

Learning to Experientially Educate One Another
A Thesis on how experiential education creates Jewish-Christian alliances

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Abstract

This thesis accomplishes two tasks: First, it explains the philosophy, methods, and components of experiential education as argued and described by several educators of the 20th and 21st centuries. Second, it lays out in detail a curriculum putting those methods and components into practice for a group of Jewish and Christian adults. The curriculum demonstrates how this education creates alliances between these groups. Experiential education is defined as any kind of informal, voluntary, immersive, or developmental education that is held outside of a traditional classroom. This includes camping, retreats, youth group, and Jewish travel.

The elements and methods of experiential education are explained in the first two chapters. The reasons for why experiential education has become prevalent in Jewish education are outlined in the third chapter. The results of using these methods are described in chapter four. Following this is a curriculum that acts as an example of the techniques explained. Articles, books, lectures, and web articles were used as sources in addition to primary source material. The primary source material came from firsthand experiences in the day camp Kids4Peace in Cincinnati, Ohio and the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion year in Israel.

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How to Begin Learning Experientially: An Introduction

The word education is derived from the Latin verb, *educere*, meaning to lead forth. Education allows individuals to take the information provided and lead others—it is a base from which to lead oneself and others. John Dewey has influenced education worldwide by espousing that experiential learning is learning by doing; and this builds a positive association through culture, language, and the environment. It is grounded in relationships—no one is a solo practitioner in experiential education. As a result, education is a social process that allows the learners to form a community. As Dewey argues, “Education is the social continuity of life.”¹ This thesis explores how experiential education can be successful in both religious and non-religious environments because of its modalities and focus on community.

Education is a lifelong journey and process—all good education creates a continuum where each educational moment rests on a past educational moment and leads to another. Our society and life demand consistent teaching and learning—that our lives lead to education and that education helps us structure our lives and grow.² Education is taught through pedagogy, meaning to lead a child, the material aiming to be directive and transformative for the learner and the teacher.

Dewey’s position is that every social interaction is educative, has an impact, nurtures us, and fosters us. We are a product of our education; of our experiences in preschool,

¹ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (NY: MacMillan, 1916), 162.

² John Dewey was an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He was influential in education having coined the idea of experiential education and learning by doing. Throughout his works, Dewey argued that education and learning are social and interactive processes, and thus he believed that students thrive in an environment where they are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum and take part in their learning. He advocated for an educational structure that strikes a balance between delivering knowledge while also taking into account the interests and experiences of the student.

elementary school, middle and high school and college. Education is a foundation that shapes us and is transformative. Dewey argued that “education progressively realizes present possibilities and makes individuals better fitted to cope with requirements.”³ Education helps us confront our life experiences and the aftermath of those experiences.

Equally important is that education does not only live in the classroom—our education comes from the world around us, from our experiences both inside and outside the classroom. As philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau said, “Education is received from nature, man, and things.”⁴ Dewey further defined education this way: “Education is the scientific method by means of which man studies the world, acquires cumulatively knowledge of meanings and values, these outcomes, however, being data for critical study and intelligent living.”⁵

Education and personal experience are connected—they are dependent on each other and together they shape human beings. An experience involves contact and communication between the student and the environment. Experience is the interaction that takes place between an individual and objects and other persons. In this case, environment is defined as whatever conditions are interacting with one’s personal needs, desires, purposes, and capacities to create the experience.⁶ In each experience, one must be aware of the surrounding conditions, and know how to shape his/her framework—physical and social—that exists to extract from it all one can contribute.

These experiences do not operate in silos—each experience depends on past, present, and future experiences. This is what Dewey calls the experiential continuum—an experience

³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 134.

⁴ Ibid, 131.

⁵ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1938), 10.

⁶ Ibid, 43.

prepares a person for later experiences that are deeper and more expansive. Each experience involves growth, pieces of past experiences, and habit. Growth requires physical, moral, and intellectual components. Human experiences are not isolated events—they work together to form a connected network of learning opportunities.

Because every experience rests on a continuum, our growth is shaped by this experiential continuum. Furthermore, an educative experience is an engagement in an activity that flows from the life of the participants, reflects a message or ideas, and results in growth.⁷ In each experience Dewey encourages the learner to ask: “Does this form of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it set up conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions?”⁸

From each experience, one witnesses how his/her attitudes and habitual tendencies were impacted, and even changed, in some situations. A habit is an element that is present in each experience. For example, when one travels and experiences another culture, the experience of traveling and witnessing another culture becomes a habit. Each place traveled to is its own experience based on those habits previously formed.

Combining education and experience results in experiential education.⁹ Experiential education is the “use of methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills,

⁷ Barry Chazan, “Veuli—and Perhaps: Israel as a Place for Jewish Education,” in *What We Now Know About Jewish Education*, ed. Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2008), 436.

⁸ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 36.

⁹ The integration of experience and education is the crux of this thesis. The combination of these two elements allows for a different kind of education to take place by bringing people of different populations together to learn from their past, present, and future experiences. This thesis will explore how the methods of experiential education can and do create alliances between people of different faith-backgrounds.

clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities."¹⁰ It is an approach to learning that is based on the experience of the learner. The learner becomes directly linked to the content or the subject matter that he/she is learning about. Experiential learning is grounded in "authentic experiences" that occur in real time and allow time for reflection and discovery of personal relevance and meaning. According to Joseph Reimer, author of *How Jewish Experiential Learning Works*, authentic learning experiences connect to real-life experiences.¹¹

Experiential education is known by many names: Informal education, non-formal education, voluntary education, and immersive education. Informal learning or education is defined as encompassing every activity that involves the pursuit of understanding, knowledge, or skill that occurs without the presence of externally imposed curricular criteria.¹² Non-formal education and voluntary education are forms of optional education where one has the chance to acquire further knowledge or skill by studying voluntarily with a teacher who assists one's self-determined interests with an organized curriculum.¹³ Immersive education provides a powerful opportunity for identification through dislocation and temporary relocation. With immersive experiences, one suspends many aspects of his/her daily realities and adopts new aspects that are distinct to each experience.¹⁴ Teaching

¹⁰ No author, "What is experiential education?" Association for Experiential Education. Accessed June 15, 2019. <http://www.aee.org/what-is-ee>.

¹¹ Joseph Reimer, and S.A. Shavelson, *How Jewish Experiential Learning Works* (NY: The Covenant Foundation and the Institute for Informal Jewish Education, 2008), 84.

¹² David Bryfman, "Introduction: Experience and Jewish Education," in *Experience and Jewish Education*, ed. David Bryfman, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2014), 5.

¹³ D.W. Livingston, "Informal Learning: Conceptual Distinctions and Preliminary Findings," in *Learning in Places: The Informal Education Reader*, ed. Zvi Bekerman, Nicholas C. Burbules, and Diana Silberman-Keller, (NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006), 206.

¹⁴ Shuki Taylor, "How Do We Tell Our Stories? From Spectatorship to Identification to Spect-actor-ship," EJewish Philanthropy. Accessed June 18, 2019. <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/how-do-we-tell-our-stories-from-spectatorship-to-identification-to-spect-actor-ship/>

experientially involves pieces of all the educational methods outlined above. It means to craft and curate an experience that is immersive, compelling, and enjoyable, that appeals to multiple learning styles, and makes use of one's environment.

There is value in both involuntary and classroom education. The stereotypical classroom exists because it is what has been used for so long. It seems more efficient and it is a traditional approach for teachers and students. These experiences occurred before the child had any say in the matter, making them involuntary. Voluntary experiences are those that a person—of any age—chooses to undertake. They help to shape one's identity because the learner is able to choose to participate. Identity development involves a process of exposure, of internalizing, and reflecting on one's early involuntary experiences, and later voluntary experiences. Both what we are given and what we choose are important to forming our identities and personalities.

And so, learning becomes a process of developing identity and agency. The ideal is to create a set of opportunities that can maximize both sets of experiences—the involuntary and the voluntary. The combination of the two makes up education as whole: A lifelong process whereby individuals are able to integrate their inner life and daily activities with what they have learned from each experience.¹⁵

In experiential learning, the curriculum stems from the surrounding culture where the culture is the knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, and emotions that play into each experience. In classrooms the pupil gives control to the teacher who decides what to teach, when, and to what end. Experiential education, on the other hand, lets the learner have control over what he/she is gaining from the experience or the lesson. The role of the teacher

¹⁵ Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996), 49.

or leader in experiential experience is non-directive. The teacher does not assume the interest and attention of the student. Instead, “the learners share the responsibility of the learning agency and the maintenance of a supportive climate.”¹⁶ This leadership is about change—using directing, communicating, motivating, energizing, and inspiring language to create and focus on the long-term results of experiential education.

However, not every experience can be educative. The educative aspect of each experience rests on the quality of the experience. It needs to be a special moment in which a person actively and mindfully takes in what is happening and records it in his/her memory.¹⁷ To be educative, an experience needs to lead somewhere positive. One needs to be able to learn from it and be able to follow it up with other experiences that will expand his/her horizons.

Experiential education has begun to appear in all kinds of environments because of its success; and because of how the methods inspire participants to create community and personal identity. This thesis argues and demonstrates how to properly use experiential education in different environments, such as a religious one. The first chapter examines educators Barry Chazan, Jeffrey Kress, and Joseph Reimer who each define experiential education differently. These definitions will lay out the essential elements of experiential education and explain how to correctly carry out the approach in different educational settings. Continuing on this explanation, Chapter Two sets out the methods of experiential education. Chapter Three focuses on how experiential education came about in Judaism and the venues where this methodology is already present and successful. Chapter Four displays

¹⁶ Bernard Reisman and Joel I. Reisman, *The New Jewish Experiential Book* (NJ: KTAV Publishing, 2002), 17.

¹⁷ Joseph Reimer, "A Response to Barry Chazan: The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*. Accessed June 25, 2019.
https://www.infed.org/informaleducation/informal_jewish_education_reply_h.htm.

the results of using experiential education and how this method can affect a person's identity development. The thesis will conclude with a curriculum for young Jewish and Christian families using the methods of experiential education.

Part One

Chapter One: Elements of Experiential Learning

Experiential education takes on multiple forms and falls into many categories of learning, such as informal learning, supplementary learning, and elective learning. It does not occur in a vacuum nor does it happen spontaneously. There are many different ways it can occur and there are a variety of definitions and characteristics. This chapter will outline the various definitions and essential elements of experiential education: These include creating an interaction and a relationship between the teacher and student; having it occur in a variety of settings; creating an immersive environment for the participants; structuring the experience as being fun and having a sense of playfulness. Finally, it is highly interactive and participatory.¹ These characteristics are the foundation of any kind of experiential education.

There are multiple definitions of experiential education, and it is worth outlining each one. Barry Chazan, professor at Spertus and a leader in experiential education, believes experiential education has eight components: One, it is person-centered, meaning the participant is considered to be an active partner in the education. Two, the experience must be central to the person's development—participation is often done through use of the senses, body, and mind. Three, the experience must follow a set curriculum that is both flexible and dynamic. Four, there must be active interaction between the students and the teachers and between the students themselves. This includes asking questions, stimulating discussions, and engaging the learners. Five, the group of students is used as an educative tool. Six, each experience has an immersive culture using the surrounding environment to “create a context

¹ David Bryfman, “Introduction: Experience and Jewish Education,” in *Experience and Jewish Education*, ed. David Bryfman, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2014), 6.

in which the walls, the design, the architecture, etc. breathe and teach the desired contents.”²

Seven, the experience must have a playful aspect to it. Eight, the educator is holistic and person-centered; his/her focus is on the learners and their personal growth.³

Jeffrey Kress of the Jewish Theological Seminary and a leading educator argues that experiential education must include a wealth of experiences. Kress maintains that there are six attributes of experiential education: One, the creation of strong relationships and a sense of community. Two, the engagement of the individuals’ emotions and spirit. Three, each experience has multiple entry points and opportunities for co-creation. Four, there are scaffolded opportunities for reflection. Five, connections are created with other experiences. Six, there is an authentic integration of content.⁴ As a whole, the teacher must develop activities that connect learners with prior knowledge so they can experience the subject as relevant, meaningful, and applicable to their world outside of the learning environment.⁵

However, the activity alone is insufficient to ensure the educational impact on the learner. Experiential education, in Kress’s mind, relies on the work of reflection. According to Kress, “reflection on an activity facilitates connections between new experiences and existing frameworks.”⁶ Reflection helps to create the continuum of experiences Dewey emphasized in his work *Experience and Education*. In addition, the use of questions is important—the questions should be built upon the students’ interests and needs and be

² Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs (NY: MacMillan, 2017), 19.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Zachary Lasker, “Hits and Misses: The Experiential Seder,” EJewish Philanthropy. Accessed June 8, 2019. <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/hits-misses-the-experiential-seder/>.

