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**BRIDGE TO ADULTHOOD:
An Emotional and Spiritual Support Group for
High School Seniors as They Transition to College**

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CHAPTER I: ISSUE ADDRESSED BY PROJECT

A. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

During my studies at the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion Doctor of Ministry Program, I realized that most of my work with Jewish teenagers had been focused on exploring with them and then instilling a sense of Jewish pride and belonging. I did this with the intention of securing the survival of the Jewish people and their continuity. Even though these elements were important and meaningful, they were concentrated in one area of Jewish education: formation and strengthening Jewish identity. What was missing was a further focus on nurturing the inner life of the individual within their family and the Jewish community context.

I agree with Ben-Lev's (2014) belief about that "Each child who enters our synagogue and takes part on our programming deserves to be given the opportunity to develop a strong sense of spirituality" (p. 58). Ben-Lev believes that the responsibility for this is shared by the adults the child encounters in his synagogue. The entire synagogue staff must reach out to families and teens. They do so by selling the unique and rare expounding on the unique needs of each person. Teens have special needs different for congregational adults. Any congregational school has the ability, indeed the responsibility, to care to the special needs of their teens by making Jewish educators, clergy and professions available as part of an educational program. As Ben-Lev says, "We have a unique opportunity to give teens a safe place to express their inner selves and reveal their unique *n'shamah* (soul). The synagogue can be a refuge for teens as they are accepted without judgment in an environment that helps nurture their spirit through professionals who know and care for them" (p. 58).

Young people, facing tough and challenging times, need to have guidance, spiritual and human sources of help in order to live with a feeling of well-being, competence, and confidence, and they need adults who will listen to them, understand and appreciate their perspective and then coach or use information or services in the interest of their own health (Hamburg, 1997). In addition, I believe religion can be a resource for positive youth development since it is associated with personal meaning, promoting moral behaviors and attitudes, and a concern for others. Religiously active youths report higher levels of coping and a more positive future orientation (Furrow & King, 2004). This helps them understand the role of the religion and community which offer routes to greater inner peace, hope and comfort.

I believe that there is constant interaction or interface between psychological and theological issues in any human life and therefore, it is important to discuss them. Since these matters are an ongoing part of the young people's lives going forward, talking about them and having them express their own feelings would help to reveal each one's unique idea about the purpose of their lives. As a result of my pastoral counseling studies at the Hebrew Union College Doctor of Ministry Program, guiding young adults on their Jewish spiritual journey became an integral component of my vision about my goals for Jewish education. My unique opportunity to influence lives by attending to this late adolescent population's deepest need - a space that provides them with choice and psychological support as well as spiritual connection - is how I view my role as clergy and an educator today.

In addition to my professional interest in this topic, I have a further personal interest, as my own daughter is a high school senior. She too is preparing to leave the nest and go to her next life

cycle – college. Especially throughout her senior year I tried to provide a “secure base” to my daughter, giving her opportunities to express her feelings in a safe environment where she was getting empathy, plus physical and emotional reassurance. My daughter told me that her anxiety, suffering and pain were diminished as a result of the emotional support I provided to her. She felt that she could rely and reach out to her family, to her Jewish community and her spirituality when needed. The base I gave my daughter corroborates John Bowlby (1988) who believes that parental gives a child the basis to be able to deal with whatever the child encounters throughout life (p. 124).

After seeing the impact of a “secure base” and its positive effect on my daughter, I wished that high school seniors of my temple also had supportive system so they could have a smooth transition into college. The knowledge that I gained from the experience with my daughter gave me confidence and even bigger desire to run the support group for the temple’s high school seniors. My role in the support group “has been likened to that of a mother who provides her child a secure base from which to explore” (Bowlby, p. 152).

I believe that the experience from the support group that I would run would be therapeutic and valuable especially because the group would offer an opportunity to: 1. Receive and offer support and feedback; 2. Improve interpersonal relationships and communication; 3. Experiment with new interpersonal behaviors; 4. Talk honestly and directly about feelings; 5. Gain insight and understanding into one’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors by looking at relationships patterns both inside and outside the group; 6. Gain understanding of other people’s thoughts,

feelings and behaviors; 7. Improve self-confidence, self-image, and self-esteem; 6. Undergo personal change inside the group with the expectations of carrying that learning over into one's outside life (Yalom, 2005).

Jacobs, Masson and Harvil (2012) state that, "in a support group, the leader should create a safe environment where members can share. Trust, commitment, and genuine caring of members for one another are important dynamics for this kind of group..." (p. 37). As a facilitator of the group, I would try to enable each member to listen to the others attentively and respond more personally to the concerns of others.

B. SPECIFIC NEEDS

During the past twelve years of serving my congregation, I have interacted with the graduates of the Hebrew High School as their Cantor and Director of Education. After demonstrating my concern and care for each of them, I believe that I have earned their trust and respect. My involvement in their religious education has created opportunities to assist and help them on their journey towards their emotional and spiritual well-being. When our graduates approached their final year of high school, I noticed their anxiety regarding the upcoming changes they have to face when they are about to leave home and go to college. They were troubled by clinical and theological issues when they faced ethical, moral and theological dilemmas at the beginning of this next step their lives.

As they have shared their feelings with me, I become aware that they shared much in common: struggling with their own sense of identity, exploring their own independence, facing pressure for social recognition, experiencing anxiety about making right choices, fearing separation from their families, fearing losing friends, accepting their own limitations, searching for love, learning about self and external validation, seeking justice and life meaning, and thinking about career choices.

In order to create an ongoing opportunity to draw upon spiritual sources of affirmation, cooperation and hope, I decided to form a support group which would assist our graduates through their journey. The group would do so by addressing concerns regarding their needs, help them to explore and build emotional and spiritual skills and capacities as well as validate, dignify, and honor them in their sacred task. This idea was approved and accepted by their parents and our temple leadership. This support group offering further spiritual guidance within the comfort of a caring community was seen as beneficial, not just to the lives of our students, but to our synagogue culture at large.

Our Hebrew High School only goes as far as a general discussion of issues surrounding the world. It never addresses deep and meaningful conversations about students' lives, what they experience at the present moment and how they cope with the difficulties they face. However, the environment of our school can also be viewed as offering amazing opportunities to connect our students with each other and to nurture an understanding of their personal spirituality. Allowing an opportunity for inquiry and promoting personal exploration provides space through which students can eventually connect to each other and our faith, and view spirituality as a

component of a “whole” person. These moments of real sharing are powerful moments needed to nurture a creation of a holy community.

C. RELEVANCE IN A WIDER CONTEXT

Temple Youth Programs, in general, are intended to encompass a friendly and continuous connection to Jewish identity and synagogue life, youth-oriented Jewish holiday celebrations, ongoing community service events, and an array of leadership opportunities. After researching the youth programs that are currently available, I noticed that none of them address the specific issue of adolescent transition to adulthood with a focus on Jewish community and spiritual awareness as a basis of ongoing emotional support. Conversations of meaningful introspection about the most important questions of self, God, the world and students’ spiritual experiences, were missing.

The only two available resources that seemed to address these issues were printed by Union for Reform Judaism Press: 1. *Resilience of the Soul: Developing Emotional and Spiritual Resilience in Adolescents and Their Families* (Address, Mencher, 2007) and 2. A curriculum consisting of six workshops for high school seniors and their parents called *Packing to College: Where Does Judaism Fit?* The first program was intended to help facilitate and guide discussions and programs within the Jewish community that sought to validate, dignify, and honor individuals and families who have had to deal with challenging and stressful emotions and situations. The other one covered practical matters such as how to develop a personal Jewish action plan. Both

programs were designed for students and their parents to work together in order to gain the tool to communicate with one another respectfully and openly, not for use in a group.

With all respect to this important matter - helping both parents and students through this difficult transition as well as connecting them to each other - I believe that seniors in high school deserve to have a private space where they can express their concerns. Rabbi Address in his *Resilience of the Soul* wrote: "We recommend that the congregation have meetings and parents together, but also provide an opportunity for adolescents to express themselves on these issues in a safe and judgment-free environment separate from their parents" (p. 4). This statement corroborates my belief regarding the importance of creating the support group. My belief is based on the psychoanalytical evidence which suggests that late adolescence is the period when teens experience separation from their parents (Anna Freud, 1966, Blos, 1962) and move towards friendships. The fact that they are going to college in a year and that they may experience something they do not want to discuss in front of their parents, suggests that this independent program may be quite helpful at this time of their lives. I believe that this new kind of resource, the BRIDGE TO ADULTHOOD, will further supports these young individuals and give them opportunities for personal development and spiritual growth.

Helping young people to discover ways of managing emotions and life stresses in more wholesome and life affirming ways is important. This group will not only provide spiritual and emotional support, which contributes to maturity and personal growth, but also will help them to continue a connection with their tradition and people. Students will be able to see the strength and power of a sacred and caring community that provides opportunities to learn from and be

strengthened by each other. This collective experience will allow the group to begin to address the issues from a nonjudgmental, non-pathological perspective, where having invaluable impact on our teens. It will enable them to expand their opportunity for a sense of connection with the temple and with one another. It will be a place of safety and transformation, a place where students' spiritual and religious development will be nurtured. As a result, it will make our community a stronger and a better place for everyone.

The opportunity for meaningful transformation that could lay the foundation for students to embark on a lifelong Jewish journey is a priority for me. There is a hope that in addition to personal growth of the participants, the BRIDGE TO ADULTHOOD PROJECT will continue to instill Reform Jewish values, foster further engagement in a array of Jewish learning and living opportunities such as Hillel, NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth), and Israeli experiences. I hope that this project will inspire a lasting connection to the Jewish people; encourage students to search for spiritual meaning; grapple with ultimate questions; reflect and assess essential Jewish beliefs; and strengthen their Jewish identity, connection to Judaism, Jewish community and Jewish life.

I believe that this project will allow participants to discover for themselves the many ways to encounter God, as a Jew and as a human at a time when their lives are in transition. It will encourage them to think deeply, view the world differently and respect the beliefs of those around them. It will show them that there is a place in the spectrum of Judaism for them, regardless of their observance, belief in God or connection to traditional views. I hope that this project would make participants stronger and prouder Jews whose connection to Judaism and the

Jewish community would give them a solid foundation during any time of transition during their entire life.

I agree with the many authors who believe in synagogue being the venue to support the needs of our teens by giving them a sense of connection with things greater than themselves. Address and Mencher (2007) say that “our congregations can and should become places where young people can discover new avenues for self-expression and self-soothing and for maintaining physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being” (p. 25). I have found that for the new generation of adolescents who are exposed to isolation due to the electronic communications with others, the need of the community that can be helpful and supportive at times of need is important especially.

According to King and Furrow (2004), “Religion not only seems protect adolescents from problem behavior, but it is also seems promote health-related outcomes and prosocial behavior. Students reporting a more salient sense of religious identity also reported having a clearer sense of personal meaning and more prosocial concerns” (p. 704). Garbarino notes that religion would seem an important antidote to the experience of meaninglessness; religion may serve as a buffer against risky behaviors for some troubled youths (1999). Markstrom (1999) reported that youth participating in religious communities report a sense of purpose and a philosophy in life, not found in those who without a religious community: “Indeed, youth participating in religious communities have been more likely to report a sense of purpose in their lives and a general life philosophy than those not in such environments” (p. 75). Lantieri (2001) supports this thought by saying that “By not welcoming the sacred... our schools run the risk of raising a whole

generation of young people who will be bereft of the wisdom and connectedness they need to leave a fully human life”.

CHAPTER II: PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE AND INFORM

A. RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES

Judaism provides a legacy of teaching and ritual that has proven to be both profound and practical. Since Jewish learning lies at the heart of our identity and it is our very essence, I believe that the most meaningful approach to dealing with many challenging issues students face is to base our discussions in the powerful truths and interpretations that are rooted in Jewish texts. This method will show how texts can be used to shed light on the struggles and challenges that are present within us. It will teach them to acknowledge their humanity, to embrace their strengths and accept their weaknesses, for they too are part of God’s blessing for us. Since each of us is made in the image of God, each of us has infinite value (Address & Mencher, 2007).

Jewish tradition emphasizes that life is a spiritual path and that spirituality is about searching for wholeness. Moses Maimonides, greater Jewish philosopher of the Medieval times, in introduction to his commentary on *Pirke Avot*, the Ethics of Fathers, wrote: “The purpose of the body is to maintain the soul; the purpose of the soul is to sustain the intellect; and the purpose of intellect is to know God” (*Shemonah Prakim*, The Eight Chapters on Ethics). This quote reflects my belief that there is no separation between religion and spirituality.

Jewish tradition also teaches that learning together is the highest form of Jewish traditional study since God is present during the study: “If two sit together and words of Torah are between them, the *Shechinah*, Divine Presence, rests between them” (Mishna, Pirkei Avot, 3.6). I believe that for teens opening the conversation about God, exploring feelings about God and having opportunity to voice the longing for the help of God and community can create possibilities of making connections and choosing to follow the spiritual journey in the future.

In his article *The State of Jewish Spiritual Education* Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman (2014) writes: “Spirituality is like Halacha, Jewish law, in that it’s a conceptual framework that permits us to perform certain operations upon the world. It is not any single thing, then, so much as it is the name we give to a set of life-enhancing judgments we wish to make and the ideas we might apply to reality in order to arrive at those judgments. Insofar as spiritual education is conceptual rather than experiential, it is the evocation of categories of thought with which to encounter bubbly springs, mountains, plants and imagination needed” (p. 17).

Rabbi Saul J. Berman (2007) supports this idea by saying in his *Perspectives on Jewish Education* that “We may not be able to directly cultivate the experience of God's presence in our classrooms, but we could shape them as a safe places in which people could talk about the experience of God, could engage in God talk, without embarrassment and without the fear of ridicule. We could certainly explore all texts, and all Jewish experiences which we provide in educational settings, from the perspective of what they reveal about human virtues which we aspire to achieve. And we could benefit from a more profound awareness that God desired not

only personal improvement, but the formation of an ideal society in which social justice is the religious foundation of the social order”.

One of the most important Jewish thinkers of the twentieth century Abraham Joshua Heschel (1966) in his book *God is Search of Man* wrote: “Religion is an answer to ultimate questions. The moment we become oblivious to ultimate questions, religion becomes irrelevant, and its crises sets in. The primary task of religious thinking is to rediscover the questions to which religion is an answer, to develop a degree of sensitivity to the ultimate questions which its ideas and acts are trying to answer” (p. 3). In Heschel’s opinion, religion has a purpose - to provide answers or at least attempts at answers, to eternal questions. Religious thinking is an intellectual endeavor out of the depths of reason. It is a source of cognitive insight into the ultimate issues of human existence. It is the tool that we employ to bridge the gap between the nature of the God theology, own ethics and our belief in relation to theology. Judaism is the answer to man’s questions of religion, and is the true source of understanding the self. In my opinion an exploration of these ultimate questions can fill people with the sense of spirituality which they are desperately searching.

