

**From Ben Yehuda to Main Street USA: Exploring Connections between
the Israel Experience and Teen Travel Programs in the Diaspora**

Liotte L. Greenbaum

**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Masters of Arts in Religious Education Degree**

**Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
School of Education
New York, New York**

**Spring 2004
Advisor: Rabbi Andrew Davids**

**THE ALI LIBRARY
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
CROOKDALE CENTER
ONE WEST FORDHAM STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10012**

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

- The Experience of Israel
- Why People are Not Going to Israel
- Other Options for Teens Instead of Israel

Chapter 2: Adolescent Development

- Adolescent Development- An Overview
- Early Adolescence (Ages 12-15)
- Late Adolescence (Ages 16-19)
- Jewish Adolescent Study
- Positive and Successful Programming for Teens
- Summary of Key Points to Adolescent Development

Chapter 3: The Israel Experience

- Chazan's Rubrics for Studying the Israel Experience
- Components and Conceptual Foundations central to the Israel Experience
- History of NFTY in Israel Programs
- Harvey Goldberg: A Summer on a NFTY Safari
- Samuel Heilman: Israel Trip Findings
- Summary of Key Points of the Israel Experience

Chapter 4: NFTY Go West

- From Israel to NFTY Go West
- Questions, Goals, and Objectives of NFTY Go West
- Staff
- Adolescents on Travel Programs
- NFTY Culture
- Far Away from the Homeland
- Themes of NFTY Go West: Judaism and Nature, Tikkun Olam
- NFTY Programming
- Program Analysis of NFTY Go West
- Suggestions for Future Trips in the Diaspora
- Summary of Key Points of NFTY Go West

Chapter 5: Conclusion

- Summary of the Israel Experience and Diaspora Teen Travel Programs

"Imagine the most incredible summer of your life. Hike, climb, discover, and explore with new friends from across the continent. Return home with endless personal accomplishments, meaningful memories and stories you'll never forget."¹

Chapter 1- Introduction

THE "EXPERIENCE" OF ISRAEL

The North American Jewish community has come to view the Israel Experience as a significant building block in the development of Jewish identity. For 45 years, the North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) has been sending teens on travel programs around the world, transforming more than 40,000 young people by giving them a summer of fun, excitement, challenges, new friends, and a lifelong involvement in Judaism. NFTY claims that more than 750 synagogues, 19 youth regions, 13 Jewish camps, Jewish Federations and communities annually turn to NFTY to provide the ultimate teen travel experience. John Dewey's notion is that true education is rooted in experiences², and it is overtly affirmed that going to Israel was first and foremost a Jewish educational experience of great power.

According to David Breakstone in Israel in our Lives: The Israel Experience, "A properly designed and implemented Israel program will have a significant and positive immediate impact on the vast majority of its participants."³ Furthermore, he added, except for a tiny fraction of the teens who travel to Israel, most of the participants regard the Israel trip as not only their most positive Jewish experience, but as the most positive

¹ NFTY in Israel brochure, 2004

² John Dewey, Experience and Education, 1938.

³ David Breakstone, page 3

life experience they have ever had. Many recent studies that have been conducted to investigate the reasons why an Israel experience has such a strong impact on teenagers, but among the top two reasons are 1) A peer group that reinforces the participants' evolving sense of identity and Jewish self-esteem, and 2) A staff of accessible role models who contribute to the growth at this critical stage of adolescent development.⁴

The impacts of an Israel trip are both long and short term, and studies by *Israel in our Lives* researchers⁵ suggest that the time young people spend in the Jewish state have an impact on cognitive, affective, and behavioral spheres. Among the results noted, according to Breakstone: greater knowledge about Israel, Judaism, and the Jewish people; better feelings about being Jewish; greater pride in and sense of Jewish identity; enhanced sense of belonging to the Jewish people; increased interest in being involved with the Jewish community; higher level of Jewish practice; and stronger tendency to marry a Jewish partner.⁶

Another researcher in the field of informal Jewish education, Barry Chazan, agrees with Breakstone about the importance and intended impacts of an Israel trip. Chazan gives a brief description of the Israel Experience:

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ from the CRB Foundation, the Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education, the Department of Jewish Education and Culture in the Diaspora, and the Charles R. Bronfman Centre for the Israel Experience: Mifgashim

⁶ Breakstone, page 2

"The overall, self-defined mission of Israel experience travel is educational. In the broadest sense, the mission is uniformly to strengthen the Jewish identity of the participants (however that may be conceived), as well as to establish and enhance their connection to Israel. Some may articulate subsidiary or instrumental goals, such as to establish bonds of friendship among Jewish youngsters from abroad or between them and Israelis. Some programs try to teach particular Judaic skills, and some aim to maximize involvement in a youth movement or comparable framework after return to the home community. Almost all programs seem to regard a return trip to Israel as one important measure of educational success."⁷

WHY PEOPLE ARE NOT GOING TO ISRAEL

However, despite the plethora of available trips to Israel that are currently offered to teenagers and young adults, many people choose other options for enhancing their Jewish experiences. Travel programs are offered to areas around the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia, each with only a different Jewish theme in common. Only about 25% of young people visit Israel⁸, and with the political situation in the Middle East in the early part of the 21st century, that number is dropping. While many teenagers are interested in participating in a travel program with other Jewish teens, they do not want to go to Israel. One of the reasons that may keep people from going to Israel is that there is little connection to the Jewish homeland.

Jack Wertheimer, in *Jewish Education in the United States: Recent Trends and Issues*, from the American Jewish Year Book (1999), says that Israel is rarely taught in supplementary schools, the source of Jewish education for the majority of young Jews. From those who received their Jewish education from a supplementary school, fewer than half of the population of the United States Jewish community feel an attachment to Israel,

⁷ Barry Chazan

therefore they have no desire to visit the Jewish homeland. Other factors that may keep people from going to Israel include high costs, concerns over security and supervision, conflicts with other interests, lack of familiarity with travel program options, and an overall lack of interest in Israel. There is also a more increased focus on the religious dimension of Jewish identity in America.⁹ According to Michelle Alperin in *Israel and American Jewish Education*, "As participation in Jewish study, prayer, and observance has grown, Israel has become less of a rallying point for the American Jewish community."¹⁰

Many Jewish teens are just not open to the idea of going to Israel. Leora Isaacs, in "Evaluations of Programs of the Israel Experience Center of UJA-Federation of New York" (JESNA 1996), spoke about the offer by the New York Jewish community to give a free plane ticket to young adults wishing to visit Israel for the first time. It was very difficult to find people willing to go to Israel, consequently, a survey was taken to find reasons for the Israel trip resistance. "Almost all of the students who indicated that they would be traveling to other countries instead of to Israel also pleaded poverty when it came to the Israel trip- despite the fact that they would be given a free ticket. Others expressed fear: "I don't go to Bosnia, and I don't go to Israel," one of them told a recruiter. And still others expressed a different anxiety: a trip to Israel "might be 'transformative'; it might lead them to become 'too Jewish'." ¹¹

⁸ Chazan and Cohen, 2001

⁹ Jack Wertheimer, *Jewish Education in the United States: Recent Trends and Issues*, 1999.

¹⁰ Michelle Alperin, *Israel and American Jewish Education*.

¹¹ Leora Isaacs, *Evaluations of Programs of the Israel Experience Center of UJA Federation of New York*, 1996.

OTHER OPTIONS FOR TEENS INSTEAD OF ISRAEL

In spite of a lack of enthusiasm to visit the Jewish Homeland, Jewish teenagers still have many options of youth programming that will garner many of the same impacts as the Israel Experience. Most of the research I have done, as well as analysis from my own experience, have shown that non-Israel trips have similar conceptual foundations and experiences to lead to the same results as the Israel Experience. Two of the reasons that have led to a successful and positive program as mentioned above (a peer group that reinforces the participants' evolving sense of identity and Jewish self-esteem, and a staff of accessible role models who contribute to the growth at this critical stage of adolescent development) are both components that are not restrictive to Israel or any specific region; rather, they can occur anywhere in the world.

By looking at Israel trips that have taken place in recent years and the studies that have come out about the impacts and effects of Israel Experiences for teens and young adults, my thesis will be attempting to discover how what we know about teen travel programs to Israel can help inform the building of Jewish identity on Jewish teen travel programs in the Diaspora. Using a model of a NFTY in Israel trip, as well as material on adolescent development and Jewish identity among American teens, I will be addressing the concept of having a travel program with Jewish teenagers and substantial Jewish content as truly being considered a Jewish experience. I will be using the 2003 NFTY Go West trip as the case study to analyze what we know of a Diaspora Jewish teen travel program.

Chapter 2- Adolescent Development

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT- AN OVERVIEW

Before attempting to plan any program, it is necessary to look at research that has examined adolescent development, especially in terms of Jewish identity formation. It is essential to know the stages of development and behavioral and emotional characteristics of teens in order to best plan a program for maximum impact. On a travel program, teens will exhibit most or all of the following characteristics, so it is crucial to understand the developmental stages of the teens with which you are working in order to communicate effectively and show that you know what they are going through.

Erik Erikson, a 20th century psychoanalyst, has theories on adolescent development that relate back to the claim that the *Israel in our Lives* researchers made that spending time in Israel has an impact on cognitive, affective, and behavioral spheres. Erikson offers a model of adolescence that sees the emotional stage of development as a crisis between identity and role confusion. Identity includes a conscious effort to distinguish oneself from others, while role confusion tugs at the adolescent to mold into surroundings and abandon a sense of distinction. In order to successfully thrive as a teenager, fostering identity involves providing an environment in which the adolescent can express both independence and conformity.

At the social development stage, teens tend to move away from parental guidance

and look to their peers as examples. They turn to their friends for emotional support, and sometimes rebel against adult authority. In order to have a successful informal education program, we must attempt to influence the values of the peer culture rather than a single individual. Peer leadership is a key component to developing socially, therefore if the group leader is Jewishly motivated, he/she will have a positive impact on the developing Jewish identity of the entire group who look to the leader as an example. The peer leader can also take direction from the adult group leader of the program in order to help the group conform to the program goals.

A third stage of development is cognitive, or being able to think abstractly, hypothetically, and logically. New ideas are forming, and teenagers try to find creative solutions to their social problems. They are not yet burdened by society and its expectations, therefore a program that is idealistic will most effectively resonate within an adolescent.¹² This can be reflected in teen tours in different ways, for example, providing them with opportunities for community service projects that enable them to come up with ways to help society.

In Reaching Adolescents, a program guide published by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, adolescent development is split into two age-based stages: Early Adolescence (ages 12-15) and Late Adolescence (Ages 16-19). Erikson's stages of emotional, social, and cognitive development can be applied to both of these age-based models. Because travel programs are open to teens in both age groups, we will briefly look at both developmentally normal characteristics and suggested adult responses for each age group as well as applying Erikson's ideas.

¹² Erikson, 1980

EARLY ADOLESCENCE (AGES 12-15)

The developmental task of early adolescence is to begin to discover personal identity, based upon the following, according to Reaching Adolescents by the UAHC: 1) the integration of family, religious, and societal values; 2) the understanding of the self in relation to peers and adults; 3) relating differently to those of the opposite sex; and 4) projecting self-concept into the future. The following are some of the more notable characteristics, and how an adult can respond in the context of a travel program.

- Changes in physical appearance as the body matures. Teens are extremely self-conscious and aware of their physical attributes at all times. Adults can compliment appearance, such as comment on a special outfit or hairstyle on Shabbat.
- Intellectual development is often reflected in teenagers' passion for discussion, debate, and frequent role as devil's advocate. Teens gain the ability to think abstractly, and their commitment to ideals becomes stronger. Adults can help facilitate discussions rather than lecture in many situations. For example, a discussion on the Middle East conflict can allow teens to express their opinions and debate with each other about the situation and what Israel's response to the Palestinians should be.
- Social development in early adolescence is most often characterized by increased independence from parents, intense relationships with peers of same sex, continual comparisons of self to peers, and occasional rude behavior toward adult authority. Adults can plan educational programs that take into account interest in relating primarily to peers. In Israel, teens stay with an Israeli host family with teenagers, so they are able to relate to someone of a similar age from another culture. This is also done in the Diaspora by having Israeli teens of the same age travel as part of the group. Adults need to understand the basis of occasional inappropriate behavior toward authority figures, but set appropriate limits and provide feedback. Teens may rebel against a certain limitation, such as having a curfew at night, but it is necessary for the health and safety of the participants and should be explained as such.
- Moral development is reflected in teenagers' need to consider right and wrong on the basis of internalized personal values rather than moral dictums. They also have an increased concern for the disenfranchised and oppressed. Adults should communicate respect for the teenager as an individual with passionate feelings about justice and fair play. Adults can underline the need to make personal decisions within a social and religious context, for example, using the Torah as a proof text for helping society, such as volunteering to clean up a beach or park,

or going on an AIDS walk.

- Emotional characteristics may include moodiness, anxiety, emotional highs and lows, and withdrawal, all within normal limits. Adults need to communicate respect for feelings and model the expression of emotion. Though adults should always encourage cooperation and inclusion, they should not pressure an occasionally moody or withdrawn teenager to participate. If a participant does not want to take part in a group presentation or discussion, such as performing a play or singing a group cheer, they should not be forced. Adults should express concern about emotional behavior that appears to go beyond normal limits and follow up to make sure that everything is alright.

LATE ADOLESCENCE (AGES 16-19)

The developmental task of late adolescence is to complete the evolution of a relatively mature personal identity, based upon: 1) The integration of family, religion, and societal values; 2) an understanding of the self in relation to peers and adults; 3) increasing confidence in relating to the opposite sex; 4) increased clarity regarding projecting the self into the future. The following are normal characteristics of late adolescents and suggested adult responses.

- Physical development is completed, and some level of sexual activity is likely. Adults should compliment appearance and physical maturity, and acknowledge sexuality as a normal part of maturity. Acknowledging that two of the participants are hooking up (within boundaries) and accepting it will show them that it is part of growing up and becoming responsible adults. Paying attention to clothing, hairstyles, accessories, or even a great physical attribute such as a smile is positive reinforcement for a teen.
- Mental development is reflected in concerns regarding "measuring up" in relation to peers. Teens are trying to make educational and vocational choices while gaining a sense of personal learning style and preferences. Adults should highlight talents, such as saying someone has a beautiful voice and ask if they would they like to help lead tefillah or a song session. Adults should also acknowledge academic pressure by educational institutions and parents, and ask how the teens learn best and for their perspectives on their secular and religious education to date.
- Social relationships with same sex peers remain active, while romantic

relationships may take on new intensity. Adults can discuss romantic relationships and realistic expectations about dating and marriage, but must respect privacy. They should be open to discussions and answering questions that teens may have. At this stage, teens have a desire to function as independent adults without parental involvement and have a new readiness to accept non-parental adult mentors as role models. Adults should applaud and encourage responsible independence, for example, giving the teens free time to wander around Ben Yehuda Street or Pier 39 in San Francisco.

- Moral development may be characterized by expressions of confusion, helplessness, and anger about injustice. Teens need to see a tangible connection between values and action. Adults should discuss ethical and moral dilemmas faced by teens through an understanding of the socio/religious context and discuss discrepancies between "what is" and "what might be". They should provide opportunity for social action, such as volunteering at an old age home or cleaning up a national park.
- Emotional characteristics include increased desire for independence (and concurrent fears about its meaning and management), along with occasional moodiness and a tendency to be self-absorbed. Adults should expect inconsistent behavior, but provide increased autonomy. They need to set appropriate limits. If teens are given free time before curfew at the end of the day, they will complain that they have to be in their rooms too early and that they should be treated as adults and allowed to go to sleep when they want. Throughout the trip, the adults can extend the curfew to give the participants more autonomy, but need to emphasize that if curfew is broken, they will have to go back to an earlier time.

By letting adolescents know that you understand what it is like to be a teenager, you will not judge them (only their behavior), you are available to listen, and you remember what it was like to be a teen, you will be able to show that you can be trusted and are invested in helping them grow.¹³

These above mentioned theoretical models are important to understand when dealing with teenagers, especially when they are away from home and in a foreign environment. Both Erikson's emotional, social, and cognitive development stages and the UAHC guide Reaching Adolescents speak of issues that the teens on travel programs are

¹³ Reaching Adolescents, pages 14-16.

identifying with on a regular basis. Changes in physical appearance, going through emotional highs and lows, becoming independent, thinking about the world around them, and platonic and romantic relationships with their peers are all developmental attributes that will be encountered on a program such as NFTY in Israel or NFTY Go West. In looking at Jewish travel programs, it is also important to look at some studies of Jewish adolescents and the contexts that help determine their decisions.

JEWISH ADOLESCENT STUDY

The Jewish Adolescent Study (JAS) is a large-scale study designed to develop a comprehensive picture of the attitudes and behavior of contemporary young Jews, particularly to understand how they view themselves both as Jews and as teenagers in the American environment. As self-described by the researchers of the JAS, "The study is a systematic inquiry into the contexts, Jewish and American alike, that shape Jewish identity and affiliation among contemporary Jewish teenagers."¹⁴ It is important to note that the JAS is a study that looks at Jewish teenagers from a sociological perspective, rather than offering a developmental model of how to work with adolescents. The developmental stages of Erikson and the theories of Reaching Adolescents can be observed in the behaviors of the subjects of the JAS. These subjects of this study reflect the demographics of the teens that are participating on travel programs, and it is important to look at their backgrounds, education, and Jewish involvement in order to gain some insight into the lives of those to which the programs will be directed.

