely on the help of others when problem-solving.

## Acceptable Evidence for Learning

### **Overview of Assessments and Evidence of Learning**

Most forms of assessing learning will occur in the field as participants proceed through the activities. Ropes course programs are progressive; groups transition from easier elements to more challenging elements. Assessment comes mainly during debriefing sessions (aka "debriefs"), when participants discuss their behaviors and reflect on the activity. It is during these discussions that the facilitator can both teach and assess understandings of Jewish and teambuilding values. Furthermore, facilitators can analyze whether or not participants take what they learn at one element and apply it to the next. For instance, if members of a group are all speaking over each other during the first activity, but then debrief and realize this, then assessment comes later when the facilitator notices whether or not they repeat this behavior during the next activity. Finally, assessments take place throughout the summer after participating in the ropes course, as learners demonstrate whether or not they have internalized what they articulated at the ropes course through their actions and through their language.

**Evidence for Learning**

- After discussing Jewish values and applying them to the debriefing session after one ropes course activity, learners apply what they have learned to the next activity and/or debrief through discussion or action.
  - E.g. – Learners constantly talk over each other while participating in the element called Whale Watch. After completing the activity, they discuss how talking over each other hindered their performance and did not represent the values of leadership that Moses displayed. The group then brainstorms possible solutions. On the next element, Spider Web, the group members elect a leader and talk one at a time. In their next debriefing session, they mention how they applied what they discussed during Whale Watch to Spider Web.
- Learners relate to ropes course principles via Jewish values rather than or in addition to secular values.
  - E.g. – Learners discuss leadership not through secular examples but through Jewish examples.
  - E.g. – Learners discuss moving out of their comfort zone with stories of Abraham and Sarah.
- After finishing all their ropes course activities, learners bring up what they learn in other group dynamic situations later in the summer, either through discussion/language or through deeds/action.
  - E.g. - Imagine a group of participants discuss the concepts of inclusivity and *b'tzelem Elohim* after playing the icebreaker Mail Call. If later in the summer one camper feels excluded from a group activity, sitting outside the group, and another camper invites them into the group while saying, "Come on, join us! You, too, are created *b'tzelem*



*Elohim,*” then counselors can determine that this latter student has internalized that specific value.

- After finishing all their ropes course activities, the group shows a noticeable shift in group dynamics that reflect what they learned and discussed on the ropes course.
  - E.g. – Participants used to always talk over each other, but now, after participating in ropes course activities, they do so less.
  - E.g. – If one person was always taking charge, now, after participating in a challenge course, others do so, too.

### **Suggested Tools to Collect Evidence of Understanding**

- Debriefing during or after each activity will allow the facilitator to lead a discussion on what participants have learned and how they might apply that to their own lives beyond the ropes course.
- Counselors in general can help assess and reinforce learning from the ropes course.
- A study guide for counselors naming some of the terms/values/concepts/texts that the group discussed and how they might play out after leaving the ropes course could help evaluate if the learners have taken these values with them. Facilitators and counselors can create this together.
- If the bunk has a group challenge in the future (e.g. fighting amongst bunkmates, etc.), then the counselors can call in a ropes course facilitator to help debrief and recall what they have learned.
- Each facilitator can fill out a program sheet prior to each activity period with each group. At the end of each activity period, facilitators have the opportunity to write a reflection on the group and their experience on the program sheet. Facilitators can comment on how they think the group did regarding group dynamics. This can be a reference for the future, to reflect on how the group has changed.

### **Process for Determining Evidence**

- The debriefing sessions after each activity are often the best way to learn and apply the knowledge cognitively.
- After each activity (except the last), participants will move onto a new activity. This enables them to apply what they learned experientially.
- Coming back to the ropes course later in the summer can help determine whether or not learners can still recall what they learned earlier. This will also reinforce prior learning.
- Facilitators should invite participants and counselors to reflect on their experience and then add those thoughts to the program sheet.

## Learning Experiences

### **Learning Activities<sup>35</sup>**

The learning activities will combine low ropes games and elements with Jewish content. Ideally, all adventure activities, including initiative/teambuilding games, low ropes activities, and high ropes elements, will be open to the addition of Jewish content, though this capstone mostly excludes high ropes elements. There are a myriad of possible approaches to integrating Jewish content within these adventure activities, including text studies, discussions of Jewish values during debriefs, renaming elements to better reflect Jewish history and culture, role playing, and more. Jewish values can be introduced before, during, and after activities.

### **Developmental Issues and Inclusivity**

On the one hand, ropes courses are all about inclusivity amongst participants. For instance, in the element Whale Watch, the activity is not over until all participants are on the platform and working together. Everyone is part of the team, even if some are leaders and some are followers. In fact, even

---

<sup>35</sup> See Appendix F, Teaching Methods, for more ways to teach and assess learning.

that framework can be adjusted to be more inclusive, by asking previous leaders to be quiet and providing space for the quiet participants to step up.

Furthermore, because of principles such as Challenge by Choice, adventure course programming encourages all learners to participate. Additionally, learners sit in equal circles when debriefing, with no one inside or outside the circle. Thus, for those willing and able to participate, there is—ideally—full or almost full inclusivity.

Unfortunately, this inclusivity does not apply to those who are either unable or unwilling to participate. Most ropes course games and activities are physical, and those participants with physical handicaps are at a disadvantage. That being said, there are some ways to include them, such as participating in cognitive puzzles, playing games with no stepping or jumping actions, and more. Facilitators must simply be creative.

There are also participants who are unwilling to participate, either by choice or by action. Some are too afraid, which is where “Challenge by Choice (with Permission to Encourage)” comes into play. Others have behavioral issues, and by not listening to directions or otherwise being unsafe, they may be asked to sit out of an activity. Of course, this is not an ideal course of action, but if they are too much of a disruption or are unsafe, then they may be asked to leave with a counselor.

## Teacher Note: How to Use this Guide

### **Background**

This teacher note maps out some of the varied ways that one can integrate Jewish values and adventure programming. One of the most educationally valuable features of ropes courses is that facilitators can customize experiences for each particular group of participants. For example, one bunk of 5<sup>th</sup> graders may overall get along nicely and generally play well together, and so when they come to a ropes course they focus on safely pushing personal boundaries and improving leadership skills. Their peers in another bunk, however, may often shout at each other and get into arguments, and so they

may need to develop skills of communication and showing respect. Finally, a third bunk may show signs of cooperation during daily routines, yet may suddenly reveal a lack of teamwork when facing new challenges in the setting of a ropes course. In this third case, a facilitator may have planned a series of elements and lessons focusing on leadership and problem-solving, but will then rethink the lesson to focus on communication and teamwork. Thus, even when planning a bunk experience, facilitators never know exactly what they will teach.

It is also likely that different facilitators will have various levels of knowledge of Jewish content, stories, and values, and will also have a range of experience facilitating groups. Someone with a wealth of Jewish knowledge could relate countless stories, values, and texts to a group's experiences, but not every camp counselor has this wealth, and it is simply impossible to teach every possible Jewish value to facilitators. On a related note, a facilitator may be adept at introducing low ropes elements, creating Adventure Narratives, and debriefing, but may lack the Jewish questions or content to merge with those skills.

Given this range of skills and backgrounds, my goal here is to give facilitators the basic framework and methods that they can apply to their own work. Furthermore, the sample lessons serve as examples of what one *could* do—not what one *must* do.

### **Depth in Applying Jewish Values**

As discussed in the rationale, applying Jewish values cannot be a shallow initiative. Jewish Adventure Course Education must include more than naming secular values in Hebrew or adding Jewish names to elements. Instead, Jewish Adventure Course Education shows that all aspects of a ropes course can be Jewish and that there are Jewish connections to secular concepts.

There are many ways to achieve this deep integration of Jewish and adventure values. Facilitators can introduce full text studies, teach based on single verses, or simply educate on individual values. One can plan a full curriculum, seize on teachable moments, or both. A program can focus in on

one value or touch upon many. The point is to demonstrate that what learners experience on the ropes course is Jewish, too.

### **How to Teach Jewish Adventure Course Education**

Jewish Adventure Course Education ultimately takes the principles of standard challenge course education<sup>36</sup> and infuses them with Jewish content. This fusion can occur at all levels of the facilitation process, such as the Adventure Narrative, the debriefing sessions, the instructions, and so on. While experience, including trial and error, will ultimately be the best way to learn how to teach Jewish Adventure Course Education, this section will provide a brief overview of various ways a facilitator can teach countless values across a variety of elements.<sup>37</sup>

There are two key ways to implement the Jewish educational aspect of Jewish Adventure Course Education: planned and unplanned. Regarding planned implementation, I imagine the process using an analogy of either a slot machine or a formula. To elaborate, a more traditional curriculum tends to lay out the various pieces in order: do this for Lesson 1, that for Lesson 2, and so on. A ropes course curriculum, on the other hand, is more like a slot machine: the various pieces are constantly moving, and eventually certain ones line up. For a Jewish Adventure Course Education curriculum, the various pieces fall under a few main categories:

<b>Value (Jewish/Secular)</b>	<b>Jewish Text</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Teaching Method</b>
-------------------------------	--------------------	-----------------	------------------------

When the facilitator pulls the crank on this metaphorical slot machine—that is, when they start planning their learning session—elements from each category will line up. However, unlike a slot machine, planning an adventure experience requires more intentionality, hence the metaphor of a formula.

Ultimately, the formula looks something like this:

---

<sup>36</sup> For more information on facilitating ropes courses in general, see Appendix G.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendices B, C, and D for lists of Jewish values.

$$\frac{\text{Value} + \text{Jewish Text} + \text{Activity} + \text{Teaching Method}}{\text{Group needs}} = \text{“Lesson”}$$

In this sense, the facilitator plugs in each variable until receiving an ideal finished product, while always keeping the specific group’s needs in mind.

To illustrate, imagine the facilitator wants to teach on the concept of *anavah* (humility), from the “Value” column. While there are many values from which to choose, such as communication or *b’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God), the facilitator has chosen humility based on group needs. To teach to this concept, the facilitator may use blindfolds during any element where it is safe to do so, such as Islands or Whale Watch. They may introduce the activity by discussing Moses refusing the mantle of leadership (Exodus 3:11) or Einstein refusing the presidency of Israel. They may also pause the activity to ask blindfolded participants how they currently relate to the concept of *anavah*. However, there are a myriad of other ways to teach humility. For example, they may choose to do Trust Falls with the group, as learning to trust in and rely on others teaches *anavah*. They may highlight this with a text from Job, which emphasizes humility. Finally, they may choose to introduce this concept during the debriefing session, by specifically asking, “How did *anavah*, humility, affect your Trust Falls?” Thus, beginning with this one value, we already have multiple options, and facilitators can mix and match. Our slot machine thus looks like this so far—and this is the tip of the iceberg:

Value (Jewish/Secular)	Jewish Text	Activity	Teaching Method
-	Exodus 3:11	-	Blindfolds
<i>B’tzelem Elohim</i>	Einstein/Israel	Islands	Front-load
<i>Anavah/humility</i>	Job	Trust Falls	Debrief
Communication	-	Whale Watch	Pause and Ask

It is important to note that facilitators can begin anywhere. Perhaps they want to lead the group in the low ropes element of Nitro Swing, and so they begin with the activity and then find a relevant value such as compassion/*rachamim*. Alternatively, the facilitator may want to teach about Genesis, and so they isolate the Jewish value of *b'tzelem Elohim* and then find an activity that works with it, such as the game Buzz. The possibilities are endless.

Conversely, while these examples all demonstrate how to plan Jewish Adventure Course Education, as is often the case in experiential education, learning on the course often happens unplanned. For example, one may choose to do an element, then during the debriefing session simply ask, “How did you demonstrate Jewish deeds during that activity,” or “What Jewish values did you experience during that game?” At that point, learners may bring up their own values, and then it is up to the group—with facilitator guidance—to relate them to Judaism and to life. For instance, if after Trust Falls a learner says, “I had faith that my friends would catch me,” then the facilitator may want to lead a discussion on faith.

Furthermore, facilitators must keep an eye out for “teachable moments,” those unplanned opportunities to insert Jewish education.<sup>38</sup> For example, if a learner brings up feeling terrified but confident during the Team Wall, the facilitator may want to teach about *yirah* (fear-awe). If a participant comments that they have never felt like a leader before, the facilitator may want to bring up leaders in the Torah such as Moses or David, or even modern day Jewish leaders such as Benjamin Netanyahu or Steven Spielberg. These teachable moments may even happen during planned experiences, and so facilitators must watch for these moments.

### **Using this Guide**

This resource guide gives examples of planned lesson plans. They include core concepts, prepared texts, activities, and values. While facilitators could use these as actual lesson plans, they are

---

<sup>38</sup> Sales & Saxe, 69.

meant to be examples. Facilitators should use them as models to build their own custom experiences, tailored to their particular groups. Each lesson varies in scope, type of activity, use of text, teaching method, and so on. They are simply a taste of what one can do.

Furthermore, each lesson plan includes two alternative mini-lesson plans. First, it lists values/principles related to the activity employed, and then it lists related activities for the given value. These lists are followed by the two mini-lessons, which briefly demonstrate other ways one might teach the given value and the given activity. For example, the first full lesson explains how to use Wind in the Willows and Group Trust Falls to teach the concept of *Lech L'cha* (leaving one's comfort zone). At the end of this lesson there are two mini-lessons. The first mini-lesson provides a brief, sample lesson on how to teach the same value, *Lech L'cha*, using different activities, Partner Trust Falls and the Team Wall. The second mini-lesson briefly describes using the same activity, Group Trust Falls, to teach a different value, trust. To return to the formula metaphor, the majority of each lesson describes one set of variables, and then at the end are two alternative formulae with altered variables.