In Genesis 12:1-2, Torah portion Lech L’chah, we read that God said to Avram: “Go forth from your land, your birthplace, your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. I will make of you great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and it shall be a blessing”. This Torah portion begins with a transformation in identity and status through a physical, geographical passage. God instructed Abram to leave his native land, his home, his parents, his values, and go to the land God shows him. Torah is emphasizing the difficult choices that have to

be made when Abraham is called upon by God to discover his true self, find his own identity. This Torah portion resonates with the high school seniors who are leaving their homes and facing the challenges of a new life in order to develop their maturity thought out this transition to adulthood. As Avram had a relationship with God that continued throughout his journey into independent life, there is a hope that the high school seniors will establish the same relationship ensuring God will be with them during their lives.

Rashi, the Jewish Biblical commentator of the Middle Ages, interpreted the call to leave the father's house as "Go for your own well-being and for your own good." This interpretation explains that leaving home where you feel comfortable and safe is a positive challenge which would improve one's life. Individuation and autonomy-striving were viewed by Rashi as an important and necessary change. Even though there is a tension between having faith in yourself and fear of change, change in your own life is an opportunity which can benefit the individual.

Rabbi Address (2008) in his book "Resilience of the Soul" supports this idea by saying that "God's presence and provision enables the Israelites to move forward, knowing they are never completely alone" (p. 47). Address also compares the story of the Israelite's wandering in the dessert to the adolescence development: "One way to read this narrative as a tale of developmental transition, the quintessential story of adolescence. The Israelites, having just left the time of dependence and security in Egypt, a period that can be imagined as childhood, spend many years wandering in the wilderness. The wilderness years are a time of confusion, growth, and repeated stumbling as the Israelites move forward a time full acceptance of responsibility

and beginning their rooted life on their own land in Israel, the much anticipated period of adulthood” (p. 45).

The strength of Jewish people had been always in the fundamental belief in the power of relationships and the power of individuals working with each other to create sacred communities.

Two examples below illustrate this belief:

1. In Torah portion “B’reishit”, Genesis 2:18, we read about the creation of human partnership about how God was concerned that “It is not good that the man be alone – I will make him a helpmate.” God proclaimed that human isolation was bad for the person. God understands the human need for love and involvement with people because we need to be loved and to be needed. This group would build upon the above mentioned strength of Jewish participants.

2. Rabbi Chayim of Tsanz used to tell the story of a man lost in the forest. He wandered for several days until he finally met another. He called out, “Brother, show me the way out of this forest.” The man replied, “Brother, I too am lost, I can only tell you this. The ways I have tried lead nowhere; they have only led me astray. Take my hand and let us search for the way together.” Rabbi Chayim would add, “So it is with us. Life is immense. Life often overwhelms us and when we go our separate ways, we may go astray. Let us at least join hands. Then we can look for the way together” (Chasidic Story). This story teaches us that by facing our fear together, we find God: God implants within us the strength to go on and helps us to restore our hope. Being a part of a community helps us to feel that we are not alone, and God’s actions are seen through the good of people. When adolescents work together to create an authentic community, they learn that they can meet any challenge with grace, love and power. Creating

sacred personal relationships is important so when we suffer from loneliness and loss of faith, we have someone who can be there for us, listen to us, validate us and comfort if it is necessary.

Judaism has always valued learning in groups. Talmud declares, "Two scholars learning together sharpen one another" (Ta'anit 7a). We learn from our tradition that Jewish subjects are not to be studied alone; you should always work with a partner. *Chevruta* - or "with a friend" - is a traditional Jewish study mode. In this way Judaism recognizes the social aspect of learning. Whether it is because you can correct each other's mistakes or talking out ideas seeking answers with others which brings greater clarity and creativity. While being together, adolescents learn to listen deeply and discover how it feels to be truly heard. As students reflect on the same experience or hear the other's stories, they develop a skill that leads to critical and creative thinking. They also develop empathy and compassion. It may help them to become more open to other experiences and to learn how to handle new situations in life.

B. CLINICAL PRINCIPLES

Blos (1962) states that "Late adolescence is a decisive turning point, and consequently is a time of crisis" (p. 129). He also believes that it is an individuation process of ego differentiation and period of consolidation (p. 192). He further states that the personality has a more unified and consistent quality due to the increasing capacity for abstract thought, for model and system building, and the tighter amalgamation of thought with action (p. 146). In other words, adolescents attain purposeful action, social integration, predictability, emotional consistence, and a stable sense of self-esteem, as well as increased ability to compromise and delay gratification.

Eric Erickson (1968) sees adolescence as a critical period of identity formation, in which individuals overcome uncertainty, become more self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and become more confident in their own unique qualities (p. 247).

Anna Freud (1966) states that: “The most remarkable phenomena in the life of adolescents are at bottom connected with their object relations... the young person tends to isolate himself; from this time on, he will live with the members of his family as though with strangers” (p. 166). Blos (1962) agrees with her stating that the view of the value of the parent decreases in the eye of the child. The child becomes arrogant and rebellious, defies rules and the parents authority” (p. 91).

According to Winnicott (1968), the individual is never independent of environment which plays an important role in emotional development of the individual. Winnicott (1956) believes that only in a facilitating holding environment that includes partnership with an empathetic caregiver is the child able to come into existence as a whole person. According to this theory, the emerging adult’s sense that he/she matters to others is validating and leads him/her to a healthy sense of self. Meeting his/her needs allows him/her to establish trust and perceive the world of relationships as safe to continue growing into adulthood. It is particularly relevant to developmental issues that arise for older children at a time when they must establish their own holding environments away from the family. Therefore, I would like to encourage my students to respect themselves and to incorporate other people’s goodness, respect and love for them. This will enable them to not to shy away from talking to people or to not to shy away from their community. The support group that they participate in at this time can become that community, or the religious community of the college that they are going to can become that helpful and supportive community that they need.

According to Zarrett & Eccles (2006) “Late adolescence and the period following, often referred to as emerging adulthood, have been noted as particularly important for setting the stage for continued development through the life span as individuals begin to make choices and engage in a variety of activities that are influential on the rest of their lives”. They summarize challenges of this period as: (1) shifts in relationship with parents from dependency to one that reflects the adolescence’s increasing maturity and assuming of responsibilities, (2) exploration of new roles (both social and sexual), (3) experiencing intimate partnerships, (4) identity formation at both the social and personal levels, (5) planning the future and taking the necessary steps to pursue these plans, and finally (6) acquiring the range of skills and values needed to make a successful transition into adulthood.

Jane Kroger (2006) supports the clinical findings that mid-adolescence, for most, is marked by a time of adjusting to and consolidating these transformations into a revised sense of identity. The mid-adolescent’s time and energy is now more often directed outward toward peer groups and negotiating places therein. They begin to think more abstractly, using some advanced reasoning strategies to consider more existential questions of values, morality, and self- meaning. Kosterman (2011) also discussed that the transition from adolescence to early adulthood is a challenging time for many young people. It is a time during which major choices are contemplated and decisions are made (Young, 2011). It can be understood as a turning point for some youth, in which individuals meet new challenges and make significant changes that dramatically alter future well-being (Eccles & Gootman, 2002).

“Numerous research findings show a strong relationship between an adolescent’s identity status or level of ego development and parental communication behaviors. Adolescents who have explored identity-defining options and have higher levels of ego development have parents who respectfully encourage autonomy within a supportive context” (Kroger, 2006, p.83).

In *Great Transitions: Preparing Adolescents for a New Century* (1996) concluding report of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, the authors noted: “Although there is no substitute for a deeply caring parent, young people can still thrive if some responsible person or group steps in to meet their developmental needs. To the extent that families and neighborhood resources are not sufficient, specially designed social supports offering family-like care and nurturing, practical services, and firm guidance may be crucial to steer a young person onto a constructive, life-affirming path”. According to Cohen and Wills (1985) social support has a beneficial effect on well-being. They state that a social network can provide regular positive experiences and socially rewarding roles in the community. This provides well-being, positive affect, a sense of predictability and stability of self-worth.

Life transition, such as moving away from home to college, creates valuable opportunities for personal growth and behavioral change. It is an important milestone that holds the potential for positive improvement while presents a range of academic, social and developmental challenges. Griswald (2008) Hart & Carlo (2005) and Conley (2014) all agree that the life transition of moving away from home to college is, although exciting, a time of uncertainty, stressful and frightening. In addition, Blos (1962) and Ericson (1968) note that this is an important developmental milestone that holds the potential for personal growth and behavioral change.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

A. THE APPROACH AND PROCEDURE

Through this study I am trying to find out what cares the participants of my support group, whether the sense of belonging to a spiritual community will be helpful to them with conflicts they deal with as they transition from dependence to independence in their lives. The purpose of this study is twofold. Just to support or refute the concept that belonging to a spiritual community helps to address conflict as college students transition from parental dependence to being independent. Secondly, to ascertain what six high school seniors who are leaving home and going to college following year deem beneficial in their psychological and spiritual development.

Senior high school participants were enrolled in this research with a view to investigating both the pressures and problems they experience in their lives and their spiritual awareness. The areas of focus during our meetings are to build spiritual and emotional resilience, encourage healthy behaviors, and emphasize the association between student relationships. In addition to all this, the purpose of this study is to ascertain what six high school seniors who are leaving home and going to college following year deem beneficial in their psychological and spiritual development.

Prior to the group meetings the students participated in individual forty-five minutes Preliminary Interviews which assessed a variety of demographic information including gender, age, psychological and family background, and participants' concerns (see Appendix II "Personal History Questionnaire"). Participants met for six sessions, each time for ninety minutes. The first

three sessions started with a questionnaire following up the discussion (see Appendix III, IV, and V). During the last session participants answered the same questionnaires used at the beginning. Individual forty-five minutes personal Exit-Interviews were then conducted. The Exit-Interviews were based on the assessment of the answers that were collected from the surveys which had been given twice. The group will then meet following winter break and summer break in order to find out how faith and the sense of community played in their lives. Further interview will be conducted when the participants come back from their first year of college.

B. METHODS

Six participants were American Jewish middle-class adolescents of Ashkenazi descent. All participants are ages 17 who live in the suburban area. The participants consisted of three male and three female, high school seniors. These teens have known each other for many years throughout public and religious school. At the start of the research, participants and their parents were given a consent form “Agreement to Participate in Research Study” (see Appendix I) containing background information, procedures, and information informing the participant of the confidentiality and voluntary nature of study.

Participants Background

Aaron is a white male. He is the fourth child (third male). He has high achievements in school and involvement in sports. He comes from a divorced family. Aaron earns money by helping his mother who has no college degree and runs a small business. Last summer Aaron left home for the first time and worked as an assistant at a Jewish camp. He had a girlfriend for one year with

no sexual involvement. He is inspired to go to college in order to be well off financially. All of his siblings are in college. Aaron was not close to his father in his early years of childhood since the marriage fell apart when Aaron was an infant. Aaron, together with his siblings, would spend a day with the father approximately four times a year. Last summer Aaron visited his father four times and worked for him once. Aaron has a stepfather who joined the family when Aaron was eight. Aaron has close relationship with his stepfather and even though he does not call him Dad, Aaron considers him as a part of the family and reports that he was the man who raised him.

Benjamin – white male from a wealthy Jewish family. He is the third child (second male). Benjamin is a third generation, public school student with very high academic achievements and involvement in sports. Benjamin has never left home and only attended summer programs at the local private college. He has never had a romantic relationship. His parents are second generation with college degrees. His mother once was very involved in our temple but due to different opinions with the leadership, left the board. Both of his older siblings graduated from colleges that were within driving distance from home.

Bernard – white male from an interfaith family; father is Jewish and mother is Christian. Bernard is the only child, third generation American. He is a public school student with high academic achievements and involvement in sports. He has never left home. His parents had marriage counselling in the past. Bernard reports a close relationship with his father and not with his mother. He has had a girlfriend for two years who has family issues. “Bernard took her under his wing” is the way his mom described her son’s relationship. Bernard is from another school district which is less affluent.

Samantha - white female, a public school student and a first child of four: three girls and one boy. She is a second generation of a wealthy Russian immigrant family. She used to dance and still plays tennis. Samantha has never left home, and during the summer worked as a lifeguard at the local summer camp. Samantha had her first relationship in 11th grade which lasted for couple of months. At the beginning of the 12th grade she started dating a new boyfriend who is also of Russian descent. Their relationship is still going on.

Jamie – white female, father is Jewish and mother converted before their marriage. Jamie is the only child. She is a public school student with very high grades. Jamie likes to sing. She has gone to sleepaway camp for several years where she worked as an assistant counselor for the past two years. When Jamie was young she was very close to her father. Her father had a strong influence in her family until he was convicted and incarcerated four years ago. As a result of this her parents divorced.

Victoria – white female and second child (second female). She is a public school student who is involved in school theatre and cheerleading. She spent some summers at Jewish camps. Victoria was born into a Russian immigrant family. Her parents came to the USA as married couple. Victoria had some crushes and a relationship during summer camp. Her older sister graduated from a local college.

Outline of Group Meetings

1st Session: Who Am I? (My Identity Questionnaire, Appendix III)

2nd Session: Does Being Jewish Have Anything to Do With Spirituality? (“Teen Survey”, Appendix IV)

3rd Session: My Belief (“The God Survey”, Appendix V; “God?” Appendix VI)

4th Session: My Relationships with My Parents in the Future

5th Session: Am I a Part of the Jewish Community?

6th Session: Conclusion: What is the Meaning of My life?

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

SUMMARY OF THE PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW

- a. All the participants were white American born. All attended public school. All report having good health and planned to go to college in the fall. Four participants had siblings and two participants were only children. Five participants were Jewish born and one participant was half Jewish and half Christian. All six participants reported that they were not currently in therapy.
- b. Four participants knew their families background. Two participants from the immigrant families knew a great deal, especially about the hardships in the old country and what the new country can offer. Two participants did not know much about their last two generations’ cultural background due to the early grandparents’ death or disconnection with their grandparents.
- c. All participants’ parents had good health. Five participants’ parents were married one time and one participant’s parents were married for the second time. Four participants’ parents had a college degree, one participant’s parents had a high school diploma, and one participant’s parents finished trade school. Five participants reported a closer relationship with their

mother than their father and one participant with his father. Five participants had the same religious beliefs as their parents and one participant did not.