⁵ Shira D. Epstein and Jeffrey Kress, “Not Just Fun and Games: Preparing Teachers for Meaningful, Constructivist, Experiential Education,” Prizmah, Center for Jewish Day Schools. Accessed July 2, 2019. <https://prizmah.org/not-just-fun-and-games-preparing-teachers-meaningful-constructivist-experiential-education>.

⁶ Ibid.

aligned with the curriculum. Kress argues that “experiential learning that flows from these questions becomes the primary vehicle for classroom learning.”⁷

Joseph Reimer from Brandeis University focuses on three characteristics of experiential education: Recreation, socialization and challenge. Reimer defines recreation as creating an immersive environment and a playful experience—each experience should be fun. His concept of socialization pertains to the group dynamic spoken by Chazan. The socialization aspect helps the learner have enough knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be an active participant in the education. Reimer believes each experience should stretch and grow the individual—or challenge the participant.⁸

Reimer argues that experiential education is a “transactive process between educators and learners in a learning environment that promotes experientially based learning.”⁹ Each experience should have focused facilitation, matching challenge to the available talent, and encourage full commitment to the subject at hand. Furthermore, Reimer argues that each activity allows the learner to explore and grow as a result. He/she is able to creatively engage with the subject, thereby potentially resulting in the breaking of new cognitive and emotional grounds.¹⁰

The group component of experiential education is of primary importance. Emile Durkheim and G.H Mead, French social scientist and American philosopher, respectively,

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Joseph Reimer, "A Response to Barry Chazan: The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," The Encyclopedia of Informal Education. Accessed June 25, 2019.
https://www.infed.org/informaeducation/informal_jewish_education_reply_h.htm.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ofra Backenroth, “Incorporating the Arts in Jewish Education,” in *What We Now Know About Jewish Education*, ed. Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2008), 342.

argued that “groups are a priori forces that shape human life.”¹¹ In experiential education, special attention is paid to the social and emotional dynamics of the group. These dynamics help to foster a vital community in which all participants feel a sense of belonging. The collective group works to “express and reinforce values that are part of the culture of the society that created the group.”¹² It shapes the identity of the individuals, creates a culture, and presents values to help touch each individual. The group experience acts as a means of socializing individuals within a broader set of communal norms.

The facilitator must create a group in which every participant feels safe, in addition to creating a sense of purpose and challenging the individuals.¹³ This helps to create equality and relationships between the group members. Furthermore, a safe environment results in feelings of comfort, trust, and acceptance within the group. These groups are small, up to thirty individuals, thereby prioritizing each individual. Because of the finite number, each individual is seen as a vital source of information and component of the group—each person is essential to the overall group dynamic. Furthermore, the interaction of a small group of peers creates a certain dynamic in communicating the content and allows for personal change and growth of the individuals.¹⁴ The small group allows for the learners to be active participants rather than passive. The social cohesion of the group results in an enhanced identity of each individual and a sense of community and collective responsibility within the group.

And so, experiential education is grounded in relationships—no one is learning alone.

¹¹ Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, 19.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Robyn Faintich, “Get Glue: How Good Jewish Educators Use Curriculum and Pedagogy to Hold It All Together,” in *Experience and Jewish Education*, ed. David Bryfman, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2014), 72.

¹⁴ Bernard Reisman and Joel I. Reisman, *The New Jewish Experiential Book* (NJ: KTAV Publishing, 2002), 16.

These relationships include those among the cohort of learners and between the educators and students. This shared ownership depends on the creation and preservation of trusting relationships. Group learning allows one's perspective to broaden because of the number of voices in the experience. The participants can use one another and their peers as sources and filters for insight and understanding.

The group dynamic must rest on teamwork focusing on safety, shared responsibility, and the energy of competition. It is designed so that everyone can gain as much as possible from the experience. The learning is enhanced by peers and the participants working together to ask questions that help to mold the overall experience; the participants are playing a part in the experience.¹⁵ As a result, the students feel empowered and in control of their education and experience.

As a result, the group dynamic forms the setting—it helps to form meaningful communities and spaces.¹⁶ The setting of experiential education matters greatly—the environment must take the participants out of their daily routines. The setting is a carefully structured environment that affects both the physical and psychological components of the targeted individuals. In addition, a safe space rich with non-judgmental discussion is of paramount importance. It is crucial to consider how one can use each space occupied to create a certain kind of experience. The setting is to be treated as a comprehensive culture based on a set of norms. Chazan argues for, “altering the social settings of young adults and placing them in new and unfamiliar settings with the goal of opening the possibility for

¹⁵ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994), 19.

¹⁶ Setting is a key component of experiential education; and it will be explored further in chapters three and four.

existing self-definitions to be shed and alternative ones to be adopted.”¹⁷

Just as Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences argues, there must be multiple routes and settings in experiential education.¹⁸ For example, an experiential educative moment should include a visual component, in addition to materials that can be held in one’s hands. These sensory components allow the student to form his/her own experience and memory of each experience. In museum education, for example, the role of the exhibit is to engage patrons actively to construct their own knowledge based on the display rather than the museum providing all the information to the learner.¹⁹ Both sensory and kinetic learning should be used to engage all participants. As a result, one forms a relationship with the environment and has a sense of ownership over it.

The setting is often an immersive environment. In immersive learning, one action can lead to many possibilities. Each instance of immersive education is dynamic and changing—it is all-encompassing, forcing the learner to use a hundred percent of his/her brain, body, and senses. It is a single activity with multiple iterations.²⁰ Mohsin Memon, founder and chief executive officer of Memcorp Learning and Performance Solutions, argues that in immersive environments, one is “creating an experience where natural behaviors will surface through multiple iterations, which are followed by reflective conversations that trigger realizations.”²¹

¹⁷ Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis UP, 2008), 39.

¹⁸ In order to capture the full range of abilities and talents that people possess, Gardner theorizes that people do not have just an intellectual capacity, but have many kinds of intelligence, including musical, interpersonal, spatial-visual, and linguistic intelligences.

Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel*, 102.

¹⁹ Judah M. Cohen and Leah Strigler, “The Cultures of Jewish Education” in *What We Now Know About Jewish Education*, ed. Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2008), 358.

²⁰ Mohsin Memon, “Experiential Learning Versus Immersive Learning,” Training Industry. Accessed June 25, 2019. <https://trainingindustry.com/articles/e-learning/experiential-learning-versus-immersive-learning/>.

²¹ Memcorp Learning and Performance Solutions is a Gamified Induction program. Mohsin Memon, “Experiential Learning Versus Immersive Learning.”

Immersive environments involve dislocation and a suspension of aspects of the participants' daily realities. In these all-encompassing settings, new aspects are adopted that are distinct to each experience.

It is an immersive environment if the participant can see him/herself fully in the experience. Shuki Taylor, founder of M², compares an immersive environment to storytelling: She claims that the reader has to see him/herself within the story just as the participant has to identify with each experience.²² Each experience should strive to shift learners beyond observation—learners should become the protagonist in the story; learners should become the focal point of the experience from both the teacher's and the students' perspectives.²³ Because the experience is immersive and learner-centered, personal transformation and individual growth occur.

Experiential education focuses on creating an interaction between students and the educators. In each experience that creates learning, an active interchange between students and the educator needs to take place. This makes the educational moment reciprocal and it can influence the people involved. As an active social interaction, ideas are stimulated, students think and rethink views, and participants re-conceptualize beliefs and ideas pertaining to the subject being discussed.²⁴ These interactions are the foundation for reflection and debriefing which ultimately help the learner understand and remember each experience and learning moment. The reflection on an activity facilitates connections

²² Shuki Taylor, "How Do We Tell Our Stories? From Spectatorship to Identification to Spect-actor-ship," EJewish Philanthropy. Accessed June 18, 2019. <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/how-do-we-tell-our-stories-from-spectatorship-to-identification-to-spect-actor-ship/>

Shuki Taylor is the founder of M², the Institute for Experiential Jewish Education. It develops and provides training and research that enables educators to craft meaningful learning experiences.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Barry Chazan, "The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, 16.

between new and old experiences and existing formulas.

A Chinese proverb says the following, “Tell me and I forget, show me and I’ll remember, involve me and I’ll understand.” This same sentiment applies to experiential education: If the learner is involved in the experience, he/she is more likely to understand the material. Once the participants are engaged in a discussion about the subject matter, they are understanding and expanding their knowledge and skill set. Implementing reflection, thoughtful consideration, and discussion of the meaning of the activities and experiences helps orient the participant, “helps him/her realize a new knowledge or skill and inspires him/her to make an enduring commitment to meaningful action.”²⁵ Each experience is founded on open inquiry and should aim to foster more questions than answers. It should lead to a dialogue between the participants. Reflective observation includes an analysis of the subject, a discussion of alternative perspectives regarding the subject, and drawing up pros and cons of the experience.²⁶

The reflection needs to be ongoing and it is part of a process: A process of doing, reflecting, deciding, changing, and then doing again. And the deciding and changing occurs based on the reflection. Reflection allows one to think critically about the experience and understand the complexity of one’s community experience and put it into a larger context. Through reflection, one’s attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes, and biases are challenged.

While each learning experience should ultimately be an interaction among students and between the teacher and the students, it is also important for the experience to be person-

²⁵ Avi Katz Orlov, “Excellence in Experiential Jewish Education,” Wordpress. Accessed June 28, 2019. <https://avikatzorlow.files.wordpress.com>.

²⁶ No author, “What is the Experiential Learning Cycle?” Growth Engineering. June 1, 2017. <https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/what-is-experiential-learning/>.

centered and have an individual-focused component. Person-centered education speaks to the idea of the learner being the center of education—each person is the center of the educational moment. The education and the experience focus on the individual and his/her growth. The individual is understood as “an active dynamic organism who grows and is shaped through active engagement in learning.”²⁷ The focus is on each person’s involvement and progress so he/she is considered to be an active partner in the educative moment. The experience should be geared towards the participants’ personal interests—this shows that the teachers are listening and asking questions of the students to identify and collaborate with them. In this way, the participants’ narratives are used as the primary text in crafting an experience. Each experience needs to enable a search for personal meaning as well.

Searching for personal meaning is a daunting task and often not easily accomplished. Experiential education seeks to remedy this by incorporating fun into learning. Creative activities, such as games, are used to link the subject matter to the experience and interests of the participants. Activities are presented creatively to elicit interest of the students. Camping is a great example of experiential learning—campers learn about the outdoors, sustainability, how to care for each other, and they learn about their surroundings. This camping experience is fun in addition to being intellectual. The fun element ensures that each experience will be a positive one, allowing for more and more similar experiences to occur. Each experience should evoke pleasurable feelings and a memory to be visited again in reflection.²⁸

²⁷ Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, 4.

²⁸ Note: If the participants dislike the experience, this does not mean the educator has failed, nor does it mean that the participants have not learned. As mentioned, each learner has different learning styles and needs to be catered to differently. The creation of multiple entry points for the learners and different learning techniques helps to avoid discomfort or dislike of the education methods. However as emphasized by Reimer, the learner needs to feel a sense of discomfort to challenge him/her and to attract his/her attention. Discomfort is allowed, even welcomed, but there should be some activities that are liked by each individual so at least one person is

Moments of fun and free time should be written into the curriculum. Free time inspires and creates relationships which, in turn, strengthens one's learning.²⁹ The curriculum should be a "total environment education strategy," encompassing both serious and fun activities.³⁰ Excitement and play result in deep involvement in activities—the learner is engaged if the activity grabs him/her. Play should be implemented in the sense of engaging and energizing the learners. The fun element makes the learners return to the experience days after and makes them want to learn more. This is the 'pedagogy of participation;' one participates if one finds joy in doing so. The fun component helps to create buy-in by the participants.

Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, an American-Hungarian psychologist, suggests implementing 'productive discomfort' to keep the participants engaged in 'flow.' Flow is the optimal place where we are behaving within our abilities while also being challenged enough to maintain our interest. One is completely immersed and engaged in the individual activity and the learning becomes fun.³¹ And so, Csikszentmihaly reframes fun as flow, being completely immersed to the extent that one's sense of time blurs. The participant and activity become one.³² For example if one is doing a program about Israel, consider having Israeli food at meals, Hebrew signs and/or instructions, and Israeli cultural items such as the use of the Israeli app Waze or quotes from Israeli politicians around for discussion. Including

learning from each activity. This thesis is arguing that experiential education is the best educational method to offer participants a fun and enjoyable way of learning.

²⁹ Joseph Reimer, and S.A. Shavelson, *How Jewish Experiential Learning Works* (NY: The Covenant Foundation and the Institute for Informal Jewish Education, 2008), 48.