### **Training Staff**

Training a first-year, non-Jewish staff member who has no experience with ropes course education may turn out to be a difficult endeavor. However, just as training instructors do not expect new staff to learn every game or facilitation technique immediately, so, too, should they not expect them to learn every Jewish value or text. Instead, staff training should focus on a selection of Jewish values that are applicable to a variety of elements. They can learn a few key texts to help guide their way. For instance, the concept of *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* (all of Israel is responsible for one another) can relate to multiple biblical and modern stories, connects to secular concepts such as teamwork, communication, and trust, and integrates well with almost any teamwork-based low ropes element. Perhaps the best way to train staff is to ensure that training continues beyond staff week.



Once they get the hang of the basics, adventure directors can continually add texts and Jewish values on a regular basis.

**Final Thoughts: Facilitating Deep Meaning**

One of the exciting aspects of Jewish Adventure Course Education is that there are so many different ways to teach. However one does it, though, one must make sure that the educational mission permeates the adventure experience and that it is deep and meaningful. It is not enough to simply name elements after Jewish places or use Hebrew synonyms for teamwork principles. Instead, one must infuse Jewish values in all aspects of the course: in games, in elements, in debriefs, and in every other aspect of ropes course education. This, in turn, will further enrich participants' camp experience and Jewish education.

## Lesson 1: Lech L'cha Out of Your Comfort Zone

### Priority Goals (Generic URJ Camp)

- To provide opportunities to strengthen individual growth and community development.
- To explore and develop Jewish identity in real life experiences.
- To explore the Jewish past so we can build a better future.

### Enduring Understandings

- We can learn Jewish values and Jewish content via personal growth and team-building activities.
- We grow as individuals when we overcome challenges as a group.
- Group values can be Jewish values, and vice versa.
- Jewish values are fundamental concepts or teachings that Jewish tradition emphasizes, that play vital roles in our daily lives, and that shape our understanding of the world and our place in it.

### Essential Questions

- What Jewish values can we learn from adventure course activities?
- How can a facilitator apply Jewish values and ropes activities to specific groups and participants?
- How can Jewish texts strengthen our understanding of group dynamics?
- How do Jewish and secular principles complement each other in a ropes course setting?

### Learner Outcomes

- K: Learners will learn Jewish values connected to group dynamics and grounded in Jewish content.
- D: Learners will challenge themselves, both as individuals and as a group, as they participate in low ropes activities that focus on both mind and body.
- B: Learners will challenge preconceived notions on how their group functions as a dynamic web of interconnected individuals.
- B: After participating in low ropes activities, learners will feel a stronger sense of connection, closeness, and trust to their peers.

### Core Concept:

- Just as Abraham left the comforts of his homeland in order to take a spiritual journey of self-growth, so, too, do we need to sometimes push out of our own comfort zones to mature and develop.

### Jewish Value

- *Lech l'cha* – leaving one's comfort zone

### Jewish Texts

- Genesis 12:1-6
- "Sarai" by Sherry Blumberg

### Adventure Activities

- Spotting
- Trust activities: Wind in the Willows, Group Trust Falls

### Assessments

- Learners will apply concepts discussed during one activity to the next activity. Participants will bring up concepts previously discussed or consider areas for improvement and actively try to work on them.
- Learners will translate Jewish values into secular concepts and apply them to real-world scenarios.
- Learners will provide feedback on the program sheet after all activities.

### Background

- This sample lesson focuses on trust exercises. Note that these involve a certain level of trust and maturity, and so the facilitator should only lead these exercises if the group is mature enough and has bonded as a team in some way already (e.g., this would most likely not be appropriate for 7 year olds who are constantly running around and yelling over each other, while it would probably be appropriate for 16 year olds who generally respect each other and listen to instructions). Refer to your institution's SOPs and LOPs regarding minimum age requirements for trust fall exercises.
- As with all of these lessons, actual facilitation will vary from group to group. This lesson serves as one possible way to bring together Jewish values and ropes course education. This lesson assumes that there are 12 participants, rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders who are all Jewish; you must adjust as needed.

### Materials

- Diagram of challenge zones. One can use a print out, draw on a paper/board, or write in the dirt.
- Trust fall platform, approximately three (3) feet off of the ground.
- A blindfold/bandana
- Copies of the text study.

### Timing (Approximations)

- Challenge by choice/comfort zones: 00:00-00:10
- Spotting: 00:10-00:12
- Wind in the Willows: 00:12-00:30
- Debrief: 00:30-00:40
- Text: 00:40-00:50
- Trust Falls: 00:50-01:20
- Debrief: 01:20-01:30

### Learning Experiences

- Challenge by Choice/Comfort Zones
  - Begin with everyone sitting in a circle, with no one excluded. This is a typical debriefing circle for ropes course exercises.
  - Ask: What does your personal "comfort zone" look like? When do you feel safe and secure?
  - Ask: When have you ever been pushed out of this zone? What happened? How did you feel? Did you ever feel unsafe?
  - Explain the concept of "Challenge by Choice," that at all ropes course activities, learners can choose to participate in activities in which they want to participate. However, by being present, they are giving the facilitators "Permission to Encourage."

- Explain the three zones. At the center is the comfort zone, when one feels totally safe and secure. At the edge is the danger zone, when one is in physical or emotional danger. Ropes staff does everything to keep us physically safe, and we will not enter the danger zone. Finally, in between those, is the growth zone.
- Ask: Why do you think we need to leave the comfort zone to grow?
- Ask: When was a time where you left your comfort zone and grew because of it?
- Learning to spot
  - Have everyone stand up.
  - Teach everyone the proper spotting stance. You should demonstrate, and have them physically copy you.
  - The stance:<sup>39</sup>
    - Feet shoulder-width apart, dominant foot behind the other. Knees slightly bent.
    - Arms up. One should block your face, if someone's feet are near your face. Hands should be "cupped" or "flat," without fingers spread apart, aka "spoons not forks" or "mittens not gloves."
    - Your body should move as the participant's body moves. Follow their hips (which hint toward the participant's center of gravity).
  - The commands:
    - (Use "fall" or "climb" as is appropriate.)
    - Faller/climber: "Spotters ready?"
    - Spotters, once ready: "Ready!"
    - Faller/climber: "Permission to fall/climb?"
    - Spotters: "Permission granted!"
    - Faller/climber: "Falling/climbing!"
    - Spotters: "Fall/climb away!"
  - Once they have learned the stance, ask them to relax and move out of the position, then to reposition themselves into that stance on their own to make sure they have learned it.
- The Wind in the Willows
  - After learning to spot, participants will engage in an activity to practice spotting and to push themselves out of their comfort zones.
  - Give all instructions before doing the activity.
  - Participants should stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. The facilitator(s) can also stand in this circle if they want to do so or if they deem it necessary for an extra pair of hands for safety.
  - One person will volunteer and enter into the middle of the circle. The rest should close up the circle.
  - The volunteer will assume a falling position:
    - Feet together.
    - Legs straight and locked.
    - Body straight.
    - The arms have a special position. The volunteer participant should extend their arms in front of them, thumbs pointed downward. They should then cross their arms one over the other. Next, they must clasp hands and interlock fingers. Finally, they should pull their hands inward and upward, close to their body.

---

<sup>39</sup> As always, the safety procedures outlined in this curriculum are not a substitute for proper safety instruction, training, and/or certification with a qualified ropes course professional. Please consult them and your SOPs/LOPs.

- Once everyone is ready, the volunteer participant should begin the commands, and the spotters (in the circle) respond as necessary (once they are ready!).
- Now that everyone is ready, the volunteer participant should close their eyes and fall back into the group, keeping their body straight. The spotters will catch the faller, then start passing them around clockwise. After some passes around the circle a few times, change direction (counterclockwise). If time permits, pass them across and around the group popcorn style (rather than in a circle).
- After they have been passed around, as a group stand the volunteer back up.
- Do not stop spotting until the participant has stood up and regained control.
- The first volunteer may join the circle once his or her turn is over and someone else can become the faller. Repeat until everyone has gone (including the facilitator if you choose).
- Debrief: The Wind in the Willows
  - Everyone should sit in an equal circle.
  - Ask: What happened in this activity?
  - Ask: How did you feel before you fell?
  - Ask: How did you feel during activity, as you were passed around?
  - Ask: How did you feel afterward?
  - Ask: What did it feel like to trust the group?
  - Ask: In what ways did you leave your comfort zone? In what ways did you leave the growth zone?
  - Ask: How can we apply what happened here to future activities?
- Text Study: *Lech L'cha*
  - Pass out the first six verses from *Parashat Lech L'cha* (see handout).
  - Explain the context of this passage:
    - Adam and Eve → Cain and Abel → Noah → Babel → Noah's descendants
    - Gen. 11 ends with Terah and his family (his sons Abram and Nahor, their wives Sarai and Milcah, and Terah's grandson Lot) and travelled from Ur toward Canaan, but stopped in Haran.
    - We are now ending the universal story of humankind's origins and beginning the story of Israel's origins, beginning with our first Patriarch, Abram/Abraham, and first Matriarch, Sarai/Sarah.
  - Read the verses aloud, in English, popcorn style verse by verse.
  - After reading, discuss the story as a group and how it relates to ropes course activities and trust falls.
    - Ask: What happened? What does the text say? Retell this narrative from your own point of view.
    - Ask: What do you think went through Abram's mind? How did he feel?
    - Ask: What were the results of his journey?
    - Ask: What do you think were some of the risks for Abram in taking this journey? What about for Sarai and his family?
    - Ask: From what you know of Abram's journey, how did he grow or mature during or after this?
    - Ask: How would you feel if you had to do what Abram did? Would you do it?
    - Ask: In what ways can you relate your feelings from the Wind in the Willows to Abram's feelings during *Lech L'cha*?
- Group Trust Falls

- Now that we have discussed ideas of trust and venturing forth into the “growth zone,” we will do another activity that for many is even tougher than The Wind in the Willows.
- Head over to the Trust Fall Platform. If you do not have one, a picnic table or other sturdy platform, approximately three feet tall, should work.
- Teach the Group Trust Fall spotting stance:
  - Form two equal lines of spotters on the ground extending out from the platform (so that the faller will fall in between the two lines). Spotters in the two lines should face the other line. They should be shoulder to shoulder within their own line.
  - Legs are positioned the same as for other spotting activities.
  - Hands are extended, palms up, bent at the elbow. Spotters should interlock forearms in a “zigzag” pattern. I.e., the first person from Line A extends their right arm, then the first person from Line B extends their left arm, then the first person from Line A extends their left, and so on down the line.
  - Heads should be tilted back slightly.
- Teach the group what is going to happen. Explain that while not everyone has to participate as a faller, they are encouraged to do so. Even if they do not fall, they should still spot.
- Inform the spotters of a change to the commands. For this activity, in light of all we have done, when the faller says his/her last command “Falling!” then the spotters should respond with “*Lech L'cha!*” (for someone who identifies as a boy) or “*Lechi Lach!*” (for someone who identifies as a girl).
- Ask the first volunteer to climb up onto the platform, making sure that the facilitator is watching/spotting. The faller should assume the same position as in The Wind in the Willows. The facilitator should take a bandana, roll it up into a strip, and tie the two ends together into a loop. They should then place this over the faller’s hands. This helps to help ensure that if the participant releases their hands, they don’t hit the spotters in the face.
- The faller should turn around with their back to the participants, feet right at the edge of the platform.
- BEFORE FALLING, the faller must perform the commands (see above). The spotters must not respond until they are actually ready!
- Once everyone is ready and have said the commands, the faller should lean back, keeping their body straight. Emphasize the straight body part—no jackknifing!
- Once the faller has fallen, the spotters should put the faller down *feet first*.
- Once down, the faller heads to the back of the line as a spotter, and another participant becomes the next faller.
- Debrief Group Trust Falls
  - Ask: What happened?
  - Ask: How did it feel going up there? What were your emotions?
  - Ask: How did you feel afterward?
  - Ask: How did you feel when you were spotting?
  - Ask: Why do you think we were able to do trust falls?
  - Ask: In what ways were you pushed out of your comfort zone? Into your danger zone?
  - Ask: How does this relate to *Lech L'cha*?
  - [If you have already discussed other values during other activities, then:] Ask: How does this relate to any other Jewish values you have learned?

- [If you do not read the poem below, then:] Ask: What do we take away from these experiences for camp? For life?
- Conclusion: “Sarai”
  - If there is time, end with this poem (found on the handout).
  - Ask a volunteer to read the poem aloud.
  - Ask: What do you think Sarai is trying to convey here?
  - Ask: What feelings does she feel?
  - Ask: How do you think Sarai grew from her own *L’chi Lach* experience?
  - Ask: How do those feelings compare to your own feelings during either The Wind in the Willows or the Trust Falls?
  - [If you did not ask this question above, then:] Ask: What do we take away from these experiences for camp? For life?

#### **Suggestions for alternative activities/lessons:<sup>40</sup>**

- Related values/principles: trust, teamwork, *anavah* (humility), *rachamim* (compassion), love thyself
- Related activities: Spider Web, Team Wall, any high ropes course or wall/tower activity
- Groups may have covered some of these topics previously. E.g., they may have already learned to spot each other, may have already discussed Challenge by Choice, etc.
- Here are two more sample “lessons” one could do related to this theme and activity:
  - Same theme: Lech L’cha and Challenge by Choice
    - Discuss the comfort zones.
    - Lead Partner Trust Fall exercises.
    - Read and discuss Lech L’cha.
    - Lead Team Wall.
    - Debrief.
  - Same activity: Group Trust Falls
    - Discuss the principle of trust. Explain when you have or haven’t trusted a friend/family member. What made you trust them, or not?
    - Lead Group Trust Falls.
    - In the debriefing session, discuss the concept of self-esteem and loving thyself. Can we be confident enough to trust? To go through a scary exercise?