- d. Four participants have dated in the past and three are currently dating. One participant reported that he never has had a relationship. One participant admitted to sexual involvement.
- e. All participants wanted to go to college. All participants had concerns related to college. Three participants made the choice of a specific college together with their parents, three student contributed by themselves. Only one participant out of six considered joining a Jewish group on campus. Only one participant “compromised her beliefs” by applying to Jesuit school.

Discussion Group 1: Who Am I? (My Identity Questionnaire, Appendix II).

Participants completed “My Identity Questionnaire” for 10 minutes.

The issue of confidentiality was raised in order to make everyone feel comfortable. The leader explained that all the names would be changed in the paper. Participants were told not to share their thoughts if they felt they did not want to.

Did any question spark anything? Would anyone like to talk about any question in particular?

Victoria: Yes, question #7. How do you estimate your openness to new experiences and readiness for change? The idea of going away is not scary but a little scary. Also, question #3. Do you believe in your family expectations? I remember when I got a 70 on a test and it was the highest grade in my class. I was so proud of myself. However, my parents were not happy with it. I realized that my parents had much higher expectations. I was upset about it.

Samantha: My parents are easy but when it comes to my grades they have higher expectations. I think it is because they are an immigrant family. They want better for their children.

Jamie: Your parents came to America where more opportunities are. They would say how lucky we are. My parents who are not immigrants would just yell at me...My mom has high expectations of me even outside the school, like not doing stupid things.

Victoria: When I have my children I think I would have high expectations. I remember my grandpa was telling me stories about the Holocaust and hardships just to survive. The whole goal is to be successful and not to struggle.

Aaron: My parents came to this country very young but I think the expectations depend on personality. Some people have high expectations and some do not. It depends on where they from. My parents' expectations are easy, just to do well and try my best.

Discussion of the text:

Before he died, Rabbi Zusya said: "In the world-to-come they will not ask me, 'Why were you not Moses?' They will ask me: 'Why were you not Zusya?'"

*Legend about Chassidic Rabbi Zusya of Hanipoli
(Died 1800)*

How do you understand what Rabbi Zusya was saying?

Who would be a modern equivalent to Moses from your own lives?

What things can you do to be yourself?

What is the message of his teaching?

All participants thought that "world-to-come" meant "in the future". The leader explained the meaning of the phrase. Participants agreed that it was important to be true to yourself and not to be fake or try to be somebody else, like Angelina Jolie or Beyonce.

Benjamin: Just try to be yourself and be the best you can be.

Victoria: It's like when you are trying to fit in something that it is not true to yourself. Probably you have some psychological issues so you don't know what to do with yourself, why you are here in this world...

Jamie: People like that lose their values. (Participants told some stories about kids at high school and college freshman who "lost her identity" by becoming "too popular" for boys on the campus.)

Bernard: Stop drinking, smoking and stop partying.

Take a minute and think about who you are. When you are ready, tell us. You may look back at the questionnaire you just filled.

Jamie: I am an opportunist and positivist. I work hard... I have a gray hair! In a junior year my hair in the back of my head became gray because of the stress. My mom said that it was sexy but I wanted to dye it. I left it the same. I guess I felt too lazy to dye it, the hair salon is across from my house!

Victoria said to Jamie that she shouldn't dye her hair. Victoria brought up a story about another child from camp with grey hair and how it was cool.

Victoria: Why did you bring up your grey hair in the first place?

Jamie: It was a part of me, hard working. You just keep going until you die someday. You keep waiting until tomorrow comes.

Victoria: It sounds so sad, it is really a terrible way of living.

Jamie: You know that it is going to pass and you will settle down with your family and kids. It's self-efficiency, like proving something to yourself and then you'll die.

Victoria: Such a sad way of life.

Jamie: At least you are not a fly who lives for a day...

Aaron: I am white male. I am also hard worker and I am kind, loving, compassionate, and intelligent.

Victoria: I am Jewish and I am American.

Benjamin: I am a nice person. I am funny. I am good at sports.

Samantha: I am hard working and motivated. All the hard things I achieved, I am proud of.

Victoria: Jamie said to wait till tomorrow and tomorrow, it is living with no purpose. We live 100 years for a reason.

Jamie: I guess I am a pessimist.

The questionnaire had questions # 12: What was your first spiritual experience? #13: How did you feel about that experience? And #14: Did you tell anyone about that experience? Why do you think these questions appeared in My Identity Questionnaire? Do these questions belong there?

Samantha: I think there is always God in the back of my mind but I think about God rarely, I did not experience anything.

Jamie: I feel it's not a question that teens identify with. In one of my classes, the teacher asked if you believe in God and no one raised their hands. It's for more philosophical and deeper thoughts thinking. It's more of an adult question to ask, when you are settled down and you have faith in something. "Being one with yourself" is spiritual, and believing in God is spiritual.

Victoria: We learn about evolution in biology so for us this is a period of questioning.

Participants tried to define what spirituality was. Participants had different ideas: Aaron suggested that religion meant belief and spirituality meant something vague, like a feeling.

Where does God come in?

In religion, everyone said. Benjamin said: “Religion is God; spirituality is connections to people you know, not to God”. Bernard felt that spiritual experience is when you feel God’s presence. Samantha said: “I thought spirituality was a part of religion and what someone believes. I thought it has to do one with the other. Maybe I didn’t have the right definition.” Aaron said: “Spirituality is not religion but believing in a higher power, something that is not in your control, when you are close to a higher power. Religion is rules and guidelines to follow. Religion is just God.”

Jamie: I was very devoted when I learned my Bat Mitzvah stuff. Now it’s kind of died out.

All participants agreed that during preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies they felt being religious.

Please read the quotes below and tell which one relates to you the most (it can be more than one quote).

1. Spirituality is where you and god meet – and what you do about it.

*Rabbi Lawrence Kushner
Jewish spirituality: A Brief Introduction for Christians*

2. Spirituality is essentially a way of responding to God, becoming conscious of God.

*Rabbi Jeffrey J. Weisblatt (d. 1995)
Six Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Look at Spirituality*

3. To seek God is to strive for the good; to find God is to do good.

*Leo Baeck
As quoted in Gates of Repentance*

Is being Jewish has anything to do with spirituality?

All participants came to the conclusion that you can be religious and spiritual but you don’t have to be religious to be spiritual. In other words, religion can include spirituality however; spirituality can be a separate thing from religion. Everyone agreed that questions #12, 13, and 14 do not belong and do belong in the questionnaire “My Identity” at the same time.

“There is not one single word in Hebrew that alone defines “spirituality”. In fact, in Judaism, “spirituality” is considered a part of a person that includes all aspects that are in our

questionnaire: the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social components that make up who we are as a whole... Since each person is uniquely created in God's image, a person's spirituality is unique to his or her own individual self." ("Packing for College" Curriculum, URJ).

How do you feel about this statement?

Participants felt that this statement was completely different from what they were saying earlier regarding spirituality. However, they agreed that it made sense. They talked about religion playing "an improving role for the human being and therefore for spirituality".

NOTE: Some participants were more responsive than the others. Female participants were gigglier and laughed a lot. Male participants were less talkative. Jamie and Victoria jumped in with the answers while others took more time to respond.

Discussion 2: My Life Experiences ("Teen Survey" Appendix IV).

At the beginning of the meeting participants were asked to answer the Teen Survey. Participants filled in answers for 10 minutes.

Was there anything that you found interesting?

Bernard: It was interesting to see the question #10. Would you like your parents to know more about the issues that concern teens? I think it is important to educate parents about involvement in their children's lives and issues that teens experience. When I took AP Psychology classes last year we spent a lot of time talking about this. We learned about the importance of having children live their lives and not shelter them from their experiences.

Does anything resonate with that in your own life with your parents?

Bernard: When I compare my parents to my friends' parents I see that my parents give me more freedom in making my own decisions and to manage my free time, even though they have their input. They are less controlling than the other parents. My friends could not even fill out the college applications by themselves.

All participants felt that their parents gave them freedom and everyone was able to complete college applications mostly by themselves, with some support from parents.

Session #2 had a lot of questions regarding talking with different people about situations when you are worried, angry, feeling guilty, frightened, confused, or even depressed. Why do you think talking to someone about these issues is important?

All participants agreed that talking was important, otherwise someone can make a bad decision, "blow up" or have a breakdown.

Jamie: I have a lot of breakdowns. But it's just me, crying from school and college. My counselor is helpful. I feel if I say it to my mother she would be crying with me.

Aaron and Victoria felt the same way about their parents who would be emotional about stresses that their children experience. Therefore, their parents would be their "last resort". They would talk to friends or try to solve problems by themselves. Benjamin would talk to his friends because his parents would make a big deal. Samantha felt that she would rather talk to her parents than her friends and that her parents would understand her better and accept whatever she was struggling with. Bernard said that his girlfriend was the person he would talk to. Everyone agreed that talking with someone would be helpful. All participants reported that they would not talk to a clergy.

Leader: Sessions #3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 deal with depression, suicidal ideas and problems like anorexia, bulimia, or frequent overeating or under eating. Why do you think these issues matter for our discussion?

Everyone agreed that these problems are specific in teenagers' lives: "Teenagers are stupid sometimes and use something to feel better". Participants talked about people in school who cut themselves and posted their pictures on Facebook or walked with their sleeves rolled up in order to show the sign: which represents cutting ("Semicolon project"). When participants heard their stories or saw people who cut themselves they can recognize who was genuine about their experience and felt proud of getting out, and who was trying to get attention by looking for people who would sympathize with them. Male participants thought that cutting was a "girl thing" since girls are more dramatic and pay attention to every detail in their lives. Male participants talked about their hardships in sports and felt that if girls would go through what they went thru, the girls would be less dramatic. Male participants said that the high school girls not really been through that much in their lives so cannot compare their experiences to other hardships. Male participants agreed that guys don't do it because they have a lack of emotions.

Does anything distract you from your regular life?

Victoria: I don't think anything really bugs me anymore because I don't have any outside commitments so I can focus on taking time on anything that I do after school or at home such as homework or if I need to do a project I can actually focus on it and do it to the best of my ability rather than rush through it.

Samantha: My boyfriend... (Samantha was laughing.)

Is it different when you have a boyfriend/girlfriend or don't have a boyfriend/girlfriend?

Jamie: I had a relationship during the summer. It was weird. You always have to be with him, and not with your family and friends. Not having a boyfriend is much more fun, you are not tied to anybody.

Bernard: So, it is a problem with the person, not with having a relationship. My girlfriend and I do everything together and we have fun.

Jamie: I guess if I really liked him I would spend more time together. So, it wasn't "good" relationship.

Samantha: I have a good relationship but I also feel like that it is kind of distraction from school work or even from friends. It's hard to see friends when you have a boyfriend.

Aaron: Yes, I agree. Sometimes it's distraction from friends.

What does sustain you in life?

Bernard: Everyone who experiences difficulties and pressures need to know that there are people who love them, and there are much worst situations than theirs.

Benjamin: When I feel down I talk to my friends, depending on a thing – to my parents.

All participants replied that when it's really bad having support from friends and parents help.

NOTE: Participants felt more relaxed than at the first group meeting. Male participants participated more.

Discussion 3: My Belief

*** Benjamin and Bernard did not come to this group meeting. The group leader talked to each boy by phone. ***

Participants answered the God Survey (Appendix V).

How do you define God?

Samantha: I am not really sure how to define it. It is something that you believe in, ask for help or hope. I do not have any image but I know that something exists.

Aaron: Something that you believe has an ultimate power in specific religion. When you follow a religion you are looking up to a God.

All participants felt it was difficult to describe God. Everyone agreed that God is someone who rules, the omnipotent.

Do you feel that there is purpose and design in the world?

Aaron felt that there is design in the world but no one knows what it is. All participants agreed.

Participants read a Hannah Szenes story from the Chapter 1 "God?" (Appendix VI).

1. Why would someone who was not religious write a poem about God?

Samantha: I don't think you have to be religious to do so. I think it is okay to write it because she had some faith. I have faith.

All participants agreed.

2. Can you be an atheist or an agnostic and still be a Jew?

Victoria: You can still be a Jew to a certain degree. Being Jewish does mean to think about God or moral values every second.

Samantha: You can be a Jew by celebrating holidays, be tied to your cultural background and at the same time not to believe in God.

Victoria: You can't celebrate holidays without thinking about God because they all tied to God!

Is it possible to believe in God if you can't prove God exists?

All participants agreed that it is possible. No one knew how to prove that God exists.

In 1944, Hannah Szenes parachuted into Yugoslavia. Soon after she was captured by the Nazis and thrown into prison. Before she was executed she was brutally tortured. While in prison, do you think she believed in God?

Samantha: Maybe as someone who was looking for hope that it would end and there would be a future. And if it was end for her she, probably, would not have any emotions about it.

All participants agreed that it was not a good question to ask teenagers who are occupied with the homework and other things in their lives. Aaron said that it was complicated question, like asking what your meaning in life is.

Participants got distracted by conversation about the teacher who gave insane amount of work to do, and their experiences with that teacher.

*** Benjamin answered questions on the phone. ***

1. She may have believed there is a God out there and maybe she just wasn't very observant.
2. I think you can be an atheist and a Jew because you may not believe in a God but you can still observe and take part in Jewish traditions such as a Seder and fasting for Yom Kippur.
3. Yes, one does not need proof of a God to believe in it. They could believe some things are the work of God such as a sickness even though there is no proof of a God being involved.
4. I think she must have been talking to or thinking about God because with that horrible of a situation there is nothing else for her to do other than talk to God.

Do you think every person should have a reason in life?

I think every person should have a reason in life otherwise you would not have any impact on someone.

Discussion 4: My Future relationship with My Parents**How do you see your relationship with your parents in five years?**

The group took a couple of minutes to reflect on the question. All four participants responded that they would have a good relationship with their parents in the future. Aaron and Benjamin said that their relationship would be the same. They would be happy to come home during the breaks.

Samantha was telling the group about how her father overprotected her at this time and she hoped that as she gets older, he would be less protective. As she talked more about her relationship with him, it showed that his “protection” was more as “controlling of her personal life”. Samantha was not happy about his actions regarding her privacy and relationship with her boyfriend. Since there was a disagreement between her and father regarding her choice of boyfriend, “every step she would take” was micromanaged by father. She said that her mother was more supportive and understanding of this matter.

Aaron and Bernard who had ongoing relationships said that their parents approved of their dating choices and therefore, participants had more freedom in spending time with their girlfriends and doing different things together. Aaron said that his girlfriend’s parents invited him to spend the winter vacation together. Bernard’s parents were willing to pay his girlfriend’s expenses so they go together on an exchange program.