³⁰ Barry Chazan, "The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, 3.

³¹ Avi Katz Orlow, "Excellence in Experiential Jewish Education."

³² Shira D. Epstein and Jeffrey Kress, "Not Just Fun and Games." Prizmah, Center for Jewish Day Schools. <https://prizmah.org/not-just-fun-and-games-preparing-teachers-meaningful-constructivist-experiential-education>.

elements like these helps the participant stay in the experience even after an activity ends—it helps the learning continue throughout the day.

In order to achieve the right balance of fun and seriousness, multiple learning paths need to be used. There need to be presentations, projects, team-building activities, dialogues, in addition to lecture pieces. The entire experience should not consist of a “bank monologue,” where the teacher deposits all the information he/she knows on the students without offering them any space to use or understand such deposit.³³

A common method used to implement a holistic experience is Paulo Freire’s educative model called “problem-posing education” or “participative and person-centered education” (PP education). Freire argued that with PP education participants “come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in the process of transformation.”³⁴ In other words, this educational model expects change in the participants and it expects the participants to think critically about the information with which they are being presented. This is the opposite of banking education because the material changes based on how each participant understands and interprets the information. The teacher is no longer the only one who teaches; instead, the students are empowered to teach as well.

PP education poses a problem that the students can relate to easily; then, they are given resources to resolve it. While banking education resists dialogue, PP education finds

³³ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, 102.

Banking education, as explained by Paulo Freire, is an act of depositing, receiving, filing, and storing the information provided. Knowledge becomes a “gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry.” Banking education assumes men and women are objects and do not need to be actively involved in their learning. (Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (NY: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2000), 72).

³⁴ Donaldo Macedo, introduction to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (NY: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2000), 12.

dialogue to be crucial because it allows for the students to be critical thinkers.³⁵ A dialogue is created around certain themes using materials that evoke cognitive and sensory responses. The participants are then asked to present their resolutions.³⁶ And so, the participants are fully involved in the activity—both the solution and the follow up. In this example, the subject matter relates to the participants’ lives. This is effective because most learn when the learning is related to their own life experience and when the learning has immediate usefulness.³⁷

The learning is participative: Everyone involved has the opportunity to speak, listen, and to be actively engaged in the learning. As a result of PP education, a new concept, skill, and attitude is gained that can be used again in a different context. PP education rests on creativity leading to reflection and action. As a method, it argues that men and women are consistently in the process of becoming—“as unfinished, uncompleted beings.”³⁸ As ‘becoming beings,’ humans need to consistently have these experiences of reflection and action in order to create Dewey’s continuum of experiences.

Experiences should be fun and diverse. A community center is an example of this. Community centers are equipped with multipurpose rooms aimed at providing a diversity of recreational, cultural, social, and athletic activities for all kinds of learners. According to educator Jane Vella, students “learn twenty percent of what they hear, forty percent of what they hear and see, and eighty percent of what they do or discover for themselves.”³⁹ And so, all of one’s senses should be used and the student must have input in each activity and

³⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 83.

³⁶ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, 31.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 84.

³⁹ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach*, 34.

experience. To create diversity, experiences must be founded on open inquiry and be able to foster more questions than answers. Being left with questions encourages students to return to learning and to remember the experience.⁴⁰ Ideally, students can come up with their own answers, becoming a part of the lesson. These answers broaden the lesson and create the diversity sought by the educator.

Dewey's continuum of experiences rests on repetition, on the repetition of facts, skills, and attitudes in diverse, engaging, and interesting ways. This helps to reinforce the essence of the experience—it plants a seed in the learner that grows into a plant as the experiences continue to occur. Patty and David Kovacs, founders of The Family School in Chicago, stress that the “act of repeating the [foundations of the subject matter] on a regular basis plants the growing seeds of meaning.”⁴¹ Just as the experiences need to repeat, so too does the reflection. Experience and reflection should be ongoing; these two aspects become ingrained in the student. This is what makes the learning lifelong—the students have each experience, reflect on said experience, remember each experience, and then return to learn again. And the cycle consistently repeats.

All characteristics and attributes of experiential education are dependent on the skill of the educator. These educators are not just any educators—they play a different role than a schoolteacher; they are a combination of a school teacher and a camp counselor.⁴² Social

⁴⁰ Avi Katz Orlow, “Excellence in Experiential Jewish Education.”

⁴¹ The Family School offers classes for grades K-8 twice a month on Sunday mornings taught by Jewish and Catholic parents and supported by their respective clergy. Patty and David Kovacs, *The God We Share: An Interfaith Religious Education Curriculum* (self-pub., Chicago, 2015), 82.

⁴² A schoolteacher, from my perspective, only teaches or lectures in a factual manner. The schoolteacher uses the banking education method extensively, depositing information in the students' minds for them to memorize. In this way, a schoolteacher might act as the only authority on the subject while supposing the students to be ignorant. This plays into Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, where he argues that a teacher oppresses a student by not expecting him/her to be able to contribute to the subject matter being taught.

worker Robert Vinter points out there are two aspects of group leadership: To indirectly influence the participants and to shape a context conducive to the achievement of the group's goals.⁴³ In this way the educator becomes a non-authoritative facilitator. The role of the educator is a non-directive one because the learners share the responsibility for the agenda and "the maintenance of a supportive emotional climate."⁴⁴ The educator is obligated to create sophisticated programming that engages youth in intense and meaningful ways. They are person-centered educators whose focus is on the learners and whose goal is the learners' personal growth.⁴⁵

And so, it is a different breed of educator that takes up the challenge of experiential education. The educator is a living role model of the values, beliefs, and behaviors he/she is teaching; and he/she teaches by showing, doing, and asking rather than by telling, lecturing, or posing.⁴⁶ His/her passion and commitment to the subject is of high importance—the students feed off this energy, giving them the desire to continue learning. The educator strives to teach by example, by providing a holistic and immersive experience; and he/she brings his/her whole self to each lesson. His/her entire lifestyle is embedded in his/her teaching.

The educator is only a step above the participants: He/she is a helper and he/she shows the way for the learners. He/she is a "guide on the side," walking alongside the

Whereas, a counselor uses the PP method to create a discussion by teaching the same subject through games, educational activities, and input from the students. The methods of a schoolteacher are not inferior. However, those methods do not lend themselves to experiential education nor to catering to different types of learners.

⁴³ Bernard Reisman and Joel I. Reisman, *The New Jewish Experiential Book*, 28.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Barry Chazan, "The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, 8.

⁴⁶ Bernard Reisman and Joel I. Reisman, *The New Jewish Experiential Book*, 30.

participants instead of leading the way.⁴⁷ Everyone is learning together. As it says in ancient Jewish literature, “I have learned much wisdom from my teacher, more from my colleagues, and the most from my students.”⁴⁸ The leader is challenged to step back, to carry out the practice of *tzimtzum*, and to make room for the voices of the students.⁴⁹ This fosters a community in which all participants feel a sense of belonging and representation.

The educator is also responsible for creating a safe and comfortable group environment and dynamic. The safety and comfort are dependent on the relationships created between the educator and students. A culture of respect, trust, and empowerment must be implemented. The educator should teach in such a way that interaction and interchange among the participants and between the educator and the students is promoted. Educators are asking questions, listening, and creating a culture of equality, equity, responsibility, integrity, intentionality, and engagement. The educator creates “teachable moments,” interpreting the ways one views the world around him/her to find ways to learn from those experiences.⁵⁰

This chapter outlined three leading definitions of experiential education, concentrating on Chazan, Kress, and Reimer’s points of view. While these definitions are different, they all argue for the following: Each experience should be playful, focused on creating and sustaining relationships and the group as a whole; they should be learner-centered, connected to previous and future experiences through reflection; and they should challenge the participants.

The group and individual relationships are used to shape the overall dynamic of

⁴⁷ Avi Katz Orlow, “Excellence in Experiential Jewish Education.” Wordpress.
<https://avikatzorlow.files.wordpress.com>.

⁴⁸ Ta’anit 7a.

⁴⁹ This term will be explained later in Chapter Two.

⁵⁰ Joseph Reimer, “A Response to Barry Chazan.” The Encyclopedia of Informal Education. Accessed June 25, 2019. https://www.infed.org/informaleducation/informal_jewish_education_reply_html.

learning. Having a curriculum based on creating relationships helps instill values of equality, safety, empowerment, trust, and acceptance—creating a team of participants. The setting is often not classroom based. Instead it is not traditional, taking place in a new and unfamiliar space, yet this space is safe and neutral. It is immersive with different learning pathways so all the senses are used. The immersive environment helps to create repetition, which, in turn, helps the participants remember and reflect on each experience. The activities or experiences created for participants need to be person-centered and/or engaging to all participants. This is implemented through reflection, thereby making the participants active partners in their education, for reflection is essential to action.⁵¹ As a result, the participants can find personal meaning in the subject. It is important that each experience have an element of fun, encouraging the participants to join in, creating a diversity of experiences.

The educator needs to teach in such a way that reflects the characteristics discussed here. He/she becomes a living role model of the components of experiential education. This can be done through many different methods, such as dialogue, non-judgmental discussion, and conversation, and questions created for the group to continually dwell on. Chapter Two explains these methods while also focusing on how to create a group that reflects the values associated with experiential learning.

⁵¹ Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 53.

Chapter Two: Creating and Applying Experiential Education

As outlined in the previous chapter, experiential education is one that creates, sustains, and depends on relationships. It is a relational education where the learning occurs during the interactions among the people learning. Teaching is also a relational art that requires interpersonal intelligence and vulnerability of both the student and the teacher. In creating this relationship, students and teachers need to make an effort to get to know and understand each other. As Eugene Borowitz, American leader and philosopher in Reform Judaism argued, everyone “must make a determined effort to get to know people as they are, not as we would have them be.”¹ The act of getting to know one another is the first step of experiential education—the education becomes person-centered and personal. Every social arrangement is educative, John Dewey argued.²

We can apply this argument to Jewish experiential education.³ Informal Jewish education happens when the individual actively experiences a diversity of Jewish moments and values that are regarded as worthwhile. Such Jewish values include caring for the stranger and loving one’s neighbor as him/herself.⁴ Judaism rests on these values and Jews are instructed to adapt their lives accordingly. A diversity of learning moments can be

¹ Eugene B. Borowitz, *Contemporary Christologies: A Jewish Response* (NY: Paulist Press, 1980), 4.

² John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (NY: MacMillan, 1916), 9.

³ Note: I am purposefully using the terms Jewish experiential education and informal Jewish education interchangeably. See the explanation of the terms in the introduction on page 7.

In addition, I am arguing that many forms of Jewish education, such as b’nai mitzvah retreats, family learning, and Jewish travel, use experiential education; and I believe these are more effective educationally because of the methods used. Jewish experiential education can and should be an opportunity for all ages, but especially children in Hebrew school to give them the desire to continue learning about Judaism and their Jewish identity.

⁴ Lev. 19:33; Lev. 19:18.

organized into organic union with everyday life, argued Dewey; and this is how the education occurs.⁵

Experiential education begins with conversing and interacting with others about diverse moments of one's life. In this way, the learning becomes the "meeting of the historically determined self with the new, the strange, the stranger, in such a way that the longing and thirst central to human life are recognized as the source and goal of life."⁶ In the end the learners are satisfied having both created new relationships and learned new skills.

The goal of experiential education, Jewish and otherwise, is to inspire learners to be continuously curious. The learners should want to continue learning while simultaneously increasing their capacity to learn. Mary C. Boys, author of *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other*, argues that "in pedagogical encounters, we don't change other people. They change themselves. They construct their own understandings, they change their minds, they decide on alternative courses of action, they redefine their priorities."⁷ Perhaps their new priority becomes lifelong learning.

How does one begin learning? The learning starts and is grounded in questions. As the teacher is planning the lesson, he/she needs to ask who are the learners; what is the goal of the course; what is the teacher's role while the students are learning; and why did he/she choose to present a particular narrative while teaching the subject. On the student side, "four open questions" can be explored in relation to the subject at hand: What do you see happening? Why do you think it is happening? When it happens in your life, what problems

⁵ John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago, IL: U of Chicago Press, 1924), 81.

⁶ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other* (VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006), 92.

⁷ Ibid, 111.

does it cause? What do you think we can do about it?”⁸ The learning becomes a result of the answers to these questions. One might even be left with more questions at the end of the lesson. This is the intended goal so one returns to learning.

Along the same lines, the education could begin with the “seven learning tasks,” a seven-phrase process of educational design. This process asks who, why, when, where, what, what for, and how; each task or question focusing on a different part of the lesson, students included.⁹ For example, it could begin with the educator asking for whom is the lesson taught? And why? This helps to create an effective lesson plan and it outlines for the students the intended goal of the lesson. Furthermore, the student and teacher are given access to the content of the lesson, which includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes by way of identifying detailed achievement-based objectives.