¹⁴ Jewish Adolescent Study, page 16

The JAS used nearly 1,300 b'nei mitzvah ages 13-17 from Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and independent congregations in 3 different regions of Eastern Massachusetts (with varying Jewish density). One parent from each child was also interviewed. Both parental and peer influences were examined, as was the institutional impact of synagogues and day schools. This age group encompasses all the participants on the teen travel programs that are being discussed in this paper, and the wide range of study is an appropriate indication of the group composition of a travel program.

The findings from the JAS indicated a decline in participation in Jewish activities as teenagers move from the high point of their Jewish education (becoming a bar or bat mitzvah) through the high school years. In 7th grade, nearly all Jewish adolescents participated in some Jewish educational, volunteer, or recreational activity, whereas a little more than half continued to participate in 12th grade. This is important information when looking at the pool of possible participants for Jewish travel programs. The teens who participate in Jewish summer trips come from those who continue to be involved in Jewish education past their bar or bat mitzvah. Those that drop out of Jewish education need to be reached out to and encouraged to participate as well.

School is the dominating force in the lives of teenagers, and both parents and children made the heavy investment in homework, school-based extracurricular activities, and paid employment, thus leaving little or no time for involvement in the Jewish community. This may also account for feelings of detachment to Israel, as previously mentioned in discussion of Jack Wertheimer's article on recent trends in the United States. School is a main topic of discussion among the teens on travel programs, especially for those who will be going to college within a year or two. Perhaps

participating in a Jewish travel program within a few years of leaving for college will help encourage teens to choose a school with a large Jewish population and lead to a more Jewish lifestyle while away from home.

Throughout the school year, not only did teenagers take their secular work seriously, but they valued and enjoyed it more than the supplementary Jewish education that led to their bar/bat mitzvah. Boys were more negative the girls across the spectrum, and this remained consistent in all areas of the study. Weekly participation in formal Jewish education declined steadily from 60% in 7th grade to 22% in 11th grade. This low percentage in the later years of high school may account for the lack of students willing to participate in Jewish travel programs, to Israel or in the Diaspora. In contrast however, the potential for informal Jewish extracurricular activities (such as youth groups) to attract those not involved in formal Jewish education remained largely unfulfilled, in terms of both rates and frequency of participation. Summer offered the best opportunity for Jewish involvement to claim the time and attention for teens, which is an important note in relation to this paper about teen travel trips, especially since the programs being studied take place during the summer months.

"Participation reached a peak with the Israel Experience programs commonly offered to sophomores and juniors, then declined sharply after graduation. Although informal summer Jewish education might be thought to compensate for a lack of Jewish involvement during the school year, more often it complements Jewish activities at home and in the local community. The vast majority of participants' religious opinions and their connection to Judaism depended greatly on parental Jewish commitment...parental mandate or support was the strongest predictor of actual enrollment. It was also a major

factor influencing exposure to and impact of Jewish summer camp and Israel experience programs."¹⁵

JAS looked at other influences in addition to parents, and found peers and the school environment as the more controlling factors to decision making among teens. Many of the teens that participate on NFTY travel programs go with a group of friends, either from camp, youth group, religious school, or secular school. The JAS found that for Jewish American teens, regardless of the religion of their peer networks, teenagers participate in the peer-group culture. Though the survey respondents care about being Jewish and about aspects of Jewish history and culture, they do not express their allegiance by engaging in practices that might separate them not only from their non-Jewish peers, but also (in denominational terms) from one another. "Judaism is important to them, but only as it fits into their lives and their goals in a secular pluralistic society."¹⁶

In reaching out to teens, the leaders and planners of teen travel programs need a carefully planned program that encourages participants to explore their Jewish identity and to understand how deeply it influences choices they make in their lives. According to Reaching Adolescents, "It is important that programs maintain a balance between values clarification exercises which respond to the needs of individuals in the group, and substantive material on Judaism and Jewish identity."¹⁷

POSITIVE AND SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMMING FOR TEENS

In order to effectively reach teenagers and help form their Jewish identity, the following suggestions about positive programming were made in the article "What We

¹⁵ Jewish Adolescent Study, page 72

¹⁶ Ibid, page 73

Know About... Youth Programs."¹⁸ These ideas were the result of a collaborative effort of the authors to examine theories such as Erikson's model of adolescent development, and how those aspects influence programs. I have followed each suggestion with an example from both a NFTY in Israel program and a NFTY Go West program.

- *Successful programs are likely to pack a lot of activity into the time available.*

Both NFTY in Israel and NFTY Go West tended to begin early in the morning and go late into the evening. In Israel during Harvey Goldberg's study, the teens went to Mt. Herzl to hear speeches by NFTY leadership, lunch in Liberty Bell Park followed by a march through Jerusalem streets to Hebrew Union College, more speeches and entertainment, then traveled by bus to Masada, had a "midnight" barbeque, saw the Masada Sound-and-Light show, slept for a couple hours in a tent, climbed the Roman ramp on Masada to watch the sun rise, toured Masada and had services, hiked down the Snake Path, breakfast at Kibbutz Ein Gedi, bathing in the Dead Sea, then got back on the bus to head to the Galilee.¹⁹

On NFTY Go West, the teens would wake up at 6:00am, have breakfast, take a bus into San Francisco, visit Angel Island, have lunch in Golden Gate Park, go to an old age home and spend time with the residents, get on the bus to drive back to San Jose, have dinner at a Chinese restaurant, go back to Camp Swig, have an evening program to debrief the day, ma'amad, and go to sleep around midnight.

Having many activities throughout the program is important in order to maximize the amount of possible impact among the participants. We know that individuals learn in multiple styles, and by offering many activities, some programs may appeal to different

¹⁷ Reaching Adolescents, page 17

¹⁸ Alexander and Russ, pages 93-94

people and affect them in new ways.

- *They attempt to have an emotional impact. These efforts should lead to close friendships among participants.*

While in Israel, teens experience going to the Kotel in the Old City of Jerusalem on their first day. For many of the participants, this is an extremely emotional event, and it bonds the group for experiencing it together. On NFTY Go West, teens were taken on a trust walk to the edge of a cliff overlooking Horseshoe Bend at the Grand Canyon. Having to rely on and trust each other by walking with their eyes closed, and then opening them as a group to view this breathtaking site was an emotional bonding experience.

Developing a group culture and having group experiences are some of the most important aspects of a teen travel program. From research and studies on the Israel Experience, as well as my own analysis of NFTY Go West, we have learned that the group experience is the most powerful aspect of a travel program. It is the only thing that remains constant while teens are traveling and away from home, and the group bonds throughout the trip due to shared experiences. Leaving at the end of the summer is a highly emotional time, and the friendships made during the program tend to last for many years in the future. The impacts and implications of having a group culture and group experiences will be discussed in further detail later in this paper in relation to particular case studies.

- *Successful programs probably demand substantial portions of participants' time.*

Both NFTY in Israel and NFTY Go West take place during the summer months and are at least four weeks in length. In order to have an effective experience, the group

¹⁹ Goldberg, page 134

needs time to adjust to each other, their staff, and the context in which they are traveling.

- *The environment in which programming takes place is likely to be significant in successful youth programming, especially to the extent that participants come to feel a sense of attachment to or ownership of the setting in which it transpires.*

This is one aspect that was relevant for NFTY in Israel, but was not transferable to NFTY Go West. In Israel, teens become comfortable and feel at home, and are able to gain a sense of belonging and attachment to their "homeland." While on NFTY Go West, the group was traveling throughout many different states in a short period of time, and though most of them were from the United States, they did not feel any sense of attachment to any of the places visited. This was especially true with the group with which I was traveling, because most of the teens (30 out of 37) were from a URJ camp in Massachusetts, and they felt very uncomfortable staying at Camp Swig in California because it "wasn't theirs." Despite the fact that the NFTY Go West participants were not able to feel an ownership over any of their locales during the summer, this did not detract from their experience. The teens compensated by relying on their group as the constant throughout the program, and did not need a physical environment to be the defining factor for their experience. Later in this paper, I will be addressing this concern of lacking a connection to the setting of the travel program, and the role that the setting may or may not play in the impacts upon the participants.

- *Good Jewish youth programs are likely to employ techniques of group process that foster a sense of ownership of the groups' activities on the part of the participants.*

While both in Israel and in the Diaspora, the teens are limited in being able to take part in planning the curriculum and programs. However, they are able to take the programs that they are offered and individualize them to their group. In Israel, while

staying at Kibbutz Gezer, the teens work together to help build a part of Pinat Shorashim, a bible-based educational garden. Each group has their own project, for example, working on the Sukkah tiles, the Gezer Calendar, or animals for the garden. One of the group bonding moments of my NFTY in Israel group took place with the recipe for making hatzatz (in order to build stairs): 1 part cement, 2 parts sand, 2 parts hatzatz. It became a rallying cry throughout the summer, which the group all learned and took ownership of for the rest of the trip.

On NFTY Go West, every evening ended with ma'amad, a closing circle and debriefing of the day. Teens were given the opportunity to lead ma'amad, and each person had the chance to share their thoughts on the day. Processing the activities together as a group gave the teens a sense of ownership of their trip. In both travel programs, the group needed to feel that they were an important part of the process of making the trip their own, something that was unique only to their group.

- *Staffing is critical to the success of informal educational programs. The staff needs to be trained, knowledgeable, and committed to the goals of the program. In this sense, the staff needs to serve as effective role models of the values the program seeks to promote.*

NFTY has a careful hiring process of staff regardless of the location of the program. As studies on the Israel Experience have shown, as well as my own experiences on NFTY Go West, the staff was of paramount importance on the program. Staff will later be discussed in more detail in relation to the travel programs with which they are working.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS OF ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Regardless of whether a program takes place in Israel or in the Diaspora, the participants will be experiencing developmental changes throughout the trip. It is important for those working with teens to understand these stages, and know how to respond appropriately. Adolescents go through physical, intellectual, social, moral, and emotional changes, and need guidance from the staff to help them grow. Teens look to each other to lead the way, and are highly reliant upon and influenced by their peers. The Jewish Adolescent Study found that involvement in Jewish activities declined with advancement through high school, but informal summer programs can help complement and reinforce a Jewish lifestyle throughout the year.

When attempting to plan a summer travel program for teens, the leaders need to carefully develop a curriculum that encourages participants to explore their Jewish identity and strengthen their Jewish commitment. Successful programs tend to pack a lot of activity into the time available, have an emotional impact, take place in a significant environment, foster a sense of ownership among the teens, and have staff that is trained, knowledgeable, committed, and positive Jewish role models. In the next two chapters, I will be looking at two teen travel programs: NFTY in Israel and NFTY Go West. Using the information from adolescent development theories, I will be examining an Israel Experience, and applying what we know to a teen travel program in the Diaspora.

Chapter 3- The Israel Experience

CHAZAN'S RUBRICS FOR STUDYING THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE

Now that we have looked at both theoretical models and studies about adolescent development, we can look at the Israel Experience in more detail. There are three broad rubrics used when studying Israel trips according to Barry Chazan, in *The World of the Israel Experience*. The first is the recruitment and marketing strategies of those who are offering an Israel trip. Research explores the number and character of the participants, their motivations for participating, and the influences, information-gathering, and interpersonal processes that led to the decision to join an Israel Experience program. Parents' connections with Israel, as seen in previously discussed research, relate most strongly to their children's likelihood of visiting Israel. Participants in Israel programs over-represent those raised in committed Jewish homes, in intensive Jewish educational contexts, and with numerous informal linkages to Israel.²⁰

The recruitment and marketing strategies of both NFTY in Israel trips and NFTY Go West were very similar. NFTY advertised their programs on the internet, in temple bulletins, brochures, through the camp system, and through regional recruitment by NFTY advisors. Many of the participants had parents who had been to Israel and had been active in NFTY as teenagers. The majority of teens on NFTY in Israel and NFTY Go West were active in their local youth groups, and still attended some formal Jewish educational programming throughout the year. On NFTY Go West, two of the bus groups

²⁰ Chazan, page 13

were from Union for Reform Judaism camps, and attended the program as the customary travel year.

The second area of studying the Israel trip looks at the impacts from the travel experience. Chazan states, "The short-term studies of impact have largely demonstrated seemingly powerful effects of the Israel trip. Toward the end of their trips, or shortly thereafter, youngsters rave about their experiences. They promise (with great sincerity) to return to Israel in short order. They express earnest enthusiasm about recommending Israel to their friends, and they claim to be ready to undertake higher levels of Jewish involvement of all sorts upon their return to local communities."²¹ The same reaction occurred on NFTY Go West. The teens raved about the trip, said they would highly recommend it to their friends, and were going to continue their involvement in NFTY and return to camp the next summer. This area will be looked at in further detail later in this paper when looking at the impacts of the specific travel program case studies.

The studies of the long-term impacts claim consequences that are strong, enduring, and broad-based, covering a variety of Jewish identity dimensions. However, long term impact studies are difficult to control adequately the selection of factors that determined the decision to participate in Israel Experience programs in the first place. Studies are unable to isolate statistically the net impact of Israel travel as a youth, and disentangle it from home, community, and Jewish education factors that may be the true cause of higher scores on adult Jewish involvement reported by alumni of Israel Experience programs. Most long-term studies do come to a consensus on two areas of impact: 1) increased Jewish communal involvement in the adult years, and 2) increased

²¹ Chazan, page 14

and ongoing support for Israel. Two further conclusions of the impacts of the Israel Experience include 1) a "trajectory of Jewishness" which seems to be initiated by the trip and so far has sustained itself for a year, and 2) the importance of the experience of community for young people and the powerful role played by the Israel Experience in that context.²² There are no long term impact studies available yet for NFTY Go West, as the trip took place six months prior to the writing of this paper.

The third rubric of studying the Israel Experience examines the actual events, processes, interactions, and dynamics that take place during the trip itself. These studies look at questions such as the personality, dynamics, and relationships among the participants and with the staff, the interaction with the sites and the educational materials, the interface with Israeli society, and the memorable or pivotal incidences and experiences that are the most crucial in portraying the conduct of the trip itself.²³ The most important information for the purpose of this essay will be this third rubric, and looking at the events, processes, interactions, and dynamics that take place during the Israel trip and how it can also apply to the trip in the Diaspora.

COMPONENTS AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS CENTRAL TO THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE

While a trip to Israel has different effects on each individual, ethnographic research and theories of educational practice point to some components that are central to an ideal experience (as being significant and creating a lasting desirable impact):

- 1) a well-defined ideology or philosophy
- 2) a conscious curriculum or program design that holds the various segments of the trip together and serves as an organizing thread throughout

²² Ibid, page 15

²³ Chazan, The Israel Experience, page 15

- 3) a charismatic director capable of conveying a clear message of purpose, particularly to those who will actually be working with program participants
- 4) a dynamic front-line staff that is well prepared to implement the program and feels some ownership of it
- 5) a focus on individual growth as a critical dimension of the Israel Experience, expressed- among other ways- in scheduled time for reflection on the personal meaning of the sojourn
- 6) attention to detail, including logistics, general organizational matters, rules and regulations, discipline, and communication
- 7) a combination of affective, cognitive, and experiential learning opportunities
- 8) structured opportunities for participants to meet with Israeli peers
- 9) fun
- 10) pre-trip preparation, increasing participants' readiness for the experience both in terms of expectations and background knowledge
- 11) a follow-up program geared towards to the integration of sojourn experiences into participants' everyday lives.²⁴

Israel in our Lives recommends some conceptual foundations that all Israel Experience curriculums should include in order to engage the participants in an on-going process of Jewish exploration and self-discovery. Barry Chazan is one of the editors of *Israel in our Lives*; therefore his research and knowledge contribute to and agree with these recommendations. The following pedagogic elements by *Israel in our Lives* was meant to serve as guidelines to those designing and implementing Israel Experience programs, however, they are also adaptable to teen travel programs anywhere in the world.

Theme: Any teen travel experience should be thematic. Regardless of the location, participants are exposed to many different stimuli during their stay at a very rapid pace. Without a framework within which to organize what they are learning, doing, and feeling, much potential impact may be lost.

²⁴ *The Israel Experience*

There are different ways to incorporate a theme. A trip in Israel can be built around a single idea or topic, such as "Israel: Dream and Reality" or "The Land of the Bible." A more generic Jewish theme can work well on trips in the Diaspora, such as *Al Shloscha D'varim*, *Tikkun Olam*, *Am Echad Lev Echad*, or the one used on NFTY Go West: *Im Ain Ani Li Mi Li?* (If I am not for myself, who will be for me?) Longer trips might assign a theme to every day, or comprise a number of mini-seminars each with its own topic. The specific theme or themes are not important; what is crucial is for participants to be given a handle or framework with which to begin to grasp the complexity and unfamiliarity of the location they are visiting. Such awareness allows participants of any age to be active partners in the process of exploration and discovery.

Sourcebook: This process of exploration and discovery will be enhanced if participants have access to educational materials- ideally compiled into a sourcebook that complement their program. Included can be background articles, primary sources, traditional texts, contemporary poetry, primary sources, maps, time lines, questionnaires, and group activity sheets. Properly utilized, these materials can enhance preparation for a particular program, on-site study, or debriefing. The sourcebook can also be a meaningful educational memento once the trip is over. A journal is another example of a something that the teens can use throughout the trip and take home with them once the summer is over. For example, when teens leave for Israel, they are given a journal in which to write their summer in Israel memories and experiences. There are also sections to write people's addresses and personal notes to friends. The same type of journal can also be given to participants on a trip elsewhere in the world with the same purpose. On NFTY

Go West, the group passed around a journal each day to contribute their thoughts and recap their activities from the day, which was copied and handed to everyone on the last day of the trip. It also included e-mail addresses, instant messenger screennames, addresses, and phone numbers of all the participants and staff.