#### **Notes on *Lech L’cha***

- Lech L’cha is Gen. 12:1-17:27
- Context:
  - After Noah/Babel
  - Line of Shem, Noah’s son, through Terach (father of Abram)
  - 11:31 - Terach took Abram, Lot, and Sarai from Ur to Canaan, but settled in Haran.
- It looks like we should focus on Gen. 12:1-6
- Berlin, Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler, ed. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.
  - Lech L’cha ends the universalism of Creation through Babel, and begins the particularism of Abraham and his descendants (27)
  - God promises Abram blessings of land and progeny, but this promise is unforeseen and we do not know why Abraham deserves them (29)

---

<sup>40</sup> See the Teacher Note for an explanation on these “mini-lessons.”

- *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*. Nahum M. Sarna, commentator. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989. Print.
  - "God's call comes in an instant, without forewarning or preparation. It is brief and compelling in its demands, and Abram's immediate response marks the true beginning of his life." (88)
  - v.1, go forth: "The preposition / gives the verb *h-l-k*, 'to walk, go,' the sense of 'separating, taking leave of.'" (88)
  - v.1 - "The enormity of God's demand and the agonizing nature of the decision to be made are effectively conveyed through the cluster of terms arranged in ascending order according to the severity of the sacrifice involved: country, extended family, nuclear family." (88)
  - On Abram's response: "In silent, unwavering obedience to the divine will, "as the Lord had commanded him," the patriarch picks himself up and goes forth, accepting his new destiny in perfect faith." (90)
- Herczeg, Rabbi Yisrael Isser Zvi. *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1995. Print.
  - Lech l'cha, "go for yourself" --> "For your pleasure, and for your benefit." (116)
    - So he can grow by leaving his comfort zone!
- Plaut, W. Gunther, ed. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Revised edition. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005. Print.
  - "The Challenge" (103)
    - "God's challenge to Abram has a progressive sequence: 'Go forth from your native land and from your father's house.' This is more poetry than geographic information. It emphasizes the difficulties of the challenge that Abram is about to accept. It is difficult to leave one's land and to be an unprotected wanderer abroad; it is even more difficult to abjure all that is most dear in one's accustomed house; it is most difficult of all // to reject one's parental values and standards. The passage makes it clear that God's demand represents a severe trial of faith for Abram, the first of several fundamental choices that he will have to make in his life [45]." (103-104) (EDIT THE PASSAGE)
  - "Go Forth--לך לך" --> "Perhaps the Hebrew implies 'Go by yourself.' This is one journey that must be made alone. One must become a stranger in the world to view it clearly, a wanderer to find its resting point. Abraham is God's possession, not the world's. The aloneness of Abraham foreshadows that of all religious seekers and, above all, that of the people of Israel in their historic solitude." ("Based on Samson Raphael Hirsch") (112)
  - "Or the expression may be interpreted to mean, 'Go to *yourself*,' that is, go to your roots, to find your potential." (Chasidic) (112)
    - Though Plaut says that strictly speaking, this is not a proper translation of the Hebrew... (112)
- Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.
  - This portion starts "with a transformation in identity and status through a physical, geographical passage." (61)
    - Notice that it's PHYSICAL
  - "Sarai" - Sherry Blumberg (on Gen. 12:5) (p. 83)
    - Leave my home?
    - My father, my mother?



Go with him  
To this place unknown?

Follow this man  
Who will cause me tears  
Who may bring me laughter  
Who says it's God's plan?

So God, speak to me  
That I may hear  
Not just to him.  
This is my plea!

Text Study: *Lech L'cha* and Comfort ZonesGen. 12:1-6<sup>41</sup>

12:1	The Eternal said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.	וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה:
12:2	I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you; I will make your name great, And you shall be a blessing	וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדְּלָה שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:
12:3	I will bless those who bless you And curse him that curses you; And all the families of the earth Shall bless themselves by you."	וְאֶבְרַכְהוּ מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶעֱרָ וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה:
12:4	Abram went forth as the Eternal had commanded him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran.	וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט וְאַבְרָם בֶּן-חֲמִשׁ שָׁנַיִם וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן:
12:5	Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran; and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they arrived in the land of Canaan,	וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בֶּן-אָחִיו וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׂוּ וְאֶת-הַנַּפְשׁ אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לְלַקֵּת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:
12:6	Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, at the terebinth of Moreh. The Canaanites were then in the land.	וַיַּעֲבֹר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁכֵם עַד אֵלֵן מוֹרָה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אָז בְּאֶרֶץ:

- What happened in this story? Can you retell the story in your own words?
- What do you think went through Abraham's mind? How did he feel?

\*\*\*\*\*

"Sarai" by Sherry Blumberg (on Gen. 12:5)<sup>42</sup>

Leave my home?  
My father, my mother?  
Go with him  
To this place unknown?

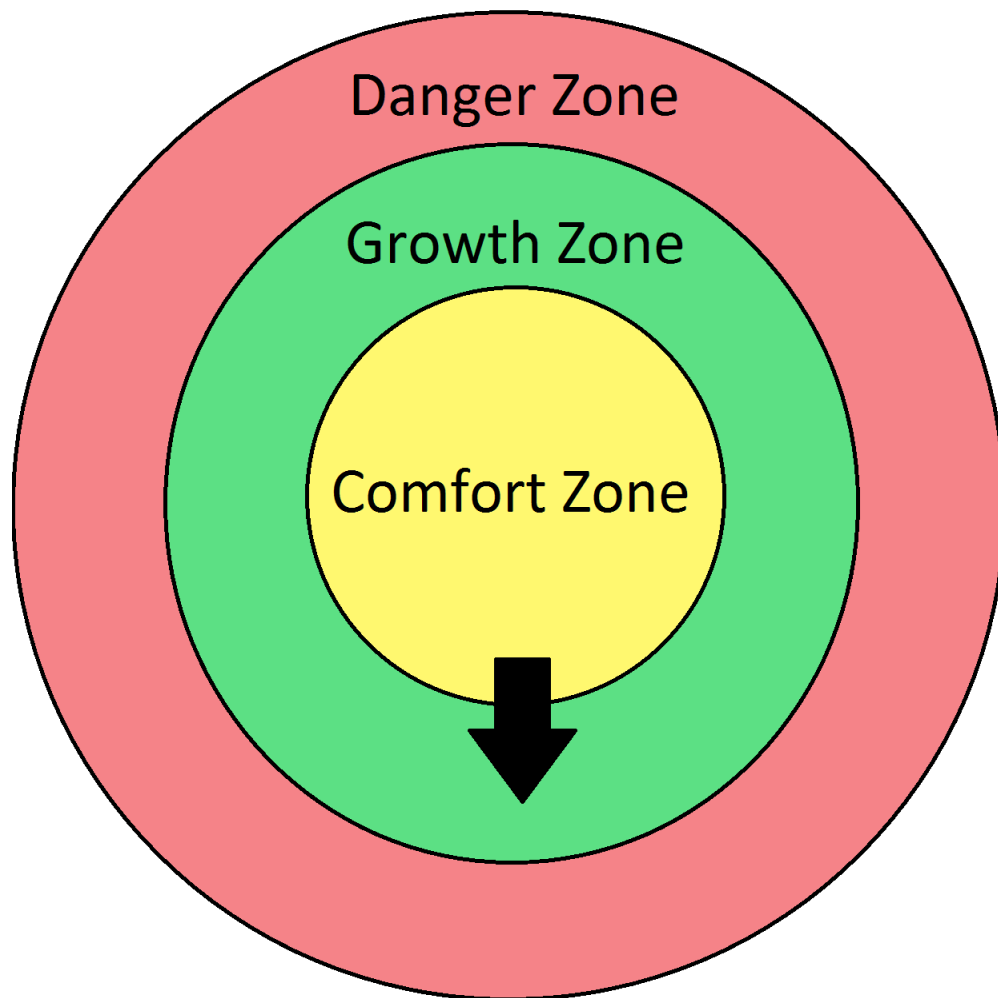
Follow this man  
Who will cause me tears  
Who may bring me laughter  
Who says it's God's plan?

So God, speak to me  
That I may hear  
Not just to him.  
This is my plea!

<sup>41</sup> Translation: NJPS Tanakh with egalitarian modifications.

<sup>42</sup> Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print. p. 83.

Handout: Lech L'cha and Comfort Zones



Challenge by Choice: Moving out of the comfort zone into a growth zone, without entering the danger zone.

## Lesson 2: Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Ba-Hula Hoop

### Priority Goals (Generic URJ Camp)<sup>43</sup>

- To provide opportunities to strengthen individual growth and community development.
- To explore and develop Jewish identity in real life experiences.
- To explore the Jewish past so we can build a better future.

### Enduring Understandings

- We can learn Jewish values and Jewish content via personal growth and team-building activities.
- We grow as individuals when we overcome challenges as a group.
- Group values can be Jewish values, and vice versa.
- Jewish values are fundamental concepts or teachings that Jewish tradition emphasizes, that play vital roles in our daily lives, and that shape our understanding of the world and our place in it.

### Essential Questions

- What Jewish values can we learn from adventure course activities?
- How can a facilitator apply Jewish values and ropes activities to specific groups and participants?
- How can Jewish texts strengthen our understanding of group dynamics?
- How do Jewish and secular principles complement each other in a ropes course setting?

### Learner Outcomes

- K: Learners will learn Jewish values connected to group dynamics and grounded in Jewish content.
- D: Learners will challenge themselves, both as individuals and as a group, as they participate in low ropes activities that focus on both mind and body.
- B: Learners will challenge preconceived notions on how their group functions as a dynamic web of interconnected individuals.
- B: After participating in low ropes activities, learners will feel a stronger sense of connection, closeness, and trust to their peers.

### Core Concept

- Sometimes we must work together as a team, with everyone in a group responsible for the well-being of the others, to overcome obstacles, thus living the value *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* (all of Israel is responsible for one another).

### Jewish Value

- *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh* (all of Israel is responsible for one another) (*B. Shavuot 39a*)

### Jewish Text

- The Twelve Spies (Numbers 13:1-14:38)

### Adventure Activity

- Helium Hula Hoop

<sup>43</sup> Based on the URJ Eisner Camp Mission Statement, URJ Camps OSRUI and Newman websites, and URJ Camping website. See Bibliography.

### Assessments

- Learners will apply concepts discussed during one activity to the next activity. Participants will bring up concepts previously discussed or consider areas for improvement and actively try to work on them.
- Learners will translate Jewish values into secular concepts and apply them to real-world scenarios.
- Learners will provide feedback on the program sheet after all activities.

### Background

- As with all of these lessons, actual facilitation will vary from group to group. This lesson serves as one possible way to bring together Jewish values and ropes course education. This lesson assumes that there are 12 participants, rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders, who are all Jewish; you must adjust as needed.
- This lesson plan focuses on the serious initiative game section of an adventure program, and assumes that the group has already played some ice-breakers and warm-ups. It precedes the low ropes elements.
- The Adventure Narrative serves as a central aspect to most low ropes programs. The facilitator constructs a story to help stimulate the participants' imaginations and foster creativity. The setting for many ropes courses is nature, but with an imaginative story, you can bring learners anywhere. See the Appendix G for more information on general ropes course facilitation techniques.

### Materials

- 1-2 hula hoops (or one per group of up to about 12 people)

### Timing (Approximations)

- 00:00-00:05: The Story of the Twelve Scouts
- 00:05-00:07: Adventure Narrative
- 00:07-00:20: Helium Hula Hoop
- 00:20-00:30: Debrief

### Learning Experiences

- Begin with the story of the Twelve Scouts (Numbers 13):
  - Say: In the Torah, we read about the Twelve Scouts. This all happened in the book of Numbers, after the Israelites left Egypt, received the commandments at Sinai, and built the Tabernacle. The people have arrived near the border of Canaan. God tells Moses to send twelve spies or scouts, one per tribe, into the land of Canaan, what today we call the Land of Israel.
  - Ask: What was so special about this land? Why did the Israelites want it?
    - *Predicted answers: God promised the land to the Israelites. It's the "Promised Land." The land has Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. That's Israel! It's better than wandering in the desert. Abraham was promised that land and moved there.*
    - Note that learners may answer with anachronisms, e.g. relating Tel Aviv to Biblical Israel. One should correct these answers without derailing the conversation, e.g. by stating that while Tel Aviv did not exist during the time of the Bible, thousands of years later Jewish pioneers thought the land was still holy and so they once again repopulated it.