Jamie felt that her relationship with her mother would be better in the future since she would grow up and be more tolerant than she is now: “I would appreciate her more because now I’m just a selfish teenager. I feel that my problems are more important than hers. When I go to college I would feel that there is no one with you so I would miss my home and my parent.”

Group continued discussion with the following questions.

What are the things you do to make your parents happy?

Benjamin: Spend time with family and do well in school.

Participants replied that different things like home chores: put my laundry away, when mom is sick to bring something from CVS.

What about yourself you think your parents are most proud of?

Benjamin: I think that I am a nice person and I like my family a lot.

Participants talked about how their parents are proud when they work hard and get good grades, being a good person and appreciative of them and others, being a “good kid”, helping others, babysit the younger siblings or help them with their homework, making right decisions that would make positive effects on others.

What are other roles your parents play besides giving you a shelter, providing food, money and other basic needs?

All females replied that their parents give them support, love and care. Benjamin replied that parents play the role of teachers in his life.

Did any of your parents let you down?

Benjamin: No, never.

Samantha: Yes, but they had a good intention. When they thought it was too dangerous to go somewhere late and I would be disappointed but they had a good reason for that; at that moment I would take it not well but then I understand.

All participants agreed.

Discussion 5: Do you see the Jewish community as a resource of support for you today?

Benjamin: If I need it... I don't know at this moment.

All participants replied that temple does not play any role in their lives these days.

Victoria: Jewish camps are the substitute for temples, and camps are the places where you feel connected to the Jewish community because you pray or talk about Judaism. You may not want to talk about Judaism but at some point you cannot fight it anymore so you become more receptive and realize that you can learn life lessons tied to Judaism. It helps and then you feel that you are more spiritual.

Aaron, who worked at a Jewish camp last year as assistant counselor, said: Not really.

Do you think it will be relevant to you next year in college?

Participants laughed and stopped talking.

Will you consider joining any Jewish organization on the campus?

Victoria said that her sister joined the Hillel and was very active there. Therefore she was looking to do the same at the college.

Benjamin: Yes, Jewish fraternity. My parents and I were looking at the percentage of Jewish students in colleges that I applied to. Even when I am in college I would like to have opportunity to be around Jewish people and Jewish traditions.

How will you spend Shabbat at the college?

Jamie: Reflecting (She was sarcastic.) Benjamin: I don't think I would go anywhere on Friday to celebrate Shabbat.

Victoria started singing a song "Today is Friday, Tonight's Shabbat" that she learned in Religious School. Jamie sang the song with her.

Aaron: I do not celebrate Shabbat now so I don't think that anything really would change. I probably would not think about it on Fridays. When my grandparents come we have a Shabbat dinner together, that's all that we do.

Samantha: I am not sure. My family light candles once in a while.

All participants agreed that if celebrating Shabbat is in the culture of your family, then you would celebrate it. The majority of the people would not spend Friday thinking of Shabbat.

Benjamin was the only one whose family lit candles and his mom baked challah every Friday.

How will you spend Jewish holidays while in college?

Benjamin: I would go on big Jewish holidays to Hillel or Jewish clubs. Victoria said that it would be the time when she would go to Hillel. Jamie and Aaron said that they would be focused on studies or they would come home.

Will the Jewish community or Temple be important to you in five years?

Everyone agreed that temple would be important when they get older and have families. They would go to temple on holidays and family celebrations.

Jamie: I would go to temple when I get older and when I am going to die soon. It sounds sad but it is true, then I will start praying. I want to go to heaven and know I am going to repent my sins.

Victoria: That's Jesus. What religion are you in? (Everyone started to laugh.)

Aaron replied that he was doing “Jewish things” because of his girlfriend who is active in Judaism. While in college he would rather take a rest from the college hard work than joining any group or Jewish organization.

Discussion 6: Conclusion/What is the Meaning of My Life?

As we conclude our group meetings does anything concern you at this time?

Samantha: Yes, waiting for the results about school admissions.

All participants responded that they were accepted to the “safety” schools or their second choice colleges and some even received scholarships. Victoria laughed: “When I got accepted in one of my safety schools I told my mom: I am not stupid”. Jamie was rejected from her top choice college and was upset that some other girls from high school, who were not qualified in her opinion, got into that school. She felt it was unfair.

Victoria suggested: “Getting upset about this is unnecessary because you got deferred from school that wasn’t even your top priority. You need to relax because if these people got there it does not make you their level or worse. It is how college works: sometimes they pick unqualified people for some reason. I know some kids got rejected from one good school and got to even better school.

Jamie: Just the fact that it was a possibility and I didn’t get in makes me upset.

Bernard: I was not rejected but deferred until March. I felt upset because it was my first choice school. I got over it. I decided to take SAT in January in order to show the result to that college. (Bernard said that he was going to work hard in case if college wants to see his grades for the second quarter.)

Aaron: I got into a good school but I am still waiting for more responses.

Benjamin: My friend is very smart and he did not get into his first choice. I did not get either. I was very upset about it but I am ok now.

Besides this particular matter where there any other situations in your life that made you feel something was unfair?

Aaron: When I wrestle and referees have “bad” calls and make decisions different than what I expected. These calls would defy whether or not I loose and sometimes it gives the other opponent a better chance of winning the whole competition. Overall these matches are for being

placed and I want to be a first place. It is annoying to have your coach fight for you and yet the referee can make an unfair call.

Victoria: My mother lost her brother who lived in Israel. He was helping some kid to get out of the whirlpool. The kid survived but my uncle who was nineteen did not. My grandma spent every day at his grave. We brought her here so she lives with us now.

When you feel that the world doesn't work in your favor, when it happens, how do you cope with that?

Victoria: I think that you have to move on by ignoring it and keep doing what you need to do. You still have other chances by applying to other schools.

How do you see yourself in the future?

Bernard: I want to be an entrepreneur. I want to open my own company. I feel that working for me is better than working for someone. Once you have a job you stop worrying or interested in doing things but if you have your own business your success will depend on how hard you will work. You will be the one who will benefit from your hard work.

Aaron: I am thinking about directing films.

Benjamin: I want to be a good person...an accountant because I like math and accounting is something that there is a job for.

Samantha: I want to do something with business. I am not sure at this moment.

Victoria wanted to have something to do with the fashion and TV industry.

Jamie said that she had many choices and would decide later in life.

Did you find our group meetings and discussions were helpful to you?

All agreed that saying out loud what they thought about spirituality was helpful in figuring out what it really was. Participants remembered that spirituality was a part of a human being, something that makes him/her a whole. Everyone agreed that talking about any hardships that teenagers are facing was helpful. Topics like what is going on with parents and school, anything that does not involve religion.

Would you recommend having this group next year?

Aaron: I do not think it applies to teens as much as it would to adults. You would need to have more experience in order to get into these questions so you can give specific examples. Things like spirituality... The other things about problems that teens experience applied to us.

Bernard: I am not sure if this program is necessary.

All participants reported that talking about philosophical issues would not be good for their age group. Programs for general interest would be better.

In college if someone would ask you about your identity, what would you tell them?

Benjamin: I probably would say I am Jewish. Victoria started singing “It’s good to be Jewish and I like it” a song that she learned in Religious school. Everyone laughed.

TABLE 1: MY IDENTITY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are the morals and values you have come from?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-response
Aaron	Love and understanding	Love, compassion, understanding
Benjamin	Family	A couple of ideas that were taught to me are telling the truth at all times and always give your best effort. Whether your best effort is amazing or results poorly, the most important thing is that you did your best.
Bernard	The ultimate goal in life is happiness.	Being successful helps in the future, to have a stress free life so you do not have to worry about yourself.
Samantha	Family	The idea that family is very important, respect for parents, education is important
Jamie	From family	Respect, responsibility, honesty, stewardship, inclusiveness, community, caring and diversity
Victoria	From family, school, culture and friends	Family, sometimes from outside environment
2. What do your family’s values stand for?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-response
Aaron	Loving and respecting each other	Love, compassion, honesty, doing a right thing
Benjamin	Jewish values, respect others, try as hard as you can, give your best	My family’s values stand for doing the right thing and being honest.
Bernard	Happiness is the ultimate goal.	Happiness
Samantha	Loving	Respect of others, loving
Jamie	Being respectful, being kind	Helping others and being selfless, modest and respectable
Victoria	What’s best for me and others	Judaism, Zionism, America, freedom,

		loyalty and morality
3. Do you believe in your family expectations?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Yes	Yes
Benjamin	Yes	Yes, I think that the expectations of my family are fair and good.
Bernard	Yes	Yes
Samantha	Yes	Yes, I believe I should strive toward their expectations because what they expect is usually what could be the best for me.
Jamie	Yes – do well in school, be the best person I can be, achieving goals	Yes – although they are very high and pressuring
Victoria	Yes – good grades and studying make life easier in the long run.	Yes, I understand where they come from.
4. How do you feel about expressing your opinion among family members?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-response
Aaron	I am comfortable expressing my opinion	Very comfortable
Benjamin	Feel good, strongly	I usually can express my opinion as freely as I want but sometimes I am discouraged to say what I truly think.
Bernard	My father is easygoing; it's hard to talk to my mother.	I don't discuss much with my mom
Samantha	I feel they listen and consider my opinion	I usually express my opinion to my family members. They want to hear my opinion most of the time.
Jamie	Not afraid	Sometimes I remain reserved
Victoria	It's easy – I am lucky to have an understanding family	I am fine to talk about anything
5. How do you feel about expressing your opinion among your friends?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	I am fine	Not a problem
Benjamin	Good	Just about all the time I feel fine saying whatever I believe on any topic.
Bernard	It's very easy.	Comfortable
Samantha	The same way I listen to them	I feel good. I think sometimes they want my opinions on certain matters.
Jamie	Very strong, not afraid.	I am very opinion about expressing my opinions with my friends.
Victoria	My opinion matters as much as theirs	We talk openly

	do.	
6. How do you make decisions in your life?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Based upon what I think is right	Based on intuition.
Benjamin	Think about what is best for myself	I make decisions in life by thinking of what would be best for both me and others around me.
Bernard	I think about them and consult my girlfriend.	I think before I decide anything
Samantha	Think about them a lot before	Most decisions I make on my own. In some situations I might consult one of my parents or a friend and ask for advice on my decision.
Jamie	My own self-conscience, my own thoughts	Based on rational reasoning and what my heart tells me.
Victoria	I usually try to use my conscience or ask advice from family and friends.	Think about them, ask my family and friends
7. How do you estimate your openness to new experiences and readiness for change?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	I am open, but change is difficult for everyone	More than willing to new experiences and changes
Benjamin	I am a little bit nervous – when it changes our of comfort zone. Move to new place, meet new people	For a lot of things, I am willing and excited to have a new experience, but am usually afraid of what will come with it and what I will do.
Bernard	I do not like nor dislike change. It's a part of life.	I want the change when it benefits me, when it is for better not for worse.
Samantha	Yes, I am open	I am usually very open to change and to new experiences.
Jamie	Open to change, accepting other's values	I believe I will be very open to change (especially with college approaching)
Victoria	As a senior transitioning into college I believe I can face any challenges.	I am open to new experiences
8. What was the most difficult thing you overcame this school year?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Writing my college essays, physically and emotionally because it's important.	Bringing up my grades and getting through most of wrestling so far.
Benjamin	Essays and applications	The most difficult thing I overcame so far was not getting into my top college initially.

Bernard	Applying to all of my schools.	Doing all my work at school and applying to colleges at the same time.
Samantha	It was the same as last year	Balancing school and applying to college with spending time with friends and family.
Jamie	Taking SAT tests and accepting your grades. What if you forget anything- for each college you need different things, so I am trying my best.	"The college process"
Victoria	Juggling school work and college applications	Writing college applications

9. Were you able you overcome that difficulty? If yes, how?

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	My siblings who went to college helped me with applying to schools and explained some things to know better	Yes, I had studied more and practiced harder in wrestling
Benjamin	I got help from mom and family: dad, brother and sister.	I was able to overcome that difficulty because I saw other kids who are very intelligent that also did not get in and I realized I still did well by getting into my next choice.
Bernard	By working hard	Yes, I worked hard
Samantha	LEFT OPEN	Yes, I had a lot of support from my family that helped me overcome it.
Jamie	Yes, by calming myself, talking to friends, guidance counselor not really with mom. Relaxing, playing music, taking a nap and thinking over, watching sunset from my room's window.	Yes – by doing my research, completing my applications and conducting interviews.
Victoria	Yes - with help of family and guidance from my school counselor I took the time to finish them all.	I did it mostly myself

10. Does your religion effect your decisions? If yes, give an example

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	Sometimes I will make the right and ethical decision based off religion because I feel guilty with God if I make the wrong decision, like being nice to people before a wrestling match will allow me to win my match.
Benjamin	Sometimes, it depends... Judaism teaches about respect and doing the right thing	My religion does affect my decisions I believe because Judaism instills the

		right values into me and teaches me what is right and what is wrong.
Bernard	No	No, it doesn't
Samantha	Not usually	It depends on what it is.
Jamie	I don't think so	Yes – when applying to certain schools
Victoria	Sometimes but rarely	Sometimes I think about it
11. Did you ever compromise your religious values for social or safety reasons? If yes, give an example		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	No
Benjamin	No	No
Bernard	No	No
Samantha	No	No
Jamie	I don't think so	Yes – I applied to a Jesuit school (has a fantastic program)
Victoria	No	No
12. What was your first spiritual experience?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	I believe in a higher power but really did not experience a connection to it.	When I met my girlfriend, putting my mind and soul into wrestling brought me to success
Benjamin	LEFT OPEN	I think my first really spiritual experience was my Bar Mitzvah.
Bernard	I have not had one.	I have not had one.
Samantha	Not really understand	I don't think I've had an experience like that.
Jamie	Not really	Bat Mitzvah
Victoria	During kayaking in the Delaware	During this vacation – kayaking in the middle of the ocean.
13. How did you feel about that experience?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	LEFT OPEN	I felt good, I knew that if I persisted and made the right choices that soon this girl would become my girlfriend.
Benjamin	LEFT OPEN	I was excited and enjoyed learning about what happened during my portion.
Bernard	LEFT OPEN	LEFT OPEN
Samantha	N/A	LEFT OPEN
Jamie	LEFT OPEN	Accomplished