Time for Reflection: Trip designers should be wary of temptation to include too much in the itinerary. In their enthusiasm to show participants everything possible, program sponsors often overload the schedule and lose sight of what is really important, namely what happens to the individual. The objective of a travel program should be to *transform* rather than *inform* those undergoing the experience, and the trips need to be structured and paced accordingly. Time for reflection, thought, and discussion is an essential ingredient of an effective (and affective) travel experience. After a visit to the Kotel, participants should be given time to debrief, talk about their feelings from being at such a majestic and significant site, and what they can gain from the experience. If doing social action by volunteering at a homeless garden in San Francisco, or participating in an AIDS walk, teens need time to think about the effects of their actions. On NFTY Go West, the teens had a chance at evening ma'amad each night to reflect on their day and offer their comments.

Educational Moments: Every travel experience is full of "educational moments," opportunities that when properly utilized, will result in intellectual, spiritual, and/or emotional revelations for the participants. Some of these moments may be pre-programmed and highly structured; others will present themselves unexpectedly and require spontaneity and flexibility on the part of the group's leaders. When first arriving

in Israel and exchanging money to shekels, participants are often excited about the new form of money they are holding. The leader can take this moment to point out some of the important historical figures that are on the bills, read and translate the words in Hebrew, and show how Judaism is incorporated into Israel currency. There are possibilities for educational moments while outside of Israel, though they may or may not be inherently Jewish because of the changed setting.

A good example of an educational moment on NFTY Go West took place while we were on a dude ranch in Utah. The staff of the ranch planned programs and activities to teach the teens about living on a ranch. In a rodeo simulation game, the teens were instructed to dress up a sheep in human clothing. In another activity, the teens had to run after a cow that had duct tape placed all over its hide, and tear off as many pieces as they could. The NFTY staff stopped the program after one group had gone, and took the rest of the time to have an impromptu discussion about Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayyim, compassion to animals.

Experiential Learning: A connection to Judaism can be made anywhere in the world. The emphasis throughout a travel program should take advantage of the sites, situations, and circumstances that cannot be replicated in any classroom. Although there is certainly a place for lectures and traditional study during a trip, its real potential lies in its unlimited possibilities for hands-on learning. An often visited site on the NFTY in Israel tours is Kibbutz Gezer, just outside of Jerusalem. NFTYites work at Pinat Shorashim, helping to build this physical representation of the Bible. They live on the Kibbutz, eat in the dining hall, and spend their days doing manual labor to build a part of

this wonderful project. While on NFTY Go West, participants spent time hiking through the desert at the Grand Canyon, Bryce, and Zion National Parks. The teens were able to hear stories from the Torah about people wandering and living in the desert, and relate to it in an empathetic way after experiencing a similar lifestyle themselves.

Mifgashim: While in Israel or in the Diaspora, it is important for program participants to be able to interact with Israelis. This can be done in Israel with homestays with families with teenagers, having Israeli madrichim, and even speaking with Israelis in shops and around the country. While those from abroad may be unfamiliar with the experience of getting to know Israelis, they will learn new ways of being Jewish that they may not have previously known, and will be interested and enriched by Israeli culture. Properly conceived and executed, the mifgash will lead participants to reconsider their own definitions of being Jewish and perhaps provide them with models for Jewish living that were previously inaccessible to them. On the NFTY trips, groups stay with teens for a few days, traveling around the country with them and participating in programs throughout the day, and then going out at night to local areas around town. On NFTY Go West, our group had one Israeli counselor and three Israeli teens participating in the program, and their integration and interactions with the Americans was a valuable learning experience of Israeli culture, customs, and ideas.

Pre-trip Preparation: As powerful as a teen travel experience may be in its own right, its impact is deepened for participants who are properly prepared. Such preparation makes them sensitive to the questions and issues to be raised during the program and provides the teens with the knowledge and background necessary to understand the

subject matter with which they will be dealing. The desired format and contents of the preparations depends on the nature of the group and the design of the particular program (e.g., a series of classes prior to departure, a number of Shabbat retreats, or long-distance learning and sharing over the Internet or via mailings when gatherings are not feasible). Whatever the venue of the choice of issues that are stressed, the goal is always the same: to maximize participants' time during the trip by readying them beforehand.

Post-trip Framework: As valuable as is pre-trip preparation, follow-up might even be more important. If the Jewish travel program is successful, participants will leave with numerous issues of identity and life style unresolved. The trip should be the beginning of a process, a vital stage in the individual's Jewish education. Ideally it will not be the culmination of a Jewish identity building process, but rather a transition to serve as a catalyst for Jewish growth and development (of the individual or the community). On NFTY Go West, there was little, if any, follow-up to the summer program. However, many participants (that were not already) became members of the local youth group, and are continuing their informal Jewish education. The majority of the teens with which I traveled on NFTY Go West are planning to go back to a Jewish summer camp this upcoming summer to continue their involvement with Judaism. A suggestion for the directors of the camps is to be made aware of the NFTY Go West program and build upon it for the upcoming summer.

HISTORY OF NFTY IN ISRAEL PROGRAMS

Following the basic ideas and necessary components of an Israel Experience

outlined above, I will now examine and analyze an actual NFTY in Israel trip. One of the areas that I chose to study before looking at the ethnographer's notes was NFTY and its background with travel programs. In order to understand much of what occurs on a NFTY trip, regardless of whether it is in Israel or in the Diaspora, it is important to have an idea of the basic nature of NFTY.

In 1939, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations founded what would come to be known as the North American Federation of Temple Youth. NFTY is comprised of hundreds of Temple Youth Groups across the United States and Canada, and are separated into smaller regions based on location. NFTY is committed to many things, including educating Jews, Tikkun Olam, a Jewish way of life, the Jewish community, Medinat Yisrael (the state of Israel), Am Yisrael (the people of Israel), friendships and fun. In addition to the thousands of local and regional programs held each year, NFTY holds several programs which provide opportunities for personal growth and learning for all its members. These include NFTY Convention (national gathering for all regions), NFTY leadership programs at Kutz Camp, NFTY Mechina (NFTY regional and executive officers leadership training), Summer Camp (any of the UAHC camps), and NFTY Travel Programs, which is the topic with which this paper is concerned.

NFTY has concentrated on teen tours to Israel for many years, beginning in 1958. The Israel experience builds the Jewish identities of participants while forging lasting bonds of personal connection with the land, people, and history of Israel. The same goal of building the Jewish identities of the participants holds true for any NFTY travel program. However, with NFTY Go West, the focus of the program was not to

make a connection to Israel, but rather, to look at the world and environment from a Jewish viewpoint. In the absence of Israel as an inherent part of the curriculum, a trip such as NFTY Go West needs a different focus to be a Jewish trip. As previously mentioned, having a theme to connect the pieces of the summer is an essential component to having a successful program. NFTY in Israel programs already have a connecting thread and overarching theme of Israel simply by being there. Israel is incorporated into all aspects of the day, whether it is dealing with Israeli currency, seeing Hebrew all over the country, or being surrounded by Judaism at all times. While a program in the Diaspora can certainly focus on Israel as a theme, there are other areas within Judaism that are important subjects as well. Judaism and nature, tikkun olam, and social action were all topics that had importance throughout the summer on NFTY Go West.

The following is a description and analysis of a NFTY in Israel trip, followed by the Israel Experience application on a trip in the Diaspora: NFTY Go West.

HARVEY GOLDBERG: A SUMMER ON A NFTY SAFARI

Harvey Goldberg's article, "A Summer on a NFTY Safari (1994): An Ethnographic Perspective" describes a NFTY trip to Israel from a scientific, outsider viewpoint. Goldberg traveled with a group of teens during the summer of 1994, and recorded his findings of the Israel Experience. I will later be comparing his research and findings to the NFTY Go West trip that took place during the summer of 2003.

The data and findings of Goldberg's research can be organized around several general topics, which are also applicable and will later be compared to the findings of

NFTY Go West. They are broken down into the following sections, and answered based on Goldberg's experience on a NFTY Safari in 1994, with additional comments from my own experience on a NFTY Israel program:

1) *Who are the youths participating in the program, and what brings them to spend a summer on a NFTY trip?*

The majority of teens participating in a NFTY summer program are 15 or 16 years old, and come from all over the United States and Canada. Most had previously been involved in NFTY with their local or regional youth groups, and many had been campers at the Union of American Hebrew Congregation (now Union for Reform Judaism) camps. The teens come from middle-class and upper middle class settings, do well in school, and are all college bound. Through interviews and discussions with the participants on the trip, Goldberg found that these teenagers "found meaning in NFTY and derived satisfaction from it in ways that they were not able to in other school and peer-based activities."²⁵ Going to Israel was a highly conscious personal choice, and NFTY was the way in which they expressed their Jewishness. Parental influence also played a big role for teens in deciding to come to Israel for the summer. One of the main reasons for wanting to go to Israel was the desire and need to develop a relationship to "their Judaism," and to become more involved and connected to the Jewish people and religion.

2) *An analysis of the NFTY curriculum as it was presented to participants of the trip, and how NFTY culture constitutes a basic feature of the Israel Experience.*

²⁵ Goldberg, page 32

In planning Israel trips, the NFTY program aims to strengthen the identity of Jewish teenagers, and to reinforce their attachment and commitment to Reform Judaism. The aims and objectives of NFTY Travel Programs are clearly stated in Addendum A²⁶, which was mailed to all participants before the summer began (including staff). It lists some of the following:

- a) To aid in the development of knowledgeable, believing, and practicing Reform Jews.
- b) To provide participants and staff with rewarding, challenging, and pleasant experiences in a religious environment.
- c) To provide opportunities to study Torah at graded levels of understanding and appreciation.
- d) To develop an appreciation and understanding of the sacred relationship between humanity and God and among all human beings.
- e) To develop an understanding that life is filled with purpose and is good beyond its materialistic manifestations.
- f) To provide youth and adults with opportunities to experience the fullness of Jewish life through prayer and other meaningful religious experiences.
- g) To provide youth and adults with opportunities for extensive training to assume roles of lay and professional leadership within both the Reform Jewish community and the Jewish community at large.
- h) To translate religious concepts into real experiences, developing or modifying personal character and group behavior in consonance with the ideals of Judaism.
- i) To provide a creative setting for Jewish learning and living through integrated and confluent religious programming.

When planning the curriculum, these objectives are kept in mind in order to have a successful program. Some components of the curriculum on NFTY in Israel (as seen as themes throughout the entire summer) included spirituality, making choices and making decisions (in regards to the participants' Judaism and their futures), Second Temple sects and modern American Jews, and Reform leadership and Reform Judaism. Though Goldberg alludes to the objectives mentioned above throughout the summer, he does not

²⁶ See appendix

explicitly comment on the NFTY in Israel trip reaching all of the set goals of the program.

Another component of the NFTY in Israel trip is the NFTY culture that is contributed by the staff and participants themselves. Most of the staff on the trip observed by Goldberg, as well as most of the participants, had been active NFTY members, thus bringing the ideas and culture to the group while in Israel. For example, NFTY usually has creative services, in which the service leaders choose a theme and have readings and songs throughout. There are versions of Hamotzi and Birkat Hamazon that are done "NFTY style" (including hand motions and banging on the tables), song sessions that are common to everyone, and even cheers that are nationally known. Mixers are generally done as a "getting to know you" at the beginning of the trip, and the teens were adept at "trust games" that are common to NFTY programs.

3) *Interactions between the participants and the staff, and the educational implications of the summer experience.*

The staff on a NFTY travel program consists of a mehanekh (educator), a counselor, and two or three junior counselors. Very generally, the mehanekh is responsible for educational programming, and the counselors for social and administrative matters. However, these job boundaries were fluid, and everyone worked together in all areas of the trip. All staff undergoes training before leading an Israel program. In Goldberg's observations, the staff on Safari A was all knowledgeable about dealing with youths, respecting them, not criticizing another counselor in front of the

group, the importance of consistency, etc. The staff was all educated Jewishly, active participants in the Jewish community, and as previously noted, had experience in NFTY settings.

The interactions between the staff and the participants were constant, living and traveling in close quarters. The staff served as role models for the participants, and their actions and remarks were often internalized and later repeated by the teens. The staff was respected and trusted by the teens, but was also able to joke around and be "friends" with the participants. The participants chose to approach certain counselors with whom they felt most comfortable when they wanted to discuss a specific topic, whether it dealt with Judaism, relationships, or anything else. The staff was able to command authority. In this group, they were not questioned because they showed respect for the participants. Teens were treated as mature, responsible individuals. Throughout the summer, the staff was called upon to be leaders, educators, friends, doctors, and even parents to the participants.

4) *In what ways are the participants "exposed" to Israel and in what ways are they protected from it?*

Almost all of the participants on NFTY summer tours studied in religious school or Hebrew school for part of their lives. They have heard countless stories from the Torah about Jewish history. Unfortunately, when traveling to the physical sites in Israel, many of the historical connections to Israel geography were not mentioned. For example, on the Safari trip with Goldberg, the bus passed through the Elah Valley, where the biblical confrontation between David and Goliath took place. There was no mention of this

historic significance to the teens, which could have been an educational moment. Throughout the entire trip while on the bus, the teens kept the shades drawn and rarely looked at the scenery along the way from one destination to the next. Goldberg's observation of this and many other similar situations allowed for an interesting analysis: "The lack of interest in geography was only one sign of an attitude that subtly emerged: that the trip entailed a kind of a NFTY - or better, a Safari A - bubble, moving along in a foreign land, with occasional stops, but basically being insulated from its surroundings."²⁷

By looking at this quote from Goldberg, we see the disconnect between the participants and the land of Israel. It is possible that they could have been traveling in their Safari bubble anywhere in the world, and that it did not matter that they were in Israel. Their group experience could have been the same had they been traveling in North America or anywhere else. The fact that they were in Israel had little meaning or appreciation to the participants.

One of the main concerns on NFTY trips is safety and security. Participants are minimally let out of direct contact with the counselors, if let out at all. Rather than tell the kids that there are safety concerns, the staff presented the issue of security in a positive way. For example, the teens were told that it was unreasonable that the whole group should have to delay its own program because of the "private itinerary" of individuals who are not where they are supposed to be on time, rather than being told that it is not safe for them to be wandering around on their own. In this way, the participants remain in a "bubble" and contact to Israel is limited.

²⁷ Goldberg, page 84

A frequent question that the teens asked on the trip was "What are we doing next?" They were not given a detailed itinerary of the trip, and sometimes would not find out what they were doing until the day of the activity. When they complained, the counselors responded that the educational content was planned by outside specialists. The counselors explained that they were only responsible for the organizational and social details. In actuality, group leaders were concerned that they would announce an activity and later have it cancelled or postponed due to forces beyond their control.

Goldberg offered the following as suggestions for future trips:

"From an educational point of view, it seems to me that the three factors mentioned- the ignorance of geography, an emphasis on security, and the reluctance to let the youngsters share in plans- encourage an attitude of passivity which mitigates against the participants learning as much as they could, particularly with reference to contemporary Israeli society....It seems that several steps could easily be taken to counteract this tendency, without compromising security, detracting from other aspects of the program, or overloading the participants' ability to absorb information. As stated, only a brief orientation session to the country's geography at the outset would help put into perspective many of the specific visits and sessions to follow, and would quite naturally be reinforced throughout the summer. A map, highlighting sites that are visited, prepared for the program and placed in the hand of every youngster, could allow the participant to utilize some of the many hours on the bus to strengthen his/her orientation to the place, and avoid shutting out the scenery and becoming absorbed in the popular music that dominates the bus atmosphere. More generally, encouraging the participants to keep to themselves oriented geographically can work against a "danger" mentioned by several people over the summer: that of relating to Israel as a "theme park".²⁸

²⁸ Goldberg, page 88

Goldberg further described the trip as a "structured interaction between a group of young travelers and the country of Israel."²⁹ By saying this, Goldberg is saying that the trip to Israel is not entirely an "experience" as it is a pre-conceived, set-up environment to show teens certain isolated areas of Israel that the trip planners think will have the most meaning as educational moments. Trips to Israel can be structured in such a way that the setting is constructed to include only certain bits and pieces for use in specific contexts determined by those running the program. If a trip can be molded around any setting, the same can be said for a Jewish teen travel program anywhere: The setting can be fixed, shaped, and determined in order to meet the goals and objectives of that particular program. A positive Jewish identity building travel program can be manufactured to take place anywhere in the world.

5) Boys and Girls on a NFTY trip.

On the summer trip that Goldberg observed, there were 30 girls and 11 boys. [Note that this trend of more girls than boys is similar to the findings of the JAS study in which boys were more negative about Jewish experiences, and girls much more active. This boy to girl proportions has remained consistent through today.] This was a common ratio for the summer tours on NFTY programs, but was never mentioned or conceived as an issue. As typical in NFTY fashion and with teens of this age, intimate, physical relationships were a part of the summer, and sexual openness was constantly present in

²⁹ Ibid, page 90

discussions and observable in contact between males and females. There was no hesitancy in discussing male or female issues in front of the entire group, and everyone was comfortable with one another to be honest and open about whatever was on their minds. The girls "dominating" the group didn't seem to have any effect on the boys, who seemed equally comfortable chatting with girls or playing sports. A few of the teens interviewed commented that one of the reasons for coming on the trip, besides spiritual reasons, was because of the opportunity for boy-girl contact. The teens would frequently sit on each others' laps, put arms around another person's shoulder or waist, hold hands, rest their heads on another's shoulder, rub suntan lotion onto each other's backs, greeting each other with hugs and kisses, etc.

As observed by Goldberg, the lines were blurred between just being friendly and movement towards intimacy. When it came to experimentation and rules and limits, the teens seemed to be the authors of what was acceptable. The teens that did pair off into "couples" made sure not to threaten the togetherness of the group, and kept their relationship out of public view. Though the topic of relationships and "hooking up" were constant factors in the minds of the youths, the actions of the teens did not interfere with the Israel program.