- Say: God had promised the Israelites that land, it's the Promised Land, and so they were supposed to go in and conquer it. That's why God sent these scouts, sometimes called spies.
- Ask: What do you think the scouts were supposed to do?
  - *Predicted answers: See if there were enemies in the land. Create a map of the land. See if it was a desert or not. Find water sources. Spy on the enemies.*
- Say: Moses sent these twelve scouts to assess the quality of the land, the strength of the people living there, and how easy it would be to live there. He told them, "Go up into the land and see what kind of land it is. Are the people strong or weak, few or many? Is the land good or bad?" (Num. 13:17-19, idiomatic adaptation).
- Say: The scouts did what Moses said to do, and they assessed the quality of the Land of Canaan and the people in it. At one point, they cut down giant clusters of grapes, grapes so large that they had to be carried by two men (Num. 13:23).
- Say: After forty days, the twelve scouts returned to Moses. They told him about the land, and how it was a land "flowing with milk and honey" (Num. 13:27). Yet they also said that the people who lived there were big and strong, and that the Israelites would never be able to conquer them. They even compared themselves to insects: "we looked like grasshoppers," they said (Num. 13:33). Only two scouts, Caleb and Joshua, believed that God would help them conquer the land. The people believed the other ten scouts, not Caleb and Joshua.
- Ask: How do you think God reacted to hearing the people's lack of faith?
  - *Predicted answers: God was angry with them. God was sad that they did not believe God's promise.*
- Say: God was angry that the people did not believe God's promise to give them the land of Canaan. God was upset that they lacked faith. Therefore, God decided to ban that generation of Israelites from entering into the Promised Land. Only their kids, and Caleb and Joshua, would be able to enter. Thus, God caused the Israelites to wander in the desert for 40 years, one year for each day they spied.
- Ask: What do you think God was trying to teach us?
  - *Predicted answers: To have faith in God. To trust God's promises. To work together. Sometimes we must listen to others.*
- Say: I think those were great answers, and we may touch upon each of those throughout our time together. One thing that stands out to me is that the twelve scouts did not show very good teamwork. How did they not show teamwork?
  - *Predicted answers: They did not listen to Caleb and Joshua even though they were right. They did not come up with a unified solution. They fought against each other. They forgot the team goal, the purpose of the mission. They did not work together to achieve anything.*
- Say: I think those are wonderful answers, and I want you to think about them as we go about our day.
- Then give an Adventure Narrative:
  - Say: Okay folks, now that we've learned about the twelve scouts, we have a very important mission to do. Mossad, Israel's spy agency, has sent us back in time to try to fix our ancestors' mistakes. We are to replace the spies and enter into the Land of Canaan. Now, this land might just happen to look like camp, but don't be fooled! Along the way we'll have a series of obstacles that we have to get through. What do you think, can we do it? Great, then let's begin!

- Say: Our first task teaches us about a certain phrase, *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*. This means that “all of Israel is responsible for one another.”
- Ask: What do you think this means?
  - *Predicted answers: We have a responsibility for the State of Israel. We must look after one another. If we see something doing something wrong, we must correct them. If we see someone doing something right, we should praise them. We have to use teamwork.*
- Ask: How does this concept relate to the story of the Twelve Scouts?
  - *Predicted answers: The scouts did not feel responsible to each other or to their people’s mission. The scouts did what they wanted out of fear, not out of loyalty. Both parties, Caleb and Joshua on one hand and the other scouts on the other, felt responsible for Israel, but only one side actually was right.*
- Ask: How might this phrase apply to the teambuilding exercises we’re going to do today?
  - *Predicted answers: To work as a team, we have to feel a sense of responsibility. If one person messes up, we all mess up. We cannot achieve a goal unless everyone is looking out for everyone else. We must not get upset when mistakes occur.*
- Say: Those were great answers, and we’re going to explore them in our next activity.
- Activity: Helium Hula Hoop
  - Say: We’ve started walking through the Land of Canaan, and we’ve come across our first challenge. Someone built this imaginary gate and we cannot move past it, unless we lower these giant, circular switches to the ground. Only when we do that can we move on. [Then proceed to give instructions for Helium Hula Hoop.]
  - Helium Hula Hoop Instructions:
    - The facilitator should grab a hula hoop and hold it up, around chest height.
    - The group should form a circle around the hula hoop. If the group is too large, feel free to break up into two smaller groups. Note that this is not a competition; both groups should work on their own to achieve the task.
    - Ask each participant to extend their right hand (or left, or their choice of one hand), and then to extend their index finger of that hand.
    - The facilitator should rest the hula hoop on the participants’ extended fingers. The facilitator should keep holding the hula hoop while finishing the instructions.
    - Inform participants that this game is called Helium Hula Hoop. Their objective is to “simply” lower the hula hoop to the ground.
      - However, there are rules/limitations: Participants can only use one finger. That finger must remain straight, parallel to the ground; it cannot loop around the hoop, go sideways, be on top, etc. The finger must remain in contact with the hula hoop at all times.
      - (Note that while often many groups try to drop the hula hoop to the ground, this usually does not work since they often lose contact with the hoop to do so.)
    - Ask if all participants understand the rules. If not, clarify.
    - Once they understand, then remove your hand and tell them to begin.
    - Most groups will lift the hula hoop rather than lower it, because by trying to maintain constant contact, they end up pushing up. The facilitator will most likely have to restart the game multiple times.

- If a group has a lot of difficulty and does not succeed after many attempts, the facilitator may tell the group to stop and take a break. In that break, move away from the hula hoop. Have the group sit down in an equal circle. Then, they should discuss what has and has not been working, and come up with a plan or two.
- The group has accomplished its task either when it lowers the hula hoop all the way to the ground, or when they have significantly improved in their ability to lower it (even if they do not actually reach the ground).
- Debrief:
  - After the group has finished, come back to an equal circle and debrief the activity.
  - Ask: What happened in this activity?
  - Ask: Why did this not work right away?
  - Ask: What did you have to do to finally achieve your task?
  - Ask: How did you feel when you did not achieve it?
  - Ask: How did you feel when you did achieve it?
  - Ask: I mentioned a phrase earlier, *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*, “All of Israel is responsible for one another.” How does that phrase relate to what we just did?
    - *Predicted answers: If one person lifted, then it would not work; we were each responsible. We had to help each other know when to lift and when to stay steady. One person ended up being the leader, but we all worked together. Teamwork!*
  - Ask: Knowing what you now know about teamwork and responsibility, how might you enact this value around camp?
    - *Predicted answers: Stand up to bullying. If someone needs help, help them! We can help be leaders on camp and in our bunk. The bunk can't get clean unless everyone pitches in.*
  - Ask: What other Jewish values or concepts can we take away from this activity?
    - *Predicted answers: Variations of: savlanut/patience, shmi'at ha'ozen/being a good listener, anavah/humility, nosei v'ol im chavairo/sharing the burden with one's friend, maker et m'komo/knowing one's place, teamwork/avodat tzevet, communication/tikshoret*
  - Ask: We also discussed the story of the Twelve Spies earlier. How does what you just did relate to their story?
    - *Predicted answers: They did not work together. Two said one thing, ten said another. Some had the right answer but no one listened. There was fighting and argument.*
  - Ask: How might the scout story have gone differently if they had used some of the Jewish values we have discussed?
    - *Predicted answers: Maybe they would have come to the same conclusion, that the land was great. Maybe all would have agreed with Caleb and Joshua. Maybe they would have gone into Israel then and there.*
  - Ask: Soon, we will go into the low ropes elements. There will be similar activities to what you just did. How, then, can you apply what you have learned here to future activities on the ropes course?
    - *Predicted answers: Listen to each other. Create a plan. Remember that it's about teamwork, we're all responsible for each other, and we cannot do it alone. We can't shout over each other. Having a leader can help.*



- Ask: Finally, how might you apply what you learned here today to your life back home? For example, how could you apply this to school projects, or to family chores?
  - *Predicted answers: Try to work as a team. Listen to others. Work together to achieve tasks. Sometimes doing things our way can make things worse, we cannot always work as individuals.*

#### Suggestions for alternative activities/lessons:<sup>44</sup>

- Related values/principles: *savlanut*/patience, *shmi'at ha'ozen*/being a good listener, *anavah*/humility, *nosei v'ol im chaveiro*/sharing the burden with one's friend, *maker et m'komo*/knowing one's place, *avodat tzevet*/teamwork, *tikshoret*/communication.
- Related activities: Spider Web, Whale Watch, Titanic, Islands, Archimedes' Bridge, Porthole, Nitro Swing, Team Wall—really anything that involves teamwork.
- Here are two more sample “lessons” one could do related to this theme and activity:
  - Same theme: *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh*
    - Begin with any Adventure Narrative; it does not have to be based on a Jewish story or text.
    - Proceed to the low ropes element Whale Watch, and participate normally.
    - After finishing the element, begin a standard debriefing session.
    - During it, bring up the phrase *kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*.
    - Ask what it means, what it meant for Whale Watch, and how it applies to future activities, to their bunk, and/or to life outside camp.
    - Ask, now that they know what this phrase means, how might they have done the activity differently?
  - Same activity: Helium Hula Hoop
    - Do not do an Adventure Narrative, just jump right into the instructions then activity.
    - After finishing the game, begin a standard debriefing session.
    - After asking standard questions, introduce some Jewish values related to the activity, and ask how they applied to this activity. Make sure the learners use the word in their answer. For instance, you may teach that *savlanut* means “patience,” and then ask how they showed the value of *savlanut* while playing Helium Hula Hoop. One learner might say, “I practiced *savlanut* because I wanted to shout out my own plan, but Talia's plan was working so I kept my plan to myself.” Then teach about *anavah*/humility, *tikshoret*/communication, etc.
    - Finally, ask learners how they might implement each of these values at camp beyond the adventure program. Where else might one practice *savlanut* at camp? When must we demonstrate *anavah*?

#### Notes

- The Twelve Spies, Numbers 13:1-14:38)
  - Context:
    - After the key events of Exodus: fleeing Egypt, receiving the commandments at Sinai, building the Tabernacle
    - Numbers 11: the people complain about the food, Eldad and Medad received God's spirit in ecstasy

---

<sup>44</sup> See the Teacher Note for an explanation on these “mini-lessons.”

- Numbers 12: Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses, God becomes angry
  - Numbers 13 begins *Parashat Sh'lach L'cha* (Numbers 13:1-15:39)
- Plaut, W. Gunther, ed. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Revised edition. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005. Print.
  - “As Jewish tradition has always understood, Israel’s possessing the Promised Land could not be realized without a military struggle—despite a divine promise of support—for warfare and occupation were the context in which widespread population movements took place at the end of the Bronze Age.” (977)
  - 13:25-33: the spies give conflicting interpretations (977)
    - Notice the “conflict,” the lack of teamwork!
  - There are multiple “internal difficulties and contradictions” in this story (977)
  - On 13:1: Note that God gives Moses the order here, while in Deuteronomy 1:22 the people asked for it (979).
    - “The Rabbis harmonized the two passages by suggesting that the special verb form for ‘send’ (שָׁלַח-לְךָ) could be understood as ‘go ahead, send them,’ indicating God’s permission rather than a direct order to send scouts...” (979).
  - On 13:25: the 40 days became 40 years. the 40 may be a symbolic or rounded number (981).
  - On 13:33: the *Nephilim* were “demi-gods” or “giants” (982)
  - On 14:6: notice that Joshua and Caleb, not Moses and Aaron, “step forward to exhort the people” (983)
  - On 14:33: 40 years may be a round number, or may indicate “a long time” (985).
- Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.
  - “Parashat Sh’lach L’cha (‘Send for yourself’) continues the theme in Numbers of challenges to Moses’ leadership.” (869)
    - Here, both tribal leaders and the people challenge Moses and Aaron.
  - “The keys to the story and subsequent wilderness accounts are the negativity expressed about the mission by ten of the twelve scouts as well as by the populace, and the consequences of that attitude” (869).
  - Moses’ intercession and God’s mercy end up saving the people, but at a cost: wandering for 40 years and the death of the adult, wilderness generation (869).
  - Note that here the locals scare the scouts, but in later excursions the Israelites scare the locals (see Joshua 2, Judges 18) (871).
  - The scouts were leaders of their tribes (871).
    - Note that just because they were leaders does not mean they performed well. Title does not mean talent. That’s a goal of adventure courses: to teach leadership!
  - On 13:2: many translators often interpret *anashim* as “spies,” but because these emissaries are supposed to survey the land rather than partake in espionage, “scouts” may be a better translation (871-872).
- Berlin, Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler, ed. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.
  - There are two goals of the scouting expedition: to evaluate the local population’s strength, and to assess the land’s efficiency (309).
  - Note that just as they had previously done in Numbers, the people rebelled. This is not teamwork, it’s the opposite!

- *Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh*
  - MJL Staff. "All of Israel Are Responsible for One Another." *My Jewish Learning*. 1 Mar. 2016. Web. <<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/all-of-israel-are-responsible-for-one-another/>>.
    - This phrase comes from the Talmud, *B. Shavuot* 39a.
    - "This phrase is the basis of the notion of the communal responsibility in Jewish law."
    - Two elements to this phrase:
      - 1 – if a Jew sees another Jew about to sin, that first Jew must step in and try to stop the other
      - 2 – all Jews have a responsibility to ensure that the basic needs of their fellow Jews are met, including food, clothing, shelter, etc.
  - Rieser, Rabbi Louis. "A Reform answer." *Jewish Values Online*. 1 Mar. 2016. Web. <<http://www.jewishvaluesonline.org/200>>.
    - This phrase appears first in the Talmud and also in early Midrash.
    - "In each instance [this phrase] teaches that the whole of the Jewish people are responsible for each other's behavior."
    - The actions of a single person affect the entire Jewish people.
    - Many different people and groups use this phrase to rally for their cause:
      - To raise *tzedakah*.
      - To support the State of Israel.
      - To avoid communal embarrassment.

## Lesson 3: Discovering that We Are All *B'tzelem Elohim*

### Priority Goals (Generic URJ Camp)<sup>45</sup>

- To provide opportunities to strengthen individual growth and community development.
- To explore and develop Jewish identity in real life experiences.
- To explore the Jewish past so we can build a better future.

### Enduring Understandings

- We can learn Jewish values and Jewish content via personal growth and team-building activities.
- We grow as individuals when we overcome challenges as a group.
- Group values can be Jewish values, and vice versa.
- Jewish values are fundamental concepts or teachings that Jewish tradition emphasizes, that play vital roles in our daily lives, and that shape our understanding of the world and our place in it.

### Essential Questions

- What Jewish values can we learn from adventure course activities?
- How can a facilitator apply Jewish values and ropes activities to specific groups and participants?
- How can Jewish texts strengthen our understanding of group dynamics?
- How do Jewish and secular principles complement each other in a ropes course setting?

### Learner Outcomes

- K: Learners will learn Jewish values connected to group dynamics and grounded in Jewish content.
- D: Learners will challenge themselves, both as individuals and as a group, as they participate in low ropes activities that focus on both mind and body.
- B: Learners will challenge preconceived notions on how their group functions as a dynamic web of interconnected individuals.
- B: After participating in low ropes activities, learners will feel a stronger sense of connection, closeness, and trust to their peers.