Victoria	This experience was breathtaking	It made me feel as if I was tiny in the world.
14. Did you tell anyone about your experience? If yes, who?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-response
Aaron	LEFT OPEN	My parents and friends
Benjamin	LEFT OPEN	A lot of people knew about it because I invited them to the service and party.
Bernard	LEFT OPEN	LEFT OPEN
Samantha	N/A	LEFT OPEN
Jamie	LEFT OPEN	Yes – family/friends
Victoria	I had friends who've experienced it with me	My family
15. How do you feel about leaving the "womb" of high school and home?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Since it is a necessary change I will adjust to it eventually. When I went to summer camp this summer I knew if I don't like place I could come home. The idea of leaving is scary because of the different environment.	Comfortable, this is a necessary change and is good for me.
Benjamin	I am excited, being out on my own, having a freedom, and not having parents all the time. At the same time I am nervous: living on my own, working by myself and make sure that the work done, staying safe, making right choices and decisions because friends may do dangerous stuff. Other people can convince you. I know about it from news, online – students party and do stupid things.	I am very excited to go to college and be on my own and have a lot of freedom. At the same time, however, I am nervous because I have never been away from home for too long by myself.
Bernard	I am excited.	I am excited about it.
Samantha	Pretty good- I feel happy, safe. My family is around and talking about it makes it easier.	I am ready to leave and take new challenges because I will have the support from family and friends at home.
Jamie	Excited to do that (nerve-racking)	Both excited and nervous
Victoria	Excitement with worries	I am excited but have a nervous feeling, like butterflies kind of

TABLE 2: TEEN SURVEY (Adopted from the “Resilience of the Soul” by Rabbi Richard Address, PP. 88-91)

<p>1. Please rate on the scale of 1-5 of these issues as to how much of the subject of concern and source of pressure you think they are for you? Please use the following scale and circle your degree of concern.</p> <p>1 No concern 2 A little concern 3 Some concern 4 Considerable concern 5 Most concern</p>				
a. Academic achievement				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	Considerable Concern	4
Benjamin	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Bernard	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Samantha	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Jamie	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Victoria	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
b. Worries about disappointing your parents				
Participants	Pre-Response		Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Considerable concern	4	Most concern	5
Benjamin	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Bernard	Considerable concern	4	Some concern	3
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	Most concern	5	Some concern	3
c. Feeling like you are not a good person				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Benjamin	Considerable concern	4	Most concern	5

Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
d. Appearance: weight, complexion, height, puberty-related concerns				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	Some concern	3	Considerable concern	4
Bernard	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
e. Athletic achievement				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Benjamin	Considerable concern	4	Most concern	5
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Jamie	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Victoria	A little concern	2	No concern	1
f. Popularity with peers (fitting in, being accepted)				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	
Aaron	No concern	1	No concern	1
Benjamin	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Bernard	Considerable concern	4	Some concern	4
Samantha	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Jamie	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Victoria	Some concern	3	A little concern	2
g. Making appropriate choices about sexual involvement				

Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Jamie	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	Most concern	5	Most concern	5

h. Sexual orientation

Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Jamie	Some concern	3	A little concern	2
Victoria	No concern	1	No concern	1

i. Using drugs, including marijuana and alcohol

Participants	Pre-Response		Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	Some concern	3	A little concern	2
Samantha	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Jamie	Some concern	3	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	No concern	1	No concern	1

j. Pregnancy and related issues

Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Samantha	Some concern	3	Considerable concern	4

Jamie	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Victoria	No concern	1	No concern	1
k. Sexually transmitted diseases				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Some concern	3	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Some concern	3	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	No concern	1	No concern	1
l. Concerns about your health or survival				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	Considerable concern	4	Some concern	3
Samantha	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Jamie	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
m. Anxiety about the world situation				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Considerable concern	4	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	No concern	1	Some concern	3
Samantha	Some concern	3	Most concern	5
Jamie	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	A little concern	2	Some concern	3
n. Moodiness				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1

Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
o. Conflicts with parents and/or other family members				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	No concern	1
Benjamin	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	A little concern	2	Some concern	3
Victoria	A little concern	2	No concern	1
p. Worries about status				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	No concern	1
Bernard	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Samantha	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Jamie	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
q. Loneliness and feeling different				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Some concern	3	A little concern	2
Jamie	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	No concern	1	No concern	1

r. Health of family members				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	Some concern	3
Bernard	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
s. Public speaking and performance				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Most concern	5	Some concern	3
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Most concern	5	Considerable concern	4
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
t. Concerns about God				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	A little concern	2
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Some concern	3
Jamie	A little concern	2	No concern	1
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
u. Concerns about whether anyone is watching over us				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	A little concern	2
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1

Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	No concern	1	No concern	1
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
v. Worries about having what it takes to become independent				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	Some concern	3
Bernard	No concern	1	No concern	1
Samantha	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Jamie	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Victoria	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
w. Worries about losing friends				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Jamie	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
x. Worries about money				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Considerable concern	4	A little concern	2
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Samantha	Some concern	3	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Most concern	5	Most concern	5
Victoria	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
y. Difficulties in romantic relationships				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE

Aaron	Most concern	5	A little concern	2
Benjamin	No concern	1	No concern	1
Bernard	Considerable concern	4	Some concern	3
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Some concern	3	Some concern	3
Victoria	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
z. Worries about managing your temper				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	Some concern	3	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Considerable concern	4
Jamie	Some concern	3	Some concern	4
Victoria	Some concern	3	Some concern	4
aa. Parents' marital conflicts and/or divorce				
Participants	Pre-Response	SCALE	Post-Response	SCALE
Aaron	A little concern	2	No concern	1
Benjamin	A little concern	2	No concern	1
Bernard	A little concern	2	A little concern	2
Samantha	Considerable concern	4	Some concern	3
Jamie	No concern	1	No concern	1
Victoria	No concern	1	No concern	1
2. When you are worried, angry, feeling guilty, frightened, confused, or even depressed, which of the following might you or teens you know do to deal with these feelings? NEVER SOMETIMES FREQUENTLY				
a. Talk about the situation with friends				
Participants	Pre-Response		Post-Response	
Aaron	Frequently		Sometimes	
Benjamin	Frequently		Frequently	
Bernard	Frequently		Sometimes	

Samantha	Frequently	Frequently
Jamie	Sometimes	Sometimes
Victoria	Frequently	Frequently
b. Talk about the situation with a parent		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Frequently
Benjamin	Sometimes	Sometimes
Bernard	Sometimes	Rarely
Samantha	Never	Sometimes
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
c. Talk about situation with a family member other than a parent		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Sometimes
Benjamin	Sometimes	Sometimes
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
d. Talk about the situation with a member of clergy		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Sometimes	Never
e. Talk about the situation with a youth group leader or camp counselor		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response

Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Sometimes	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
f. Talk about the situation with a guidance counselor or teacher		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Sometimes	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	
Jamie	Never	Sometimes
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
g. Talk about the situation with a therapist		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
h. Pray		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Sometimes
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Sometimes	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Frequently	Sometimes

Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
i. Listen to music, sing		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Sometimes
Benjamin	Sometimes	Frequently
Bernard	Sometimes	Sometimes
Samantha	Frequently	Frequently
Jamie	Frequently	Frequently
Victoria	Frequently	Frequently
j. Read a book to distract yourself		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Sometimes	Sometimes
Victoria	Never	Never
k. Find information to manage your problem		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Frequently
Benjamin	Sometimes	Sometimes
Bernard	Frequently	Sometimes
Samantha	Frequently	Frequently
Jamie	Frequently	Frequently
Victoria	Frequently	Frequently
l. Meditate, do yoga		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Sometimes
Benjamin	Never	Never

Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
m. Exercise, play sports		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Frequently
Benjamin	Frequently	Frequently
Bernard	Sometimes	Sometimes
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
n. Go shopping		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Sometimes	Sometimes
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
o. Eat foods you enjoy in moderation		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Sometimes	Sometimes
Benjamin	Frequently	Sometimes
Bernard	Sometimes	Sometimes
Samantha	Frequently	Sometimes
Jamie	Sometimes	Sometimes
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
p. Drink alcohol		

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
q. Use drugs		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
r. Write down your feelings		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Sometimes	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Sometimes	Sometimes
Victoria	Never	Never
s. Go online to chat rooms		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never

Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
t. Watch TV or movies		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Frequently	Frequently
Benjamin	Sometimes	Sometimes
Bernard	Sometimes	Sometimes
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Sometimes	Sometimes
Victoria	Sometimes	Frequently
u. Go on an eating binge		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Sometimes	Never
Benjamin	Sometimes	Sometimes
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Frequently	Sometimes
Victoria	Never	Never
v. Cut, burn, or hurt yourself in some way		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
w. Deprive yourself of food		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never

Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
x. Deprive yourself of some favorite activity		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Sometimes	Never
Victoria	Never	Never
y. Do deep breathing exercises		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Sometimes	Sometimes
Benjamin	Sometimes	Sometimes
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Sometimes	Sometimes
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Sometimes	Sometimes
z. Shoplift or partake in other risky and/or illegal but sometimes thrilling behavior		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Never	Never
Benjamin	Never	Never
Bernard	Never	Never
Samantha	Never	Never
Jamie	Never	Never
Victoria	Never	Never

3. Please list/describe any other issues that you are concerned about and/or that you know concern other young people. If you need more space, you can continue on the back.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	LEFT OPEN	Many young people concern about college and social status
Benjamin	LEFT OPEN	LEFT OPEN
Bernard	College acceptance and my future life because I do not know what is coming and I want to have an extremely successful future.	College acceptance
Samantha	LEFT OPEN	None
Jamie	N/A	None
Victoria	None	None
4. Have you yourself ever felt sad and hopeless for more than a few days? Or do you know someone who has? Please elaborate.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No, and no one I've known has felt this way	No, but I had a friend who was sad for a while because he didn't have many friends.
Benjamin	No	No, if I ever felt sad or hopeless, I think of other things to make me feel better.
Bernard	I haven't. My friend lost all of her friends and wanted to kill herself. She tried two times.	My friend wanted to kill himself when his girlfriend cheated.
Samantha	I knew a few people that felt this way.	I don't but some people do feel this way.
Jamie	My friend – suffers from depression due to low confidence	My friend
Victoria	Yes, in ninth grade	Once I was but not anymore
5. Do you believe a few, some, many, or most kids get depressed?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Many	Many
Benjamin	Some	Some
Bernard	Many	Many
Samantha	Some	Some
Jamie	Many	Many

Victoria	Some	Some
6. Do you know anyone who has expressed suicidal ideas?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	No
Benjamin	No	No
Bernard	Yes	Yes
Samantha	Yes	Yes
Jamie	Yes	Yes
Victoria	Yes	Yes
7. Would you know what to do if you have concerns about your own depression or someone else's?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Yes	Yes
Benjamin	Yes	Yes
Bernard	Yes	Yes
Samantha	Yes	Yes
Jamie	Yes	Yes
Victoria	Yes	Yes
8. Have you yourself experienced or do you know the kids who have a problem related to eating like anorexia, bulimia, or frequent overeating or under eating? If yes, how many kids have such problems (in your opinion)		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	No
Benjamin	No	No
Bernard	Yes	Yes
Samantha	Yes	Yes
Jamie	Yes	Yes
Victoria	Yes	Yes
9. Circle what you have found to be the most helpful sources of information on the subject of teen problems like depression, eating disorders, peer pressure, etc.		

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Internet, TV Shows, Friends, Movies, Books, Parents	Internet, Movies, Parents
Benjamin	Internet, Friends, Parents	Internet, Friends, Movies
Bernard	Internet, Friends, School Programs, Movies	Internet, Friends, Movies, School Programs
Samantha	Parents	Parents, Friends
Jamie	Friends, Parents-sometimes, School Programs, Camp Programs	Friends, School Programs, Camp Programs
Victoria	Friends, Parents, School Programs, Camp Programs	Friends, School and Camp Programs

10. Would you like your parents to know more about the issues that concern teens?

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Yes	Yes
Benjamin	No	No
Bernard	Yes	Yes
Samantha	Yes	Yes
Jamie	Yes	Yes
Victoria	No	Yes

11. If you could give parents one message about how to help their kids, what would it be?

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Freedom will help them grow and learn.	Try to think like your kid and sympathize more.
Benjamin	Tell your kids to be themselves	There are times where it is good to talk to them and see if they are okay, but at the same time, they need to be left alone sometimes.
Bernard	Let kids fail. They need to experience failure, and not always think things will go well.	Let their kids be themselves and live their lives.
Samantha	Not to criticize the kids or tell them they did something “wrong”, figure out how to solve problems with them.	Try to understand them

Jamie	Don't just throw them in therapy – you have to take the first step!	Don't overreact when something bad happens
Victoria	Don't judge your kids when they need your help	Be there when they need you
12. Would you like to have opportunities in camp to discuss the pressures kids feel?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No it's not necessary	No
Benjamin	No	No, I don't attend camp
Bernard	No, I would not	No
Samantha	No	No
Jamie	Yes	Yes
Victoria	No, we have counselors that do one-on-one with kids if they are upset.	Yes, I guess. By now we are counselors and we are the ones who mentor children.
13. Would you like to have opportunities in camp to discover better ways of reducing stress and maintaining health and balance? Please elaborate.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	No, I feel as if camp is just an escape and the real world is different so these coping strategies will not be that effective.
Benjamin	No	I don't attend camp
Bernard	No, I would not	No
Samantha	Yes, I think that it is very important for teens like myself to learn how to deal with everyday stress.	Maybe
Jamie	Yes – there should be informational (fun) activities at least once a week.	Yes, it is imperative for kids/teens to know this.
Victoria	Yes	Yes
14. Would you like to have opportunities to discuss pressures and to discover of reducing stress in youth group? Please elaborate.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	This could be helpful because this is a secure group that kids can go to with comfortably sharing anything.
Benjamin	No	Yes, that could help kid get rid of stress and find ways to improve their feeling from kids with similar problems.