6) Reflections and impacts of the Israel Experience.

In looking at the NFTY in Israel program, Goldberg brought up the issue of the optimal mix of experience and knowledge. The experience standpoint says that teens should have unusual and positive emotional adventures tying them to their peers, to

Israel, ideas of Israel and Judaism, and to NFTY. The knowledge aspect points to acquiring educational and pedagogical information, based on adequate introductions to the material, mobilizing participant involvement, presenting substance in a cumulative matter with reinforcement reviews, and so forth. These two perspectives can work with each other and reinforce each other throughout the trip, but can also lead to different agendas. In general, the program was based on assumptions of knowledge that the teens would have when beginning the trip. According to Goldberg, it underestimated the youths' ability to benefit, both in terms of experience and of knowledge, from the summer. The participants abilities to seek, interpret, and structure experiences and information on their own was limited because of a predetermined curriculum that had its own goals of what the "experience" and "knowledge" should be. The teens were highly structured throughout their time in Israel, and were not able to make individual choices, thus they were kept from being directly immersed in the true aspects of Israeli life. This criticism by Goldberg opens the door for non-Israel trips to also have a potential impact on the participants.

After the Israel trip ended and the participants returned home, Goldberg continued to look at the impacts of the experience. He found it common for the teens to visit each other, speak on the phone or instant messenger, and hold reunions for those living in close communities. Most of the teens attended NFTY Convention in the winter of that year, describing it as a reunion of sorts for those on Israel trips that lived all over the country. A number of teens were actively engaging in programs with Jewish content, such as teaching in religious schools, organizing meetings for others to go on future Israel

trips, or being involved with local NFTY chapters.

What actually occurs during Israel trips and experiences which precede and follow them are complex and multilayered. Some of this complexity can be highlighted when Israel trips are compared to other forms of identity-driven travel, such as NFTY Go West. The expressed purpose of travel may be to have an impact or reinforce certain aspects of someone's identity, which can vary for each individual. The exposure to other Jews with competing ideological claims may bring new ideas to the surface, which can be both a positive or negative impact upon those affected. Goldberg views one of the main purposes of the Israel trip as providing Jews from abroad with a basic recognition of Israel's physical dimensions, to show them and hopefully connect them to their Jewish homeland and historical significance.

However, Israel trips cannot be viewed as isolated factors that can be measured or assessed on their own. They take on different meanings in the context of each individual that participates in the program. While each group puts their unique stamp on a program, each person brings something different and special to the experience. Therefore it is hard to assess whether the Israel Experience was successful in reaching its goals.

In terms of Jewish identity formation, the teens were given ample opportunity in many forms to strengthen their identities and commitment to Reform Judaism. They were provided with rewarding experiences in a Jewish environment, substantial Jewish content and programs, opportunities to study Jewish texts, time to develop relationships with each other and the staff, possibilities to take leadership roles, and provided with creative settings for Jewish learning and living.

For further information and research of Goldberg's ethnographic study of NFTY in Israel, please refer to The Israel Experience: Studies in Jewish Identity and Youth Culture.³⁰

SAMUEL HEILMAN: ISRAEL TRIP FINDINGS

Samuel Heilman, a sociologist who also studied a teen Israel trip through Young Judea, saw similarities to those of Goldberg's NFTY in Israel experience. He emphasizes that in all the trips, regardless of who organizes them, the essential elements remain the same: the human "raw material" of American teens, the venue of Israel, the staff are of similar moldings, and the general goal of the summer of somehow enhancing the Jewish dimension of those going on the trip while arousing a sense of connection to Israel.³¹

One of Heilman's critiques of the Israel trip, as he experienced, was the combining of Israel and the group; the group experience was the defining and impacting factor for the participants. He comments that this may not be bad, and contributes to the hunger for community and belongingness in today's world. The Jewish community and Israel can play an essential role in creating this sense of community among American Jews, but, Heilman claims, "The community created is temporary and will remain such if it does not lead to other Jewish communal experiences."³²

Another issue was that of Jewish content while in Israel. The Jewish elements that are part of everyday life in Israel were taken for granted as reality, and the practice of rituals, religious expectations and restrictions, and that fact of being in a Jewish country

³⁰ Goldberg, pages 23-140

³¹ Heilman, page 260

³² Ibid, page 262

or on a trip in which all the participants were Jews led to Jewish facets being unarticulated or left out. The setting and background of Israel may be important for this "American teen adventure," and may serve to stimulate other attachments and Jewish involvements, but many of the teens did not take more than a collection of images and experiences from their Israel trip. "For these youngsters, the summer, though fun, remains unappropriated, external, unintegrated, never built upon, connected, revised or influencing or influenced by anything else in their subsequent life, uncompleted and unabsorbed permanently into their being."³³ He continues to critique that those serious about Jewish continuity will have to admit that regardless of the excitement and rewards of a summer Israel trip, it can never by itself be sufficient to solve the dilemmas of Jewish continuity and identity.³⁴

Heilman's statements about the significance of the Israel Experience show that these trips may not be the cure-all solution for building Jewish identity and forging a relationship between teens and a lifelong Jewish commitment. The Israel trip may just end up being a fun trip with other Jewish teens, and will fade from memory as time goes by. Israel in this context is a virtual reality trip that may not lead to any further Jewish activity. A program that is not internalized, not built upon once the trip is over, and not focused or appropriated, will not lead to any significant Jewish identity formation. Therefore the Israel Experience is limited in power if it is not combined with other Jewish educational experiences.

In this regard, the defining feature of the Israel Experience is not Israel, but to build Jewish identity while on the trip, and to continue doing so in the future. Israel offers

³³ Ibid, page 263

³⁴ Ibid, page 265

a Jewish place for teens to visit, but if they do not experience Judaism in ways besides those that are central to Israel, the trip will remain a fun tour with other Jews to someplace Jewish. The teens will not have any Jewish content to take home with them once they leave Israel.

Participating in a travel program that incorporates similar ideas and offers options for learning about Judaism and Jewish ideas can also lead to Jewish identity formation. The use of tourism as a means to discovering self-identity, especially in Israel, is only a tool in that discovery process. Israel is only one location in which this can take place, whereas teen travel programs such as NFTY Go West can offer those same possibilities in a different location. In the case of NFTY Go West, teens were able to build their Jewish identities on aspects of Judaism that they learned in the United States. The teens are able to make a choice among a myriad of options of how to be Jewish. Within this framework, they were given tools that they can incorporate into their everyday lives in order to help strengthen their Jewish identities and commitment to Reform Judaism.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS OF THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE

From Harvey Goldberg's experience on a NFTY in Israel program, we saw in action the elements that researchers claim as essential to the Israel Experience. This paper opened up with the claim that going to Israel is a foremost Jewish educational experience of great power, and will have a significant and positive immediate impact on the vast majority of the participants (Breakstone). Research found that peers who

reinforced the participants' identity and Jewish self-esteem, as well as staff as positive role models, were two substantial factors in contributing to the success of the Israel Experience. However, through their own observations and research, both Goldberg and Heilman state that the Jewish educational experience in Israel is limited and may not result in the desired impacts.

Regardless, people are not going to Israel. Rather than lose a generation of teens who might normally go to Israel, NFTY came up with another option for a summer experience that would also enhance Jewish identity and be a positive Jewish travel program. By looking at Goldberg's observations and analysis of this NFTY in Israel experience, as well as using Breakstone's model of core concepts for an Israel Experience, we can now take those elements that led to a successful program and apply them to NFTY Go West. Most of the components and conceptual foundations of NFTY in Israel were also applicable to the trip in the United States, though there were a few components that could not be transferred to any location because they are inherently part of Israel.

The components central to an ideal Israel Experience according to *The Israel Experience* included notions such as an ideology; a curriculum; a dynamic staff; a focus on the individual; attention to details; affective, cognitive, and experiential learning; a chance to meet Israeli peers; fun; pre-trip preparation; and a follow-up program. All of these criteria were met in Goldberg's experience, and were also incorporated into the NFTY Go West trip. In addition, the similar and sometimes overlapping ideas presented by *Israel in our Lives* were also present in the Diaspora trip, including: theme; a

sourcebook; time for reflection; educational moments; experiential learning; mifgashim with Israelis; pre-trip preparation; and post-trip framework.

All of the above mentioned components are not specific to Israel, and in the next section, it is explained how they were integrated into NFTY Go West. This study also shows that the central ideas to a successful Israel trip can be applied anywhere, and also includes a sample curriculum of programs that can be used on any teen travel program regardless of location.

Chapter 4- NFTY Go West

FROM ISRAEL TO NFTY GO WEST

From the previous two chapters, we have learned about the components and conceptual foundations that contribute to a successful Israel Experience. We also learned about adolescent development, and the factors that must be taken into consideration when working with teenagers. Using the information about these two areas, we can now look at NFTY Go West, a Jewish teen travel program that took place in the Diaspora during the summer of 2003. This trip included ten days of touring national parks and the Grand Canyon in the western United States, ten days at Camp Swig in California, and eight days on an Alaskan wilderness adventure.

With the political situation heating up in 2001-2002 in Israel and with even less people traveling overseas as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, NFTY decided to offer another option in order to give teens an opportunity for a Jewish educational travel program. The same issues mentioned in discussing the Israel Experience and adolescent development also face us in the Diaspora of trying to reach our teens and build them to be strong Jewish individuals. In the next section, I will be looking at what we know about adolescent development and the Israel Experience, and how that information was relevant on NFTY Go West. I will be addressing the central concepts that all of the researchers agree are the most important factors that lead to a positive and successful Israel experience, and how those concepts were utilized on NFTY Go West. I will also look at those components from the Israel Experience that could not be replicated on

NFTY Go West, and how the trip was able to compensate for those missing pieces.

Lastly, I will look at and critique the programs from NFTY Go West and discuss ways that the trip could be improved.

QUESTIONS, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES OF NFTY GO WEST

There were 150 participants on NFTY Go West, and each person was placed in a group, either based on a camp they had attended or a national group with people from all over the United States and Canada. We learned from the Israel Experience that a *mifgash* with Israelis is an important aspect to the program; therefore Israelis (both teens and staff) were also invited to participate in the program (This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter). There were 35 to 40 teenagers in each group, and they traveled together on the same bus with one other bus group for the entire trip. Though the locations changed throughout the summer, the group remained constant and a huge factor in the success of the program.

What made this trip Jewish? Is a travel experience with Jewish kids and substantial Jewish content truly a Jewish experience or just a fun trip? What were the goals of this program? Who participated? What were our expectations? How did we build a connection to the Jewish people and Ahavat Yisrael without physically being there? What were some of the challenges of education on a travel program? How does Judaism affect the already developing identities of adolescents? What do we know about how identity formation is developed as individuals, and as a collective group? How does NFTY culture influence and affect a travel program? What did we want the participants

to take home with them when the summer was over?

In addition to those mentioned in the addendum (previously discussed), some further goals of this program included: 1) Helping to develop lifelong Jewish learners who are engaged in an active Jewish lifestyle, 2) Preparing participants to be partners (with each other and God) in repairing the world, 3) Strengthening participants commitment to Jewish life in order to make the world a better place, 4) To help participants on a personal journey from observers to active participants as stewards of the earth, and 5) To build a caring community among the group of meaningful friendships.

STAFF

One of the main aspects from the Israel Experience that is critical in the success of a travel program is the staff. Breakstone, Chazan, Goldberg, and Heilman all mention staff being crucial to the success of the program. The staff on NFTY Go West was very knowledgeable about Judaism, and served as positive Jewish role models for the teens. NFTY had many applicants for staff positions for NFTY Go West, and was able to carefully screen them to find the most knowledgeable and qualified candidates. NFTY looked for people who had prior experience in the NFTY and camping world, therefore they would be familiar with NFTY culture. The staff members also needed to be experienced in working with adolescents, and have a strong Jewish background. Most importantly, the staff of NFTY Go West needed to be positive Jewish role models for the participants, because the staff is highly influential at this developmental stage.

Once hired, the staff was then split between the four groups, each with four or

five staff members per group of participants. I was placed in Group 2, which was mainly composed of participants from one of the Union for Reform Judaism camps, with a few other teenagers from Canada, Israel, and the New York area. Group 1 (National) was the other group with which our bus traveled. Similar to the Israel Experience, NFTY Go West took place over a significant time period. Each of the groups was able to bond and form their group culture in their own way throughout the summer.

The staff of each group included a group head, educator, and two or three general counselors. In my group, C was the group head (as well as the songleader), I (being the graduate student in Jewish education) was the educator, and E and A were counselors. Similar to the Israel Experience, the boundaries of job descriptions were fluid, and everyone filled in for each other and worked together for the best interest of the participants. Our staff group had an interesting dynamic from the beginning: A was from Israel, C from Canada, and E and I both from New York. E has been working at the camp from which most of our group's participants came for many years. He already knew most of the kids before the trip began. This was beneficial because he was able to describe the teens and their developmental stages to the rest of us. If someone had an eating disorder, had gone through depression, or was committed to social action, he was able to point that out before we met the teens. The staff had all been in touch via e-mail before the trip began, and we finally met at staff orientation on July 3rd in Las Vegas.

Staff orientation consisted of meetings throughout the day, programming and planning for the trip, and further development of leadership skills. This is an important aspect of any travel program, for the staff needs to be well-trained in order to lead a

successful program. Almost all of the staff had previous experience working with NFTY at year-round youth group events, on travel programs, or at one of the URJ camps. Thus, everyone was familiar with NFTY culture. We therefore did not need to orient ourselves to song sessions, tefillah, birkat hamazon, hamotzi, or evening ma'amad, all elements that are part of a NFTY program that were incorporated throughout the summer.

ADOLESCENTS ON TRAVEL PROGRAMS

It is imperative for the staff to understand the developmental stages of adolescents and appropriate responses to their behavior. Though discussed in further detail in Chapter 2, this is a brief summary of some of the points that should be highlighted in reference to travel programs.

One of the first aspects mentioned by Erikson is identity versus role confusion. Teens are trying to distinguish themselves from their peers, while at the same time, trying to mold into the surroundings and not stand out from the group. On a travel program, this internal conflict will be present throughout the trip. It is important for teens to be provided with an environment in which they can express both independence and conformity. On a program such as NFTY Go West, the teens participated in an AIDS Walk. Though most of the participants chose to wear the same shirt and walk in groups, a few of the teens decided to pick up trash along the way, while others sang songs and cheered the entire way through. The teens had a choice to stay with their friends in the same mold, or do something a little different that they wanted. Peers are highly influential, so some teens may just need an opportunity to veer away from the common

idea and see that it is acceptable to be different.

Because peers are so influential and such a large part of their lives, the relationships among teenagers are very intense. While the friendships on travel programs are strong and teens share a common bond, a fight with a friend can cause a teen to be highly emotional and upset. In contrast, something positive such as completing an activity (such as climbing the alpine tower at camp or finishing a community service project) can cause a teen to be exuberant. Staff members need to be prepared to deal with emotional highs and lows throughout the program.

One of the areas that is constantly on the minds of teens, especially in a travel program, is relationships and "hooking up" with members of the opposite sex (experimentation with members of the same sex is not common on these programs, but falls under this category as well). As a participant commented from the NFTY in Israel trip studied by Goldberg, hooking up is part of the NFTY culture: "That's what NFTY is about. If it didn't include that, it wouldn't be NFTY."³⁵ The staff must keep the teens healthy and safe, but must also respect the rights and privacy of the participants. NFTY indicates that summer programs are not the right time to experiment with sexuality, participants' values, and the values and ethics of others. The hope is that some forms of behavior will be put aside for the summer in order to achieve the educational goals of the program. Regardless of this position, intimate relationships do happen on travel programs, and the staff must be ready to answer questions in an appropriate manner and handle the emotions of the participants.

³⁵ Goldberg page 120

NFTY CULTURE

NFTY culture also played an important role on NFTY Go West. As the Israel Experience researchers all commented, it is important for the teens to bring some kind of ownership to the program. The group with which I was traveling had a pre-existing culture from NFTY and from many years together at camp. For example, they knew certain tunes to songs and prayers that are commonly done at NFTY events and camp. In contrast, the two groups that were mixed with teens from all over the United States did not have a pre-existing culture, and needed to form their own kind of community throughout the summer. On Friday evenings, when the teens in my group would join in Shabbat song sessions and Israeli dancing, the rest of the groups were not familiar with the words and steps that my group has known for many years.

The culture that was apparent in my group is another aspect of the Israel Experience core concepts. Most of the teens in my group of NFTY Go West already knew each other from spending many years together at camp. They were quite eager to spend every second together. When making room assignments, there were always complaints because people wanted to be with their same group of friends. The staff hoped to have the teens intermingle and become acquainted with new friends in order to help them get to know other people, including the three Israelis and four Americans that did not know anyone from camp. By the end of the summer, the participants were so happy that they had gotten to room with and get to know new people, and they felt as though everyone in the group had known each other for years. Those few who had not been at camp in previous summers want to go this next summer to reunite with their friends from

NFTY Go West. They will share their group cheer that became the mantra for the summer experience.