Another way to begin learning effectively is to apply the “Gathering-Exploring-Reflecting-Responding-Appling” method.¹⁰ Each step of this process has a certain task and the order is necessary to create an effective lesson and rich educational experience. In the ‘gathering’ step, the teacher creates an activity to keep the students thoughtfully occupied before all the students are present.¹¹ This is an activity to gather the students together. For example, playing a game without teams such as cards or knockout so that the students can join as they arrive.¹² These games bring the entire group together to learn about individual empowerment, to instill confidence, and to imbue determination in the participants.

⁸ Jane Vella, *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994), 109.

⁹ Ibid, 112.

¹⁰ Patty and David Kovacs, *The God We Share* (self-pub., Chicago, 2015), 80.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Knockout is a basketball game where players have to make three-pointer shots and then try to get the ball in the hoop before the person behind them in line.

The ‘exploring’ step is the central part of the lesson—it forces the teacher to ask, what will the student do that will lead him/her into the main content area of the day?¹³ This step works to connect the student with the subject being taught. An example of an ‘exploring activity’ is having a dialogue about the theme of the day’s lesson plan or something that has happened in the news or an upcoming religious or secular holiday.

The ‘reflecting’ step gives students an opportunity to repeat back what they have heard or read allowing the teacher to hear any misconstrued ideas or misinformation and clarify for them.¹⁴ For this component, the students can engage in a debriefing where they are asked to share what they learned and what they still have questions about. This can also be done through journaling or ‘think-pair-share.’¹⁵

The ‘responding’ step begins the activity component of the lesson—it can involve a creative activity or project to create the ‘experiential’ part of the lesson.¹⁶ An example of this is creating a word cloud of what elements of the lesson are on the participants’ minds. The final step—‘application’—gives the students an opportunity to discover how they can apply the content of the class to their own personal world.¹⁷ An example of the final step can be achieved through reflection in journals individually or out loud with the group. This learning method works to combine aspects of experiential learning and components of formal classroom learning.¹⁸

¹³ Patty and David Kovacs, *The God We Share*, 80.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ In ‘think-pair-share,’ students are asked to think individually about the topic at hand, then share those thoughts with a partner, and then partners can share with the whole group if they wish.

¹⁶ Patty and David Kovacs, *The God We Share*, 80.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ As footnoted, this template is based on a method described in Patty and David Kovacs’s book, *The God We Share*.

These different question-based learning methods can lead to an emergence of diversity—a diversity of constituents and of subjects. It is important to acknowledge the diversity instead of ignoring it. The diversity adds to the lesson because the students have more to learn from other students’ differences. One could even argue that the lesson becomes one of ‘engaged pluralism,’ where “one accepts the fallibility of all inquiry, one accepts the multiplicity of perspectives and interpretations. One rejects the quest for certainty, the craving for absolutes and the idea of a totality in which all differences are finally reconciled.”¹⁹ The lesson is focused on learning about and from others. The goal is to get people talking about themselves as members of different cultural groups or social classes. As a result, this begins the conversation and the relationship as a result. One begins to learn from others based on their different perspectives.

Diversity can create unity within the group. If all the members of the group come with different experiences and stories to present to the group, they are all united in this difference. Stephen D. Brookfield, author of *Discussion as A Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms*, argues that “unity in diversity is achieved when the cultural groups assert their differences proudly while respecting the differences of others.”²⁰

In terms of Jewish experiential education, unity is a Jewish value—one of the comprehensive mitzvot of the Torah is the mitzvah of ahavat yisrael, the love for a fellow Jew. This mitzvah points to the unity of all Jews, creating a single entity of the Jewish people. While there are different sects of Judaism that suggest division within Judaism, the idea is that Jews come together to create community, while still retaining different practices

¹⁹ Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, *Discussion as A Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2005), 17.

²⁰ Ibid, 134.

and beliefs between the different sects.²¹ An example of this is Birthright Israel—on each trip all kinds of Jews are brought together, religious and secular. The goal of each trip is not to make them the same in how they practice Judaism, but to celebrate their diversity, enabling them to understand Israel and Judaism better.

Diversity and unity are crucial aspects of any kind of education, experiential education especially. Dialogue is one way to use these aspects to one's advantage in the classroom. Dialogue, when broken down, means between and word, or the word between us. A dialogue is an encounter between people where words are shared and a diverse narrative is formed. Dialogue transforms the coincidence of co-existence into an opportunity for education and friendship.²² It is an exploration or inquiry in which the participants view themselves as collaborators intent on resolving the challenge they face.

A dialogue involves two individuals or groups empathetically listening to each other with respect. Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and philosopher who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy, argued that one should engage in dialogue to create the social component of knowledge in addition to the individualistic component.²³ Dialogue can be thought of as a journey where one meets and establishes relationships with others. The relationships allow the participants to begin a course of education, enrichment, and support for one another.

Dialogue rests on reflection, which in turn creates action—as Freire argued, “to speak a true word is to transform the world.”²⁴ Dialogue focuses more on inquiry and increasing

²¹ Zohar Raviv, “The Spirit of Birthright Israel” (lecture, The iCenter, Chicago, IL, May 2019).

²² Gary M. Bretton-Granatoor and Andrea L. Weiss, *Shalom/Salaam: A Resource for Jewish-Muslim Dialogue* (NY: UAH Press, 1993), 3.

²³ Paulo Freire and Donaldo Macedo, “A Dialogue: Culture, Language, and Race” in *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 65, no. 3, fall 1995, 379.

²⁴ Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (NY: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2000), 87.

understanding; it is exploratory and one has the opportunity to experience the other side of the relationship. It becomes an act of inclusion and equality “which makes it possible to meet and know the other in one’s concrete uniqueness and not just as content of one’s experience.”²⁵ A dialogue between students or groups leads to discussion and the gaining of different perspectives on each topic.

An example of how to use a dialogue effectively in experiential education is a ‘problem-posing’ dialogue.²⁶ This is a dialogue created around adult themes using adult materials to evoke affective, psychomotor, and cognitive responses.²⁷ The dialogue should allow the learners to be fully engaged, using all of the students’ senses. Each dialogue should be based on open questions (the Four Open Questions described on pages 28-29 are a good example). As the students engage in dialogue, they build confidence, create relationships and the skills to learn, develop, and listen. The students come together for these very reasons—the importance of education and coming to an of understanding of one another; the benefits of communication and connectedness; and the promise of where the relationship can lead.

Inter-religious dialogue is another strong example to use in diverse groups. Inter-religious learning is the study and encounter with other religious traditions and its representatives. The goal is to “transcend learning about the other in the abstract in order to have participants encounter Judaism as it is lived by informed and committed Jews.”²⁸ Inter-religious learning and dialogue leads to broader and deeper questions, new bonds of friendship and loyalty based on learning together. Through the participation in an inter-

²⁵ Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1965), xv.

²⁶ This is an example of problem-posing or participative and person-centered (PP) teaching, as mentioned in Chapter One.

²⁷ Adult themes can include creation and definitions of families, death and dying, and poverty and privilege, in addition to other topics.

Psychomotor learning is the relationship between cognitive functions and physical movement.

²⁸ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, 17.

religious dialogue, one can develop ways of “educating in faith that fosters religious commitments that are clear and rooted—grounding the person in the tradition’s way of life—yet simultaneously ambitious and adaptive, recognizing the inadequacy of any one expression of faith.”²⁹ Engaging in an inter-religious dialogue helps one expand his/her own religious education, providing them the foundation for self-understanding as a member of that religion. This in turn helps them to shape positive attitudes about other religions and people of other religions.

Dialogue leads to discussion when multiple participants are present and many topics are explored, as a result. Discussion involves purposeful conversations, deliberation, and thought-provoking questions that invite reflection, synthesis, and creativity.³⁰ Most importantly, discussion is the means for revealing the diversity of opinion that lies below the surface of any complex issue.³¹ This is done through a process of giving and taking; speaking and listening and describing and witnessing one another and others’ perspectives. It takes collaboration and cooperation with others to be exposed to new points of view, to increase the understanding of a topic, and to renew one’s motivation to continue learning.³²

In discussions, everyone has the right to express themselves while carrying the responsibility of creating spaces to encourage reluctant speakers to participate. And each discussion should be non-judgmental and open to different views and perspectives. Each person who contributes should have the intention of engaging others and maintaining the tension between the serious and playful aspects of each topic in discussion. Once the

²⁹ Ibid, 55.

³⁰ These purposeful conversations can include current events, lifecycle events, or money and wealth in our country.

See the Four Open Questions described on pages 28 and 29.

³¹ Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, *Discussion as A Way of Teaching*, 9.

³² Ibid, 6.

different views are voiced, the group is mutually responsible for such views. Discussions help participants reach a more critically informed understanding about the topic in question. When effective, discussions help foster an appreciation for diversity of opinion. In addition, they act as a catalyst to helping people take informed action in the world.³³ Discussions stem from questions; and the questions are never ends in themselves, but stimuli for learning and the foundation for good conversation.

Conversations and discussions are similar in format, but different in effect. They typically take place between two to six people, whereas a discussion could involve any number of people. It is less structured than a dialogue, which is more formal, usually involving prompts written ahead of time. Conversations are flexible and organic—sometimes debates or arguments take place. Sometimes it is simply just people speaking with one another.

Conversations involve partners. They are reciprocal and provide a breadth to the subject matter because they give space for the different voices and interesting turns conversations can take as a result. Education can take place in these conversations because one can create ‘teachable moments,’ conversations that have the implicit purpose of teaching. ‘Teachable moments’ is a way to educate through conversations about direct and indirect experiences; “they help to provide an interpretative lens through which one views the social world.”³⁴

Intentional dialogues, discussions, and conversations are created through the engagement of several values, such as hospitality, participation, mindfulness, humility,

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Joseph Reimer, "A Response to Barry Chazan: The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," The Encyclopedia of Informal Education. Accessed June 25, 2019. https://www.infed.org/informaleducation/informal_jewish_education_reply_hm.

mutuality, deliberation, which in turn, in my view, create hope. In terms of hospitality, everyone should be invited to participate and have mutual receptivity to ideas. Participation is key—everyone’s participation matters, both silent and spoken. Everyone involved should have the time to speak, listen, and to be actively engaged in the learning. Mindfulness goes along with this—it is important to remember to pay attention to others and to ourselves. Even though participation is important, it is essential to practice humility, the willingness to admit that one’s knowledge and experience are limited and incomplete and to act accordingly. Humility leads to mutuality, to caring about everyone’s self-development in addition to one’s own. Deliberation is the overall element, the one which combines all the ones discussed above: It is the willingness of the participants to discuss issues fully by offering arguments that are supported by data, logic, and evidence.

Once each dialogue, discussion, and conversation embody all of these elements, a kind of hope is created. A democratic faith and hope are created because the talents and abilities of the individuals are combined. This increases the likelihood that new light will be cast on previously established difficulties and/or on previously learned topics. And so, one should leave each dialogue, discussion, and/or conversation with a renewed sense of appreciation for the subject matter.

There are several ways to go about executing successful dialogues, discussions, and conversations. One example is the idea of collegial teaching that brings together leaders from each tradition who trust and respect each other to speak and learn. Collegial teaching is done in the presence of the other and it is dependent on having mutual respect, common goals, and joint preparation between the leaders.³⁵ Along with those elements, this method is steeped in

³⁵ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, 88.

tradition, honesty, and the willingness to support one another. It is considered acceptable and desirable to ask hard questions about one another's tradition and about one's own tradition. The focus on questions underscores the importance of honesty in this method of conversing.

The constructivist approach is another example that uses the methods of dialogue.³⁶ This approach “creates opportunities and occasions in which students will, given their own questions, needs, and purposes, gradually construct a more mature understanding of themselves, the world, and the other—an understanding that must be their own.”³⁷ Constructivist teaching is based on the belief that learning occurs as learners are actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge acquisition instead of passively receiving information. As presented in previous chapters, experiential learning rests on past experiences. So, too, with constructivist teaching: All knowledge is constructed from a base of prior knowledge. Learners are not a blank slate; and they learn best when they are allowed to construct a personal understanding based on experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences.³⁸ Examples of this method include experimentation, research projects, films, and field trips.

German pedagogue Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel laid the foundation for modern education based on the recognition that children have unique needs and capabilities.³⁹ Fröbel worked to train children in cooperative and mutually helpful living spaces; to foster in them the consciousness of mutual independence, and to help them in making the adjustments that will carry this spirit into overt deeds. He argued that the root of educational activity is in the

³⁶ John Dewey and Jean Piaget were influential in the development of this method. Piaget's argument suggested that we learn by expanding our knowledge of experiences which are generated through play from infancy to adulthood which are necessary for learning.