Bernard	No, I would not. I believe each person should explore their own techniques.	No
Samantha	I think most teens are aware of their stresses and pressures but most do not know how to handle them in a healthy way. So, I think these opportunities would be helpful.	Maybe
Jamie	Yes – I love helping others with their problems and coping with stress.	Yes, it is imperative for kids/teens to know this.
Victoria	Yes	Can't hurt
15. Would you like to have the clergy and educators in your home congregation offer opportunities for kids and parents to learn more about the pressures kids experience? Please elaborate.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	No	No, I feel as if the kids should be the one to educate because no one elaborate better that the children on the problems that THEY experience.
Benjamin	No	No, I don't think I would talk to clergy and educators about my personal problems.
Bernard	No	I would not. I feel that clergy and educators would be biased in regards to issues that kids face because they are looking at it from a "Don't do XYZ because you will regret it." I think kids need to know exactly what may happen, and learning through experience is superior to just having someone tell you what to do. Many kids may also feel rebellious and just do things to do against authority. If the clergy and educators can be truly unbiased, then I believe that they should offer opportunities for kids and parents to learn more about the pressures kids experience. My health teacher was truly unbiased, and I really enjoyed his class.
Samantha	Yes, I think it would be helpful for kids and parents; it would give them the ability to understand how to handle pressures when they are faced.	It's a good idea

Jamie	Yes – mainly so that those who believe in God can feel his presence in their lives when coping with stress.	Yes, it is imperative for kids/teens to know this.
Victoria	Yes	Yes
16. Other ways in which your Judaism helps you to manage the difficult choices and feelings that are part of your life? Please elaborate.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Yes, it helps clear things up I otherwise wouldn't know how to handle.	When faced with doing something good or bad, I think about my faith, and remember that the right thing to do will be paid forward later.
Benjamin	The values I have come from Judaism and my parents.	Yes, the values that I get from Judaism and the way I was raised due to Judaism helps me to make difficult choices.
Bernard	My Judaism never helps me manage my life. I am not religious, and I do not act thinking about what God would think is right. I act based on what is best for my situation, and what I personally think is right, even if others do not.	Judaism does not help me manage my life.
Samantha	I am not sure	It helps manage difficult choices because I believe someone is watching over us.
Jamie	It used to but not anymore	N/A
Victoria	Not really unless I'm on a bus or plane, or driving somewhere	It gives me hope sometimes
17. If you could give the staff at camp one message about teen pressures, what would that be?		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Teen pressures can come from anywhere, not just other teens.	Let them speak about their pressures and you will then be able to understand although you will never fully be able understand.
Benjamin	LEFT OPEN	The best way to forget about them is to keep busy doing other, fun activities.
Bernard	Teen pressure is not something that can be helped. It will always be experienced, and it helps teens develop their own personalities, recover from their own mistakes, and become responsible adults. There are isolated cases when an individual may be destroyed by teen pressure. If	Try to understand what these pressures come from

	there would be a little competition for anything then few people would push themselves past their limits to achieve great things.	
Samantha	To be understanding of the pressures	Try to understand
Jamie	Just listen	Don't let kids just focus on the bad things in the past – focus on the better things in the future.
Victoria	None	Don't focus on them too much

TABLE 3 “GOD SURVEY”

1. I WONDER ABOUT GOD a. A lot b. A little c. Rarely d. Never		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	A little	A lot
Benjamin	A little	Rarely
Bernard	A little	A little
Samantha	A little	A little
Jamie	A lot	A lot
Victoria	A little	A little
2. I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD a. Frequently b. Rarely c. Never		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Rarely	Frequently
Benjamin	Rarely	Rarely
Bernard	Frequently	Frequently
Samantha	Frequently	Rarely
Jamie	Frequently	Frequently

Victoria	A little	A little
3. I HAVE FELT CLOSE TO GOD... (You may select all that speak to you.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. when I have been at Shabbat services b. when I have been at a wedding c. when I have been at a baby naming d. when I have been at a bar/bat mitzvah e. when I have been at a funeral f. when I have experienced outstanding movies, plays, or concerts g. when I have experienced great art h. when I have read an outstanding book or poem i. when watching my child or grandchild at special moments j. when I have been outdoors and experienced nature's wonders k. I rarely feel close to God l. I never feel close to God 		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	At Shabbat, funeral. Experienced outstanding movies, plays or concerts, great art, have read outstanding poem, outdoors and experienced nature's wonders	Experienced great art, read an outstanding book or poem, have been outdoors and experienced nature's wonders, making the right choices and succeeding afterwards, like with wrestling.
Benjamin	At Shabbat, Bar/Bat Mitzvah	At Shabbat
Bernard	At a funeral. I rarely feel close to God	As a funeral
Samantha	At Shabbat Services, at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, at funeral, outdoors and experienced nature's wonders	Shabbat services, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, outdoors, funeral
Jamie	I rarely feel close to God. I have a lot of doubts on the concept of God as I progress through my adolescence.	I rarely fell close to God. I lost faith other the years after my Bat Mitzvah.
Victoria	At Shabbat, funeral. Experienced outstanding movies, plays or concerts, when I have been outdoors and experienced nature's wonders.	At Shabbat, funeral. Experienced outstanding movies, plays or concerts, when I have been outdoors and experienced nature's wonders. Before I go to a trip (car or plane) or in times of sickness I recite the Sh'mah.
4. I HAVE FELT DISTANT FROM GOD... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. when seeing the devastation caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornados b. when first experiencing the events of 9/11 and now remembering them years later c. when a close relative or friend has encountered illness or great personal setbacks d. when I have suffered my own setbacks e. when viewing the world in general 		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response

Aaron	Seeing devastation caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornados, first experiencing the events of 9/11, a close relative or friend encountered illness or great personal setbacks; I have suffered my own setbacks, viewing the world in general.	Seeing devastation caused by natural disasters, a close relative or friend encountered illness or great personal setbacks; I have suffered my own setbacks.
Benjamin	Viewing the world in general.	A close relative or friend encountered illness or great personal setbacks
Bernard	Viewing the world in general	Viewing the world in general
Samantha	Seeing devastation caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornados	Seeing devastation caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornados
Jamie	Viewing the world in general. Science has enlightened me.	Seeing devastation caused by natural disasters, first experiencing the events of 9/11, a close relative or friend encountered illness or great personal setbacks, I have suffered my own setbacks, viewing the world in general.
Victoria	A close relative or friend encountered illness or great personal setbacks; I have suffered my own setbacks.	A close relative or friend encountered illness or great personal setbacks
5. GOD CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN MANY WAYS. IDENTIFY YOUR BELIEFS. WRITE AGREE, DISAGREE, NOT SURE		
a. God is the creator of the universe		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
b. God rewards good people and punishes bad people		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Disagree	Not sure

Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Disagree	Disagree
c. The universe reveals evidence that God exists		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Disagree
Benjamin	Agree	Not sure
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
d. Science can explain everything. God is an unnecessary hypothesis.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Not sure	Disagree
Bernard	Disagree	Not sure
Samantha	Disagree	Disagree
Jamie	Agree	Agree
Victoria	Disagree	Disagree
e. Holocaust tells us that God's power is severely limited.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure
Benjamin	Disagree	Disagree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Agree	Not sure
Victoria	Agree	Agree
f. God could have prevented Holocaust.		

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Disagree
Benjamin	Disagree	Disagree
Bernard	Disagree	Disagree
Samantha	Not sure	Disagree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Disagree
g. Sometimes innocent people suffer without any reason.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Disagree	Agree
Jamie	Agree	Agree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
h. God would like to prevent some of the suffering, but can't.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Not sure
Benjamin	Not sure	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Not sure	Not sure
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
i. We would understand why some people suffer if we could see the complete story.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Agree
Benjamin	Not sure	Not sure
Bernard	Not sure	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree

Jamie	Agree	Agree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
j. Evil exists for a purpose, even if we don't grasp it.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Agree
Benjamin	Disagree	Agree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Not sure	Agree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
k. Evil is a human responsibility, not God's.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Agree	Agree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
6. HERE ARE SOME WAYS IN WHICH GOD MIGHT BE UNDERSTOOD. WRITE AGREE, DISAGREE, NOT SURE		
a. God is my conscience.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Disagree	Disagree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Disagree	Disagree
b. God works through my conscience.		

Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Disagree	Disagree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
c. God comforts.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
d. God is omnipotent.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Not sure
Bernard	Agree	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
e. God is limited.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure
Benjamin	Not sure	Agree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure

Jamie	Not sure	Not sure
Victoria	Disagree	Not sure
f. There is purpose and design in the world.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Agree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
g. It is impossible to understand God.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Not sure
Benjamin	Not sure	Disagree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
h. We are partners with God in the ongoing process of creation.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Not sure
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
i. There is one God.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure

Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Not sure	Not sure
Victoria	Agree	Agree
j. God is the power behind the laws of nature.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Disagree
Benjamin	Not sure	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
k. God is the order behind the laws of nature.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Disagree
Benjamin	Not sure	Not sure
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
l. God is a force working for good in the universe.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure

m. God is a presence in the universe supporting us to do our best.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Nor sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
n. God is hope.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Not sure
Bernard	Not sure	Disagree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
o. God is love.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Disagree
Bernard	Not sure	Disagree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
p. There is no God.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Disagree	Disagree
Benjamin	Disagree	Disagree
Bernard	Not sure/Disagree	Not sure/Disagree

Samantha	Disagree	Disagree
Jamie	Agree	Agree
Victoria	Disagree	Disagree
7. HERE ARE SOME FURTHER DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT GOD DOES. WRITE AGREE, DISAGREE, NOT SURE.		
a. God is merciful.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
b. God is just.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Not sure	Not sure/Agree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
c. God feeds the hungry.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Disagree
Benjamin	Disagree	Disagree
Bernard	Disagree	Disagree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure

d. God heals the sick.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Agree
Benjamin	Not sure	Disagree
Bernard	Disagree	Disagree
Samantha	Agree	Agree
Jamie	Disagree	Disagree
Victoria	Not sure	Not sure
e. Mercy is Godly.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Agree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
f. Justice is Godly.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Not sure	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Not sure
Bernard	Agree	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Agree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
g. Feeding the hungry is Godly.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Disagree	Disagree

Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Agree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
h. Healing the sick is Godly.		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	Agree	Not sure
Benjamin	Agree	Agree
Bernard	Disagree	Agree
Samantha	Not sure	Not sure
Jamie	Disagree	Agree
Victoria	Agree	Agree
8. IF GOD WAS ACCEPTING QUESTIONS, I WOULD WANT TO ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION(S)		
Participants	Pre-Response	Post-Response
Aaron	LEFT OPEN	Why do you never allow success for everything?
Benjamin	What do you control and what don't you control?	What in this world do you control and what is out of your control?
Bernard	Did you create other experiments just like us?	Are there any other versions of societies? Did you create other versions of life to see how everything plays out? Like in the Bible stories?
Samantha	I don't know	
Jamie	What do I do with my life right now?	Is there a purpose in life? If so, what is it?
Victoria	Why do you let the Holocaust and other crazy things like children die happen? Why is it that you don't help dispute what stupid problems families share?	Why don't you prove that you are One? It could stop many wars and terrors from happening.

POST-INTERVIEWS

Aaron

In the God Survey, question #5j: Evil exists for a purpose, even if we don't grasp it, both times you answered that you were agreed. Can you explain more?

Evil makes good. Without evil nothing will be considered good. Evil gives a point, a reference to compare to. If goodness was the only thing, people would not appreciate it. This belief did not come from anywhere, I just feel this way. Whenever I am experiencing bad, I know that later it will be better. Nothing is permanent in life.

In Teen Survey Question #7h: When you are worried, angry, feeling guilty, frightened, confused, or even depressed, which of the following might you or teens you know do to deal with these feelings? You changed your answer from never to sometimes.

Before I wrestle I need kind of inspiration. Something like: "Please God..." And if doesn't work I am thankful and try again to succeed. I don't get angry at God.

You answered that faith-be paid forward later...

If you do something good it will get back to you. This is just my belief in general and I do not know where it comes from. There are good things that happen in my life, like wrestling and my girlfriend, college acceptance. (Aaron talked about wrestling and colleges that he was accepted.)

In My Identity question #10 Does your religion affect your decisions you said that you "feel guilty with God"...

It started this year in wrestling. I feel that if I do everything right before I would succeed, even if I be nice to my opponents. It makes me feel comfortable and calms me down. It worked and I won a lot of times!

In God Survey question #8. If God was accepting questions, I would want to ask God the following question(s), you wrote "Why do you never allow success for everything?"

Not everything in life we do is going the way that we want it to be. Why can't God just make everything perfect regardless of if we learn from our mistakes or not.

Would you recommend having such group in the future?

Yes, I would recommend it would enable each person to look at things from the different point of view and potentially have their questions answered.

Benjamin

How do you estimate your openness to new things in life and changes?

I think not easy, sometimes uncomfortable, both, physically and emotionally. This discomfort started in the middle school.

I know you had a struggle with your physical growth when you were in middle school. Do you feel this discomfort started because of that?

I think it is in general, and what people think of me. I think most people think I am a nice person.

You never had a relationship...Where you looking for one?

Not really looking for it. It's not a priority of mine. I am more into school and sports.

You wrote that you were deferred from your first choice college. (We talked about what happened.) How did it make you feel?

I was upset but I wasn't angry at God. I think it is partially because there are people that are smarter than me.

You wanted to ask God about: What in this world do you control and what is out of your control?

I was interested about it because people often ask why God did this or that. And if a bad thing happened they ask Why and when something good happen they say: Thank you, God.

You wrote that you felt close to God on Shabbat.

I don't know, just because I go to temple. Temple represents for me the time when I am with my family, being together.

In God Survey you agreed that there is a purpose and design in the world, question 6f.

I think that God is everywhere and he is watching over us. I guess that is how I learned from Judaism, maybe religious school.

You changed your answer from Not Sure to Disagree in question #7d: God heals the sick. Why?

I don't think it has to do with God but modern medicine and technology.

You agreed that Evil Exists for a Purpose, question #5j.

I think that even there is no obvious reason but there is some reason that bad people exist in the world.

Last year you had mononucleosis... how did you feel through that time?

I felt that I was unlucky that I got sick. I did not enjoy it but eventually I got better. It could happen to anyone. I've seen worst happen to other people; my friend broke his arm and could not play basketball anymore.

During our second group discussion you said that if you had any issues you would talk to your friends first because parents would make a big deal.

I just feel I would not talk to them about things that are going on in school... like drugs, alcohol. I would make my own decisions or would have my friends' opinion.

Would you consider talking to clergy when there is no one to talk to?

No, probably not, because I feel more comfortable talking with my friends or cousins that are my age. Even though I like coming to temple.

Does anything concern you at this moment?

How will I do in college?

Were our discussions helpful to you?

I think so. They made me think differently about myself and what I do every day.

Would you recommend this group for next year?

I would, even if it is about God, life meaning or spirituality.

Bernard

In one of our discussion you mentioned that both your parents gave you freedom. Please tell me more.

I feel that as a result of that I am more successful.

Did both your parents give you freedom and do you feel both your parents value your decisions?

In their own ways... My dad is more suggestive while my mom would try to change my decision. She is very argumentative not about me but in general. I guess it is the way she was raised, the way she wants the things work out, her way. Since I was three-four years old I remember her being argumentative like that. When she told me stories about her earlier life she spoke about her dad raging on her mom and being verbally abusive to my mom also.

What is your way of talking to her?