The group culture was slightly changed with the addition of the Israelis. As the Israel Experience recommends, a mifgash with Israelis is an important component to a travel program. In order to have an Israeli presence, NFTY Go West had Israeli staff members as well as six high school participants. The staff attempted to use Hebrew throughout the summer, for example, referring to campers as "chanichim" and staff as "madrichim." In my group, the three Israeli teens taught Hebrew (though not necessarily appropriate words) to the American participants, and told them about their lives in Israel. One of the Israeli participants was going into the army within a year, and was explaining how Israeli citizens all serve in the army. On Shabbat, the teens all participated in Israeli dancing and singing Hebrew songs they knew from camp and youth group. Though they were not in Israel, NFTY Go West was able to compensate bringing Israeli aspects to the program. It is worthwhile to note that while in Israel, the Israelis were able to be the host for the NFTY group; while in America, the Israelis were fellow tourists. Rather than being able to show Americans their typical lifestyles in Israel, the Israelis and Americans learned alongside each other in a location that was new and unfamiliar for everyone. This mifgash is something that will need further research on the impacts on both the Israeli and American teens of the group.

This pre-existing culture was also the cause of a few issues in the group. For example, during Birkat Hamazon, NFTY Go West tried to get the teens to recognize that we were not in Israel but were still thinking about it. On NFTY Go West, the staff used

the Birkat Hamazon version that is said in Israel, which has lines added that ask for peace in Israel. My group knew the NFTY version and tune that they had learned at camp. They found it very difficult to alter their usual version adding something else that "didn't belong" in their minds." In comparison, other groups that had a more diverse population were required to learn the entire Birkat Hamazon. For these groups, the lines about Israel were part of the "normal" prayer for them.

FAR AWAY FROM THE HOMELAND

There were other components from the Israel Experience that were not included on NFTY Go West. One of the concepts that stems from the Israel Experience is a sense of being "home" while in Israel. While the researchers found that some of the teens felt connected to Israel, there was no feeling of being home while on NFTY Go West. The teens were constantly moving from place to place, not staying in the same location for more than four nights. Even though most of the teens were from the United States, they had never been to any of the NFTY Go West locations. They did not feel connected to places in the rest of the country.

In order to compensate for not having a place to call "home," NFTY Go West concentrated on the group experience as the constant. It also focused on using the themes to connect the different parts of the summer. Using programs based on Judaism and nature, and Tikkun Olam/Social Action, NFTY Go West tried to teach the participants how to see the world through a Jewish lens and how they could make a difference. These things would in turn help strengthen the identity of the participants and increase their

commitment to leading a Jewish life.

THEMES OF NFTY GO WEST: JUDAISM AND NATURE, TIKKUN OLAM

NFTY Go West was designed to give teens an opportunity to connect to the world around them. The teens participated in activities that enabled them to have a Jewish focus on the places they visited throughout the summer. By the end of the trip, the participants should have been able to 1) describe the relationship between Judaism and nature, about which I did extensive research and have included later in this paper; 2) describe their role as stewards and being responsible for the environment; 3) articulate a clear plan of bringing the concepts of caring for the environment home with them once the trip was over; 4) describe moments from the trip when they felt a connectedness to Judaism and the world around them.

NFTY Go West had another Jewish core concept as well as the connection to nature and the physical environment. The other focus of NFTY Go West was Tikkun Olam, fixing the world. Participants were given the opportunity to take part in numerous social action projects around throughout the summer in order to play their part in repairing the world (both for the land and for people). Tikkun Olam is a value that is highly regarded in Judaism. By participating in social action projects throughout the summer, the teens were given a chance to make a difference in the world.

The researchers that contributed their ideas on the ideal Israel Experience all claimed that a theme, conscious curriculum, or program design was needed as a connecting thread. The summer on NFTY Go West revolved around these themes of

Judaism and Nature and Tikkun Olam.

While at the National Parks in Arizona, Utah, Nevada, California, and Alaska, Judaism and nature was the lens through which all of the programs were based. Everyone carried little cards around that had blessings that are said upon seeing mountains, trees, rainbows, a thunderstorm, or just a generic blessing for the wonders of creation. Within a few days of being in Utah, the teens would pull out the cards without being directed to by a staff member and say their own blessing.

For social action projects, the teens participated in the AIDS Walk in San Francisco, helped restore native plant habitats suffering from human impact, volunteered at a Marine Mammal Center, visited the Nike Missile Site and discussed nuclear weapon usage, worked for Save the Bay, went to the immigration center at Angel Island, spent time with residents in the Jewish Home for the Aged, cleaned up trash from a beach, and worked at a food bank learning about hunger awareness. The teens were able to think about some of the issues that plague our society today, and volunteer to make a difference. These programs not only gave the NFTY Go West participants a chance to help over the summer, but gave them tools for tikkun olam that they can bring home and use for the future. NFTY did a good job of bringing Jewish aspects to the volunteer work. The teens were given a framework for their social action projects, both before the day started and reflection time afterwards.

NFTY PROGRAMMING

NFTY programming is very unique. From their creation and implementation to

their leaders and participants to their setting and timing, all aspects are meant to increase Jewish learning and understanding and to help form and build Jewish identity. There are a few key goals of NFTY educational programming, as outlined in *Hamakor: The NFTY Resource Book*. These are 1) To transmit Jewish culture, 2) To provide the setting and opportunities for Jewish high school students to explore, experiment with and establish their own Jewish identity, 3) To provide the setting and opportunities personal development and growth, 4) To offer Jewish high school students the opportunity to meet and build relationships with their peers in their community, region, and throughout the nation, 5) To focus on issues of relevance and importance to Jewish high school students, and 6) To provide education through a positive social environment and pure fun. NFTY programs are also unique in that they take place in an informal setting; the physical context and the social and experiential nature of programs together define what makes a successful program. As the Israel Experience researchers all agreed upon, as well as John Dewey, experiential learning is a highly effective method for educational programming.

The programs of NFTY Go West were related to two themes during the summer: Judaism and nature and social action. Topics explored as mentioned above including Bal Tashchit (Do not waste), Tzar Ba'alei Chayyim (Compassion to animals), Gemilut Chasadim (Acts of love and kindness), Tikkun Olam (Social Action), as well as basic Torah concepts of relating to nature. These themes served as a connecting thread throughout the summer, and gave the trip a framework in which to operate. Some of the programs that occurred during NFTY Go West are included in the appendix of this paper. Here is a brief description of a few programs that worked, a few that didn't, what aspect

of the Israel experience they contained, if any, and how they could have been done better.

PROGRAM ANALYSIS OF NFTY GO WEST

Im Ain Ani Li Mi Li- If I am not for myself, who will be for me? Rockin' R Dude Ranch.

This exercise began to show the ideas of working together as a group and helping and respecting each other. From the research done on adolescent development, we know that at this stage, the participants highly valued their peers, looked to them as examples, were highly influenced, and were in intense relationships with each other. We also know that the teens could be moody, self-absorbed, and may rebel against authority figures. In order to get along throughout the summer, the teens learned the necessities of being respectful to each other and how to be aware of each other's needs and feelings. This program also showed that one needs to not only look out for themselves, but for others as well, and to take action now rather than waiting for others. The teens were given a brief summary of what we would be doing throughout the trip. Discussions centered on social action components, and the importance of restoring/repairing in the world around them. This idea was also described as part of the moral development stage of adolescents in the second chapter of this paper. This program was an effective opening activity, with everyone participating. It used Hebrew, a quote from Pirke Avot as the overarching theme. This fun program also allowed the participants to be creative.

Web of Life. Dude Ranch.

This program was created at the last minute because of the earlier mentioned Rodeo at the Dude Ranch. (The teens were supposed to dress up sheep in human clothing, and run after a cow with duct tape on its hide and pull off as many pieces of tape as they could.) Using this occurrence as an "educational moment", this program was developed to show the teens the consequences of their actions, as well as the idea of having compassion to animals. Using quotes from the Torah and Pirke Avot, the staff led a discussion that was very effective in teaching this moral lesson to the teens. Once the program ended, the staff walked around and cut the string between each person until everyone had a part of the yarn. The string was then tied onto everyone's wrist or neck and kept as a keepsake for the summer to remind the participants that everyone is connected. This was a bonding moment for the group, and gave them a chance to feel ownership of their experiences.

Pirke Avot, Wisdom For Life. St. George, Utah

This program worked well, because two bus groups were combined and mixed together. The teens had a chance to integrate with others from a different group. Though the peer group has a tremendous impact, the teens also wanted to meet the people in the other groups. It gave them a chance to hear new opinions, to work together figuring out what is important in their lives, and develop goals for this trip. Their answers were well-thought out, and they were presented in a way in which peers were teaching and influencing each other. This program also incorporated the idea of having time for

reflection. The participants were able to think about their experiences on the trip up to that point and determined what they hoped to accomplish over the remainder of the summer.

Hitbodeduioi. For use at Grand Canyon, Lake Powell, Bryce Canyon, Zion National Park, and any outdoor natural environment.

These short programs were ways to "get in touch" with nature and appreciate the wonders of the natural world. The Israel Experience researchers suggest making time for reflection during the trip in order to process all of the information. These sessions worked well as time for the teens to think about the environment and the world surrounding them. Though they could have been rooted in Jewish text, most of these sessions were nature-related. They were successful at allowing time for personal reflection, and appreciating God's creations. Had these programs been replicated in Israel, the teens may have automatically associated them with Judaism. On NFTY Go West, they were more attuned to and in awe of nature itself.

Brit Olam for Tikkun Olam Week. Camp Swig, CA.

This program was held on the first day at camp. It was not hugely successful. All four bus groups were together for the first time. The participants would rather have had free time to socialize and enjoy the pool and outdoor environment at camp instead of sitting in a program room in a structured activity. The program was also led by someone the participants did not know, and they felt that this leader was condescending in her

approach. Unfortunately, this was the participants' perception throughout their stay at Camp Swig. For example, the participants of NFTY Go West did not want to be "campers" as they were called; they were told they were to be treated as adults and wanted the responsibility of that title. The staff at Camp Swig saw them as another session of campers. These staff did not have a relationship with NFTY Go West participants, and therefore were not viewed as an authority within the group. The camp staff's methods of approach were unsuccessful, and the teens remained isolated from the Swig staff for the entire week. For this particular program, the NFTY Go West staff was given the program material. Though it was well-prepared and thought-out, the participants were not able to gain much from it. It would be better if this program had been shared after the teens had some time to explore their new camp environment, talk to their friends, and become acclimated to camp.

Social Action at Camp Swig

- AIDS Walk
- Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Marin Headlands, Tiburon, Sausalito
- Save the Bay
- Angel Island, Jewish Home
- Santa Cruz beach cleanup, Watsonville food bank

These programs were the core of the Tikkun Olam/Social Action aspect of the summer. The teens were able to participate in the AIDS Walk in San Francisco, help restore native plant habitats suffering from human impact, volunteer at a Marine Mammal

Center, visit the Nike Missile Site and discuss nuclear weapon usage, work for Save the Bay, go to the immigration center at Angel Island, spend time with residents in the Jewish Home for the Aged, clean up trash from a beach, and work at a food bank learning about hunger awareness. The teens were able to think about some of the issues that plague our society today, and volunteer to help make a difference. These programs not only gave the NFTY Go West participants a chance to help over the summer, but gave them tools for tikkun olam that they can bring home and use for the future. NFTY did a good job of bringing Jewish aspects to the volunteer work, and gave the teens a framework for their social action projects, both before the day started and reflection time afterwards. Please see the appendix for further descriptions of the social action projects.

The programs of NFTY Go West had Jewish themes incorporated throughout, including many of the ideas that were also present on the NFTY in Israel trip. However, there were some aspects that could not be done in America because they are inherent to Israel only. In order to compensate for not having Israel as a major theme of the trip, we focused on Judaism and nature and Tikkun Olam, because it was more relevant to these participants on this trip. It gave the teens something Jewish upon which to focus their tourism during the summer. The teens were not expected to become nature specialists on the trip; rather, they were given the means to look at the environment around them from a Jewish perspective. In returning home once NFTY Go West ended, the teens were able to see the world through Jewish eyes.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE TRIPS IN THE DIASPORA

Though NFTY Go West was a successful teen travel program, there are ways that it can be improved for the future. From the researched gathered on adolescent development and the successful components of the Israel Experience, as well as my personal experiences on NFTY Go West, the following are some suggestions for future programs in the Diaspora.

The first area that can be improved is that of the recruitment and marketing of the participants. The vast majority of the teens that participate in travel programs are already involved in NFTY, attend one of the Union for Reform Judaism camps, or work at their local temple. These teens come to the travel programs with strong Jewish identities, and are active members of the Jewish community. Research on both Israel Experiences and from my observations of the few unaffiliated teens on NFTY Go West has shown that a positive group experience can strengthen the Jewish identity of the participants. If more teens who are not involved were encouraged to participate in a program such as NFTY Go West in which they were given a positive Jewish experience in the United States, then perhaps they would be more inclined to live a more committed Jewish life and be an active member in the community. On NFTY Go West, the majority of the teens participating were already active members of the Jewish community. In my particular group of 37 participants, 33 attended a URJ camp, 3 were Israeli and active participants in their own communities, and only one participant was not involved in Jewish life and forced into the trip by his parents. By the end of the summer, even that one participant wanted to go to camp the next summer and has continued to talk to and meet up with the

friends he made on NFTY Go West.

The group experience on a travel program has proven to be the most powerful tool for teens in developing a strong Jewish identity. Teens rely on their peers as the constant throughout the summer; therefore, a group culture must be created. This can be done before the trip even begins. All of the teens who participate in travel programs have access to the internet. A chat room or message board can be set up before the summer so participants can post messages and get to know each other. The teens can also use this medium to keep in touch once the summer is over to keep in touch, post pictures, and make plans for future Jewish interactions.

Throughout the trip, there are also things that can be done to strengthen the culture of the group. T-shirts are usually made and given out at the end of the summer. The teens can come up with cheers that describe their group and reinforce it. They can name their group and refer to themselves as that name throughout the summer. For example, on NFTY Go West, my bus was called Alon (all of the bus groups were given Hebrew names of trees). This name was incorporated into programs, cheers, songs, inside jokes, and games throughout the summer.

A fun way that my group got to know each other was playing the game Alon Alive on the bus. The staff came up with five random questions to ask each participant, and conducted interviews from the front of the bus while traveling between locations. This was also a good use of bus time; rather than let the participants listen to music or sleep the entire ride, the staff attempted to encourage the teens to interact with one another and chat with new people. The bus time was also a good time for the staff to

teach mini-lessons. The Israeli staff member (and sometimes the Israeli teens) would teach a Hebrew word of the day, or the songleader would lead the group in singing. This was also a good time to tell the teens about the day ahead of them, where they were going, what they would be doing there, and give them some background information.

It is also possible to compile all of the information about the places on the travel program into a sourcebook, which can be handed out to the teens at the start of the summer. It can also include reference material to some of the Jewish concepts that are being studied, such as quotes from Pirke Avot, the Torah portions that are read during the weeks in which the trip takes place, and programs that can be taken home for use with a local youth group. The sourcebook can also include blank pages to be used as a journal, as well as pages for friends to sign their names and give contact information for the future.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS OF NFTY GO WEST

The programs of NFTY Go West were mostly successful, though they were created with only the present travel program time frame in mind. The teens learned about Judaism and nature while on NFTY Go West, but they were not going to return home and become Jewish nature specialists. The programs that are created on a travel program need to be relevant for the teens in the future as well as the present. A program that is geared towards the future may help the teens take the concepts they learn during the summer and apply them to a setting back home. For example, the social action projects on NFTY Go West were a great way for the teens to be involved in Tikkun Olam. Working with the

residents at an old-age home or cleaning up a park are examples of something that they can do once they return to their home communities. Perhaps having teens from the same communities working together to come up with a list of activities and opportunities that they can do in their hometowns throughout the year would give the teens a post-trip framework to apply their knowledge from the summer program.

Teen travel programs in the Diaspora can have a powerful impact on the Jewish identity of the participants. In addition, another goal for this type of program should be to encourage involvement in the Jewish community and strengthen the teens' commitment to Judaism. A program giving teens options for future involvement in the Jewish community would be a helpful resource in reaching that goal. Having someone speak about programs such as NFTY in Israel, Eisendrath International Exchange, the Meitav Youth Fellowship, the Union for Reform Judaism Camps, and NFTY at the local level are all ways in which teens can become immersed in Jewish life once they return home. Hopefully, the travel program during the summer will be a powerful tool in strengthening their Jewish identities and lead to more involvement in the Jewish community and a stronger commitment to Judaism.

Chapter 5- Conclusion

SUMMARY OF THE ISRAEL EXPERIENCE AND DIASPORA TEEN TRAVEL PROGRAMS

NFTY in Israel and NFTY Go West were both examples of successful Jewish teen travel programs. They both incorporated the elements needed in order to work with adolescents, had components and conceptual foundations necessary for a successful program, contained substantial Jewish content, and had a significant and positive impact on the participants. The main idea that both Israel trips and trips in the Diaspora have in common is a strong group experience, including both amongst the participants and with the staff. The teens were able to strengthen their Jewish identity by establishing bonds with other Jewish teenagers from around the world (including with Israelis), learning about Judaism in an informal environment with their peers, and having positive Jewish role models as staff.

Despite the claims that it is a wonderful, transformative, Jewish experience, many people are not going to Israel. The country has dropped from the agenda of religious schools, and Americans have little connection to the Jewish homeland. Due to safety concerns because of the political situation in Israel (especially at the beginning of the 21st century), NFTY offered another summer program in 2003 for teenagers intending to help build Jewish identity and be a positive Jewish travel program. NFTY Go West took what we know from the Israel Experience, as well as information about adolescent development, NFTY culture, and group experiences, and transferred that information to this new program held in the United States.