³⁷ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, 91.

³⁸ J. Piaget & B. Inhelder, *The Psychology of the Child* (NY: Basic Books, Inc., 1969), 37.

³⁹ John Dewey, *The School and Society*, 111-112.

instinctive, impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material.⁴⁰ When students are given the opportunity to engage in an activity, such as dialogue, games, or play, students become a part of the lesson, embodying the knowledge imparted to them.

Lastly, a Jewish methodology is important to consider when constructing these dialogues, discussions, and conversations for a religious setting. Judaism's creation story, as interpreted by Jewish mystics, rests on *tzimtzum*, meaning contraction. Jewish mystics believe that during creation God withdrew so that other things could come into being. And so must educators—they must step back so the students can take the lead and learn while doing so. A consequence of *tzimtzum*, *shevirah*, are the divine sparks that are to be found everywhere in creation. Our creation and education are imperfect even while holding a bit of the divine spark within them.⁴¹ This leads to *tikkun*, meaning repair, restoration, reintegration, and completion. *Tikkun* completes the cycle, allowing the learner to learn on his/her own, building his/her own knowledge base. In this method, the leader should withhold his/her presence and power so that the learners may have some space in which to be, leaving room for others to act and lead.⁴²

This chapter details how experiential learning occurs—in dialogues, discussions, and conversations, all of which stem from asking questions of others. Experiential learning is dependent on diverse environments where unity can be created from each experience. Participants are brought together in the knowledge they are gaining and the experience in which they are included. Dialogues, discussions, and conversations create diversity and unity

⁴⁰ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 41.

⁴¹ Eugene B. Borowitz, *Exploring Jewish Ethics: Papers on Covenant Responsibility* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990), 328.

⁴² *Ibid*, 329.

in how they are carried out—they allow people to come together and learn about each other, to learn about their backgrounds and traditions. These educational forms create cohesive groups of people bonded together by their experiences and by what they will experience in the future. They create a shared experience by sharing and engaging with others.

Chapter Three: Experiential Education in Judaism

Experiential education is popular in many different areas of study, but it has become especially popular in Jewish learning circles. In Judaism, experiential education is being used in adult education; overnight and day camps; international exploration; and youth programs. This chapter will explain how experiential education and Judaism became connected and how this methodology is used to teach about Judaism. In particular, it will demonstrate how experiential education enhances experiences in youth groups, camps, retreats, Jewish community centers, and Jewish travel experiences. Furthermore, it will outline how engaging in Jewish experiential education aids in creating a Jewish identity and an understanding of Jewish values, beliefs, and practices.

Since the 1980s, intermarriage has become prevalent throughout the United States.¹ In fact, intermarriage accounts for half of the married Jewish households. In addition, the North American Jewish communities are struggling with communal affiliation and retention of their members who are emerging adults between the ages of eighteen and late twenties.² Instead of enrolling children in Sunday school, many families desire to create their own forms of Jewish observance, practice, and Jewish identity. They are creating experiences based on their own individual family needs and desires. For such families who still desire a Jewish lifestyle, the responsibility and initiative for learning lies within each family.

¹ This date is chosen because in 1983 Reform Judaism recognized children of Jewish fathers in a mixed marriage as Jewish. Central Conference of American Rabbis, "The Status of Children of Mixed Marriages," Jewish Virtual Library, March 15, 1983. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/reform-movement-s-resolution-on-patrilineal-descent-march-1983>.

² Scott Turberg Aaron, "A Grounded Theory of How Jewish Experiential Education Impacts the Identity Development of Jewish Emerging Adults" (dissertation, Loyola Univ., 2013), 72.

Furthermore, according to *The New Jewish Experiential Book*, there is a greater readiness and expectation for people to be more actively involved in shaping their Jewish education in addition to their Jewish identity.³ Voluntary education is typically done in smaller groups with an informal teaching style.⁴ While the educators and leaders of experiential education are aware of the varying personalities, desires, and needs of the students—they believe education is being creatively presented to elicit more interest from more people. As a result of these changes (individual participation, learning in smaller groups, and taking responsibility for one’s learning), experiential education has become a large component of Jewish education.

Examples of Jewish experiential education include youth groups, camps and retreats, Jewish community centers, adult learning or family education, and Jewish travel.⁵ As mentioned in the introduction, these are forms of extra-curricular or informal education. They become examples of experiential education because they concentrate on creating a personal connection between the learners and the subject being studied.

Based on my experience, youth groups are usually led by charismatic and engaging counselors or advisors who are close in age to the participants. Often topics of immediate interest to the young participants are addressed such as politics or self-care. The students voluntarily participate in cultural, educational, ideological, and social activities within a peer group context.⁶ Throughout the academic year, youth groups go on retreats which offer extended blocks of time with their peers to engage in a diverse range of activities. At retreats,

³ Bernard Reisman and Joel I. Reisman, *The New Jewish Experiential Book* (NJ: KTAV Publishing, 2002), 12.

⁴ Ibid, 13.

⁵ As explained in the introduction, experiential education creates direct experiences and focused reflection to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities.

⁶ Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs (NY: MacMillan, 2017), 28.

a Jewish milieu (including saying *HaMotzi*, the Jewish blessing over bread and observing Shabbat), creates a sense of togetherness and group loyalty. Retreats are typically run by both a rabbi and another leader who is close in age to the participants and has some Jewish knowledge. Jewish camps create the same kind of effect. In these environments, the outdoors is frequently used as the setting and the students are not confined to traditional classrooms.

Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) attract a diverse group of people—from observant Jews, to secular Jews, to even some adjacent Jews.⁷ This variety is due to the multi-purpose aim of the JCC that provides a range of recreational, cultural, social, athletic, and Jewish general education activities for a broad cross-section of Jews and others.⁸ JCCs attract both adults and children for learning—for example in lectures and classes and in activities such as working out in the gym or taking lessons in the pool.

Adult learning and family education are voluntary educative experiences established to enable adult Jews to enrich their Jewish knowledge and acquire Jewish skills. In these settings, a curriculum about how to celebrate the Jewish holidays can be taught. Or there is opportunity for participants to pray as a community and with their families. Again, the curriculum is not classroom-based and the activities are diverse. For example, in Cincinnati, a program called The Table was put on to bring together non-affiliated and affiliated Young Jewish Professionals to celebrate Shabbat.⁹ During these evenings, participants went through the Shabbat rituals of lighting candles, drinking wine, eating challah, and giving tzedekah while making friends and acquaintances to form a Jewish community. This program was

⁷ An adjacent Jew is someone who supports the Jewish community, takes part in Jewish events, and is an ally to the greater Jewish community.

⁸ Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs, 29.

⁹ The Table was created by rabbinical students in 2016. After the students were ordained in 2017, the program folded. The program was typically hosted in their home or other young professionals’ homes.

targeted at people in their twenties and thirties and was led by rabbinical students of the same age. As a result, The Table allowed participants to learn about Shabbat and about some general values of Judaism, while meeting Jews of similar ages and creating a Jewish community of their own.

Jewish travel is perhaps the strongest example of Jewish experiential education because it “provides a laboratory to study how experiential education can be used to affect one’s knowledge and behavior.”¹⁰ The journey often simultaneously arouses the participants’ senses, stimulates their minds, and engages their physical being. Jewish travel attracts people of all ages, including adults and children. Travel is a way for individuals to appreciate their heritage and to begin to comprehend the contemporary world. Jewish travel consists of educational trips that take young people and adults to places of Jewish interest or culture. Destinations include visiting Jewish communities in eastern Europe, Spain, United Kingdom, Israel, and Ethiopia among others.

There is a sense of social cohesion, or a shared experience, on each trip created through the emphasis on enhancing individual Jewish identity. And there is a development of a sense of klal Yisrael.¹¹ The journey becomes the curriculum as participants experience the Jewish lifestyle in each country. Furthermore, the curriculum is not simply an itinerary or schedule of events—“It is a carefully-woven scenario which reflects a world-view.”¹² Often the tour guide begins with a set of curricular themes, such as social justice, spirituality, and Jewish practices, and proceeds to identify sites that represent these themes. This is then tied

¹⁰ Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: A Journey in Young Adult Identity* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis UP, 2008), 6.

¹¹ Klal Yisrael literally means all Israel. In this context, klal Yisrael speaks to the creation of Jewish unity and communality, individual identity, and collective affiliation on these trips.

¹² Shaul Kelner, *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism* (NY: NY UP, 2010), 65.

into a larger meta-narrative which connects and synthesizes the disparate pieces of information into a single unified story that makes sense of the whole experience.¹³ For example, a tour of the Jerusalem market, *Machane Yehuda*, allows one to interact with vendors, passersby, Israelis, and other tourists. In addition, participants learn about Israeli food and culture. All of these pieces put together provide the learner with an accurate picture of Israel.

These educational excursions, allow the participants to be directly immersed in the sites, events, and people of each place, creating a classroom. There is a defined subject matter and cognitive learning occurs through the use of the senses. On the tour of *Machane Yehuda*, for example, one can smell falafel frying, see people wrapping tefillin (phylacteries), taste halva (the scrumptious sesame dessert), touch the shoulders of passersby, and hear the shouts of vendors as he/she explores the market, taking in all aspects of his/her surroundings. A sense of community is formed because of the amount of time the group is together trying to navigate and understand a new and unfamiliar place. These trips are a catalyst for a more fundamental transformation in the participants' Jewish identities and behaviors. They return home inspired to engage in more activities that have a Jewish component.¹⁴

Participants are creating their own Jewish journey each time they take part in Jewish travel: It is the “possibility to go beyond, look behind and underneath to find points of connection that turn the experience of travel into a true journey.”¹⁵ The Israel experience has the greatest chance of transforming the lives of contemporary Jews, moving them closer to

¹³ Ibid, 91-2.

¹⁴ Leonard Saxe, Charles Kadushin, Shaul Kelner, et. al. *A Mega-Experiment in Jewish Education* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis Univ, 2002), 13.

¹⁵ David Bryfman, “Introduction: Experience and Jewish Education,” in *Experience and Jewish Education*, ed. David Bryfman (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2014), 7.

the point when being Jewish is the center of their identity. Not only are they strengthening their individual Jewish identity, but they are also strengthening the collective identity and ethnic Jewish community around the world. From the travel experience, they are able to foster identification with a nation-state and a sense of belonging in a transnational ethnic community.¹⁶

There are several different types of Jewish travel: Some are daytrips, some are ten days, and others can last up to a year. The longer the trip, the deeper the meaning potentially can be. Masa and Birthright Israel match young adults with long-term study programs lasting from several weeks to several years.¹⁷ A *tiyul*, a Hebrew word typically used to describe a daytrip within Israel can be prompted by a desire for a better grasp of knowledge and a link with the land of Israel. *Tiyulim* are short trips to museums and monuments, hiking trips, and/or day bus trips around Israel.¹⁸ They are intended to generate affect, instill commitment, and construct an organic connection with Israel within a short amount of time.¹⁹ Often this would include a non-religious pilgrimage during which sites of natural beauty and historical significance would be visited.²⁰

Shoah (Hebrew for destruction and the Holocaust) pilgrimage journeys are centered around visits to Holocaust museums or trips to Holocaust sites such as those in Poland.

March of the Living is a pilgrimage from Holocaust sites in Poland culminating in a

¹⁶ Shaul Kelner, *Tours that Bind*, 14.

¹⁷ Masa Israel Journey is a public-service organization founded by the Prime Minister's Office of the Government of Israel, together with The Jewish Agency for Israel. Masa Israel is the leading organization in the long-term Israel experience space.

Birthright Israel seeks to ensure that every eligible young Jewish adult, especially the less connected, is given the opportunity to visit Israel and have an educational journey for up to ten days.

¹⁸ Plural of *tiyul*.

¹⁹ Shaul Kelner, *Tours That Bind*, 32.

²⁰ Shaul Kelner, "Jewish Educational Travel," in *What We Now Know About Jewish Education: Perspectives on Research for Practice* ed. Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2008), 426.

memorial walk from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Israel's national Holocaust Memorial Day. Participants then travel to Israel for Israeli Independence Day. This is an example of a Jewish heritage trip where travelers visit sites related to Jewish history, such as graves of famous rabbis, Jewish leaders, and synagogues in current or former Jewish communities. The trips and their 'curricula' strive to enhance the participants' Jewish identity as one experiences Judaism on a deeper level and creates a connection with the place he/she is visiting.