I don't talk to her often, but when we talk I try not to argue with her because she may be much persistent and talk about pointless things. (Brandon gave me an example of how his mom can start an argument. While listening I thought that he was dismissive and not willing to converse with her.)

If the relationship with your mom was not this way, what would be different?

Less stress in her life, a little less in my life, and my dad's life, definitely.

Do they argue a lot?

Yes, I mean, my father really tries not to get into it so it's not getting worse with her and says okay. She is not really getting response back and it sets her off, like screaming to the wall. It frustrates her.

I see... So, how do you feel about what is going in your life now?

Bernard talked about colleges that he got in. He had not decided yet what college to go.

During our last group meeting you told us about becoming an entrepreneur. What kind of work do you want to do?

Something with technology, franchise... nothing specific at this time. I would like to go to the areas that are undeveloped. The ultimate goal is become corporate, like CEO of my own thing.

How is it when you have so much to work on and have a relationship?

It is fine because you have someone to work with. It is helpful and makes it more fun. Instead of just sitting and reading a book there is another person to talk to. She has high grades like me so we have a lot in common.

Does your religion effects your decisions?

No, like with colleges. I applied to some colleges that have a big Jewish population and some colleges that do not. My choice was strictly about their programs, what they had to offer.

You wrote that you never had a spiritual experience. What do you think the “spiritual experience” mean?

I think when you are really in need so you pray to God like “Please, please help me!” It is when you feel that God is there, like, above you or right with you by your side. You really feel that God is next to you.

It sounds like God has a physical representation...

I remember once when I was working on some stuff for my program to franchise, the information that I needed came up and I felt that God wanted me to do that. I felt good about it, kind of lucky. Like someone out there looking after you. I did not tell about that experience to anyone.

You wrote that you wonder a little about God... “A little” was a choice out of four: Never, Rarely, A little and A lot.

Sometimes I have questions, just randomly. It was interesting about the Holocaust. It was a controversial question. I felt that God does not have power to do everything.

There were more choices but you chose to answer that you felt close to God at the funeral. Why funeral?

My dad’s mom passed away last year and my grandpa was crying very hard, like very, very hard. He was talking to her saying that I would be there and we would be again together... I felt very sad. They were very close and she was his only friend, he did not have anyone else. He is still a wreck. He lives forty five minutes away. I do not see him or call him, my dad does.

You also wrote: “I felt distant from God “viewing the world in general”. Why this choice?

A lot of stuff that based on religion, like in the Middle East, French and God caused that, in some way because they believe in the same God...

5d. Science can explain everything... You wrote Not Sure. Why?

How did science get there? Almost like “chicken and egg” thing... Even in science how come everything works so perfectly in electricity, that type of thing...

You wrote that you know people who wanted to commit suicide...

Yes, I know two people. My friend wanted to kill himself when his girlfriend cheated on him. And another friend lost all of her friends.

Evil exists for a purpose... 5j

Yes, because it helps to balance the world. If the world was purely Godly, there would be minimal development. With competition between people the better things would come out, a better encouragement for things in the world.

How do you feel about leaving home?

I am very excited to live by myself and become an adult. You are responsible for buying your own food, doing laundry, cleaning your room and doing stuff that you are not responsible for at home. There are more fun things at college that you can do. I will have more time for doing activities that college offers. There so many opportunities that you can do at college.

Samantha

It seemed that college process was the most difficult thing that everyone overcame this year. How was it for you?

I did not hear back from any school yet. I am nervous about my first choice. I hear a lot that you have a better chance to get into a good school next year if it did not work at this time. All colleges are local, close by. I always wanted to live in the city and also be close to my home. I would live in the dormitory. (Samantha talked about the colleges she applied to.) It is my first time to live on my own but I feel that I am ready. My family is always close by so I am not worried a lot.

It seems that you are very close to your family and your parents. Is there anything you would like to suggest to your or other parents?

Try to understand what your children go through because there is a lot of stress on them at this moment.

In the God Survey you did not ask God any question. Do you have any question now?

I do not have a certain question. I just know that wherever I go to college it would be a good decision and I would be happy with it.

Was there anything difficult for you this year?

What school to go to and applying to it, things like with friends, family. I think I overcame all of them.

“Sometimes innocent people suffer without any reason”, question # 5g. At pre-response you wrote Disagree and post-response was Agree. Can you explain?

I think that sometimes there is a reason... I probably meant something in between of Disagree and Agree, I am not sure...

We talked about other responses that she wrote and each time she would change her answer or say that she was not sure or did not know how to explain.

During our group discussion about spirituality, it seemed that everyone had trouble defining it and after we talked about it, people understood it better. How was it for you?

I think that you can experience spirituality when you are a little bit older, when you grew up. Like maybe twenty or thirty, it depends on the person. I do not think that at our age you would know (Samantha wrote both times that she never had spiritual experience.)

How do you feel about our group meetings?

We got to know each other better and learned about each other that we all think differently even though we are going through the same things.

NOTE: It was hard to talk to Samantha. It would take some time for her to come up with an answer. It seemed that she did not understand some questions and it seemed she was not trying to do that. Samantha joined our school last year and I think, due to the new relationship, it was not easy to talk.

Victoria

How do you feel about our group meetings?

I liked our talk about Hanna Szenes's story. She lived during a scary time when she did not have anyone to turn to so she turned to God because she needed hope. I am not observant but I still think about God from time to time. I don't think about God every time I make a move but if I was Hannah I would think about God.

What is your belief?

I view God as a ray of hope when you cannot turn to anybody. And if it did not work you question God's power. In camp some kids would say "I am an atheist because I prayed to God every single day when my grandma was sick. And she died..."

How do still have hope in something that does not help you?

My friend lost his hope. He felt that God let him down... I understand and feel bad for my friend but you have to understand that God is not a miracle worker. I guess, since my friend was not educated about God, he felt this disappointment.

If you had a similar situation how would you react?

I would pray and if it worked out I would become more faithful. If it did not work out I would not lose any faith. You just move on...

If you had this situation to whom would you go?

I would not go to anybody or to my friends so we can talk about it. Hanna Szenes could go two ways: feeling that miracle would happen so she would pray so much or completely losing faith. Or maybe I would think about the future of my country and feel better knowing that there is an end to this disaster. She died for a reason.

Did our group discussions open new doors to thinking?

Not really... I did question things but I knew all this stuff.

Victoria talked about the "Defense" movie that she watched recently. She told me that the movie was about Holocaust and one of the ideas in the movie was sacrificing yourself for your country.

Victoria was interested in this type of movies because her grandpa was born during the World War II.

NOTE: Victoria was the most “theologically” equipped out of six participants. I assume it happened because of her personal background and Jewish summer camp attendance.

Jamie

When we had our group discussion you said that you try to pass your day because at the end we would die. What has shaped your idea on that statement?

It was self-actualization on my own, growing up with things around me shaped that idea.

Things like what?

Things like my school, peers, being a teenager. If you do poorly in class, you are waiting for taking another test.

I am not clear how this is connected to the death...

There is no specific example I can give you. I just feel a lot of teenagers feel the same way I feel. At the end of the day we are going to die and therefore you have to live your life to the fullest. That what I meant in this statement, I did not mean that in the depressive sense (Jackie giggled.)

What are the things in your life that make you happy?

Camp makes me happy; it is a safe and stable environment for me in general. (Jackie talked about her camp sessions and how she planned to go there every summer.) I love it so much because it is a good environment and helping kids to understand what they become. It is so much fun to work with kids.

Stable and safe... in what way?

Leaving home, moving to another house, or going to college are different then when I go back to camp. (We talked about Jackie’s college choice.) It is a big change for me.

How do you feel about this change?

I am definitely scared however; I know I will be okay because I am pretty adaptable. I am excited too.

Can you describe your relationship with God?

I used to enjoy going to temple and praying but I do not do it anymore. I grew up and stopped being faithful and stopped going to services. I always question if God exists or not. It is up in the air whether if I believe in God in the first place.

Why is it important to know if God exists or not?

I do not think it that important, because people go on with their lives and accomplish things without worrying about that. I do not ask God for anything, I just go my day. God is more like an emotional presence; it is helping me to go through the difficult times.

How does God help you during the difficult times?

Like with college, I was able to go through the whole process with perseverance and not to be upset about results if I did not like them. It was more indirect that everything will work out.

How did you get this idea?

It was formed on my own, throughout this year.

How did our meetings and surveys affect your thinking about God?

It definitely made me think and question more about God and everything. It was really connected and relatable to teenagers who do not know anything about God and religion. They question and try to figure out for themselves.

Would you recommend this kind of group for teenagers?

Yes. You did not give them answers; kids decided by themselves and kind of deduct from their own reasoning and decided by themselves what was right or wrong.

OUTCOMES

At the end of all the sessions it seemed that all the participants did undergo some shifts or changes. By looking at the answers provided for the Post-Responses, I can see that some of them are different from the Pre-Responses. Most participants expressed their views more openly and broadly in the Post-Responses.

1. I found out that the participants Benjamin and Bernard, who did not come to our third session, were more open in person. They were more closed in group and more observant. One-on-one counseling meetings worked better for them. Bernard explained that talking in group was not the place to talk about your personal problems. Benjamin and Samantha found difficulty talking and expressing their feelings even one-on-one. It was implied that they might not participate in this group next year.

2. Male participants felt that the issues teenagers experience should not be discussed at camp or with clergy. Only female participant answered yes for question #13 "Would you like to have

opportunities in camp to discover better ways of reducing stress and maintaining health and balance?” (Teen Survey)

3. Participants were confused and found it hard to identify religion, spirituality and the difference between these two. Only Benjamin felt that discussions about theological issues were important and expressed the need in having this kind of support group. According to Pelcovitz, Goldberg and Rosenberg (2010), “The development of religious and spiritual values in adolescence is inextricably intertwined with the general process of adolescent development. They express a newfound ability to think abstractly. This newfound skill is at times expressed by challenging religious actions and beliefs”.

4. Some participants felt that they never had spiritual experiences in their lives.

5. Some participants viewed God as a “miraculous dealer”.

6. Participants did not view synagogue as a place where they could find help and discover new ways to solve problems that they experience. It will be interesting how they feel about this when they come back from college.

7. Participants did not feel that talking to clergy about their problems is relevant.

8. Only two participants whose families are more involved with temple or with Jewish life identified themselves as Jews.

9. Participants never expressed that “praying” was helpful in times of crisis.

10. Female participants felt that it would be beneficial if there was an option of private counselling.

11. The results confirmed Kadushin, Kelner & Saxe (2001) statement that: “Young Jews lead complex lives as they navigate between childhood and adult life. There is overall decline in participation in Jewish activities from the time of becoming a bar or bat mitzvah through the high

school years. Judaism is important to them, but only as it fits into their lives and their goals in a secular, pluralistic society” (p. 73).

12. One female participant and one male participant had more to say about their Jewish experiences and were more open to continuing such activities. They were interested in the Israel experience programs and more likely to have their connection to Judaism enhanced by involvement in college Hillel programs.

13. Parents did not have a big influence on teens’ attitudes and behavior at this time, except for one female participant.

14. Two participants felt that parents or siblings directly influenced their decision to continue their Jewish education in college: one male and one female.

15. All participants reported that currently they don’t use substances, avoidance, or self-distracted behaviors. Three female participants answered that they go shopping “Sometimes” and three male participants answered “Never” (Teen Survey, Question #2: When you are worried, angry, feeling guilty, frightened, confused, or even depressed, which of the following might you or teens you know do to deal with these feelings? all of the participants answered that they “Never”: q. Used drugs, p. Alcohol, s. Go online to chat rooms, v. Cut, burn, or hurt yourself in some way, w. Deprive yourself of food, z. Shoplift or partake in other risky and/or illegal but sometimes thrilling behavior).

16. The transition to college seemed easier for the participants who had previous experiences away from home.

17. Friends played a very important role in the lives of these participants, sometimes more than their parents.

18. Some participants got lost or were confused by theological questions that were raised. They reported that it was hard for them to understand the meaning of the theological questions.

19. All male participants had a clear vision about their future. Female participants had an idea but still were not sure.

20. All participants were confused about being religious and observant: all reported that they were not religious. After clarification all reported that they were not observant.

21. All participants were emotionally healthy. I believe this was due to all participants having a “secure base”, a healthy home, where parents were always responsive to the needs of their children. Our parents represent God for us. For small child both mother and father are the first objects in his life who are protectors and whom he trusts. Trusting God can be compromised when they have a conflict with their parents so they start doubt their faith. John Bowlby (1988) suggests that a central feature of the concept of parenting is “the provision by both parents of a secure base from which a child or an adolescent can make sorties into the outside world and to which he can return knowing for sure that he will be welcomed when he gets there, nourished physically and emotionally, comforted if distressed, reassured if frightened. In essence this role is one of being available, ready to respond when called upon to encourage and perhaps assist, but to intervene actively only when clearly necessary. In these respects it is a role similar to that of the officer commanding a military base from which an expeditionary force sets out and to which it can retreat, should it meet with a setback. Much of the time the role of the base is a waiting one but it is none the less vital for that. For it is only when the officer commanding the expeditionary force is confident his base is secure that he dare press forward and take risks. No parent is going to provide a secure base for his growing child unless he has an intuitive understanding of and

respect for his child's attachment behavior and treats it as the intrinsic and valuable part of human nature I believe it to be” (p. 10).

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

As a result of the study, it was evident that further research questions need to be answered; in order to develop a further plan to facilitate spiritual, psychological and ethical development in adolescent should include the following:

- How to create an environment that promotes spiritual growth?
- How to help learners identify spiritual experience verse as Jewish religious experience?
- How to trigger a desire to search for a meaningful relationship with synagogue experience?
- An idea of what conceptual tools could be used to nurture spiritual development.
- A means for students to grow out of this kind of group experience in order to increase a sense of collective identity and to be themselves.
- A means to trigger students’ interest for thinking about ultimate questions.

I learned in this study that these teens do not reflect a strong belief in God but rather a strong feeling for friendship. For this group, creating possibilities of making deeper connections to the Jewish community plus choosing to follow a spiritual path, appear to be issues for the future and not for this transitional period. I would want my students to become Jewish searchers of meaning, to trigger their interest and encourage them to grapple with the larger life issues such as: the purpose of life; life and death; the relationship between visible and invisible, the

relationship to community, family, the relationship between man and woman, success and failure, hope and despair.