In looking at research on adolescent development, we learned that there are stages of emotional, social, and cognitive development that affect teens' behavioral characteristics. Teens in early developmental stages (ages 12-15) change in physical appearance, become intellectually stimulated, begin separating themselves from parents and moving towards peers for friendships and relationships, think about moral issues based on personal values, and may be moody, anxious, withdrawn, and go through emotional highs and lows. Teens in late development stages (ages 16-19) begin to mature sexually, are concerned with measuring up to their peers, are social with friends in both platonic and romantic relationships, show anger with injustice, and desire to be independent, though still showing signs of moodiness and self-absorbency. Adults should convey that they understand what teens are going through and that they are there to help them grow, especially when on a program which requires teens to be far from home in an unknown environment.

According to the Jewish Adolescent Study, Jewish American teenagers were similar to every other American teenager: though religion may be important, participation declines as students get older, and secular school work becomes a higher priority. Jewish teenagers are influenced by their peers (in addition to parents), and with summer being the best opportunity for Jewish involvement, many friends choose to go on a travel program or to camp together. The peer-group culture is a dominating factor in Jewish life for teenagers.

When reaching out to Jewish teens, successful programs are packed with numerous activities and demand substantial portions of time. They attempt to have an

emotional impact, take place in a significant environment, and employ group-processing techniques. The staff is also a critical aspect of a successful program, needing to be trained, knowledgeable, committed to the goals of the program, and positive Jewish role models.

Once the research on adolescent development and criteria for successful programming is completed, we looked at the Israel Experience to see what elements could be isolated and transferred to a program in the Diaspora. The components and conceptual foundations that are central to the Israel Experience included an ideology, a curriculum, a dynamic staff, attention to details, affective, cognitive, and experiential learning opportunities, Israeli mifgashim, pre- and post-trip preparation, and fun. A successful program should also have a theme, a sourcebook, time for reflection, and educational moments.

NFTY adheres to the components and concepts described above while planning its teen travel programs. NFTY in Israel incorporated these on Harvey Goldberg's observation of an Israel Experience. The NFTY in Israel program participants were in the late adolescent developmental age-group, came from all over the United States and Canada, and had been previously involved in NFTY at their local level or had attended a URJ camp. The programs on the Israel trip aimed to strengthen the identity of Jewish teenagers and to reinforce their commitment to Reform Judaism, while keeping in touch with the pre-existing NFTY culture that the participants and staff brought with them. The staff were positive Jewish role models and good leaders on this program, and had authority and control over the participants, programs, and amount of Israel that were seen

on the trip. Though this trip had more girls than boys, gender differences were not an issue, and the group still had a cohesive bonding experience, which remained in well past the end of the summer.

Samuel Heilman critiqued the Israel program by saying that it was not Israel but the group experience that was the defining factor of the program. If the community that was built in Israel does not hold together in future Jewish experiences, then the temporary togetherness and bonding is lost for the participants. He also comments that the Jewish content while in Israel was taken for granted. Teens merely got a glimpse of images and fleeting memories to take home with them. The summer was fun, but was not permanently absorbed into something more tangible for their subsequent lives. In this view, the setting of Israel does not seem to be one of the main factors in determining the success of a travel program.

NFTY Go West had many of the same components as the Israel Experience. By looking at the research on the Israel Experience as well as adolescent development, we can see that a travel program in the Diaspora can be just as powerful of a Jewish identity building experience as a travel program in Israel.

Some of the goals of NFTY Go West, in addition to developing Jewish identity and having a positive Jewish teen travel experience, included preparing participants to be partners with each other and with God in repairing the world, and becoming active in being stewards of the earth. NFTY Go West also had a major social action component, and teens were able to spend time helping to repair the world.

The researchers of the Israel Experience agree that there are certain components

and conceptual foundations that are central to a positive Jewish identity building experience. NFTY Go West also had many of those same components of a successful program.

The staff of NFTY Go West was knowledgeable about Judaism and active participants in the Jewish community. Most of the staff had prior experience in NFTY and in Jewish camping, and were adept at working with adolescents. The staff were positive Jewish role models for the teens, and critical to the success of the program. They understood the stages of development of the teens with which they were working, and were able to handle emotional highs and lows, offer opportunities for individual growth, and knew how to deal with the relationships among the participants.

NFTY culture played an important role on NFTY Go West. While some groups had a pre-existing culture from camp, other groups had to create their group culture while on the trip. Each group bonded and shared experiences in their own ways, and was strengthened throughout the program.

There were some aspects from the Israel Experience that were not included in NFTY Go West. There was no sense of "home" while traveling through the United States, versus the sense of belonging that is part of being in Israel. In order to compensate for this, NFTY Go West concentrated on forming a strong group as the constant throughout the summer, and became the most influential and powerful component of the trip. Another aspect from Israel that was lacking on NFTY Go West was having Israelis as fellow tourists rather than hosts for the Americans of a travel program.

In accordance with the Israel Experience, NFTY Go West also incorporated

themes to connect the pieces of the summer program. Participants learned about Judaism and nature, tikkun olam, and social action by engaging in text-based learning activities, hiking, kayaking, and climbing through some of the beautiful national parks of the United States, volunteering in community service activities such as the AIDS Walk in San Francisco, an old age home, cleaning up parks and beaches, and working in a homeless garden. The teens took time in guided reflections to see the world around them, and what their role was in helping protect the earth.

In more formal programming, the participants also looked at concepts such as Bal Tashchit (do not waste), Tzar Ba'alei Chayyim (compassion to animals), Gemilut Chasadim (acts of love and kindness), and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world). Through text-based study, the teens were guided by a well-trained and knowledgeable staff, learning about the world around them.

Travel programs such as NFTY Go West can also have powerful effects on the participants. Future trips can be improved in a few ways. Marketers can reach out to the unaffiliated teens to take part in this type of program. The group experience can be strengthened by providing pre-trip communication options such as message boards or chat rooms that can be used after the trip is over as well. Throughout the trip, the group can come up with a name, cheer, and t-shirt to help the group bond and get to know each other. Bus time can be used for games and educational programming. Participants can be given a sourcebook with a map and highlights of the locations they would be visiting throughout the summer. Finally, programs that help teens bring home the concepts they learned over the summer and ways to get involved in their hometown Jewish

communities will provide follow-up to the summer.

NFTY Go West was offered to teens as another option instead of going to Israel for the summer. As the website said,

"Together with Jewish teens from across North America enjoy four fun filled weeks exploring spectacular North American sights. Embark upon an unforgettable NFTY adventure understanding that the wilderness has always served as an important metaphor for the Jewish people. It was in the wilderness that we received the Torah, the wilderness that served as a place of refuge and reflection, the wilderness that functioned as the birthplace of our people. The NFTY Go West program is designed to create an opportunity for our participants to find their own special relationship with this unique environment and in doing so, attain a greater sense of self.

Fulfill your commitment to Tikkun Olam, repairing our world, in the social justice element of this summer adventure. Help repair a world that does not yet reflect peace and wholeness.

Go where few NFTYites have ever gone before- Alaska and its national parks offer awesome views of nature in its most pristine state. It also reminds us of the biblical responsibility to serve as stewards of the earth.

Create a unique NFTY traveling and sharing Jewish community where each day brings a new opportunity for adventure, personal growth, and group challenge."³⁶

NFTY Go West set out to give teens a Jewish travel experience and help build Jewish identity. It succeeded in its goals:

- 1) giving teens a Jewish lifestyle during the summer, and hopefully for the future
- 2) offering an informational background on Judaism's view of human roles in protecting and preserving nature

³⁶ NFTY Go West website, 2003

- 3) strengthening their commitment to Jewish life in order to make the world a better place
- 4) helping them on a personal journey from observers to active participants as stewards of the earth
- 5) building a caring community among the group of meaningful friendships.

NFTY Go West was able to bring substantial Jewish content to the trip, incorporate NFTY culture into the programs, offer positive Jewish role models, and bring together a group of individuals forming them into their own Jewish community. NFTY Go West was a learning experience for everyone involved. Together with what we know from the Israel Experience, we can continue to form strong Jewish identities for teens for many years to come.

Bibliography

Academic Expeditions. Teen Expedition- US National Parks-Dude Ranch-Alaska.

Arian, Ramie. Jewish Youth and Jewish Camping: Camp and Israel as Building Blocks for Jewish Identity. CAJE, *Jewish Education News*, Winter 2003, Volume 24, Number 1.

Bayar, Steven, and Hirschman, Francine. Teens and Trust: Building Bridges in Jewish Education. Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, 1993.

Bernstein, Ellen, Ecology and the Jewish Spirit: Where Nature and the Sacred Meet. Jewish Lights Publishing, United States, 1997.

Bernstein, Ellen, and Fink, Dan. Let the Earth Teach You Torah. Edward Brothers, Inc. United States, 1992.

Biers-Ariel, Matt, Newborn, Deborah, and Smart, Michal Fox. Spirit in Nature: Teaching Judaism and Ecology on the Trail. Behrman House, Inc. United States, 2000.

Breakstone, David. The Israel Experience: Great Expectations. *Jewish Education News*, 37-40.

Breakstone, David. The Israel Experience. *Israel in our Lives*. CRB Foundation, Department for Jewish Zionist Education of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Charles R. Bronfman Centre for the Israel Experience: Mifgashim. Jerusalem, 1999. _

Call Us Your Builders (NFTY Convention 1997 Resource Book). UAHC Press, New York, 1997.

"Can Israel Alternative Programs Work?" A Case Study of a Mifgash by the Jewish Federation of the North Shore. 2003.

CCAR Journal, Winter 2001.

"Changing Reality: The Teen Israel Experience," *The Jerusalem Report*, 2-6, 1996.

Chazan, Barry (ed.) Studies in Jewish Identity and Youth Culture. c.1995.

Chazan, Barry. *Youth Trips to Israel: Rationale and Realization*. JESNA, New York, 1994.

Chazan, Barry. "The Israel Trip: A New Form of Jewish Education." *The Israel*

Experience, 1992

Chazan, Barry. "What is Informal Jewish Education?" 1991

Cohen, Steven, and Susan Wall. "Excellence in Youth Trips to Israel." CRB Foundation, JESNA. New York, 1994.

Comins, Michael. Torah Trek. Hitbodeduts, "The Human Relationship to the Earth."

Dewey, John. Experience and Education. Simon & Schuster Inc., New York 1938.

Eisen, Arnold and Michael Rosenak. Teaching Israel: Basic Issues and Philosophical Guidelines. *Israel in our Lives*. The CRB Foundation, The Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education, and the Charles R. Bronfman Centre for the Israel Experience: Mifgashim. Jerusalem, 1997.

Erikson, Erik. Identity and the Life Cycle. W. W. Norton, NY 1980.

Goldberg, Harvey. A Summer on a NFTY Safari. c. 1995.

Hamakor, The NFTY Resource Book: What you need to know about Jewish living and leading. UAHC Press, New York, 1994.

Heilman, Samuel. A Young Judea Israel Study Tour. c. 1995.

Isaacs, Ronald, The Jewish Sourcebook on the Environment and Ecology. Jason Aronson Inc. New Jersey, 1998.

"Jewish Adolescent Study," Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 1999.

Jewish Environmental and Nature Education Training Manual. Foundation for Jewish Camping, Inc., 2003.

Kelman, Stuart. What We Know About Jewish Education. Torah Aura Productions, Los Angeles, 1992.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. Learning from Ethnography: Reflections on the Nature and Efficacy of Youth Tours to Israel. c. 1995.

"Making Meaning" Participants' Experience of Birthright Israel. Brandeis University, 2000.

Margolin, Ruth Bloomfield. Tikkun Olam: From Dream to Reality. UAHC Press, New York, 1987.

NFTY Convention 1999 Resource Book, UAHC Press, New York, 1999.

Reaching Adolescents: Interdating, Intermarriage, and Jewish Identity. UAHC Press, United States 1990.

Sh'ma Magazine, 31/582, May 2001.

Waskow, Arthur. Torah of the Earth: Exploring 4,000 Years of Ecology in Jewish Thought, volumes 1 and 2. Jewish Lights Publishing, United States, 2000.

Wertheimer, Jack. "Jewish Education in the United States: Recent Trends and Issues." 1999.

What We Know About Jewish Education, ed. Kelman, Stuart. Torah Aura Productions, CA 1992.

www.coejl.org

www.nfty.org

Programs from NFTY Go West

Im Ain Ani Li Mi Li- If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

- 1) Teach/Sing song "Im Ain Ani Li Mi Li"
- 2) Break into three equal groups and give each group one card with one of the following:
 - a) Im Ain Ani Li, Mi Li? If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
 - b) Uk'shani l'atz mi, mah ani? If I am only for myself, what am I?
 - c) V'Im lo acshav, aimatai? And if not now, when?
- 3) Have each group do a quick name game for introductions, and then briefly discuss the part of the song on their card. What do they think it means, how can it apply to the summer?
- 4) Using random items in a brown paper bag, have the group create a skit to teach the other two groups their passage. Bags will be handed out by program leader.
- 5) Bring the three groups together to share their skits.
- 6) Summarize what the skit represented and how it applies to the trip.

The Dating Game Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayyim: Compassion to Animals

Objective: Choose contestant with most compassionate attitude towards animals; Personal reflection on tza'ar ba'alei chayyim. Resource: See appendix 1 quote sheet. Players: Host (Madrach/a), Bachelor/ette, 3 contestants

1) Host welcomes audience to "The Dating Game for Animal Lovers!" Bachelor/ette is introduced by the host, gives brief bio. (Includes: loves to have fun, but most of all is observant of the mitzvah of tza'ar ba'alei chayyim. Looking for someone to share in his/her commitment to protecting the sanctity of animal life.

2) Contestants introduce themselves, give brief bios. (The following is for group discussions, not information for contestants to volunteer about themselves)

a) Vegetarian, Fashion Designer, lives on a boat in Crystal River, FL. Has a pet cat that was a stray. Designs many collections that use leather, despite being anti-fur. Vegetarian because he/she doesn't like the taste of meat.

b) Vegan, CEO for a large advertising agency that represents several large companies. Companies represented include Nike, Nokia, and Wilson's leather. Has a pet dog, but must leave him at a kennel once a month to travel for work. Recycles everything (tin, cardboard, organics), will not use animal tested products or wear leather.

c) Founded Humane Society, has a show-dog that has won 5 blue ribbons, shows dog in many rigorous competitions. Lets dog run around off leash on property, dog sometimes kills rabbits. Lives in a house in the mountains. Eats all meat except veal.

3) Teens break into groups to discuss each contestant, come up with two questions to ask contestants. Elect a group speaker to ask questions as contestants come around to groups.

4) Speakers can ask questions to contestants. Allow groups to discuss which contestant possesses the Bachelor/ette's ideal qualities of tza'ar ba'alei chayyim and why. Share personal experiences/reflections of compassion towards animals.

5) Final regroup of all groups, each group presents which contestant matches as the bachelor/ette's perfect mate and why they made that decision.

Web of Life

- 1) Entire group sits outside in a circle. Take a ball of string/yarn and toss it across the circle to someone. They catch it, hold onto a piece of the string, and toss to someone else. Continue tossing ball of string around circle until everyone is holding a piece of string and it forms a web through the middle of the circle..
- 2) Have one person stand up as they hold the string in their hand. Ask how many people felt a tug on their own string. Have each of those people who felt a tug stand up. Ask how many more people felt a tug. Continue until everyone is standing.
- 3) Discuss how everyone is connected in the circle of life, and how every little pull by one person can affect so many other people. Discuss our role in nature and the environment, and how our actions affect others.

Pirke Avot, Wisdom For Life

- 1) Have entire group sit in a circle. Hand each person 6 m&ms. DO NOT EAT! Everyone must stay silent for this part of the program. Follow Hitbodedut "Mindfulness."
- 2) Break into preassigned groups. Each group has a piece of butcher paper with a quote from Pirke Avot written on the top. Read quote, and discuss how it applies to our relationships with other people and nature/environment on this trip.
- 3) With your group, come up with 5 principles of life that are most important to live by this summer, write under the Pirke Avot quote on the butcher paper.
- 4) Groups all come together in a large circle, each small group presents their principles.
- 5) Summarize some of the more important points, reiterate group respect and cooperation, working together, etc.

Mindfulness

In a plastic bag, you will find several M&Ms. Try the following exercise.

1. Eat 5 M&Ms in the normal fashion.
2. This time, each 2 M&Ms as slowly as possible. No biting!
3. This time, take 1 M&M. Hold it in your hand and look at it before eating. Notice the color and the texture. Feel the weight. Next, place it in your mouth. Let it melt. Eat it ever slower than the first two. This time, take care to concentrate fully on the taste of the M&M. Eat like it's the last piece of chocolate that you'll ever eat in your life.

Pirke Avot- Wisdom for Life

If you had an easy reference guide book for life, what would it look like? The Biblical authors wrote the Book of Proverbs to answer that question. And then the Rabbis following with their contribution, a book in the Mishnah called Pirke Avot. Here are some examples:

- The world stands on three things: Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Chasidim (study, prayer, and acts of lovingkindness)
- If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?
- The day is short and the task is great and the laborers are idle; the wages are high and the one responsible is impatient. It is not upon you to finish the work; neither are you free to desist from it.
- He whose actions exceed his wisdom, his wisdom endures. He whose wisdom exceeds his actions, his wisdom does not endure.
- Let your friends honor be as dear to you as your own, do not be easily provoked, and do Teshuvah one day before you die.
- Say little and do much, and receive all people with joy.
- By three things is the world sustained: by truth, judgement, and peace.
- Despise no one and deem nothing impossible, for there is not a person that does not have their hour and there is not a thing that does not have its place.

Why wasn't the Book of Proverbs enough? Because each generation, in its unique circumstance, must learn its own wisdom. What wisdom does our generation need? Write 5 "principles for life" that we need today.

