

Congregation Or Ami

Teen Retreat Fall 2018

Program # 3: Blessing of Our Relationship with the World

Saturday, 7:30-8:45pm

Goals

- To demonstrate how intricately we are connected to the world
- To explore the relationship between the four elements (earth, fire, wind, water) and their creative/destructive powers
- To connect Judaism to the earth

Objectives (TSBAT:)

- Articulate their connection to each of the four elements
- Compare and contrast the creative and destructive aspect of each element
- Create a blessing exploring their connection to the elements

Locations:

- 3 rooms in Needleman (water, earth and air)
 - 1 table set up in each
 - Water room: Washing cup and basin, towel, blessing for hand washing
 - Water destruction pictures set up on one wall
 - Earth room: (needs to be easy access to outside)
 - Earth destruction pictures set up on one wall
 - Wind/air room: 40 balloons
 - Wind destruction pictures set up on one wall
- Dining hall (fire)
 - Table set up with chanukkiot, candles, shabbat candles in holder, birthday candles in something, lighter, picture of camp fire
 - Rest of the program materials, from the post-it notes to the end

Materials

- Appendix A: Pictures of water destruction
- Appendix B: Pictures of earth destruction
- Appendix C: Pictures of wind/air destruction
- 2 chanukkiot
- 18 candles
- Shabbat candles
- Shabbat candle holder
- Birthday candles

- Picture of camp fire
- Lighter
- Washing cup
- Large basin
- Towel
- Blessing for washing hands on an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper
- 40 balloons (regular balloons, any color)
- 3x3 Post it notes (3 pack)
- 10 Giant post-it notes
- Markers
- 50 pens/pencils
- Blessing formulas from Program 1, Blessings from program 1, Appendix B
- Keychains (1 for each pp)
- Permanent markers

Timeline

00-03 Settle In

03-06 Instructions

06-08 Split into groups

08-26 Explore the first 3 elements (5 minutes/element and 1 minute for transition)

26-36 Fire station

36-51 Creating Blessing

51-1:00 Keychains

1:00-1:10 Whole group discussion and Wrap up

00-03 Settle In

Participants will come into the room and settle in.

03-06 Instructions

Elana instructs: You are going to visit the four elements that make up our world: earth, wind, fire, and water. Each element is inherently Jewish. Each element has creative power - where it can add to our lives and make it better, and each element has destructive power - where it can detract from our lives. You will split into four groups and explore each of the rooms. In each room, look at what you see around you. Which part of the room speaks to you? Which part hurts your heart? What do you want to fix in that part of the world? As you prepare to leave each room, we ask you to take a post-it note and write one word that represents your thoughts on that space.

We will first explore the elements of earth, wind and water.

06-08 Split into groups

Split pps into three groups by numbering off, and direct group to each of the 3 rooms

08-26 Explore the 3 elements (5 minutes/element and 1 minute for transition)

Set up: 4 rooms, each set up with destruction from an element on one side, and creative/positive parts of an aspect on another.

Earth:

- Show pictures of earthquakes, of pollution, of litter, sounds of earthquakes
- Do a short grounding activity, grounding feet on the ground. Show that our jobs are to be shomrei adamah (keepers of the earth)

Wind/air:

- Destruction: pictures of hurricane force winds blowing things, of raging storms, of storms, air pollution, sounds of the wind whipping
- Have a fan blowing gently, balloons to blow up and let the air out of, instruct them to take deep breaths

Water:

- Destruction: pictures of tsunamis, flooding, mudslides, sounds of waves crashing
- Have clean drinking water, clear. Pictures of a mikveh (with an explanation), handwashing station and the blessing for washing hands

Fire (not to be demonstrated with negative images, due to recent fire):

- Destruction: Giant post-it notes with the questions: What did you see in the fires? What was painful to watch? What did you see that gave you hope? How do you feel now?
- Have chanukkiot lit and twinkling, shabbat candles glowing, birthday candles in a cupcake/muffin, pictures of a campfire

Once everyone has seen all three of the first stations, bring participants into a 4th room to do the fire station.