### Core Concept

- When we put effort into getting to know each other, we can find the worth and value of every individual, thus discovering that we are all created *b'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God).

### Jewish Value

- *B'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God)

### Jewish Texts

- Genesis 1:26-28
- Genesis 9:6
- M. Sanhedrin 4:5
- Rabbi Jack Bloom's teaching on *b'tzelem Elohim*

<sup>45</sup> Based on the URJ Eisner Camp Mission Statement, URJ Camps OSRUI and Newman websites, and URJ Camping website. See Bibliography.

### Adventure Activities

- Opening icebreakers and stretching

### Assessments

- Learners will apply concepts discussed during one activity to the next activity. Participants will bring up concepts previously discussed or consider areas for improvement and actively try to work on them.
- Learners will translate Jewish values into secular concepts and apply them to real-world scenarios.
- Learners will provide feedback on the program sheet after all activities.

### Background

- As with all of these lessons, actual facilitation will vary from group to group. This lesson serves as one possible way to bring together Jewish values and ropes course education. This lesson assumes that there are 12 participants, rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders who are all Jewish; you must adjust as needed.
- This lesson plan focuses on the initial ice-breakers and warm-up games of a full low-ropes session. These are the very first activities participants will play.
- Icebreakers help participants get to know each other. While many bunkmates may already know each other's names, it frequently helps to begin with at least one icebreaker or name game no matter what, especially if the group will be participating at a challenge course for an extended period. Beginning with these games strengthens the adventure program for multiple reasons: it allows the facilitator to learn all group members' names, it ensures that bunkmates actually know each other's names, and it emphasizes the notion that using each other's names is a key aspect of the socialization of ropes course education.

### Materials

- 1 beach ball, with questions on it (see below for details)
- Place-markers: 1 per participant.
- Copies of the text (at least 1 copy; ideally 1 per participant)

### Timing (Approximations)

- 00:00-00:05: Namejective
- 00:05-00:10: Beach Ball Questions
- 00:10-00:15: Introduce *b'tzelem Elohim*
- 00:15-00:20: Mail Call
- 00:20-00:25: Stretches
- 00:25-00:28: Further discuss *b'tzelem Elohim*
- 00:28-00:35: Present other texts on *b'tzelem Elohim*

### Learning Experiences

- Begin with the icebreaker, Namejective.
  - Invite all participants to stand in a circle with about one foot of space in between each person. You as facilitator should also join the circle, as well as any counselors if you choose.
  - Explain to participants that we will be playing an icebreaker to get to know each other.
  - One at a time, each participant will say their name and an adjective to go along with their name. The adjective should begin with the same letter as the name they would like

others to call them, whether that be first name, last name, or nickname. The adjective should also describe them. For instance, someone named David Goldsmith might be “Determined David,” Patricia Smith could be “Precious Patty,” and Henry Stein might be “Silly Stein.” If participants have trouble thinking of an adjective, adding “-like” to the end of a noun helps, such as someone named Peter going by “Puppy-like Peter.”

- This activity becomes more complicated, however, because everyone has to say their own name and all who have already gone before them. Using the examples above, if David goes first he would only have to say “Determined David.” Patty is next, and so she would say “That’s Determined David, and I’m Precious Patty.” Stein would then say both names before his own, “Determined David, Precious Patty, and I’ll go by Silly Stein.”
- Emphasize that while we want to learn everyone’s names, this is a safe space to forget. If you forget someone’s name, now or in the future, that’s okay—just ask!
- Once everyone has said their name, ask if anyone can recall everyone’s names. Once one or two people try, ask everyone to rearrange the circle, and then ask if anyone can still recall all the names in this new order.
- Play Beach Ball Questions.
  - For this activity, you will need a beach ball with various questions or qualities on it. E.g., you may have various questions written all over it, such as, “What is your favorite food?” and, “Where is your favorite place to travel?” Alternatively, you may simply state the topic, such as “favorite color” and “# of siblings.” Fill the ball with as many different questions as you can, leaving clear space in between each one.
  - Ask everyone to form an equal circle with about a foot of space in between each participant.
  - For this game, you, as the facilitator, will toss the beach ball to one person, who will try to catch it. If they do not catch it, that’s okay, and they should then pick it up. You should say their name as you throw it to them. Once that person is holding the ball, they should answer the question that is closest to their right thumb (if it’s equidistant, pick one). Once they answer, they should then pick someone new, say their name, and toss the ball to them.
  - Try to make sure that everyone receives the ball at least once. You may want to play so that no one can get the ball twice until everyone has received it once.
- Introduce the concept of *b’tzelem Elohim*
  - Invite everyone to sit down in an equal circle.
  - Ask: Why are we beginning by getting to know each other?
    - *Predicted answers: If we need to achieve a task, we should be able to ask for help by name. To work as a group, everyone needs to feel a part of the group, and knowing names helps reach that feeling.*
  - Ask: Does anyone know what *b’tzelem Elohim* means?
  - Explain that *b’tzelem Elohim* means “in the image of God.” Explain the biblical account, that when God created the world, God created humans on the sixth day.
  - Hand out and/or read aloud Gen. 1:26-28.
  - Ask: How did God create human beings?
    - *Predicted answers: As both male and female. In the image of God. As rulers/caretakers of the world.*
  - Emphasize that God created human beings in God’s image.
  - Ask: What does it mean to be created in God’s image?

- *Predicted answers: We are like God. When we do things, it is like God does things. We can create, just like God creates. We are all special. We are similar in some ways but also unique.*
  - Ask: Since we are all created in God's image, how should we relate to one another? How do we work together?
    - *Predicted answers: We should get to know each other. We should respect each other. We should work together. We should help each other.*
  - Ask: How does this concept of *b'tzelem Elohim* relate to the icebreakers we just played?
    - *Predicted answers: We are getting to know each other. We are learning about how we are each unique but also similar. Maybe we'll see how we're all like God.*
  - Ask: What do you think we're going to do today at this adventure course?
    - *Predicted answers: Play games. Work as a team. Climb walls. Learn.*
  - Teach that today, this group will be playing games and doing ropes course elements to grow as individuals and as a team.
  - Ask: How might the notion of *b'tzelem Elohim* be relevant to working as a team?
    - *Predicted answers: We have to recognize that everyone has value. All human beings have worth. While we might offer different skills or talents, we're all a part of the team.*
- Play another icebreaker, Mail Call.
  - Hand out place-markers, one to each participant. These can be disks, plush toys, etc., anything that can simply mark a spot and will still be useable if someone accidentally steps on it.
  - Ask participants to stand in an equal circle, with one to two feet of space between each other. You as facilitator should stand in the middle.
  - Once the circle is set, ask participants to drop their place markers at their feet. They are now no longer "theirs," but simply mark a spot.
  - To play this game, one person will stand in the middle, just as you are doing now. This person will say, "My name is \_\_\_\_ and I have mail for anyone who \_\_\_\_." The first blank is their name. The second blank is for any true statement about that person. Note that it has to be a *true* statement. For instance, if someone named Michelle is standing in the middle wearing sneakers and she likes the Boston Red Sox, then she could say, "My name is Michelle and I have mail for anyone who likes the Red Sox," or "My name is Michelle and I have mail for anyone wearing sneakers." She would not say, "My name is Michelle and I have mail for anyone wearing flip flops," because that's not a true statement about her.
  - Once the middle person states his/her name, then anyone else for whom that statement is true will leave their spot and find a new spot. Participants who move cannot go back to the same spot, and (ideally) should not go to a spot to the left or right of their current spot. This will leave one person without a spot, and they are now the person in the middle. This person will then say their name, state a true fact, and once again everyone will move.
  - As facilitator, feel free to play along. You may notice that some people are always in the middle and some people never get there. If that's the case, you may want to pick someone to go in the middle. For instance, if Jennifer always avoids the middle, you may say, "Oh look at that, it's Jennifer's turn!" Ideally, everyone will have at least one chance to share something about themselves.
- Facilitate group stretches

- Invite participants to stand in an equal circle with a foot of space in between each person.
- Tell participants that we will be performing physical activities today, and so it is important to warm up in a variety of ways. One way we warm up is through stretches.
- Because they are a team, the participants will lead their own stretches. Starting with one person, each person will lead a different stretch. Emphasize that ideally they will target different body parts (calves, biceps, etc.), but it is okay if you don't. Inform the participants that if they lead a stretch for limbs, they must stretch both limbs.
- Pick a time (15-30 seconds) and count aloud as a group as you do each stretch.
- Once everyone has led a stretch, you as facilitator may want to fill in with any key stretches that they missed (e.g., if they did not stretch their backs, you may want to lead a stretch that focuses on the back). Additionally or alternatively, you may want to give them a moment to stretch anything they feel that they missed.
- Further discuss *b'tzelem Elohim*
  - Ask everyone to sit in a circle.
  - Remind everyone what *b'tzelem Elohim* means (in the image of God).
  - Ask: How did Mail Call relate to this concept?
    - *Predicted answers: We learned about each other. We learned what makes us similar and what makes us different. We saw that each of us is special.*
  - Ask: How does stretching relate to *b'tzelem Elohim*?
    - *Predicted answers: Each part of us—including our bodies—are created in God's image and so we must treat them with respect. If we want to be partners with God, we must take care of our bodies and help them work to their full potential.*
- Present other texts on *b'tzelem Elohim*.
  - Say: This concept of *b'tzelem Elohim* is related to many other Jewish texts. We're going to explore a few of them now before moving on to our next activity.
  - If you have copies of the alternative texts, you may pass them around and ask participants to read them one at a time (leaving room for discussion in between each reading). You may want to cut them into strips and pass out the strips to three readers. Otherwise, you should read each one aloud (perhaps twice) and then discuss.
  - Read text #2: Genesis 9:6
    - Ask: What does this text mean?
      - *Predicted answers: If you kill someone, you will be killed. That because we're created in God's image, we shouldn't murder or be murdered.*
    - Ask: How does this relate to the concept of *b'tzelem Elohim*?
      - *Predicted answers: It mentions that humans were made in God's image. It discusses being responsible for one another. It turns the concept of b'tzelem Elohim into a commandment. There are consequences for our actions.*
    - Ask: How does this text relate to our earlier activities?
      - *Predicted answers: When we get to know each other, we are less likely to hurt another person. We are all humans and are therefore responsible for each other.*
  - Read text #3: M. Sanhedrin 4:5.
    - Explain: This text comes from the Mishnah, a key Jewish text that brings together various rabbinic and Biblical laws and written in 200 CE. This excerpt comes from a larger discussion on requiring two witnesses for capital cases.
    - Read the text.



- Ask: What does this text mean?
  - *Predicted answers: While we are all very similar, we are all also unique. God made the first person, but God also creates us through our parents. Being unique is a good thing.*
- Reemphasize that later in the day, the group will be going through team challenges that involve working together to achieve a physical task.
- Ask: What does this text tell us about working together?
  - *Predicted answers: Each of us are Godlike and can help do things in this world. Each of us are unique and can contribute. Even if we're all special, we're also alike in many ways and so we can rely on each other.*
- Read text #4: Rabbi Jack Bloom
  - Ask: How do you feel about Rabbi Bloom's teaching?
    - *Predicted answers: I like it in theory, but it can be difficult to put ego aside. I like it because we should all feel special and unique. I wonder if there's room for trying to improve ourselves.*
  - Ask: How does this relate to what we will do today?
    - *Predicted answers: Sometimes we may have to let others take charge or complete a task. I may be afraid to do something and that's okay. If someone climbs higher or runs faster, that does not mean that I have to feel bad about myself.*
- Ask: How do all of these texts relate to our daily lives at camp?
  - *Predicted answers: We need to treat each person with the respect they deserve. We have to remember that we're all different, but that's usually a good thing. Just because we do not understand someone does not mean they should be valued less. We must listen to each other, because we all have something of worth to say and do.*
- Teach that this concept of *b'tzelem Elohim* will be a key part of today's adventure activities. Emphasize that this is about personal and team growth no matter where you are, how physically fit you are, etc. Emphasize that this is not a competition, except, perhaps, against oneself.

#### **Suggestions for alternative activities/lessons:<sup>46</sup>**

- Related values/principles: love thy neighbor, *anavah*/humility, *maker et m'komo*/knowing one's place, *avodat tzevet*/teamwork, *kavod*/respect, equality, *k'lal Yisrael*/Jewish peoplehood, *shalom*/peace
- Related activities: any icebreakers (e.g. Butt Spelling, One Thing On You, Speed Dating, Wandering Bump Game), Entourage, Leader Game, Silly Orchestra, Buzz, Human Knot, Helium Hula Hoop, Rope Shapes, any trust games, Mohawk Walk, Islands, Porthole, Spider Web, Team Wall, Whale Watch. Any game or activity where differences are celebrated.
- Here are two more sample "lessons" one could do related to this theme and activity:
  - Same theme: *b'tzelem Elohim*
    - Begin with any icebreaker, ideally one that shows how we're different yet similar (e.g. Mail Call).
    - Introduce the concept of *b'tzelem Elohim* by studying some or all of the texts on the handout, using similar questions.
    - Divide the group into smaller groups of 2-4 people. Invite students to create a quick (<60 seconds) skit that demonstrates a value of *b'tzelem Elohim*.

---

<sup>46</sup> See the Teacher Note for an explanation on these "mini-lessons."