Bal Tashchit: Do not waste

- 1) Split campers into 4 groups. Give each group 1 piece of paper and one marker.
- 2) Ask campers to plan their final banquet (within certain parameters- budget, supplies, etc.) Counselors may tell campers amount of money in group kupah they are allowed to spend.
- 3) Campers work in small groups to plan banquet for about 15-20 minutes.
- 4) Bring group back together and describe concept of Bal Tashchit. Engage in discussion for 10-15 minutes about ways to include this concept in party planning.
- 5) Break back into groups with a second sheet of paper and have campers incorporate idea of Bal Tashchit into their plans.
- 6) Bring group back together and have each group present their original idea and how it is now "environment friendly".
- 7) Have entire group decide on one idea or a combination for their final banquet.
- 8) Summarize how the ideas of Bal Tashchit can be applied to all areas of life, not just parties. As an example, bring a card from the hotel room that asks if customers want to reuse their sheets and towels to save water. Think of ideas they can do at home to help with excessive usage.

Social Action at Camp Swig

Golden Gate National Recreation Area/Marin Headlands- Removing invasive plants, part of Habitat Restoration efforts

This activity will help restore native plant habitats suffering from human impact. Non-native plants were introduced to this area by people in the past (for a variety of reasons, from aesthetics to usefulness). These plants "out-competed" the native plants for space, water, and soil, and in many cases change the face of the ecosystem. Removal of invasive plants improves habitat value for local wildlife while teaching campers about Bay Area plants and natural history.

The Marine Mammal Center

"We recognize human interdependence with marine mammals, their importance as sentinels of the ocean environment, which is essential for all life, and our responsibility to use our awareness, compassion and intelligence to foster their survival and the conservation of their habitat." This center works to this end through rescue and humane treatment of ill, injured, or orphaned marine mammals, to return healthy animals to the wild; through scientific inquiry, to increase knowledge of marine mammals, their health and their environment; and through education and communication programs, to increase appreciation of marine mammals, foster informed decision-making and inspire action to protect the marine environment...Campers will volunteer with facilities projects at TMMC to contribute to the survival and conservation of marine mammals and their habitat.

The Nike Missile Site

Campers consider the origin and legacy of a military installation developed to protect urban areas from nuclear attack. We will conduct a tour and program at the Nike site, with a focus on the idea posed by Albert Einstein. "You cannot simultaneously prevent and prepare for war." Campers engage in inquiry-based exercises that challenge them to work independently and collectively to address the complexities of the Cold War, its definition of security, the technology it spawned, and its issues relevant still today. Working in small groups, participants will consider issues such as the public's right to know, nuclear testing on the environment, and the soldier's personal experience.

Save the Bay

Campers will participate in Canoes in Sloughs, an innovative, experiential program that places them in canoes to explore the bay-estuary ecosystem up close. Campers are accompanied by Save the Bay staff members who explain the watershed and the Bay's many wonders. Under staff guidance, campers experience the Bay by using

water quality kits, dip nets, maps, and field guides. Campers will volunteer in habitat restoration activities such as native plant propagation, building a native plant nursery, transplanting and weeding, water quality monitoring, native seed collection, site mapping, and bird, plant, and aquatic invertebrate monitoring. Themes of the day will include interdependence, human impact, and habitat loss/degradation.

Jewish Home for the Aged

Campers will have an introduction by a local rabbi about the issues and challenges of the residents. They then will meet with the residents, and listen to a panel discussion and stories of personal ancestry. A program will follow that is an exploration and appreciation of where our ancestors came from, and a tefillah/shira with the residents.

Santa Cruz Beach Cleanup

Introductory talk by a ranger/naturalist about the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and why it is so important to keep trash out of the water. Marine debris pollutes the oceans and endangers the lives of marine animals and the health of the marine ecosystem. The overwhelming majority of marine debris is plastic, which does not biodegrade or ever go away, but can either affect animals now or break down into little pieces to affect them later. Campers will learn what is considered recycling versus trash and will note on paper the variety and number of items picked up during the beach cleanup.

Second Harvest Food Bank, Watsonville

The group will be split in half. Each half will spend an hour in a hunger awareness program led by food bank staff. The other hour will be spent in the warehouse, packing and stocking food to be distributed to hungry or homeless people.

Appreciation

Usually, human beings only take from nature. If we value the natural world, then it is appropriate for us to show our appreciation. In many cultures, people bring gifts- such as special herbs or tobacco- out to their favorite places and leave it as an offering. In Judaism, we leave the gifts of our hearts: our prayers and good intentions for the well-being of the natural world. If you really appreciate them, walk around your site and silently let each rock and shrub and branch and leaf know that you are grateful for their presence.

Afterwards, see if you feel different when you sit down.

Isn't it true? So often we don't take the time to let the people we care about most know how much we appreciate them!

Write a short note or letter to someone who you appreciate. Let them know how grateful you are for your relationship with them. If you want to, you can then send it to them later.

Sound Map

Sit, or better yet, lie down in a comfortable place. After a few minutes, if you are very still, the animal life in the area will return to its normal state. Usually, we human can first detect animal life by the way of our ears. For about ten minutes, simply listen to the sounds around you. When you are ready, make a "sound map." On the other side of this page, draw a simple, small picture of your sight, leaving lots of room around the edges. Then draw an arrow pointing in the direction where you heard a sound. Write the sound at the end of the arrow.

Still-Hunting

Still hunting was practiced by the American Indians. A brave who wanted to still-hunt would go to a place he knew well and felt attracted to. There, in the forest or on a hillside, he would sit down and let his mind settle into a still and watchful mood. If his arrival had caused a disturbance among the creatures around him, he waited patiently until the world of nature returned to its normal, harmonious routine. Usually, his only desire in still-hunting was to observe and to learn.

For the first part of your stay remain motionless, not even turning your head. Be as unobtrusive as you can, letting the world around you go on as it does when you aren't there. Feel that you are part of the natural surroundings; mentally move with the shimmering leaves, or dance with the butterfly as it darts and dodges through the air. Because you are still, curious animals may come close for a look at you.

Afterwards, you may record any observations you would like to remember on the bottom of this page.

What's True?

Telling the truth about ourselves, to ourselves, just might be the hardest thing that we are ever asked to do. Yet it is so important. In Judaism, this is the first step in doing teshuvah, finding our way back to our best selves through self-awareness and gentle self-criticism. Teshuvah is the main activity of Yom Kippur, but we can, and should, do it throughout the year.

Write 3 questions about yourself that begin, "What's true..." For example, you might write about recurring themes in your life, like, "What's true about how I relate to people" or "What's true about how I react to X or Y?" You can ask directly about your personality traits, such as "What's true about me and arrogance/humility, assertive/passive, lazy/disciplined, etc." Or you might ask, "What's true about the way I...receive love, give love, make friends, respond to friends' problems, prioritize my activities, make the world a better place, etc.?" Choose things that are important in your life.

So....what's true?

After you have your questions, write a paragraph of two in response to each.

Letter to God

Try to relax using a method such as following your breath or silently singing a song or line from the prayerbook. Listen within, and when you are ready, write the most honest thing you can to God (or if you prefer, to your higher self). You might describe your wishes for yourself, or your family and friends. You might write about the things you need most, or ask for guidance.

Write your own eulogy!

No kidding! Think about what you would like to hear others say about you if you were at your own funeral. On a piece of paper, write a one-page eulogy that you hope others will say for you. You might talk about the personality traits your friends loved in you, or some of the more memorable things that you did. How did you affect the lives of those around you?

How does your eulogy compare to what you think you would hear with what others might say about you today?

Do you think it's possible for you to live up to your own ideas about a good life for yourself? What would you have to change about yourself?

Animals/Tza'ar Ba'alei Hayyim

Genesis 1:30-31

And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth, where there is life, I have given every green herb for food; and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Genesis 9:3-4

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with its life, which is its blood, you shall not eat.

Exodus 23:4-5

If you meet your enemy's ox or his ass going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the ass of one who hates you lying under its burden, you shall refrain from leaving it with him, you shall help him to lift it up.

Leviticus 19:19

You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your cattle breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with mixed seed; nor shall a garment mixed of linen and woollen come upon you.

Deuteronomy 5:14

But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your ox, nor your ass, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who is inside your gates; that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.

Deuteronomy 22:10

You shall not plow with an ox and an ass together.

Deuteronomy 25:4

You shall not muzzle the ox when he treads out the grain.

Isaiah 11:6-9

The wolf also shall live with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Ecclesiastes 3:19

For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; one thing befalls them both; as the one dies, so dies the other; They have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast; for all is vanity.

Proverbs 12:10

A righteous man regards the life of his beast.

Proverbs 30:24-28

There are four things on earth which are small, but they are exceedingly wise; The ants are not a strong people, yet they prepare their bread in the summer; The badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; The locusts have no king, yet they go forth all of them by bands; The lizard climbs up with her hands, and she is in kings' palaces.

Job 12:7-9

But ask the beasts, and they shall teach you; and the birds of the air, and they shall tell you; Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach you; and the fishes of the sea shall declare to you. Who knows not among all these that the hand of the Lord has done this?

Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 108b

... The raven gave Noah a triumphant retort. It said to him, 'Thy Master hateth me, and thou hatest me. Thy Master hateth me — [since He commanded] seven [pairs to be taken] of the clean [creatures], but only two of the unclean. Thou hatest me — seeing that thou leavest the species of which there are seven, and sendest one of which there are only two. Should the angel of heat or of cold smite me, would not the world be short of one kind?

Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 100b

If the Torah had not been given we could have learnt modesty from the cat, honesty from the ant, chastity from the dove, and good manners from the cock who first coaxes and then mates.

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 40a

A man is forbidden to eat before he gives food to his beast, since it says. And I will give grass in thy fields for thy cattle, and then, thou shalt eat and be satisfied.

Jerusalem Talmud, Ketubot 4:8

A person should not acquire domestic animals, wild beasts, or birds before buying food for those animals to eat.

Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 77b

He did not create a single thing without purpose. [Thus] He created the snail as a remedy for a scab; the fly as an antidote to the hornet['s sting]; the mosquito [crushed] for a serpent['s bite]; a serpent as a remedy for an eruption. and a [crushed] spider as a remedy for a scorpion['s bite]. 'A serpent as a remedy for an eruption':

Midrash Rabbah, B'reishit 10:7

Our Rabbis said: Even those things which you may regard as completely superfluous to the creation of the world, such as fleas, gnats, and flies, even they too are included in the creation of the world, and the Holy One, blessed be He, carries out His purpose through everything, even through a snake, a scorpion, a gnat, or a frog.

Deuteronomy Rabbah 6:1

Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, has compassion for human beings, so does He have compassion for animals.

Deuteronomy 22:6-7

If a bird's nest chances to be before you in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they are young ones, or eggs, and the mother sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; But you shall let the mother go, and take the young to you; that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days.

Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed part 3, chapter 48

It is forbidden to slaughter 'it and its young on the same day,' this being a precaution against killing a child in front of its mother. For in these cases animals feel great pain, as there is no real distinction between the pain of humans and the pain of animals. This is because the love and compassion of the mother for her young is not reasoned intellectually, but has only to do with the emotions and instincts, which are found among animals no less than among humans.

Ramban, Devarim 22:6

Scripture does not allow us to destroy a species altogether, although it permits slaughter for food from that species. Someone who kills a mother and her children in one day...it is considered as if he destroyed the species.

Maimonides, Mishned Torah, Hilkhos Tefila 9:7

One who exclaims in prayer, 'the One who has compassion on the mother birds by commanding us not to take the mother bird with her eggs, and is similarly compassionate when commanding us not to slaughter an animal and its children on the same day, should have compassion on us' and other similar statements must be silenced. Such commandments are mere decrees and are not compassionate...for if they were compassionate, it would not be permitted for us to slaughter [animals] at all.

Baal Shem Tov

A man should consider himself as a worm, and all other small animals his friends in the world, for all of them are all created.

Tales of the Hasidim- Early Masters, p. 111

After the Maggid's death, his disciples came together and talked about the things he had done. When it was rabbi Schneur Zalman's turn, he asked them, "Do you know why your master went to the pond every day at dawn and stayed there for a while before coming home again?" They did not know why. Rabbi Zalman continued, 'He was learning the song with which the frogs praise God. It takes a very long time to learn that song.'

Water

Ecclesiastes 1:7

All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; to the place from where the rivers come, there they return again.

Genesis Rabbah 13:3

Three things are equal in importance, viz., earth, man, and rain. R. Levi b. Hiyyatha said: And these three each consist of three letters, to teach that without earth there would be no rain and without rain earth could not endure; while without either man could not exist.

Newman, Hasidic Anthology, p. 459

The Kotzker Rebbe taught: "We read: Moses said: "My doctrine shall drop as rain." (Deut 32:2) We see that rain falls upon many kinds of plants, and each grows according to its own nature. In the same fashion, let instruction be accepted by all persons, and each one will profit according to his inherent ability.

Air/Stars/Sky

Deuteronomy Rabbah 8:6

Samuel said: The Torah is not to be found amongst astrologers whose work is to gaze at the heavens. People said to Samuel: 'Lo, you are an astrologer, and yet you are also great in the Torah.' Whereupon he replied: 'I only engage in astrology when I am free-from studying the Torah.' 'When is that?' 'When I am in the bath.

Psalms 96:11-13

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all that is in it. Let the field be joyful, and everything in it; then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy. Before the Lord; for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his faithfulness.

Song of Songs 2:11-13

For, behold, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing bird has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines in blossom give forth their scent. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov

A person should get into the habit of singing, for a holy melody is a great and wondrous thing. It can awaken the heart from its sleep and bring one back to the Divine Source of All.

Responsibility/Stewardship/Dominion

Genesis 2:15

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and to keep it.

Tosefta Sanhedrin 8:3

Why were human beings created last in the order of creation? So that they should not grow proud- for one can say to them, 'Even the gnat came before you in creation!'

Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 4:6

It is said, Shall one man sin, and wilt Thou be wroth with all the congregation? (Num. XVI, 22). R. Simeon b. Yohai taught: This may be compared to the case of men on a ship, one of whom took a borer and began boring beneath his own place. His fellow travellers said to him: 'What are you doing?' Said he to them: 'What does that matter to you, am I not boring under my own place?' Said they: 'Because the water will come up and flood the ship for us all.'

Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13

Upon creating the first human beings, God guided them around the Garden of Eden, saying, "Look at my creations! See how beautiful and perfect they are! I created everything for you. Make sure you don't ruin or destroy my world. If you do, there will be no one after you to fix it."

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav, Liquei Mo'HaRaN 1 5:1

According to the Rabbis, every person must say the entire world was created for me. If the world was created for me, it follows that I must always examine how I can rectify the world and fulfill its needs and pray for the world.

Abraham Joshua Heschel

"There are three ways in which we may relate ourselves to the world- we may exploit it, we may enjoy it, we may accept it in awe."

Adlai Stevenson

"We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace; preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and the love we give our fragile craft."

Land/Use/Soil

Genesis 2:7-9

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Exodus 3:5

And he said, Do not come any closer; take off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.

Leviticus 25:3-4

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in its fruit; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest to the land, a sabbath for the Lord; you shall not sow your field, nor prune your vineyard.

Leviticus 25:23-24

The land shall not be sold forever; for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession you shall grant a redemption for the land.

Numbers 35:2-5

Command the people of Israel, that they give to the Levites of the inheritance of their possession cities to live in; and you shall also give to the Levites an open ground around the cities. And they shall have the cities to live in; and their open ground shall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beasts. And the open ground around the cities, that you shall give to the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits around. And you shall measure from outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, and on the south side two thousand cubits, and on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits, and the city shall be in the midst. This shall be to them the open ground of the cities.

Deuteronomy 11:13-17

You shall have a place also outside the camp, where you shall go out to it; And you shall have a spade among your weapons; and it shall be, when you will ease yourself outside, you shall dig with it, and shall turn back and cover your excrement; For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to save you, and to give your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy; that he should see no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.

Isaiah 5:7-8

For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. Woe to those who join house to house, who lay field to field, till there is no room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!

Isaiah 45:18

God himself who formed the earth and made it; he has established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.

Ecclesiastes 1:4

One generation passes away, and another generation comes; but the earth abides for ever.



U A H C

UNION OF AMERICAN
HEBREW CONGREGATIONS
איחוד להדות מתקדמת באמריקה

YOUTH DIVISION

ADDENDUM A

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NFTY Travel Programs

1. To aid in the development of knowledgeable, believing and practicing Reform Jews.
2. To provide participants and staff with rewarding, challenging and pleasant experiences in a religious environment.
3. To provide opportunities to study Torah at graded levels of understanding and appreciation.
4. To develop an appreciation and understanding of the sacred relationship between humanity and God and among all human beings.
5. To develop an understanding that life is filled with purpose and is good beyond its materialistic manifestations.
6. To provide youth and adults families with opportunities to experience the fullness of Jewish life through prayer and other meaningful religious experiences.
7. To provide youth and adults with opportunities for extensive training to assume roles of lay and professional leadership within both the Reform Jewish community and the Jewish community at large.
8. To translate religious concepts into real experiences, developing or modifying personal character and group behavior in consonance with the ideals of Judaism.
9. To provide a creative setting for Jewish learning and living through integrated and confluent religious programming.
10. To serve as an informal education resource center for congregations and regions of the UAHC.
11. To promote the use of Hebrew as a living and modern language and the learning of Hebrew for purposes of greater Jewish literacy.
12. To implement the awareness of K'lal Yisrael in general, and of the State of Israel in particular, and to offer participants the opportunity to find their own creative and active rolls in the process.