26-36 Fire station

(This room will be set up with the positive aspects of fire on a table, and the large post it notes set up around the room)

Say: we all know how destructive fire has been. We have seen the real live impact of that fire on our lives over the past few weeks. Each of you experienced the fire differently and each of you are impacted by the fire. We know how hard the destruction is.

Around the room, you will see big post-it notes with different questions. Go around and answer the questions with either a word, or a phrase. Feel free to read other teens answers - this is meant to help you share your own experience and see what others experienced. [Faculty: have pens available to the teens/post-it notes]

36-51 Creating Blessing

Once Pps are finished walking around the room, have them gather again in the middle. Then say: However, we know how much the community has come together to help and be with each other. In a group of 4-5 teens (I will split you up in a moment), you are going to share what you've seen and experienced, so that we can each see the impact of our community, so we can see how one person can touch a life, and many people create a community. And from that, your group will come up with 1-2 sentences together. These sentences will be combined to make a giant teen blessing of resilience.

[For facilitators: have each Pp go around the circle and share one or two sentences of their experience: the first sentence about what they experienced that was hard, and the second of what they experienced that demonstrated hope and resilience and what they experienced. As they share, write down key words. Once everyone has shared, tell your group that you will be writing two sentences: one about the hard part of the fires and what everyone experienced: the before part. And the second about the after part of the fire, where people came together and helped. Obviously, the experiences may not align. That is okay, but try to make sure that everyone's ideas are at least acknowledged.]

Share with the teens that although they are writing the blessings now, we will share them as a big group during Havdallah. Their blessings might be a little shorter than how they wrote them, because we are going to try to combine blessings if they say similar things.

51-1:00 Keychains

Once the blessings of resilience are written, gather participants as a big group. say: that we all have many ways to think of resilience. These blessings we wrote will be combined into a giant teen blessing of resilience which we will say for Havdallah.

We know that all four of these elements have an impact on us and our community. Each of us has been impacted by fire and elements in our world. In order to remember our blessings, because it is so easy to forget that we are connected to each other and can impact each other, we are going to make a keychain of blessing. We will give each of you a keychain and you get to write a word of blessing to remind yourself of the blessing. Decorate it however you want, so that you feel connected.

1:10-1:15 Wrap up

The facilitator will bring the teens back together and ask the following questions (as applicable, based on the prior activities) as a way to hone into the main point of this activity:

- Which room, if any, did you feel more drawn to/connected to?
- What are examples from Judaism (holidays, Torah stories, your own experiences) that connect you to one of the elements?
- Did anything in the rooms make you feel disconnected or put off by the element?
- What is our obligation, as Jews, to help fix our world from what you saw on the destruction side? What is our obligation to develop the creation side?
- How can you make a difference in any of the situations you saw today? How can you bring a little less destruction to the world?

Once these answers are ascertained, the facilitator will ask: what are some different ways you are now thinking of your relationship to the world? (*get answers*)

Then say: there are many ways in Judaism to be in relationship to the world. We are meant to be *shomrei adamah*, guardians of the earth. When things like these fires happen, we feel just how much we rely on the earth, but we also realize how hard it is to be in relationship. Our task now is to continue to see that relationship. Even though we saw destruction, we also wrote a blessing of resilience, of strength at this time. As we continue to work towards feeling resilient, our job is to remember to constantly try to be in relationship with the world, that the world needs us to help it, just as much as we want the world to be there to support us.

Appendix A: Water Destruction (each image on its own page)

Laptop with video of Hurricane: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kou0HBpX4A>

Appendix B: Earth Destruction (each image on its own page)

Laptop with video of earthquake: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnWYTOtHmjA> (Start 40 seconds in)

Appendix C: Wind Destruction

Video of wind storm/tornado: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xb7E7tENpDY>