- Play the game Entourage. For this game, participants pick a person and play rock paper scissors. The winner keeps playing and faces another person, while the “loser” follows around the winner and cheers his/her name loudly and enthusiastically. This person is now in their “entourage.” If that person loses to someone else, then both join the new winner’s entourage. Eventually, all will be cheering one person’s name. Play another 1-2 rounds.
- Relate the game Entourage back to the concept of *b’tzelem Elohim*. How did you demonstrate that value in that game? How did it feel to win? How did it feel to cheer? What does this teach us about how we should interact with each other at camp?
- Same activities: icebreakers
  - Begin with a series of icebreakers. Play them back to back without debriefing.
  - Read Leviticus 19:17-18. Ask what it means. Focus on the concept of “love thy neighbor.” Ask how this relates to the icebreakers, and then ask how we may bring it with us to camp. Emphasize that we can more easily love other people when we get to know them.

## Notes

- Text #1: Gen. 1:26-28
  - Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women’s Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.
    - On the translation of Gen. 1:27, *human beings*: “This translation resorts to the plural to avoid using misleading masculine pronouns later in the verse. Literally the Hebrew has: ‘And God created the *adam*. In the image of God he created him/it; male and female he created them’ (shifting the object pronoun from singular to plural). By referring to *adam*, the text is not describing an individual but a new class of beings that comprises female and male from the start, both of them in God’s image. This idea is repeated more clearly in [Gen.] 5:1-2. The shift from singular to plural does not convey that man was created before woman. (That the singular pronoun is masculine can be explained as necessary for grammatical gender agreement in the Hebrew language.) Rather, it seems to say that our humanity, as *adam*, precedes our division into sexual categories. Our humanity comes first; our sexual identity next.” (8)
    - On Gen. 1:27, *male and female*: “This passage explicitly proclaims the co-creation of female and male, both in God’s image. It establishes the goodness and gender balance as the foundation for all that follows. The terms male (*zachar*) and female (*n’kevah*) designate biological categories, thus relevant to fertility, a major theme in this passage. The word *zachar* evokes the Hebrew word for “remembering,” and *n’kevah* evokes the word for being pierced.” (8)
  - Plaut, W. Gunther, ed. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Revised edition. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005. Print.
    - On v. 26, “let us” – “Tradition has understood the plural in various ways: speaking out loud to no one in particular (so Rashi), or as addressing the angelic host...Saadia treated the ‘us’ as a majestic plural, applied in the Bible to some distinguished personalities (for example, Num. 20:3; Judg. 13:15)... while Nachmanides explained it as follows: The human was to be fashioned from physical matter (like all other creatures) but was also to have a soul (like no other creature). ‘Let us’ is therefore to be understood as if God were addressing

the earth in this uniquely cooperative process of creation. ... In a way, all these explanations succeed and fail, for they highlight our inability to conceptualize God, even as we cannot—in the physical realm—conceptualize infinity or what “existed” before the world began.” (21)

- Text #2: Gen. 9:6
  - Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.
    - “*The shedder of human blood...*” – “The very formulation expresses parity between crime and punishment: the first six words repeat in exact mirror image: *spill—blood—human / human—blood—spill*. The message is both simple and profound: complete parallel between deed and consequence—no more, no less. This formulation resembles the “eye for an eye” principle (Exodus 21:24). Less clear is how such a guideline is to be carried out.” (44)
    - “*in the image of God.*” – “Because humankind is made in God’s image, murder counts as a crime against God.” (45)
  - Plaut, W. Gunther, ed. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Revised edition. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005. Print.
    - On vv. 5-6: “Human beings are created in God’s image, and their destruction requires us to restore the divine balance of existence. This restoration may be accomplished *by means of beasts or by means of human beings*. Thus, when an ox gores a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned (Exod. 21:28)...and when one person is murdered, another death must even the balance.” (64)
- Text #3: M. Sanhedrin 4:5
  - “Mishnah Sanhedrin Ch. 4.” *eMishnah.com*. Excerpted from “The Mishnah: A New Integrated Translation and Commentary.” 27 Mar. 2016. Web.
    - M. Sanhedrin 4:5 begins with witnesses in capital cases, and how courts require strict, hard testimony. The text goes on to show how much life matters, quoting various texts and teachings, including this teaching with the coin metaphor.
    - While Sanhedrin 4:5 is too long to reproduce in this lesson plan, here is a little more context: “Also, to teach the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed is He; when a man casts many coins from a single mold, they all resemble one another, but the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed is He, fashioned each man in the mold of the first man, yet not one of them resembles another. Therefore, every single person is obliged to say: The world was created for my sake.”
- Text #4: Rabbi Jack Bloom’s teaching
  - Rabbi Jack H. Bloom, Ph.D., is both a rabbi and a clinical psychologist. He has written a number of books including *The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar* and *Jewish Relational Care A-Z*. For more information, visit his website: <http://www.jackhbloom.com/>.

Text Study: B'tzelem Elohim (In the Image of God)

**1) Genesis 1:26-28<sup>47</sup>**

1:26	Now God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness; and let them hold sway over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, over the beasts, over all the earth, over all that creeps upon the earth."	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:
1:27	So God created the human beings in [the divine] image, creating [them] in the image of God, creating them male and female.	וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְרָא אֱתֵם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצַלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֶת־זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֶת־ם:
1:28	God then blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and tame it; hold sway over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, and over every animal that creeps on the earth."	וַיְבָרֵךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבִשְׁתֶּהּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָרֶמֶשׂוֹת עַל-הָאָרֶץ:

**2) Genesis 9:6<sup>48</sup>**

9:6	Whoever sheds the blood of a human being, By [another] human shall that person's blood be shed; For in God's image Did God make man.	שֹׁפֵךְ דַּם הָאָדָם בְּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפֹּךְ כִּי בְצַלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת-הָאָדָם:
-----	--	--

**3) M. Sanhedrin 4:5**

If a person strikes several coins from the same die, they all resemble one another. But, although God fashioned every human in the stamp of the first human, not a single one is exactly like one's fellow.<sup>49</sup>

**4) Rabbi Jack Bloom's teaching on b'tzelem Elohim**

Rabbi Jack Bloom used to teach that being created *b'tzelem Elohim* means that we are good enough just the way we are.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Translation: Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.

<sup>48</sup> Translation: NJPS Tanakh with egalitarian modifications.

<sup>49</sup> Translation: Greenfield, Amy. "In God's Image' – Betzelem Elohim." *USY.org*. 27 Mar. 2016. Web.

<sup>50</sup> Adapted from: Wechter, Sharon L. "B'tzelem Elohim: 'In God's Image.'" *ReformJudaism.org* 14 Oct. 2006. 27 Mar. 2016. Web.

## Appendix A: Glossary

Provided here is a glossary of selected relevant terms for Jewish Adventure Course Education.

- *Adventure course* – Adventure courses, also known as ropes courses or challenge courses, are experiential learning centers that take individuals and groups and push them out of their comfort zone in safe ways. They help develop leadership, communication, teamwork, self-esteem, and other group-dynamic skills. They are often part of camp or outdoor settings.
- *Adventure Narrative* – This is a creative story that a facilitator tells participants while partaking in low ropes activities. These tales foster imagination, creativity, and fun.
- *Challenge by Choice* – This term, coined by Project Adventure, refers to the concept that all participants have the option to participate, but (as long as they stay safe) do not need to actually do so. Along with this comes “Permission to Encourage,” meaning that by coming to an adventure course, participants give implicit permission to facilitators to encourage participation.
- *Climbing wall* – Climbing walls are simulated rock walls.
- *Debriefing sessions* – aka “debriefs.” After most low ropes activities, facilitators will debrief what just occurred with the group in a debriefing session. Here, participants discuss what happened, what they learned, how it was Jewish, and how they can apply their takeaways to camp.
- *Dewey, John* – (1859-1952) – One of the founders of constructivism, Dewey was a pioneer in modern education. He promoted concepts such as learner-centered teaching and experiential education.
- *Element* – An element is a physical, structured ropes course activity, as opposed to a fun or initiative game. Elements may be as simple as a 12-foot wall that participants must climb over (Team Wall) or as complicated as a series of platforms and planks of wood that participants must combine in the right order to cross to the other side (Islands).
- *Enduring Understandings* – These are the “big ideas” of a unit or curriculum.
- *Essential Questions* – These key questions help frame and guide the teaching of the unit or curriculum.
- *Equal circle* – When debriefing a group, all participants should sit in a circle where no one is outside or inside the circle and where no one blocks anyone else’s view. Essentially, all learners sit equally.
- *Facilitator* – The facilitator works with a small group of participants on the ropes course, bringing them through activities, mapping out lessons, running debriefing sessions, and monitoring safety.
- *Fun Games* – These are silly, fun, and relatively safe field games. They often come right after icebreakers. While challenging, their main purpose is to help participants warm up and become comfortable participating in activities with each other.
- *High ropes* – High ropes courses consist of elements that are relatively high off the ground, and generally require safety equipment such as ropes or helmets. They often focus on individual growth. High ropes courses may include climbing walls and alpine towers.
- *Icebreakers* – Icebreakers are warm-up activities that enable participants to get to know each other. They may range from simple name games to activities that ask for details of participants’ lives. Facilitators may often begin with these activities.
- *Initiative Games* – These are serious games that come between fun games and low ropes elements. While fun, they are challenging and often include some task or obstacle to overcome. They help prepare participants for the more risky challenges of low ropes elements.

- *Learner Outcomes* – Based on the concept of whole person learning, these learner outcomes try to touch upon knowing, doing, believing, and belonging (KDBB).
- *Limud* – Literally “studying,” some camps use this term to describe their educational department and classes.
- *Low ropes* – Low ropes courses consist of elements that are relatively low to the ground, and may not require ropes or helmets. They tend to focus on group work more than individual growth.
- *Middot* – In simple terms, *middot* means “Jewish values.”
- *Teva* – *Teva* means “nature,” and may refer to the outdoor education aspects of a camp.
- *T’filah* – *T’filah* means “prayer” or “worship.”

## Appendix B: Partial List of Jewish Values with Corresponding Elements<sup>51</sup>

Here is a partial list of Jewish values and the elements that could go with them. Note that this list is not anywhere near exhaustive. Rather, this list provides a small sample of how one may pair elements with a given value. Just because a specific value is not listed does not mean it cannot be a Jewish adventure value, and just because a certain element does not line up with a value does not mean that one cannot associate them together.

Value	Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anavah</i>/humility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any activity where a leader becomes silent</li> <li>• Any activity with blindfolds</li> <li>• Buzz</li> <li>• (Climbing/high ropes)</li> <li>• Matilda’s Garden</li> <li>• Spider Web</li> <li>• Team Wall</li> <li>• Trust activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>B’tzelem Elohim</i>/in God’s image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helium Hula Hoop</li> <li>• Icebreakers</li> <li>• Islands</li> <li>• Nitro Swing</li> <li>• Swinging Log</li> <li>• Stretching</li> <li>• Trust activities</li> <li>• Whale Watch</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lech L’cha</i>/Leaving one’s comfort zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Climbing/high ropes)</li> <li>• Spider Web</li> </ul>

<sup>51</sup> Appendices B, C, and D come from a variety of sources, including Campbell, Elkins, Freeman, Ingall, Jacobs, *JCC Chicago*, Schwartz, and Telushkin.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Wall</li> <li>• Trust activities</li> <li>• Wild Woozy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Makir et m'komo</i>/knowing one's place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any activity with selected leaders</li> <li>• Any blindfolded activities</li> <li>• Helium Hula Hoop</li> <li>• Many other team elements</li> <li>• Nitro Swing</li> <li>• Rope Shapes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ometz Lev</i>/courage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any activity where a participant overcomes fear</li> <li>• (Climbing/high ropes)</li> <li>• Nitro Swing</li> <li>• Team Wall</li> <li>• Trust activities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Yirah</i>/fear-awe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Climbing/high ropes)</li> <li>• Spider Web</li> <li>• Team Wall</li> <li>• Tension Traverse</li> <li>• Trust activities</li> <li>• Wild Woozy</li> </ul>

### Appendix C: Partial List of Elements with Corresponding Values

Like Appendix B, above, this list is not exhaustive.

Element	Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buzz</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anavah</i>/humility</li> <li>• Problem-solving</li> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• <i>Simchah</i>/joy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helium Hula Hoop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh</i>/all of Israel is responsible for one another</li> <li>• <i>Savlanut</i>/patience</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nitro Swing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ometz lev</i>/courage</li> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• <i>Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh</i>/all of Israel is responsible for one another</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• <i>Dibbuk chaverim</i>/cleaving to friends</li> <li>• <i>Eimun</i>/trust</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whale Watch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teamwork</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh</i>/all of Israel is responsible for one</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wild Woozy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Anavah</i>/humility</li> <li>• Focus</li> <li>• <i>Savlanut</i>/patience</li> <li>• <i>Shalvah</i>/calmness</li> <li>• Trust</li> </ul>

## Appendix D: A More Complete List of Jewish Adventure Values

Like Appendices B and C, above, this list is not exhaustive.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Ahavah</i> – love</li> <li>• <i>Anavah</i> – humility</li> <li>• <i>B'tzelem Elohim</i> – in the image of God</li> <li>• <i>Chesed</i> – kindness</li> <li>• <i>Dibbuk chaverim</i> - cleaving to friends</li> <li>• <i>Eimun</i> – trust</li> <li>• <i>Eino machazik tova l'atzmo</i> – taking no personal credit</li> <li>• <i>Erech apayaim</i> – slow to anger</li> <li>• <i>K'dushah</i> – holiness</li> <li>• <i>Kavod</i> – honor, respect</li> <li>• <i>Kehilah</i> – community</li> <li>• <i>Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh</i> – all of Israel is responsible for one another</li> <li>• <i>Lech l'cha</i> - leaving one's comfort zone</li> <li>• Loving thy neighbor</li> <li>• Loving thyself</li> <li>• <i>Maker et m'komo</i> – knowing one's place</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Manhigut</i> – leadership</li> <li>• <i>Nedivut</i> – generosity</li> <li>• <i>Nosei v'ol im chaveiro</i> – sharing the burden with one's neighbor</li> <li>• <i>Ometz lev</i> – courage</li> <li>• <i>Rachamim</i> – compassion</li> <li>• <i>Ratzon</i> – willingness</li> <li>• <i>Savlanut</i> – patience</li> <li>• <i>Sh'tikah</i> – silence</li> <li>• <i>Shalom</i> – peace</li> <li>• <i>Shmi'at ozen</i> – being a good listener</li> <li>• <i>Shmirat haguf</i> – guarding one's body</li> <li>• <i>Simchah</i> – joy</li> <li>• <i>Tikshoret</i> – communication</li> <li>• <i>Tochechah</i> – rebuking</li> <li>• <i>Torah</i> – Torah, instruction, learning</li> <li>• <i>Tzedek</i> – righteousness</li> <li>• <i>Tzniyut</i> – modesty</li> <li>• <i>Yirah</i> – fear-awe</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## Appendix E: Games/Activities Mentioned, with Brief Descriptions

This section does not aim to teach about each element or activity. Instead, it serves as a guide so that facilitators understand exactly to which elements or activities this capstone refers.