S E R V I N G R E F O R M J U D A I S M I N N O R T H A M E R I C A

633 THIRD AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10017-6778
TEL: 212.650.4070

FAX: 212.650.4199
E-MAIL: YOUTHDIVISION@UAHC.ORG

P.O. Box 443
WARWICK, NY 10990
PHONE: 845.987.6300
FAX: 845.986.7185
E-MAIL: NFTYIS@WARWICK.NET

13 KING DAVID STREET
JERUSALEM 94101, ISRAEL
011.972.2.624.6195
FAX: 624.1295
E-MAIL: NFTYISOF@ACTCOM.CO.IL

NFTY Go West- written by the Singing Chug, Camp Swig, 2003

Verse 1:

Rowing down the bay I didn't feel really sincere
I couldn't think of nature, pollution was so near
Digging random holes in the ground didn't feel so right
Too many other things around that I could truly fight

Chorus:

And together we must find a way
And we've got to start today
To make the world a better place
We mustn't leave a trace
Cleaning the beaches as the Torah teaches
To leaving a mark on the human race

Verse 2:

When we got together on the day to clean the beach
We all had a common goal that we all had to reach
Just like Captain Planet said on Channel Five at 9
We all got together just to make the shore divine

Verse 3:

Our ancestors worked hard to build their family a home
From all over the world people had to roam
Because of this we learn about our peoples' history
We visit Angel Island and sing for the elderly

Verse 4:

During our short stay we gave tikkun olam a chance
Helping native vegetation pulling up ice plants
When we worked together the hillside was rid of weeds
We could clearly see the result of our group's good deeds

The Human Relationship to the Earth

Beresheit (Genesis) 1:26-28

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth,^b and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them.

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ
וְיִרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־
הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ
בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: וַיְבָרֶךְ
אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ וִרְדּוּ בְּדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיַּי הָרֹמֵשׁ
עַל־הָאָרֶץ

Beresheit 2:4-7

Adam and Eve

⁴This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth^b and no plant of the field had yet sprung up; the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth^b and there was no man to work the ground, ⁶but streams^c came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. ⁷And the LORD God formed man^d from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

ב אֵלֹהִי תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם בַּיּוֹם עָשׂוֹת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים אָרֶץ וּשְׁמַיִם: וְכָל־יֹשֵׁי הַשָּׂדֶה טָרִם יְהוָה בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל־
עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרִם יַעֲמֹת כִּי־לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ
וָאָדָם אֵין לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה: וְאָדָם יַעֲלֶה מִן־הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה
אֶת־כָּל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר
מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

Beresheit 2:15

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם
וַיִּנְתְּהוּ בְּגַרְדֵּן־עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹדָהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָתָהּ:

VaYikra (Leviticus) 25:1-24

Sabbatical Year

The LORD said to Moses on Mount Sinai, ²"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, and itself must observe a sabbath for the LORD. ³For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vines and gather their crops. ⁴But in the seventh year the land is to have a sabbath of rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. ⁵Do not reap your harvest or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. ⁶Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—yourself, your manservant and your hired worker, and the hired worker of the temporary resident who lives with you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces will be eaten.

The Year of Jubilee

⁸"Count off seven sabbaths of years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. ⁹Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. ¹⁰Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. ¹¹The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. ¹²For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

¹³"In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property.

¹⁴"If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other.

¹⁵You are to buy from your countryman on the basis of the number of years since the jubilee. And he is to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops.

¹⁶When the years are many, you are

to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what he is really selling you is the number of crops.

¹⁷Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God.

¹⁸"Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land. ¹⁹Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live there in safety. ²⁰You may ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we do not plant or harvest our crops?" ²¹I will send you such a blessing in the sixth year that the land will yield enough for three years. ²²While you plant during the eighth year, you will eat from the old crop and will continue to eat from it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

²³"The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants. ²⁴Throughout the country that you hold as a possession, you must provide for the redemption of the land.

God's Covenant With Noah

9 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

4 "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. 5 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man.

6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

7 As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-נֹחַ וְאֶת-בָּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
כ פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ: וּמִדַּמְכֶּם וְהַחַיָּה עַל-כָּל-
הָחַיָּה הָאָרֶץ וְעַל-כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם כָּל-אֲשֶׁר תִּרְמַשׁ הָאָדָמָה
י וּבְכִלְדָּנָהּ הֵם בְּיָדְכֶם נָתַנּוּ: כָּל-דָּמָשׁ אֲשֶׁר הוּא-חַי לָכֶם
י וְיִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ כִּי־כֶסֶף עֵשָׂב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל: אֶךְ-בֶּשָׂר
ה בְּנֶפֶשׁ דָּמוֹ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ: וְאֵךְ אֶת-דַּמְכֶּם לְנֶפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם אֲדַרֵּשׁ
מִיַּד כָּל-חַיָּה אֲדַרְשֶׁנּוּ וּמִיַּד הָאָדָם מִיַּד אִישׁ אָחִיו אֲדַרֵּשׁ
י אֶת-נֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם: שֹׁפֵךְ דָּם הָאָדָם בָּאָדָם דָּמוֹ יִשְׁפָּךְ כִּי בַעַל־
י אֱלֹהִים עֵשָׂה אֶת-הָאָדָם: וְאַתֶּם פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ שִׂרְצוּ בָאָרֶץ
ה וּבְרִיבָהּ:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:11-18

11 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.

12 Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, 13 and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, 14 then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 15 He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. 16 He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. 17 You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." 18 But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

הַשֹּׁמֵר לֹךְ פֶּתַח-שֹׁכֵחַ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְבַלְתִּי
כ שִׁכַּח מִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחֻקֵּיהֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מֵצִוְךָ הַיּוֹם: פֶּן-
ה תֹּאכַל וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵתִים טֹבִים תִּבְנֶה וְיִשְׁבַּעְתָּ: וּבִקְרָךְ וּצְאֻנֶּךָ
י יִרְבּוּ וְכֶסֶף וְזָהָב יִרְבּוּ-לְךָ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-לְךָ יִרְבֶּה: וְדָם לִבְכָּר
י וְשָׂכַחְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַמוֹצִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית
י עֲבָדִים: הַמּוֹלִיכֶךָ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַגָּדֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא נַחֲשׁוֹ שָׂרָף וְעַקְרָב
ט וְצִבְאוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֵין-מַיִם הַמוֹצִיא לְךָ מַיִם מִצּוֹר הַחֲלָמִישׁ:
ט וְהַמֵּאֲכִילֶךָ מִן הַמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִדְעוּן אֲבֹתֶיךָ לִמְעַן עֲנֶתְךָ
י וּלְמַעַן נִסְתָּךְ לְהִיטִיבְךָ בְּאַחֲרִיתֶךָ: וְאָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְּךָ כָּחִי וְעֵצִים
י יְדִי עָשָׂה לִי אֶת-הַחֵיל הַזֶּה: וְזָכַרְתָּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי הוּא
ה הֵנִיךְ לֹךְ פֶּתַח לַעֲשׂוֹת חֵיל לִמְעַן הָקִים אֶת-בְּרִיתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּע
י לְאֲבֹתֶיךָ בְּיוֹם הַזֶּה:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 11:13-16

13 So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul—14 then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. 15 I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied.

16 Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn away and worship other gods and bow down to them.

י וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעַתְּ תִשְׁמָעוּ אֶל-מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר
י אֲנִי מֵצִוְךָ אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ
י כָּל-לִבְבְּכֶם וּכְלִי-נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי מִטַּר-אֲרָצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹדֶה
י וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאִסְפַּת דָּגָן וְתִירֹשָׁה וְיִצְהָרֶךָ: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשָׂב בַּשָּׂדֶה
י לְבִהֲמֹתֶךָ וְאֵכְלָתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ: הִשְׁמָרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן-יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם
י וּבָרַתֶּם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:

"Toward An Environmental Ethic"

[1] Why were human beings created last [in the order of Creation]?...

...Another meaning:

So they should not grow proud –
for one can say to them,

"The gnat came before you in the Creation!"

Another meaning:

So they might immediately begin fulfilling a
mitzvah.*

Another meaning:

So they might enter the [already prepared]
banquet at once.

An analogy: What is this like?

Like a ruler who built a palace, dedicated it,
prepared a meal,
and only then invited the guests...

**Mitzvah*: what God requires of Jews: in this case, keeping the Sabbath holy.

Tosefta Sanhedrin 8:4-5
Land of Israel, c. 400 CE

[2] *Consider God's doing!*

Who can straighten what has been twisted?
Ecclesiastes 7:13

When God created the first human beings,
God led them around the garden of Eden and
said:

"Look at my works!

See how beautiful they are – how excellent!

For your sake I created them all.

See to it that you do not spoil and destroy
My world;

for if you do, there will be no one else to
repair it."

Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 1 on 7:13
c. 800 CE

[3] In that day,
I will make a covenant for them*
with the beasts of the field, the birds of the
air,
and the creeping things of the ground;
I will also banish bow, sword, and war from
the land.
Thus I will let them lie down in safety.

And I will betroth you forever:
I will betroth you in righteousness and
justice,
And in goodness and mercy,
And I will betroth you in faithfulness:**
Then you shall know (or be devoted to)
God.

Hosea 2:20-22

*namely, the people of the northern
kingdom of Israel.

**God (the groom) will give these qualities
to Israel (the bride) as the bride
price.

[4] The wolf and the lamb shall graze
together,
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
And the serpent's food shall be earth.
In all my sacred mount
Nothing evil or vile shall be done
—said God.

Isaiah 65: 24-25

quoted from *A Garden of Choice Fruit*
David E. Stein
translator and editor



nfty alumni • kutz camp • col

[home](#) | [what's nfty](#) | [nfty&you](#) | [regions](#) | [resources](#) | [travel programs](#) | [kutz camp](#) | [alumni](#)

NFTY Summer Travel Programs

Home

Programs

- Israel L'dor V'dor
- European Roots
- America Go West!

Safety and Security

- Israel L'dor V'dor
- European Roots

Fees and Conditions

Frequently Asked Questions

Why NFTY?

Apply Online

Downloads

For More Information

NFTY Go West!

Four Weeks visiting the Western USA and Alaska!

10 days National Parks, Grand Canyon, Western Dude Ranch
10 days Saratoga, CA – Social Action, Social Justice, and San Francisco
8 days Alaskan Wilderness Adventure

[Tour Highlights](#) | [Tour Itinerary](#) | [Accommodations](#)

Together with Jewish teens from across North America enjoy four fun filled weeks exploring spectacular North American sights. Embark upon an unforgettable NFTY adventure understanding that the wilderness has always served as an important metaphor for the Jewish people. It was in the wilderness that we received the Torah, the wilderness that served as a place of refuge and reflection, the wilderness that functioned as the birthplace of our people. The NFTY "Go West" program is designed to create an opportunity for our participants to find their own special relationship with this unique environment and in doing so, attain a greater sense of self.

Fulfill your commitment to Tikun Olam, repairing our world, in the social justice element of this summer adventure. Help repair a world that does not yet reflect peace and wholeness.

Go where few NFTYites have ever gone before- Alaska and its national parks offer awesome views of nature in its most pristine state. It also reminds us of the biblical responsibility to serve as stewards of the earth.

Create a unique NFTY traveling and sharing Jewish community where each day brings a new opportunity for adventure, personal growth, and group challenge.

Tour Highlights:

- Bryce Canyon - Hoodoos and other mysterious shapes
- Spectacular views of the Grand Canyon- North rim
- Amazing scenery in Zion Park
- Horseback riding at a real Dude Ranch



- Hiking, swimming river tubing in Utah
- Petrified Forest and Kodachrome Basin
- Tikun Olam - making a difference
- San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge
- Mountains, Forests and glaciers
- Grizzlies, Whales, Seals and other incredible wildlife
- Cruise on rivers and fjords in incredible Alaska
- Mt. Denali (Mt. McKinley) National Park
- Hike on a real mountain glacier
- Seward Nature Reserve
- Whale watching cruise
- White water rafting

Tour Itinerary

Part One – South West National Parks

Bryce, Zion & Grand Canyon National Parks: Nature set Bryce Canyon, Zion and the Grand Canyon ablaze with copper-hued chasms and theatrical formations. Explore through the diverse symphony of forest, desert, plateau and canyon in this spectacular trinity of national parks. No postcard can possibly prepare you for the chiseled vastness of the Grand Canyon, the monolithic oddities of Bryce Canyon or the stunning cliffs of Zion.

Bryce Canyon is filled with incredible red rock formations. From brilliant red sandstone hoodoos and mazes, to open amphitheaters and lush green forests, Bryce Canyon National Park inspires awe and appreciation for one of Mother Nature's greatest miracles. Kodachrome Basin is a spectacle of massive sandstone chimneys, ever-changing from gray and white to shades of red with the day's mood. Numerous rocks and coves offer solitude, quiet and unique desert beauty.

As one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, the **Grand Canyon** shows an impressive display of erosion and mother earth's natural beauty. The incredible views and panoramas are breathtaking. The true glory of nature is revealed to the visitors as they stand in awe in front of this massive canyon.

Zion is very likely one of the most awe-inspiring National Parks in the world. Throughout the park iron oxide has colored the sandstone a myriad shades of red while more natural white or ochre hues have remained in various sections and layers. Water flow from rain, and river has etched through the rock and created deep chasms of twisted and convoluted mass filled with pinnacles, domes, arches and spires. Elevations in the Park range from 4,000 feet in the valley floors to near

9,000 feet at the highest points. . Where the water leaves the rock, hanging gardens and natural stains line the walls, creating a tropical paradise in the midst of the otherwise arid desert surroundings

Days 1-10 - Fly to Las Vegas and transfer to St. George, UT and the Valley of Fire. Get wet in Zion National Park, revel at the sight of the north Rim of the Grand Canyon, roll down incredible sand dunes, and swim in the waters of Page and Pip springs.

Kayak on the beautiful Lake Powell, hike in Antelope Canyon; visit Bryce National Park, Escalante Petrified Forest and Kodachrome Basin.

Have a western adventure of a lifetime at a real Dude Ranch in Utah, while staying at a comfortable lodge.

Tube down a river, rope a calf, ride a horse, make your own rodeo, and hike to "Bandit's hideout". Enjoy hay wagon rides, western line dancing, campfires and much more. Celebrate Shabbat in a beautiful natural setting together with your friends as we explore and understand the important relationship between nature and Judaism.

Part Two – Tikun Olam in the San Francisco Bay area

Days 11- 20 - While hosted at UAHC Camp Swig (our western teen only camp) surrounded by giant Redwoods in Saratoga, CA. (1 hour from San Francisco). Spend ten meaningful days exploring critical issues and making a difference. Move beyond the self to help others. Ten days of "Tikun Olam" programming will offer you the opportunity to reach out to those in need- to understand our responsibility to move from beliefs to deeds... to help repair our world. Participate in projects that may include but not limited to feeding the homeless, working with physically and mentally challenged kids, cleaning up the Santa Cruz beach and more. We will join an Aids walk to show our solidarity and support, learn and understand the plight of migrant workers in the United States and in the Bay area specifically. Participate in a special opportunity to visit Jewish elderly, and create a campaign and agenda to lobby in front of local political leaders.

While visiting in the area enjoy the great sights of San Francisco – eat sourdough bread, have fun at pier 39, and cruise on the bay.

At Camp Swig share and create together two beautiful Shabbat experiences in a relaxed nature setting, which allows for unique and spiritual experiences.

Part Three - Alaska – The final Frontier

Alaska is a rare treasure. Few places on earth offer encounters with wildlife roaming free in its eternal domain, or awe-inspiring scenery caused by mountain and water, snow and ice, forest and tundra. Alaska, perhaps more than any other region in North America, is cloaked in a mystical aura that ignites the imagination. Its mountains, glaciers, coastline and wilderness are without equal in symbolizing the "Final Frontier", a last opportunity to experience the wilderness in its most pristine, unspoiled expression.

Days 20-28 - Fly to Fairbanks, Alaska, to explore the Chena and Tanana Rivers by boat and learn about Alaska's wonders while panning for gold. Transfer to Denali National Park and raft down the Denali River and explore the dry creek.

Rangers lead us on an incredible wild life adventure as we gaze in awe at the mighty Mt. Denali (Mt. McKinley).

Go deep into the Chugash Mountains trekking and wildlife exploring while staying a mountain resort. Enjoy a unique Shabbat in a beautiful northern environment where the sun never sets.

Visit Alyeska on a bike tour of the Cook Inlet and the Chugash mountains and then hike on a real mountain glacier.

See the Portage glacier on your way to Seward in the Kenai Fjord National Park. Cruise Prince William Sound and see glaciers crash into the sea while on the lookout for whales, seals, otters and puffins.

Conquer Marathon Mountain where the famous 4th of July race is conducted every year, admire its spectacular views of ice fields and then Kayak on the sound nearby.

Fly to San Francisco and then home, concluding a spectacular summer adventure of personal discovery and challenging Jewish growth. Return home having had a once-in-a-lifetime journey of pride, discovery, friendship and fun, while appreciating the world in which you live and inspired to make a difference in your life and in the lives of others.

Accommodations

NFTYites will be staying at hotels, Camp Swig cabins, resorts, dormitories and on or two nights of camping out.

Who is this program designed for?

While this is a fantastic and challenging summer adventure including lots of hiking and exploring- it is designed for virtually everyone to participate and enjoy.

Application deadline: May 1 – (Most applicants apply from December to April. After May 1 applications will be accepted on a space available basis).

**REGISTER
NOW!**

Departure: Early July return early August

Program fee: \$5,550

©2003 North American Federation of Temple Youth

THE JEWISH LIBRARY
HEBREW UNION COLLEGE
JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
SACRED SPACE CENTER
ONE WEST FOURTH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10012