I realized that the interconnection between spirituality and religion must be emphasized and taught at a younger age. Nurturing spiritual development at the beginning of a child's early educational years would clarify what the religion is about. These courses would help children to develop their own sense of spirituality and relationship with God which will stimulate their curiosity about any philosophical and ethical questions such as, "What is the purpose of life?" or "What must be done in order for me to become a mensch, an honorable person?" As a result of this revelation, I decided to introduce a new curriculum to the 4th Graders of the Religious School called "Partners with God." I believe the course can step in and expose children to profound questions about God and prepare children for a personal sense of holiness and a life rooted in Jewish spirituality.

APPENDIX I

Consent Form for Participation in the Research Study

Researcher: Cantor Galina Makaveyev, Director of Education

Opinions of Senior Hebrew High School Students on Their Spiritual Growth

The goal of this study is to assess the spiritual quotient of students as they graduate from Hebrew High School and begin new portion of their life: prepare to leave their home and go to college.

You are invited to participate in a research study. Participation in the study is voluntary. You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate.

All the names used in the study will be changed. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. You will be welcome to know the outcome of this study upon completion and presentation of my doctoral dissertation.

Group participants will meet for eight sessions, one and a half hour each time. During each session you will discuss topics related to and focused on your upcoming new life. In addition,

there will be survey and other informal questionnaires. You may choose not to answer any question(s) that makes you uncomfortable.

In addition to the group meetings you will also be interviewed before and after the study individually by the researcher. There will not be audio or video recording of the group meetings or interviews. The researcher will take notes during these meetings.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researcher any study related questions
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled *The Opinions of Senior Hebrew High School Students on Their Spiritual Growth*

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Parents Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX II

PERSONAL HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Date: _____

Ethnic History

1. Are you American born? _____
2. What generation? _____
3. What country did your family come from?
4. How much do you know about last two generations cultural background?

Religious History

1. Do you have any differences between your religious beliefs and those of your parents?
Yes: _____ No: _____
2. How do you understand your mother's faith belief? _____

3. What is your parents' faith system? _____
4. Are they both Jewish? _____ Are they both Reform? _____ Are they observant?

5. Is your religious background come from Ashkenazi _____? Sephardi? _____

Psychological History

1. Have you ever received counselling or psychotherapy? _____
If so, list approximate dates: _____ Do you plan to continue therapist in college?

2. Do you presently take any medication? _____
If so, what dosages, how often and why? _____
3. Why did you feel the need in that? (optional) _____

Relationship History

1. Have you ever had a boyfriend or girlfriend? _____
2. Have you ever had a crush? _____
3. Have you ever been in a relationship? _____
If so, when and for how long: _____ Was it sexual? _____

Family Relationship History

1. How close are you with your mother? A lot: _____ Not much: _____
2. How close are you with your father? A lot: _____ Not much: _____
3. How close are with your siblings? A lot: _____ Not much: _____
4. When you were little which parent did you feel most close? _____ If not a parent
who was a trusted person in your life then and now? _____

Family History

1. Parents: Married: _____ Divorced: _____ Widowed: _____ Separated: _____
2. Is this the first marriage for your parents? Second? _____
3. Mother's Occupation: _____ Father's Occupation: _____
4. Mother's Education: _____ Father's Education: _____
5. Mother's Health: _____ Father's Health: _____
6. Siblings gender and age: _____
7. Where are you in the birth order? _____
8. Do you have a step or half brother, sister? _____
9. Do you have a step mother? Step father? _____

Pre-College History

1. Who mostly contributed to the choice of college? Parents: _____ Myself: _____
2. How far from home is your college? Another state: _____ Another coast: _____
3. Is there Jewish organization on the campus? Yes: _____ No: _____
If so, which? _____
4. What kind of social group would you join? _____
5. If there is a problem, should you decide to drop out of college or parents? _____
6. Which family member that you will miss the most? Why? _____
7. Which family member least? Why? _____

Concerns

1. What do you worry the most about going off to college? _____
2. Are there any concerns you have at this time?

3. Would you like to discuss them with anyone? _____
If yes, who would be that person? _____
4. Do you believe in the concept of trust? _____

MY NOTES: Encourage the student to tell the story that associated with the answer.

APPENDIX III

MY IDENTITY

Your name: _____ (Please take as much space as you need while answering the questions.)

1. What are the ideas and values you have come from? _____
2. What are your family values stand for? _____
3. Do you believe in your family expectations? _____
4. How do you feel about expressing your opinion among family members?

5. How do you feel about expressing your opinion among your friends?

6. How do you make decisions in your life? _____
7. How do you estimate your openness to new experiences and readiness for change?

8. What was the most difficult thing you overcame this school year?

9. Were you able to overcome that difficulty? If yes, how?

10. Does your religion effect your decisions? If yes, give an example

11. Did you ever compromise your spiritual values for social or safety reasons? If yes, give an example. _____

12. What was your first spiritual experience? If you had one, give an example.

13. How did you feel about that experience?

14. Did you tell anyone about your experience? If yes, who? Why that person?

15. How do you feel about leaving the "womb" of high school and home?

APPENDIX IV

TEEN SURVEY (Adopted from the "Resilience of the Soul" by Rabbi Richard Address)

This survey is designed to elicit your knowledge and personal experience with stress as a young person. Our goal is to gain a greater understanding of the stresses and pressures in the lives of teens and young adults so did clergy, educators can work together to be certain our Jewish communities respond to the real needs of the young people and families.

There was no need to identify yourself on this questionnaire. We are seeking to learn about the issues that you see is most pressing in the lives of young people. We want to know how young people seek to manage these issues and to ascertain what information and programs would be most helpful.

1. Please rate on the scale of 1-5 of these issues as to how much of the subject of concern and source of pressure you think they are for you? Please use the following scale and circle your degree of concern.

- 1 No concern
- 2 A little concern
- 3 Some concern
- 4 Considerable concern
- 5 Most concern

a. Academic achievement	1	2	3	4	5
b. Worries about disappointing your parents	1	2	3	4	5
c. Feeling like you are not a good person	1	2	3	4	5
d. Appearance: weight, complexion, height, puberty-related concerns	1	2	3	4	5
e. Athletic achievement	1	2	3	4	5
f. Popularity with peers (feet and in, being accepted)	1	2	3	4	5
g. Making appropriate choices about sexual involvement	1	2	3	4	5
h. Sexual orientation	1	2	3	4	5
i. Using drugs, including marijuana and alcohol	1	2	3	4	5
j. Pregnancy and related issues	1	2	3	4	5
k. Sexually transmitted diseases	1	2	3	4	5
l. Concerns about your health or survival	1	2	3	4	5
m. Anxiety about the world situation	1	2	3	4	5
n. Moodiness	1	2	3	4	5
o. Conflicts with parents and/or other family members	1	2	3	4	5
p. Worries about status	1	2	3	4	5
q. Loneliness and feeling different	1	2	3	4	5
r. Health of family members	1	2	3	4	5
s. Public speaking and performance	1	2	3	4	5

t. Concerns about God, religion	1	2	3	4	5
u. Concerns about whether anyone is watching over us	1	2	3	4	5
v. Worries about having what it takes to become independent	1	2	3	4	5
w. Worries about losing friends	1	2	3	4	5
x. Worries about money	1	2	3	4	5
y. Difficulties in romantic relationships	1	2	3	4	5
z. Worries about managing your temper	1	2	3	4	5
aa. Parents marital conflicts and /or divorce	1	2	3	4	5

2. When you are worried, angry, feeling guilty, frightened, confused, or even depressed, which of the following might you or teens you know to do deal with these feelings?

a. Talk about the situation with friends	Never Sometimes Frequently
b. Talk about the situation with the parent	Never Sometimes Frequently
c. Talk about the situation with a family member other than the parent	Never Sometimes Frequently Never Sometimes Frequently
d. Talk about the situation with the member of the clergy never sometimes frequently	Never Sometimes Frequently
e. Talk about the situation with a youth group leader or camp counselor	Never sometimes Frequently
f. Talk about the situation with the guidance counselor or teacher	Never Sometimes Frequently
g. Talk about the situation with the therapist	Never Sometimes Frequently
h. Pray	Never Sometimes Frequently
i. Listen to music, sing	Never Sometimes Frequently
j. Read the book to distract yourself	Never Sometimes Frequently
k. Find information to manage your problem	Never Sometimes Frequently

l. Meditate, do yoga	Never Sometimes Frequently
m. Exercise, play sports	Never Sometimes Frequently
n. Go shopping	Never Sometimes Frequently
o. Eat foods and enjoy in moderation	Never Sometimes Frequently
p. Drink alcohol	Never Sometimes Frequently
q. Use drugs	Never Sometimes Frequently
r. Write down your feelings	Never Sometimes Frequently
s. Go online to chat rooms	Never Sometimes Frequently
t. Watch TV or movies	Never Sometimes Frequently
u. Go on eating binge	Never Sometimes Frequently
v. Cut, burn, or hurt himself in someway	Never Sometimes Frequently
w. Deprive yourself of food	Never Sometimes Frequently
x. Deprive yourself of some favorite activity	Never Sometimes Frequently
w. Do deep breathing exercises	Never Sometimes Frequently
z. Shoplift or partake in other rescan and/or illegal but sometimes thrilling behavior	Never Sometimes Frequently

3. Please list/describe any other issues that you are concerned about and/or that you know concern other young people. If you need more space, you can continue on the back.

4. Have you yourself ever felt sad and hopeless for more than a few days? Or do you know someone who has? Please elaborate. _____

5. Do you believe a few, some, many, or most kids get depressed? Few Some Many Most

6. Do you know anyone who has expressed suicidal ideas? Yes No

7. Would you know what to do if you have concerns about your own depression or someone

else's?

Yes No

8. Have you yourself experienced or do you know the kids who have a problem related to eating like anorexia, bulimia, or frequent overeating or under eating? Yes No

9. Circle what you have found to be the most helpful sources of information on the subject of teen problems like depression, eating disorders, peer pressure, etc.

Internet TV Shows Friends Movies Books Parents

School Programs Camp Programs Synagogue Programs

10. Would you like your parents to know more about the issues that concern teens? Yes No

11. If you could give parents one message about how to help their kids, what would it be?

12. Would you like to have opportunities in camp to discuss the pressures kids feel? Yes No

13. Would you like to have opportunities is in camp to discover better ways of reducing stress and maintaining health and balance? Please elaborate.

14. Would you like to have opportunities to discuss pressures and to discover of reducing stress in youth group? Please elaborate.

15. Would you like to have the clergy and educators in your home congregation offer opportunities for kids and parents to learn more about the pressures kids experience? Please elaborate.

16. Other ways in which your Judaism helps you to manage the difficult choices and feelings that are part of your life? Please elaborate.

17. If you could give the staff at camp one message about teen pressures, what would that be?

APPENDIX V

THE GOD SURVEY

Adapted from a survey created by Rabbi Mark Shapiro of Sinai Temple, Springfield, MA.

1. I wonder about God

- a. A lot
- b. A little
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

Other - If you wish, you are welcome to elaborate here on your choice.

2. I have questions about God

- a. Frequently
- b. Rarely
- c. Never

3. I have felt close to God... (You may select all that speak to you.)

- m. when I have been at Shabbat services
- n. when I have been at a wedding
- o. when I have been at a baby naming
- p. when I have been at a bar/bat mitzvah
- q. when I have been at a funeral
- r. when I have experienced outstanding movies, plays, or concerts
- s. when I have experienced great art
- t. when I have read an outstanding book or poem
- u. when I have been outdoors and experienced nature's wonders
- v. I rarely feel close to God
- w. I never feel close to God

Other - You may share another experience that has made you feel close to God or, if you wish, please elaborate on any of the choices you made above.

4. I have felt distant from God... (You may select all that speak to you.)

- f. when seeing the devastation caused by natural disasters such as earthquakes and tornados
- g. when first experiencing the events of 9/11 and now remembering them years later
- h. when a close relative or friend has encountered illness or great personal setbacks
- i. when I have suffered my own setbacks
- j. when viewing the world in general

Other - You may share another experience that has made you feel distant from God or, if you wish, please elaborate on any of the choices you made above.

5. God can be understood in many ways by different people. Even the same person may have differing beliefs about God. Here is an opportunity to identify some of your beliefs. Write A (Agree), D (Disagree), N (Not Sure).

- a. God is the creator of the universe.
- b. God rewards good people and punishes bad people.
- c. The universe reveals evidence that God exists.
- d. Science can explain everything. God is an unnecessary hypothesis.
- e. Holocaust tells us that God's power is severely limited.
- f. God could have prevented Holocaust.
- g. Sometimes innocent people suffer without any reason.
- h. God would like to prevent some of the suffering, but can't.
- i. We would understand why some people suffer if we could see the complete story.
- j. Evil exists for a purpose, even if we don't grasp it.
- k. Evil is a human responsibility, not God's.

6. Here are some more ways in which God might be understood. Write A (Agree), D (Disagree), N (Not Sure).

- f. God is my conscience.
- g. God works through my conscience.
- h. God comforts.
- i. God is omnipotent.
- j. God is limited.
- k. There is purpose and design in the world.
- l. It is impossible to understand God.
- m. We are partners with God in the ongoing process of creation.
- n. There is one God.
- o. God is the power behind the laws of nature.
- p. God is the order behind the laws of nature.

- q. God is a force working for good in the universe.
- r. God is a presence in the universe supporting us to do our best.
- s. God is hope.
- t. God is love.
- u. There is no God.

7. Here are some further descriptions of what God does. Write A (Agree), D (Disagree), N (Not Sure).

- a. God is merciful.
- b. God is just.
- c. God feeds the hungry.
- d. God heals the sick.
- e. Mercy is Godly.
- f. Justice is Godly.
- g. Feeding the hungry is Godly.
- h. Healing the sick is Godly.

8. If God was accepting questions, I would want to ask God the following question(s).

APPENDIX VI

GOD?

Edited by Josh Barkin, Torah Aura Productions

You've probably heard of Hannaz Szenes. She was a Hungarian Jew who moved to Eretz Israel just before Holocaust started. She was eighteen. While in Israel she joined the British Army and trained to be a paratrooper. She also began writing poetry in Hebrew.

Hannah Szenes was not religious. She didn't go to synagogue, and she was by all accounts uninterested in the ritual, commitments, and customs of Judaism. But she wrote this poem:

My God, my God, I pray that these things never end,
The sand and the sea,
The rush of the waters,
The crash of the heavens,
The prayer of humanity.

Examine Szenes poem carefully. As you do, think about the following questions. You may want to note your initial answers.

1. Why would someone who was not religious write a poem about God?
2. Can you be an atheist and still be a Jew?
3. Is it possible to believe in God if you can't prove God exists?
4. In 1944, Hannah Szenes parachuted into Yugoslavia. Soon after she was captured by the Nazis and thrown into prison. Before she was executed she was brutally tortured. While in prison, do you think she believed in God?

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