Birthright Israel is the most common example of Jewish travel. Birthright Israel is "an Israel trip that connects American Jews to their past, to Israel's present, and by virtue of its Jewish contribution to Israeli society and culture, to the future well-being of the Jewish people."²¹ When Birthright Israel was founded in the 1980s, it aimed to create unity, continuity, and mutual responsibility between its participants. Birthright Israel, in its creation, strived to reach a sector of young American Jewry that had been regarded as detached from Jewish life by giving them an Israel experience.²² Second, Birthright Israel wanted to launch young affiliated Jews on a Jewish journey that would lead them to a lifelong involvement with Jewish life. It wished to impact the next generation, creating a cross-generational sense of responsibility and accountability to one's Judaism and to Israel. Lastly, they wanted to create links among these unaffiliated Jews, Israel, and the larger Jewish community.²³ Since its founding, some 650,000 Jews have taken a birthright trip.²⁴

This is not a 'Jewish heritage trip,' but a journey that weaves together Israel's past, present, and future into a tapestry of the evolving Jewish and Israeli civilization. The trip

²¹ Leonard Saxe, Charles Kadushin, and Shaul Kelner, et. al. *A Mega-Experiment in Jewish Education*, 22.

²² When Birthright Israel was created, it was intended for Jews ages eighteen to twenty-two. Now Jews can participate up to age thirty-two.

²³ Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel*, 104.

²⁴ No author, "It's all in the Numbers: A Video Reflecting the 2017 Brandeis Study," Birthright Israel Foundation. Accessed January 6, 2020. <https://birthrightisrael.foundation/numbers>.

offers a concise, birds-eye overview of Jewish history through the sites one visits. Israel is portrayed as a modern contemporary Jewish state, as a country of diverse views, and as an exemplar of the centrality of pluralism of Judaism.²⁵ There is a ‘no strings attached’ pledge—one is not required to engage in any follow-up activities or engagement with Judaism. Because experiential education should include aspects of lifelong learning, opportunities like Birthright Israel have been created to begin one’s exploration of his/her Jewish identity, to strengthen one’s connection to Israel, and to ensure the vibrancy of the Jewish people worldwide. For example, during the trip, participants meet Israeli leaders and witness how Judaism is practiced in Israel. Exploration of the land and Israel and its people offers a laboratory to investigate core questions of both past and present Jewish values. Questions include ‘how is Shabbat practiced throughout Israel and how do these different practices affect the Jewish people as a whole?’

Birthright Israel is rooted in its person-centered approach, where the participants are the subject matter of the journey. They have a sense of ownership in the educational process; they are captains of their Jewish journey. Participants are allowed to choose where to have meals throughout the trip and they are given the chance to navigate the neighborhoods of each city as they choose a restaurant. The needs and interests of young people are the starting point of the educational goals of Birthright Israel.²⁶

The group experience is indispensable to personal identity formation—the participants become a traveling community of young Jews. Mutual recognition, tolerance, responsibility, and trust are established as participants work together to understand the

²⁵ Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan, *Ten Days of Birthright Israel*, 106.

²⁶ For an example of a Birthright itinerary, see page 167 in the Appendix.

meaning and significance of each place. Shaul Kelner, author of *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism*, argues that a good trip makes maximal use of the group experience as an educational force.²⁷ He continues, “the development of a positive climate among participants and between staff and participants is a powerful force in a good trip. Sharing and learning from each other can enrich the trip greatly; divisiveness and intra-group tensions can be tiresome and wasteful.”²⁸ The group experience is used to enhance the trip; it becomes the participants’ community so that they move from being detached from a Jewish community to creating and being apart of one.

Relationships are formed when small groups visit sites individually or during the night out when participants are given the freedom to roam around Tel Aviv. Participants spend hours on the bus, learning and interacting with one another as they pass by the Arava desert or Beer Sheva. They hike together, helping one another traverse narrow trails, cross flowing rivers, and crawl through historical caves. All of these activities add to the trip and create long-lasting relationships (and memories) between the participants.

Along with being person-centered, it is an immersive trip—there is programming and traveling all day, often going until late at night. Participants spend ten days with the same forty people, creating their own Jewish and Israel community as a result. The itinerary includes places of Jewish historical significance in Israel such as Masada, the Western Wall, and Caesarea.²⁹ They engage with Israel’s modern leaders to make connections between the

²⁷ Shaul Kelner, *Tours that Bind*, 160.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Masada is an ancient fortification in south Israel overlooking the Dead Sea. Herod the Great built two palaces for himself on the mountain and fortified Masada between 37 and 31 BCE. The siege of Masada by Roman troops from 73 to 74 CE ended in mass suicide of the 960 Sicarii (Jewish Zealots who opposed Roman occupation of Judea) rebels who were hiding there.

The Western Wall (also known as the Wailing Wall or *Kotel*), is believed to be the last remaining remnant of the Second Jewish Temple in addition to being an Islamic holy site. The *Kotel* is considered to be the holiest place for Jews to pray because of its history.

United States and Israel in both countries' commitments to freedom, rules of just law, and a democratic government. There are encounters with famous figures, such as Reuven Rivlin, the president of Israel, to connect Diaspora youth to Israelis, educators, and to one another. In this way, they are invited into a dialogue about Israel. Participants are forced to confront critical social issues and questions of identity throughout the trip. They participate in Judaism cognitively, aesthetically, and kinesthetically. As a result, "participants [often] return home inspired to be engaged in more activities that have a Jewish component."³⁰ Each participant, and the group as a whole, moves toward continued engagement with Jewish concepts, values, communal Jewish life, and Israel.³¹

The whole idea of taking a Jewish journey is an educational component in itself. It is the possibility to go beyond the classroom, to look behind and underneath to find points of connection with the site one is visiting. The journey helps uncover the challenges of connecting Jews of one place with Jews all over the world. Being a traveler may result in a reflective experience so that the visitor is able to see him/herself through the sites. Buildings and monuments of other countries are the expression of their culture. Observations of them create an internal dialogue of one's reactions and reflections for each site. This dialogue is a way of accepting the surrounding society on its own terms, speaking its language, learning its

Caesarea is located in northern Israel. The city was built by Herod the Great about 25 BCE as a major port. It served as an administrative center of Judea of the Roman Empire. During the Muslim conquest in the 7th century, it was the last city of the Holy Land to fall to the Arabs. Under the Crusaders it became a port and a fortified city again before being attacked again after the Mamluk conquest. Today it is a national park of Israel.

³⁰ Leonard Saxe, Charles Kadushin, and Shaul Kelner, et. al. *A Mega-Experiment in Jewish Education*, 24.

³¹ According to the 2017 Brandeis study, 85 percent of participants on Birthright have said the experience was life changing. 74 percent felt connected to Israel; and 40 percent feel a connection to Israel in relation to non-participants. 30 percent of the participants have returned to Israel. Most significantly, 25 percent are more likely to participate in Jewish community events than non-participants.

No author, "It's all in the Numbers: A Video Reflecting the 2017 Brandeis Study," Birthright Israel Foundation. <https://birthrightisrael.foundation/numbers>.

history, and then imbuing its values.³² The visits take on meaning by virtue of the comparisons and contrasts they offer.

Our patriarch, Abraham, is the symbolic wandering Jew.³³ The Jewish people were born and formed on their journey wandering in the desert as portrayed in the Book of Exodus. And this story is still with us today when we celebrate Passover. The Haggadah repeats, “in every generation, each person should feel as though he[/she] him[/her]self had gone forth from Egypt, as it is written: ‘And you shall explain to your child on that day, because of what God did for me when I, *myself*, went forth from Egypt.’”³⁴

Furthermore, a journey to Israel represents a link between Israel and the Diaspora. Jeremy Leigh, historian and Israeli tour guide wrote, “Israel experience has the greatest chance of transforming the lives of contemporary Jews, moving them closer to the point when being Jewish is the center of their identity.”³⁵ It is a way of strengthening the collective identity of the Jewish people and the ethnic community around the world.³⁶

Jewish identity is strengthened by engaging in Jewish experiential education because one is able to grasp a better understanding of the essential values of Judaism from each experience. In the *Talmud* it is taught, “The study of Torah is equal to the sum total of all other mitzvot.”³⁷ According to this principle, studying is an all-encompassing process that should occur constantly; and to study is to interpret, distinguish, clarify, and explain what

³² Jeremy Leigh, *Jewish Journeys* (London: HAUS Publishing, 2006), 142.

³³ In Genesis chapter twelve, verse one, it is written, “God said to Abraham: Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you.” This is just the beginning of Abraham’s travels throughout his life.

³⁴ Rabbi Howard A. Berman, *The New Union Passover Haggadah* (NY: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2014), 56.

³⁵ Jeremy Leigh, *Jewish Journeys*, 168.

³⁶ Shaul Kelner, *Tours that Bind*, 4.

³⁷ The *Talmud* is the body of Jewish civil and ceremonial law and legend comprising the *Mishnah* and the *Gemara*. Shabbat 127a

one is experiencing. When the learner engages in the material directly, responds to guided questions, and integrates his/her identity and interests with Jewish knowledge, one has accomplished experiential education in a Jewish context.³⁸ It is a method that is immersive, occurring in all settings. It is person-centered, allows for fun, and requires a holistic teacher.

Jewish experiential education rests on the same elements as experiential education does in a secular context with some exceptions. The main tenet of Jewish experiential education is the following teaching: “I have learned much wisdom from my teacher, more from my colleagues, and the most from my students,” as stated in Chapter One.³⁹ This principle advocates for participants to learn from one another in addition to learning from their leader. Each activity is executed with kavannah, with intention—each activity is done with the purpose of achieving the larger goal of connecting people to Judaism in a meaningful and creative way. Moreover, the curriculum is based on giving machshara and ma’aseh, using values to create qualification, thereby inspiring action.⁴⁰

The core values of Jewish life are the foundations of Jewish experiential education. The educational experience is framed in Jewish values such as kehilla, chavruta, and mifgash.⁴¹ The communal aspect of experiential education allows for the values of klal yisrael, am yisrael, kehilat kodesh, and tikkun olam to be implemented, thereby becoming values the participants wish to uphold in their daily lives.⁴² In experiential education, the

³⁸ Young, Mark S. “When is Education Experiential Education?” Voices of Conservative Judaism. Accessed December 15, 2019. <http://www.cjvoices.org/article/when-is-education-experiential-education/>.

³⁹ Babylonian Talmud, Ta’anit 7a

⁴⁰ Machshara (מאכשרה) means qualification or training. Ma’aseh (מעשה) means act, deed, or value.

⁴¹ Kehilla means community. Chavruta is partner learning or learning with and from others. Mifgash is a direct encounter with the people of the country one is visiting.

⁴² Klal Yisrael refers to the creation and sustaining of the Jewish peoplehood. Am Yisrael is the concept of the Israeli people united as one. Kehillat Kodesh is a holy or sacred community. Tikkun olam is the effort to repair the world. It is defined by acts of kindness performed to perfect or improve the world. All of these values can be tied into the group aspect of experiential education.

educator becomes the “sage on the side;” one who engages in *tzimtzum*, thereby making room for other voices.⁴³ The educator can also be understood as a *madrich*,⁴⁴ someone who shows the way for the learners. In this way, the learners uphold the ancient principle: “Who is wise? One who learns from everyone.”⁴⁵ The group dynamic of experiential education works to endorse this statement. Furthermore, Jews often study together in *chavruta*, in a pair or in a small group. This creates community, allowing the students to learn from others, expand their knowledge, and teach others as a result.

This chapter posits that experiential education takes on a unique character in Judaism that is unlike traditional Jewish education, such as Hebrew or Religious School. The experiential approach attempts to solve the challenge of the growing numbers of unaffiliated and detached Jews; and it is largely successful because of its diversity, curated to the learners’ needs and desires. Youth groups, camps, JCCs, adult and family learning experiences, and Jewish journeys help build individuals’ Jewish identity and connection because of the range of experiences and immersive environments. The growth of one’s Jewish identity is dependent on creating an understanding of Judaism’s core values and guiding principles. Community, responsibility, accountability for others, and teamwork are the intended outcomes and goals of Jewish experiential education. Lastly, many people leave each experience with a desire for more and a desire to incorporate the values into their daily lives—the unaffiliated Jew becomes affiliated and part of a Jewish community.

⁴³ Avi Katz Orlow, “Excellence in Experiential Jewish Education,” Wordpress. Accessed June 28, 2019. <https://avikatzorlow.files.wordpress.com>.

Tzimtzum literally means reduction. In Kabbalah, a *tzimtzum* is a reduction of the divine energy that creates worlds. *Tzimtzum* is the way God makes space for us to have our own world. God hides God’s light from us, so that we can make our own choices. In education, the leader engages in a form of *tzimtzum*, stepping back allowing for others to lead and share their perspective. Return to Chapter Two for more information on how this occurs in Jewish experiential education.

⁴⁴ A *madrich* includes a guide, mentor, counselor, or a leader.