- *Archimedes' Bridge* – This is an alternative version of Islands, below.



- *Beach Ball Questions* – In this icebreaker, participants stand in a circle and pass around a beach ball, on which questions are written. When one participant catches the ball, s/he must answer the question closest to their right thumb.
- *Blindfolds* – Many activities include the possibility for one or more participants to wear bandanas or blindfolds over their eyes. They then must rely on the help of their peers.
- *Butt Spelling* – In this silly icebreaker, participants stand in a circle. One at a time, each person turns around (with their back to the group), states their name, and then tries to spell their name with their butt (in cursive or script, English or Hebrew).
- *Buzz* – Participants stand in a circle and pick a number (three and four work best). Then, they must count upwards, one person at a time. However, any time a number has the chosen number as a digit or has a multiple of the chosen number, the person must not say the number and instead must say “Buzz!” For instance, if the group chooses the number three, then counting would go like this: “1, 2, buzz, 4, 5, buzz, 7, 8, buzz, 10, 11, buzz, buzz, 14...” If a participant makes a mistake, then they must step into the circle and shout “Yes,” and then the counting restarts. The goal is to count to a specific number (e.g. forty).
- *Coffeepot*: One person leaves the circle. The rest of the group picks a daily activity or verb, e.g. “brushing your teeth.” The person who left comes back, then asks people various questions using the word “coffeepot” as a substitution for the unknown verb. For instance, the person might ask “How do you coffeepot?” or “At what time do you coffeepot?” The goal is to correctly guess the activity.
- *Elves, Wizards, Giants* – This is a giant, team version of rock-paper-scissors. The group is split into two smaller groups. For each round, each group picks to be either elves, wizards, or giants, each represented by a unique gesture with sound effects. After deciding on a creature, both teams meet in the middle, then the entire team does the same gesture. Whichever team wins

tries to tag the other team as they run away to their side of the field. Those who are tagged join the other team, those who are not remain on their original side. Replay rounds until everyone is on one team, or you run out of time. Elves beat wizards, wizards beat giants, and giants beat elves.

- *Entourage* – In this game, each learner finds a partner and plays rock-paper-scissors until there is a winner between the two partners. The one who loses joins the other’s “entourage,” meaning they follow the other around shouting the winner’s name. If a person with an entourage loses, they and their whole entourage join the other’s group. The game is over once there is one winner with everyone else shouting their name.
- *Group Stretches* – In this activity, each participant leads a stretch as part of a warmup.
- *Haha!* – In this activity, participants lie on the ground with their heads on each other’s laps (the first person is on no one’s lap). The first person shouts “ha!” loudly, the next proclaims “ha ha!” just as loud, the third states three “ha’s,” and so on until everyone has participated. If anyone genuinely laughs, the game restarts.
- *Helium Hula Hoop* – Participants stand in a circle around a hula hoop. While maintaining only one finger per person under the hula hoop and without breaking contact, participants must try to lower the hula hoop to the ground. Difficulty lies in the fact that the hoop often “floats” away as people push upwards.
- *Human Knot* – The group comes together and each person uses their two hands to grasp the hands of two other people. No one can grab the hands of someone standing next to them nor can they hold the hands of the same person twice. Now that the group is a giant knot, they must untie themselves.
- *Islands* – This name refers to a series of activities that may also be called Titanic, Archimedes’ Bridge, or other names. While each version may have its own unique qualities, they all share the

characteristic that participants must move from one platform to another using a series of wooden boards.

- *Leader Game* – This game is also called “Indian Chief,” although that term is not politically correct. In this activity, everyone sits in an equal circle, and then one person leaves the circle. While that individual is gone, the rest of the group picks a leader who will perform various actions: clapping, snapping, rubbing their head, etc. The rest of the group follows the leader, changing when s/he does. The other person comes back to the group and tries to figure out who is the leader, in three or fewer guesses.
- *Mail Call* – In this icebreaker, participants stand in a circle with one person in the middle. The one in the middle declares their name and then states, “I have mail for anyone who \_\_\_\_\_,” inserting a true statement about themselves. If that statement is true for anyone else, they leave their spot and try to find a new one. The person left without a spot restarts the process from the middle.
- *Mohawk Walk* – This low ropes element is made up of a series of cables between posts or trees. Participants must help each other cross from one end of each cable to the other, without falling off.
- *Namejective* – In this icebreaker, participants provide their name along with an adjective that begins with the same first letter. The first person to go only says their name, the second says both names, the third person says all three, and so on.
- *Nitro Swing* – Also known as Nitro Crossing, this activity involves participants swinging on a rope swing from one platform to another across a span of ground that they may not touch.
- *One Thing on You* – In this icebreaker, participants pick any item they have with them and describe how it represents them. For instance, a learner may say that their keys represent their

optimism as they try to unlock life, or that their sneaker represents their dedication to physical fitness.

- *Porthole* – This low ropes element is a tire hung between two trees or posts. Participants must lift each other through the tire, with everyone starting on one side and ending on the other.
- *Rope Shapes* – Participants stand in a circle and hold a long piece of rope tied off in a loop. They then close their eyes. The facilitator proceeds to name a shape. Without looking, participants must create that shape in the rope.
- *Sharks and Minnows* – Participants line up on one side of a marked-off field. One or two people become the sharks, the rest are minnows. The minnows want to reach the other side of the ocean without being tagged by a shark. If they make it, they get to play again in the next round. If not, they become a sea anemone and they must stand where they were tagged. They cannot move their feet, but they can move their hands to try to tag other minnows, who (if tagged) then must freeze where they are and also become sea anemones.
- *Silent Counting* – In this frustrating activity, the group closes their eyes. Then, without speaking, planning, or assigning roles, participants must count up to the number that corresponds to the number of people in the group (e.g., if there are twelve playing, they must count to twelve). No one may repeat a number and all must participate.
- *Silly Orchestra* – The group stands or sits in a circle. One person starts making any noise in some sort of rhythm, e.g. “Woo! Woo!” or “Sh-sh-shhhh, sh-sh-shhhh...” Then the next person joins in making their own noise, and then the next. Eventually, each participant will be contributing their own sound. Once everyone is making noise, the first person stops making noise, then the second person, and so on until everyone is silent.
- *Speed Dating* – In this icebreaker, participants split into two equal groups. One group sits in a circle facing outward, and the other group sits in a circle around the first circle, facing in. Each

participant should now be facing another person. The facilitator asks a question, and each partner answers. After one to two minutes, one of the circles rotates, so that each person is facing someone new. The facilitator then asks a new question, and the process continues.

- *Spider Web* – In this activity, participants pass each other through holes in a rope “web.”
- *Team Wall* – The Team Wall is a flat wall approximately 12 feet tall. Participants help each other climb over the wall, without the use of ropes.
- *Trust activities* – This generic term refers to any activity in which participants generally rely on their peers to hold or catch their full weight. Examples include Group Trust Falls, Partner Trust Falls, and the Wind in the Willows.
- *Trust Falls, Group* – One participant falls backward from a height of 3-4 feet into the arms of the rest of the group.
- *Trust Falls, Partner* – The group divides into partners. While standing on the floor, one partner falls back into the other’s arms, then they switch roles.
- *Whale Watch* – This activity involves the entire team standing and balancing on a wobbly platform.
- *The Wind in the Willows* – In this activity, participants stand in a tight circle with one learner in the middle. Keeping a straight body, the person in the middle falls into the arms of his/her peers, and the group then proceeds to pass him/her around the group.
- *Wandering Bump Game* – In this icebreaker, participants wander around as a clump of people until the facilitator says “freeze!” Once that occurs, participants should find a partner standing near them. Then the facilitator will ask a question and each partner should answer. Once a minute or two has passed, everyone starts to wander again, until they once again freeze and find a new partner.

## Appendix F: Teaching Methods

While using the debriefing sessions to utilize teachable moments may be one of the best ways to integrate Jewish values with ropes course education, it is not the only way. Here are some other suggestions on how to integrate Jewish texts and values into a challenge course experience:

- Teach a text study. This can be on traditional texts (biblical, rabbinic) or modern texts (e.g. Anne Frank, Israel's Declaration of Independence, etc.). Texts can be entire passages or one verse.
- Use Jewish quotes and single verses to highlight your values.
- Laminate and carry pictures, quotes, texts, etc. with you as you move from element to element. Store them with other challenge course gear, and take them out when leading groups. Examples of such resources include copies of text studies, portraits of Jewish heroes, and a copy of the "Comfort Zones" handout from Lesson 1.
- Focus on one value over the course of the whole unit, target one value per activity, or cover a variety of values throughout the various activities.
- Tell a story. This can be an Adventure Narrative, an introduction to an element, or simply a story for its own sake. The story could highlight the value, or could set the stage for participants to come up with their own stories.
- Provide case studies in Jewish values for participants to explore.
- You could teach the value, ask about the value, or both.
- Invite learners to act out lived Jewish values.
- Typical ropes course facilitation focuses on one element at a time. However, you may choose to build toward a final activity, such as the challenging Team Wall, to synthesize previous learning.
- You can teach about the value prior to the activity (front-loading), during the activity, or afterward (in the debriefing session).
- You can also plan the whole experience, seize upon teachable moments, or both.

## Appendix G: Facilitating Low Ropes Courses in General

While challenge course training does not lie within the purview of this curriculum, I want to touch upon it briefly. The basic goal of low ropes education is to use experiential education to push both individuals and groups out of their comfort zones to help them grow and develop, fostering skills such as communication, teamwork, and self-esteem. Facilitators have two main roles: overseeing safety and ushering a particular group through activities based on their specific needs and characteristics. While certified instructors can easily teach the basics of safety and supervision, educating staff on not only the tools of facilitation but also how and when to implement them can be much more difficult.

Nevertheless, here is an overview of many ropes course programs and how to facilitate them. An ideal ropes course experience, whether it be a few hours or a few days, tends to move from somewhat carefree activities to more serious activities and finally to the ropes course itself. Most groups begin with ice-breakers, such as Mail Call and Beach Ball Questions, followed by fun games that are less about emphasizing particular values and more about getting group members accustomed to interacting with each other, such as Coffee Pot, Entourage, and Sharks and Minnows. In a sense, these are the warm-up activities. Following these fun games (though that is not to say the next activities are not fun!), groups move onto more challenging initiative games. These include activities such as Helium Hula Hoop, Human Knot, and Silent Counting. Finally, groups transition to low ropes elements, generally beginning with easier elements (such as Whale Watch) and, if they are mature enough, ending with difficult elements (such as Team Wall or Trust Falls). Additionally, some groups may move onto high ropes elements after this.

Three critical components accompany initiative games and low ropes facilitation. First is the "Adventure Narrative." In this, the facilitator constructs a story to help frame the elements. The narrative also helps stimulate participants' imaginations and foster creativity. The setting for many challenge courses is nature, but with a story, the participants can imaginatively travel anywhere. Here is

one way to introduce a series of activities, beginning with the element Whale Watch, which involves participants balancing on a wobbly, wooden platform:

“Okay kids. We’ve decided to leave the adventure course and go on a cruise on the Caribbean. Isn’t it lovely? We can see whales, seals, seagulls, icebergs....icebergs? Oh no! I don’t know why there’s an iceberg in the Caribbean, but we’ve hit it! The ship is going down! Being great people, we’ve all helped everyone else off the boat and now it’s just us left. But there’s only one life raft remaining! This is a special raft, and the only way it can leave the sinking ship is if we can all get on the middle without tipping it. Do you think we can do that?”

Then the facilitator introduces the rules and objective to Whale Watch.

The second major piece of facilitation is adjusting the activities to fit each group. If a group is particularly immature, they may spend more time playing games and less time on actual low ropes elements. If they are relatively mature, then perhaps they can handle some of the more challenging elements such as Team Wall or Trust Falls. If a group has difficulty solving problems, the facilitator may want to bring them to a more puzzling element such as Archimedes’ Bridge or Islands, while if they find themselves constantly arguing, they may go to an element that focuses on teamwork and communication, such as Whale Watch. Finally, as long as the group adheres to all safety procedures, a facilitator can adjust any element to fit their needs. For instance, if one particular learner constantly talks and leads the way, the facilitator might ask that individual to remain silent for the next activity, or tell that person that they are a chicken and can only make chicken noises. If a group needs a challenge, the facilitator can blindfold certain group members (as long as it is safe to do so). Facilitators can also make the rules tougher or easier. For example, for the Spider Web, in which participants must help each other pass through holes in a giant net, a facilitator can make the activity easier by saying participants can reuse any hole, or make it harder by saying that they cannot use any bottom holes. Personalization and customization options are endless.