⁴⁵ Pirkei Avot 4:1

Chapter Four: The Results of Experiential Learning in Judaism

As explained in the previous chapter, experiential education appears a great deal in Jewish learning: It is present in youth groups, retreats, adult education, and Jewish travel. Each of these experiences helps build one's Jewish identity and connection. Learners are left with the values of community, responsibility, and accountability for others instilled in them. These values stem from the social aspect of experiential learning; and they lead to the result of experiential education. That result is that the learners are given the opportunity to share the information and experience with others; they are responsible for passing down the information to new learners—a generational learning of sorts or Dewey's continuum of experiences. This responsibility creates within them a desire for more learning and a desire to incorporate what was learned into the rest of their daily life.

This chapter will go into further detail of the results of experiential education demonstrating why it is such an effective educational method. Results include the creation of a habit of lifelong learning within each participant; the creation of social groups; and the creation and building of one's Jewish identity. These results go together to form Jewish literacy and identity as the individuals learn by doing and are purposefully engaged in the subject.

As in all forms of education, experiential education attempts to leave a lasting impression on the learner, whether it be in an outdoors environment or as one is exploring and traveling in Israel or Europe. It creates consistency and a desire to continue learning and building community. Its focus on reflection and discussion allows the learners to return each day ready to learn more, ready to add to what they have already learned. The fun and playful element only adds to that desire—the learner is moved to participate because of the different

participatory and engaging activities. The group dynamic leaves the learner with a group of friends and mentors to encourage, challenge, and to create community. And the person-centered aspect of experiential education gives the learner a sense of importance and confidence in each subject, allowing the learner to fully grasp and understand the material for future use. These components are frequently lacking in traditional classroom-based education, in contrast—therefore, they become the key components of experiential education.

As discussed in earlier chapters, Jewish experiential education embodies “a philosophy and pedagogy that purposefully engages learners in direct experiences and focused reflection within settings inspired by Jewish values, traditions, and texts, in order to create knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop the individual’s capacities to contribute to their communities.”¹ This method of education focuses on learning by doing instead of learning through a lecture or from a teacher at the front of the room. This is the key to the power of experiential education. The learners are participating in an event, experience, or moment through their senses, body, and mind enabling them to understand a concept, fact, or belief in a direct way. The teacher deliberately selects Jewish experiences with the intent of affecting and influencing the learner, thereby shaping their Jewish identity.

Jewish experiential education functions best in immersive environments, meaning an intentional environment. These environments include being in someone’s home or traveling to another country and participating in their practices. The environment draws the learners in and holds their attention through each experience. The venue used helps develop an all-encompassing educational culture.²

¹ David Bryfman, “Introduction: Experience and Jewish Education,” in *Experience and Jewish Education*, ed. David Bryfman (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2014), 6.

² Examples of immersive education will be given in the end of the thesis, in the curriculum.

Experiential education is, in a nutshell, learning through experience, connecting the learners to the culture, language, and environment of each subject, thereby making the experience positive and memorable. It creates meaningful learning, working to directly link the learner to the content or subject matter. For example, when a student goes to a Shabbat dinner and hears the blessings over candles, wine, and challah, the student is able to understand the important elements of Shabbat in a direct, meaningful, and positive manner. It becomes a full-sensory experience: One looks around the Shabbat table and takes in the light of the candles, smells the aroma of challah, tastes the warmth of a home-cooked meal, touches one another in moments of prayer and blessing, and hears jovial conversation around the table. Engaging in activities like Shabbat dinner strengthens one's Jewish literacy helping one to create strong, positive, and emotional bonds with Jewish life. This is a starting point: As one continues to experience other customs, one is able to develop his/her Jewish identity based on these experiences.

Each experience is person-centered in experiential education—it affects the learner's total being and contributes to his/her overall Jewish character. We can return to the Shabbat example above to further explain this: When one experiences Shabbat, one leaves, hopefully, with a message of community and one understands that Judaism is about community. This notion of community helps the witness to connect with both the people around the Shabbat table and with themselves. He/she leaves knowing he/she was a crucial part of that Shabbat table.

Ideally, the learner connects the dots between what he/she is learning and what he/she is experiencing in life to begin to create a Jewish life and identity. Through each experience, the student is able to confront and internalize basic dimensions of Jewish life. These

experiences help young Jews achieve holistic growth, strong Jewish literacy, positive affiliation and engagement, and a connection to the Jewish community.

To achieve this, learners go through a process of becoming an ‘architect’ of their experiences, then becoming a ‘story bearer,’ resulting in being a ‘role model’ for others.³ As an ‘architect’ of their experience, the learner is given the independence to build a personalized Jewish identity and connection—to craft his/her own Jewish narrative and involvement.⁴ He/she creates his/her Judaism through the Jewish concepts, stories, rituals, etc. that he/she has experienced. He/she is left with meaningful stories based on his/her memories of each experience and his/her imagination of future experiences.⁵

As the participant tells his/her story, he/she becomes a ‘story bearer,’ or author of his/her own story. He/she is an active participant in the stories that are based on his/her reflections and memories. He/she becomes in charge of the evolution of each story and experience, and of each one’s impact and influence on him/herself and others.⁶ The participant becomes accountable and responsible for the creation and growth of each story because he/she is ultimately creating his/her own Judaism.

One begins to search for more experiences and more ways to engage in the subject matter to further develop their Jewish identity, for example. At this moment, one has reached the stage of being a ‘role model,’ of an advanced seeker and example for others who are just beginning their learning journeys. With these steps, the education becomes humbling instead of being merely satisfying because one begins to see how others are learning—the student becomes the teacher. The educational decisions are value-laden, affecting the individual’s

³ Barry Chazan, “Creating a Language of Israel Education” (lecture, The iCenter, Chicago, Jan 7, 2018).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

values. The learner is encouraged to apply the values learned to his/her life outside each learning experience. For example, one welcomes the stranger by meeting new people, thereby taking on that Jewish value.

Jewish travel is by far the most effective and influential method of Jewish experiential education. The journey of traveling is more than the mere act of traveling: “Journeys compromise the thrilling, challenging, at times dangerous and at other times depressing, encounter with the world beyond. Most importantly, however, they unlock an encounter with oneself.”⁷ As one traverses the Jewish spaces, times, landscapes, and narratives, one is able to create his/her own narrative and become a ‘story bearer.’⁸ The participant becomes part of the evolving narrative of Judaism and the place he/she is visiting—he/she is a living part of the ongoing story.

The formation of a community gives the participants opportunities to further connect with Jews and engage in Jewish activities. The connections created become their own form of education—relational education, where the education occurs during the interactions between people. Through the relationships, bridges are created between different kinds of Jews and between Jews from all over the world. These relationships help to form positive Jewish role models who use what they have witnessed and experienced to teach new students.

The education becomes a social process, realized to the degree in which individuals form a community or group. The group dynamic concentrates on enhancing the skills of mutual recognition, tolerance, responsibility, and trust without undermining diversity. The responsibility aspect encourages participants to step up and help others, to be intertwined in

⁷ Jeremy Leigh, *Jewish Journeys* (London: HAUS Publishing, 2006), 5.

⁸ Zohar Aviv, “The Spirit of Birthright Israel.” (lecture, The iCenter, Chicago, March 4, 2019).

others' lives—being there for them and taking part in their lives. All of these effects stem from the fact that good education is about creating trust, trust in oneself, and in others.

Community and trust often inspire meaningful reflection and discussion among participants. Reflection, dialogue, and discussion allow one to think critically about each experience, to understand the complexity of community experience, and put it in a larger context. It allows one to maximize retention of information gained from each learning moment. In these conversations, all voices are encouraged, offering a multitude of perspectives on each subject. The dialogue allows the participants to ask existential questions and focus on personal and social values and beliefs to create models of intellectual practice.⁹

This model is one of lifelong learning—it is imperative to mold the students' learning in order to create continuous curiosity and an increasing desire to learn. As Dewey said, “The most important attitude that can be formed is that of a desire to go on learning.”¹⁰ The effort to create reflection and discussion from each experience implies that each experience ends but does not conclude—one is left with questions and curiosities that create a strong impulse to continue learning. These curiosities encourage participants to revisit assumptions made and to open the door to other related subjects.

It is important to take moments for reflection and debriefing and to make each discussion somewhat brief, about thirty minutes. The reflective period should follow times of overt action and should be “used to organize what has been gained in periods of activity in which the hands and other parts of the body beside the brain are used.”¹¹ In this way, the entire body is used in experiential education—cognitive and physical learning are used to

⁹ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1938), 39.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 37.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 17.

optimize one's education.

The chain of learning creates a habit, a habit of learning, thereby giving learners the desire for lifelong learning. Dewey maintained, “every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects the quality of subsequent experiences” creating a habit within the person having the experience.¹² Our habits become part of our daily routines, actions we do often without thinking—they become automatic. As a result, a curriculum is created where every experience lives on in previous and future experiences.

Every experience should take something from a previous example to modify the quality of a future experience. And so, the experience prepares a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality. Zohar Raviv, an Israeli educator who works for the iCenter for Israel education, argues “Education is not a product that starts and ends at a particular moment, but an unquenched continual thirst.”¹³

Creating this routine of learning helps the individual grow physically, morally, and intellectually. The education contributes to a process of growth and maturity each time the student returns to learning. And this is an ever-present process—we are always growing. Education “train[s] child[ren] in cooperative and mutually helpful living; foster[ing] in them the consciousness of mutual independence, and help[ing] them in making the adjustments that carry this spirit into overt deeds.”¹⁴ The educative experience aids students in learning more about themselves to grow into more mature, responsible, and accomplished beings. The growth can be understood as a synthesis of aesthetic, affective, moral, behavioral, and

¹² Ibid, 35.

¹³ Zohar Aviv, “The Spirit of Birthright Israel.”

The iCenter for Israel Education works to build, shape, and support the field of Israel education.

¹⁴ John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1924), 111.

cognitive dimensions.

Growing and learning from experiences can be applied to Jewish experiential learning as well. With each experience one needs to ask, “Does this form of growth create conditions for further growth, or does it result in conditions that shut off the person who has grown in this particular direction from the occasions, stimuli, and opportunities for continuing growth in new directions?”¹⁵ Growth is part of Soviet psychologist L.S. Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development where participants are guided and supported by educators to try out new learning approaches. The new learning moves them towards different levels of their potential development.¹⁶ The zone of proximal development is often interpreted as the distance between what a learner can do without help, and what he/she can do with support from a knowledgeable adult. Vygotsky says a person participates in a dialogue with the “knowledgeable other” such as a peer or an adult and gradually, through social interaction, develops the ability to solve problems independently.¹⁷

From this it can be ascertained that the role of education is to give children and adults experiences that are within their zones of proximal development to encourage and advance their individual learning with new skills and strategies. This can be taken a step further to the concept of ‘scaffolding,’ where a teacher helps a student as necessary and then tapers off the aid as it becomes unnecessary, giving the learner a chance to learn and experience on his/her own.¹⁸

¹⁵ John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 36.

¹⁶ Joseph Reimer and David Bryfinan, “Experiential Jewish Education” in *What We Now Know About Jewish Education*, ed. Roberta Louis Goodman, Paul A. Flexner, and Linda Dale Bloomberg, (Los Angeles, CA: Torah Aura Productions, 2008), 346.

¹⁷ A. Yasnitsky, *Vygotsky: An Intellectual Biography* (London and NY, Routledge, 2018), 24.

¹⁸ L. Berk, and A. Winsler, “Vygotsky: His Life and Works” and “Vygotsky’s Approach to Development” in *Scaffolding Children’s Learning: Vygotsky and Early Childhood Learning* (Washington D.C.: National Assoc. for Education of Young Children, 1995), 24.

Jerome Bruner, who first introduced scaffolding in the late 1950s, used the term to describe children's oral language acquisition. The language is first spoken at home, allowing the child to hear and begin to understand the language. Next the child is exposed to instructional formats in school and slowly, he/she begins to acquire the language, pushing him/herself to learn and communicate more in the language. Zone of proximal development and scaffolding are methods that demonstrate how a person can grow and mature while learning.

Jewish experiential education lends itself to these methods. For example, in the deepest sense, experiencing the celebration of the Jewish High Holydays is to understand some of the founding values of Judaism, such as taking responsibility for one's actions, both good and bad, and asking for forgiveness for wrong actions. Learning about these elements allows one not only to learn about Judaism and about Yom Kippur, but also to learn how to take responsibility in our modern world. Hopefully, one is able to grow morally and intellectually in this experience.

The development of habits, lifelong learning, and further identity exploration helps one become literate in a certain subject. As one becomes accustomed to observing the Jewish holidays for example, one becomes more knowledgeable about the practices, beliefs, and values of Judaism—he/she develops Jewish literacy. His/her degree of Jewish literacy plays into his/her development of his/her Jewish identity. Learners engaging in Jewish practices are able to maintain and build their Jewish identity, thereby becoming more confident and comfortable in their Judaism.