The third critical piece of initiative games and low ropes facilitation is the debriefing session, the “debrief.” This, perhaps more than the activity itself, is where learning happens. In a debriefing session,



the participants (and facilitator) sit in an equal circle; no one should be behind anyone else, no one should be in the middle, and everyone should be able to see everyone else. The facilitator then uses a series of facilitation techniques to process the activity. The goal is to encourage the participants to speak; ideally, the facilitator will talk as little as possible. One common and crucial technique is to ask open-ended questions, such as “what happened,” “how did you feel,” “what did not work,” “what did work,” and so on. However, there are plenty of other facilitation skills that the facilitator can employ, such as:

- Using silence. Eventually, someone will speak up or answer your question. This gives participants time to process their thoughts, and may encourage shyer participants to articulate themselves.
- Calling out specific people. For instance, a facilitator might ask, “Who did you see as a leader in that last activity? Who was a follower?” This can further help to identify which participants to mute or blindfold in the next activity.
- Rose-Bud-Thorn. In this activity, participants explain something that went well in the last element (rose), something that did not go so well (thorn), and something they would like to work on (bud). This also works as a wrap-up for the entire program.
- Targeting specific skills and principles. For instance, one could ask, “What skills did you have to employ to get the job done?” One could also ask targeted questions, such as, “How was your communication in this activity,” or “In what ways did you use teamwork?”

Ultimately, the goal of the debrief is not to focus on the activity, but to apply the experience to the real world. The facilitator should ideally end the debriefing session by asking how learners can take what they learned with them beyond the ropes course, to their bunk, to their homes, to their schools, etc.

## Bibliography

### **Selected Resources for Facilitators, Educators, and Directors**

Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT). <<http://www.acctinfo.org/>>.

The ACCT creates and promotes the standards of safety and operations of ropes courses. This organization provides resources on how to safely develop, build, and operate challenge courses.

Cain, Jim, Ph.D. "In Defense of Adventure-Based Education and Active Learning Opportunities." *Teamwork & Teampay*. [www.teachmeteamwork.com](http://www.teachmeteamwork.com). 22 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.teachmeteamwork.com/teachmeteamwork/files/InDefenseOfAdventureBasedEducation.pdf>>.

This article presents an in-depth exploration of (secular) challenge course education. In it, the author describes a brief history of experiential education and ropes courses, guidance on seeking proper authorization to operate a ropes course, and a list of organizations and resources for more information. The author also explores some of the theory behind running an excellent adventure program.

Evertson, Eric G. "Ropes Course Facilitator Training Manual." *New Mexico Military Institute*. 22 Feb. 2016. <<https://www.nmmi.edu/academics/leadership/documents/NMMIYLCCRopesCourseTrainingManual-Level1Spring2014.pdf>>.

This resource serves as a training manual for a specific ropes course program. Nonetheless, it contains countless resources for other directors and facilitators wishing to develop or enhance a ropes course program. It includes "Skill Evaluation Tests" (S.E.T.s), goals for facilitators, ropes course philosophy, information on activities, and more. Anyone who uses this manual must remember that its authors created it for their unique program, with their standard and local operating procedures and priority goals in mind, and so others must adopt it to meet their own needs and requirements.

Project Adventure. <<http://www.project-adventure.org/>>.

Project Adventure has been one of the most influential organizations in the field of challenge course education since its beginnings, based on Outward Bound, in 1971. Project Adventure provides workshops and programming on topics ranging from bullying prevention to applying adventure concepts to physical education.

Key resources on Jewish values include the books by Susan Freeman, Louis Jacobs, Joseph Telushkin, and Barry Schwartz. See the bibliography, below, for more details.

While many Jewish texts can expand on Jewish values, I found the Torah to be especially useful for bringing Jewish texts to URJ summer camp participants. In particular, Eskenazi and Weiss's *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* and Plaut's *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* were helpful for applying modern commentary to this ancient text. See the bibliography, below, for more details.

### **Selected Annotated Bibliography**

Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.

This Torah commentary proved to be an invaluable resource for creating each sample lesson plan. The editors weave together traditional commentary, grammatical elucidation, and modern feminist writing to show just how texts can be relevant to modern readers of the Torah. This commentary also includes outlines, poetry, and essays to further enhance the understanding of the Bible. For this capstone, *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* provided material for the notes section of each lesson, the poem for Lesson 1, and egalitarian translations for Lesson 3. Although not the only Bible or commentary cited in this capstone, Eskenazi and Weiss' commentary served as by far the most versatile scriptural resource.

Freeman, Susan. *Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities*. Springfield, NJ: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 1999. Print.

Freeman's book served as a powerful resource on teaching Jewish values, which this capstone applies to adventure course settings. This resource book first explores the definition of *middot* (Jewish values), their history, and their practical application in daily life, all of which influenced this capstone's definition and application of Jewish values. The book then explores a series of specific *middot*, such as *anavah* (humility), *emet* (truthfulness), and *nedivut* (generosity). For each value, Freeman provides textual resources and sample activities that educators can use to teach these values. Finally, in the back of the book, Freeman provides long lists of *middot*.<sup>52</sup> Overall, Freeman's definition, lists, and sample activities helped shape the content of this capstone.

Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Values*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd., 1960. Print.

Although Jacobs wrote this book over fifty years ago, he nonetheless presents relevant teachings on Jewish values and how to understand them in general. Jacobs lists eleven distinct Jewish values, ranging from the study of Torah to the fear of heaven to holiness. He then explains what Jewish values are, focusing on two key points: that they hold a special emphasis in Jewish tradition and that they are relevant to our daily lives rather than simply existing as abstract ideas.<sup>53</sup> Jacobs' book ultimately helped shape this capstone's understanding of Jewish values by providing both examples and an analysis of the definition.

*Project COPE Manual*. Irving, TX: Boy Scouts of America, 2008. Print.

The *Project COPE Manual* reflects the teachings and safety standards of the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA's) adventure course program, Project COPE. While the BSA may ultimately have different priority goals than a URJ summer camp, both challenge course programs share a foundational understanding of what a ropes course is and what it aims to do, i.e. using physical group challenges to help individuals and teams grow. Project COPE emphasizes eight core principles, such as teamwork, trust, communication, and leadership, which are key to (secular) ropes course education. Project COPE served as my basis for understanding ropes course education and helped fuse together Jewish and adventure course education.

Sales, Amy L. and Leonard Saxe. *"How Goodly Are Thy Tents": Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2004.

---

<sup>52</sup> Freeman, pp. 355-356.

<sup>53</sup> Jacobs, pp. 7-8.

Sales' and Saxe's fundamental book on Jewish summer camps helped inform the rationale behind writing this capstone. The book presents a survey and analysis of Jewish summer camps from the early 2000s, ranging from Reform Jewish camps to Zionist camps to secular camps. Sales and Saxe explore key aspects of Jewish summer camp programming, including camp as both an educational and a social environment.<sup>54</sup> They also discuss how some Reform camps focus mainly on the social aspect rather than the educational aspect.<sup>55</sup> The knowledge gleaned from this book corresponds with my experiences at URJ summer camps. Furthermore, the key teaching that camp should be both educational and social aligns with ropes course education, which brings together learning through experiential and group education.

Schwartz, Barry L. *Jewish Heroes, Jewish Values: Living Mitzvot in Today's World*. West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, Inc., 1995. Print.

Although written as a quasi-text book for children, Schwartz's book on Jewish values ended up serving as an extremely useful resource for this capstone. Schwartz looks at various Jewish values such as *talmud Torah* (the study of Torah), *k'lal Yisrael* (Jewish peoplehood), and *tikvah* (hope), and he also offers his own analysis on the meaning of *mitzvot* (commandments) and values. Each chapter focuses in on one value, and connects them to Jewish heroes. This work influenced the creation of this capstone by broadening the criteria for Jewish content beyond biblical texts and into contemporary stories and modern history. It also provided sample activities, which further expanded the possibilities of the curriculum.

Zeldin, Michael. "Making the Magic in Reform Jewish Summer Camps." *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, ed. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2006.

Whereas Sales' and Saxe's article focused on Jewish summer camping in general, Michael Zeldin's article hones in on Reform Jewish camping specifically. Zeldin's main argument is that camp is "magical," a magic based on intentionality, charismatic people, identification with a group, and ritual.<sup>56</sup> He explores the history of Reform summer camping and how it is similar to, yet distinct from, other full-time Jewish educational experiences, mainly day schools.<sup>57</sup> He also explores the teachings of John Dewey and how experiential education applies to summer camp.<sup>58</sup> This work heavily influenced the rationale of this capstone, identifying both the strengths of Reform camps and also growing edges on which they could improve. The key takeaway is that Reform camps are a perfect opportunity for experiential, Jewish education, thus establishing a niche that adventure courses can fill.

## Complete Bibliography

"A Typical Day." *URJ Camp Harlam*. 19 Dec. 2015. Web.  
 <<http://harlam.urjcamp.org/camplife/typicalday/>>.

---

<sup>54</sup> Sales & Saxe, pp. 55-56.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

<sup>56</sup> Zeldin, p. 89.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. pp. 92-94.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. p. 98.

Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT). <<http://www.acctinfo.org/>>.

"Activities." *URJ Eisner Camp*. 19 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://eisner.urjyouth.org/summer/summer-at-eisner/activities/>>.

"Adventure Chug Programming Guide Sheet." *URJ Eisner Camp*. Union for Reform Judaism. Print.

Bazeley, Alyson. "Creating Mensches On and Off the Field: A 6 Points Sports Academy Curriculum." NYSOE Capstone, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Apr. 2012. Print.

Berlin, Adele and Marc Zvi Brettler, ed. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. Print.

Cain, Jim, Ph.D. "In Defense of Adventure-Based Education and Active Learning Opportunities." *Teamwork & Teamplay*. [www.teachmeteamwork.com](http://www.teachmeteamwork.com). 22 Feb. 2016. <<http://www.teachmeteamwork.com/teachmeteamwork/files/InDefenseOfAdventureBasedEducation.pdf>>.

Campbell, Gaye. *Jewish Ethics and Values*. New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1967. Print.

Dewey, John. *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier, 1938). Quoted in Zeldin, 98.

Elkins, Dov Peretz. *The Bible's Top 50 Ideas*. New York: Specialist Press International, 2005. Print.

Eskenazi, Dr. Tamara Cohn, and Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss, Ph.D., eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press, 2008. Print.

Evertson, Eric G. "Ropes Course Facilitator Training Manual." *New Mexico Military Institute*. 22 Feb. 2016. <<https://www.nmmi.edu/academics/leadership/documents/NMMIYLCCRopesCourseTrainingManual-Level1Spring2014.pdf>>.

Falk, Beverly. *Teaching the Way to Learn*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Foster, Chase and Rachel Heaps. Personal Interview. 9 Nov. 2015.

Freeman, Susan. *Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities*. Springfield, NJ: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 1999. Print.

Greenfield, Amy. "'In God's Image' – Betzelem Elohim." USY.org. 27 Mar. 2016. Web.

Herczeg, Rabbi Yisrael Isser Zvi. *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 1995. Print.

Ingall, Carol K. *Transmission & Transformation: A Jewish Perspective on Moral Education*. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1999. Print.

- Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Values*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell & Co. Ltd., 1960. Print.
- "Jewish Values." *JCC Chicago*. Web. 2 Dec. 2015. <<http://www.gojcc.org/jewish-life/jewish-values/>>.
- The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*. Nahum M. Sarna, commentator. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989. Print.
- Magida, Sarah. "Living 12 for 12: A Year-Round Curriculum Connecting Cabins and Classrooms." NYSOE Capstone, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Mar. 2015. Print.
- "Mission Statement." *URJ Eisner Camp*. Union for Reform Judaism. 21 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://eisnercamp.org/summer/>>.
- MJL Staff. "All of Israel Are Responsible for One Another." *My Jewish Learning*. 1 Mar. 2016. Web. <<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/all-of-israel-are-responsible-for-one-another/>>.
- "Newman Experience." *URJ Camp Newman*. Union for Reform Judaism. 21 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://campnewman.org/summer-camp/experience/>>.
- "The OSRUI Experience." *URJ Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute*. Union for Reform Judaism. 21 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://osrui.org/summer/>>.
- Plaut, W. Gunther, ed. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Revised edition. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005. Print.
- Project Adventure. <<http://www.project-adventure.org/>>.
- "Project COPE Director Instruction Session." National Camp School, Boy Scouts of America. Hawk Mountain Scout Reservation, 402 Blue Mountain Rd, Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972. 31 May 2008. Lecture.
- Project COPE Manual*. Irving, TX: Boy Scouts of America, 2008. Print.
- Rieser, Rabbi Louis. "A Reform answer." *Jewish Values Online*. 1 Mar. 2016. Web. <<http://www.jewishvaluesonline.org/200>>.
- Rosenak, Michael. "Education for Jewish Identification: Theoretical Guidelines." *Forum*. World Zionist Organization. Winter, 1978, #28-29.
- Sales, Amy L. and Leonard Saxe. *"How Goodly Are Thy Tents": Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2004.
- Schwartz, Barry L. *Jewish Heroes, Jewish Values: Living Mitzvot in Today's World*. West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, Inc., 1995. Print.
- Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (TNK)*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985. <BibleWorks, v.9.>.

Telushkin, Rabbi Joseph. *The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living*. New York: Bell Tower, 2000. Print.

"URJ Camps." *URJ Youth*. Union for Reform Judaism. 21 Dec. 2015. Web. <<http://urjyouth.org/camps/>>.

Wechter, Sharon L. "B'tzelem Elohim: 'In God's Image.'" *ReformJudaism.org* 14 Oct. 2006. 27 Mar. 2016. Web.

Zeldin, Michael. "Making the Magic in Reform Jewish Summer Camps." *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, ed. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2006.