In addition to the development of Jewish identity, one's personal identity is formed

Scaffolding was first developed by educators Jerome Bruner, David Wood, and Gail Ross who developed it while applying Vygotsky's concept of zone of proximal development to various educational contexts.

from these habits. One grows from the experiences, using them to develop communities and social networks to rely on. One develops other skills such as patience and resilience from strengthening one's different identities while attaining a level of intellectual maturity.

The process of educational experience becomes cyclical—one engages in each experience, learning and gaining various skills. One adopts those skills and applies them to his/her life and returns to learning to gain more skills. The cycle is iterative as one builds his/her chain of education experiences throughout life. When one reaches the stage of advanced age, the cycle can still continue; there is always more to learn and experience and to learn from each experience.

As developed in this chapter, learning is lifelong and contributes to the continuum of experiences and learning Dewey advocated for in his educational philosophy. As Dewey posited, our learning should be continuous, direct, and purposeful. It becomes an example of plasticity—each subsequent activity is carried over and based on prior experience and retained information. One forms habits and is able to grow both in educational literacy and in the subject being examined from the experiences. Because the learning is done in groups, small learning communities are formed for future participation and community. The elements of participation and an immersive environment allow the learner to become an active component of the lesson.

In this chapter and the previous one, it has been demonstrated how experiential education in Judaism is effective and creates lasting experiential education for each learner. This method can and should be applied to other subjects, for the use of experiential education leads to several positive results: Learning and participating becomes a habit; social groups are formed; and one is able to form an identity with the subject matter, thereby developing a

degree of literacy in the subject.¹⁹ These results are dependent on one another. The next component of this thesis—a curriculum—will demonstrate how to further apply experiential education to other subjects and areas of learning to form unexpected community by learning from one another. This example will explain how to attain the results discussed in this chapter. Let's learn together.

¹⁹ In Part Two of this thesis, a curriculum about Judaism and Christianity is used as an example of just how versatile experiential education can be.

Part Two

An Introduction to an Experiential Curriculum

Experiential education is founded on studying in the presence of and with another—it is formed from relationships and it depends on relationships between its participants. It becomes a form of a dialogue involving two individuals or multiple groups empathically listening to each other with respect and intrigue. I believe an encounter with the stranger is fundamental to the learning process. I am in good company with Dwayne Huebner, author of *The Lure of the Transcendent*, education philosopher, and curriculum theorist, who argues that “Encounters with strangers are pathways to new understandings of how God and human beings are in relationship.”¹

As discussed in earlier chapters, experiential education lends itself well to religious environments and to environments of multiple religions. This is based on the notion that religions can serve as a basis for learning from and understanding one another. Experiential education in a religious context can result in inter-religious learning—studying in the presence of the other, resulting in an encounter with the tradition embodied in the other. The goal is to “transcend learning about the other in the abstract in order to have participants encounter Judaism or Christianity, for example, as it is lived by informed and committed Jews and Christians.”² Instead of creating divisions and defining cultural differences, religion becomes a lens through which we can see the world; and interfaith education offers two sets of glasses.

¹ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other* (VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006), xvi.

² Ibid, 17.

We live in an interconnected, global environment—I believe such an environment demands dialogue, religious dialogue. Religion can offer community, a refuge, and “an island of caring in the midst of a hostile, competitive world.”³ Studying another’s religion creates new bonds of friendship and loyalty based on what has been learned together. Mary C. Boys, author of *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other*, argues that religious education holds the key to reconciliation among those of different religious traditions.⁴ Her argument is based on the fact that all religions have syncretic elements, in that they continue to evolve, change, and influence each other.

Instead of focusing on the divisions that a difference in religion inherently creates, I am concentrating on building a bridge between Judaism and Christianity; to create more synergy for making this world a better place; and to find a way to use our differences and similarities for the benefits they bring. I am attempting to transform a coincidence of coexistence into an opportunity for education and friendship. People of these religions should be brought together because of the importance of education and to realize the benefits of learning from one another. Hans Kung, a Swiss Catholic priest, theologian, and author, argued that, “There can be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions. There can be no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions.”⁵ I am offering an educational method to create dialogue between the religions, potentially leading to some peace between the religions.

This education moves from tolerance to acceptance, ultimately resulting in pluralism. Tolerance does not lead to understanding the other; it merely permits people to live alongside

³ Harold Kushner, *Who Needs God* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 100.

⁴ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, x.

⁵ Hans Kung, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (London: SCM Press, 1991), 105.

those who differ from them without demeaning them. Tolerance does not require that people learn from others; as John Stuart Mill argued, “It is easy to be tolerant regarding what you really do not care about. The challenge is to be able to respect religious and moral differences while having deep connections.”⁶ Acceptance demands understanding and taking others as they are. Pluralism does just what Mill argued for—it is built on an encounter of commitment and a respect for difference that flows from knowledge of one’s own tradition. Furthermore, in order to understand our world, it is crucial to understand that it is pluralistic, and that religious pluralism contributes fundamentally to the diversity of nations.

As I have argued in Part One of this thesis, in pedagogical encounters, we do not change our students. They change themselves. They construct their own understandings; they change their minds; they decide on alternative courses of action; and they redefine their priorities, resulting in a desire to learn more about others and about themselves. This education does not aim to change people; rather, it aims to create a culture of curiosity about others and to use the curiosity to expand their minds and open their hearts to new beginnings and relationships. A difference in religion does not have to result in resolution between the two religions, instead it can result in searching and questioning. All of us are on an ongoing journey to understand and determine our identities, religious and otherwise; learning about another’s religion makes our journey more fulfilling.

This curriculum focuses on bringing together Jews and Christians of all ages who are curious about their religious journeys and about others’ journeys. Because of the similarities between Judaism and Christianity, these religions are a great place to start inter-religious learning. Mary C. Boys argues that “Judaism has become one of Christianity’s more

⁶ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, ix.

significant teachers because its continued existence and vitality poses questions to Christians which touch on the heart of [Christians'] faith."⁷ Because of their common roots and intertwined histories, Christianity cannot fully understand itself without Judaism and vice versa. Their histories are dependent on each other.

Christian-Jewish dialogues began after World War II and the Second Vatican Council's statement on the Church's relation to the Jews' mutual recognition of a common humanity.⁸ The Second Vatican argued the following: "Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues."⁹ At that time, Jews and Christians became conscious of having much in common, while turning a blind eye to their many significant differences.¹⁰ Almost seventy-five years later, the differences between the two religions have been rediscovered; and many have learned to take those differences seriously, and to respect and value them.¹¹ This curriculum aims to do just that—to bring together

⁷ John H. Westerhoff, "Questions Which Touch on the Heart of our Faith," *Journal of Religious Education Association* 76 (1981): 25.

⁸ This is argued by Mary C. Boys who wrote that The Second Vatican Council (1965) led to many Jewish and Christian communities coming together for learning and observing of various religious practices and holidays. It can also be argued that this movement started earlier, in 1927, when the National Conference for Community and Justice was founded. This organization was first founded as the National Conference of Christians and Jews by social activists to bring diverse people together to address interfaith divisions.

Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, xii.

The Second Vatican Council is where *Nostra Aetate* (1965), the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions. The declaration can be found in its entirety in the appendix.

⁹ *Nostra Aetate*: Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations,

<https://ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/second-vatican-council/nostra-aetate>

¹⁰ Jakob J. Petuchowski, "Introduction," in *When Jews and Christians Meet* ed. Jakob J. Petuchowski (Albany, NY: State Univ. of NY, 1988), x.

¹¹ *Ibid*, xi.

Christians and Jews who already have much in common and who are willing to learn how the religions differ and to enrich his/her own individual religious practice.

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Before taking on this weighty task, it is important to consider some questions. When Jews are in the presence of Christians, history is always on the table. Jews build their identity as much on history as on core beliefs of tradition—history plays a central part in Jewish self-understanding. It is worth asking yourself, as the educator, ‘How can Jews relate to, even reconcile with, a tradition that has caused them so much suffering over nearly 2,000 years?’ For Christians, theology is the issue: It is fair to ask, ‘How might Christians respect the integrity and profundity of Judaism while respecting and reverencing the centrality of Jesus Christ to the church?’¹²

Apart from these important questions, there are guidelines to be taken into consideration: First, it is crucial to communicate the virtues, values, and goals of the curriculum.¹³ These include general dispositions and practices that help support successful communicative relations with a variety of people over time. Examples include: Patience, openness to giving and receiving criticism, a readiness to admit that one may be mistaken, a desire to reinterpret or translate one’s concerns so that they will be comprehensible to others, self-restraint to allow others to speak, and a willingness to listen thoughtfully and attentively. Second, this learning depends on mutual respect, honesty, and the willingness to support one another. Third, reinforcing honesty is crucial to maintaining the equality and dignity of participants.

¹² Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, 15.

¹³ These guidelines (and the following six principles) stem from my research for this thesis and from the execution of Kids4Peace interfaith day-camp (which brought together Jewish, Christian, and Muslim middle school students) in summer 2017.

The following six principles are necessary to keep in mind: One, each community and person has the right to define their own position in every discussion. Two, building community facilitates the discussion of ideas, thereby promoting learning. Three, the activities should be facilitated by establishing agendas, ground rules, and parameters. Four, in each discussion, the group should explore areas of agreement first and then look at areas of disagreement. Five, a balance should be kept between the number of participants and their genders. Six, use ‘I statements’ to aid in avoiding unnecessary confrontation.¹⁴

The curriculum is created for a seven-day learning experience for Jews and Christians, ages twenty-one and older—it is best executed with a diverse group of ages within that range. It should be done outside of a classroom space, for example in one or more religious buildings or a community center or a retreat center where the group can stay overnight is ideal. The space needs to leave room for flexible set-ups, such as tables, floor space, and chairs. The group should not exceed thirty participants. It is important to have an equal number of each religion represented. It is advised that more than one educator be a part of this program. The program is created to cover a work-day, from nine to five, with lunch and breaks included. The portion of the program that falls on the weekend will have a different schedule to accommodate Shabbat and Sunday church services.

¹⁴ Before beginning the curriculum, consider doing the text study provided in the Appendix on page 175.

**Learning From One Another and Together:
A Curriculum for Jews and Christians in Dialogue**

Day 1 Theme/Goals¹

Theme: Listening and Learning

Questions to consider and answer throughout the day:

- What does it mean to truly listen?
- How do we learn while listening?
- Are listening and learning dependent on one another?
- What is the difference between hearing and listening?
- How do we practice and improve upon active listening?

Goals: Introduce staff and participants.

- Explain sign language for love (pinky, pointer finger and thumb of one hand raised).
- This symbol can be given at any time throughout the week.
- Build a foundation for interfaith education and dialogue.
- Engage in interactive programming.
- Prepare for Day 2's theme of Teamwork.²

Begin with a prayer to set intentions:

READER: We gather here as an interfaith community
to share and celebrate the gift of life together

ALL: *Some of us gather as the Children of Israel*

Some of us gather in the name of Jesus of Nazareth

Some of us gather influenced by each

READER: However we come, and whoever we are

May we be moved in our time together

To experience that sense of Divine presence in each of us

Evoked by our worship together

ALL: *And to know in the wisdom of our hearts*

*That deeper unity in which all are one.*³

¹ The activities on days one through four are adapted from a curriculum I wrote (and executed in summer 2017) for an interfaith day-camp, Kids4Peace (K4P). K4P brings together Christian teenagers for dialogue, learning, and team building. The goal of K4P is to help the participants become agents of change for their K4P community and for their greater communities.

² Remember to take breaks between sections. Let participants use time as they wish. Have students keep journal throughout week (see journal prompts on pages 159 and 160).

³ Susan Katz Miller, *Being Both: Embracing Two Religions in One Interfaith Family* (Boston: Beacon Press), 34.

Goals for the week: To provide knowledge of culture, beliefs, and values, especially the ritual, history and everyday practices to both Christianity and Judaism.

- To feel comfortable living in and understanding more than one group.
- To be able to communicate with all members of the two respective groups, both the week's participants and other people who call themselves Christians and Jews.

Creating a Community

Time frame: 15 minutes

Introduction: It is important to create a safe and authentic space for the participants to engage with the topics. The safety guidelines are designed to create a safer environment for discussion and a more intimate tone for sharing.

- Introduce these guidelines by sharing a time when you did not feel safe discussing your thoughts and opinions.

Connection: This activity begins to satisfy Barry Chazan's desire to use the group as an educational tool; and Joseph Reimer's characteristic of activities working to socialize the participants. It also hearkens back to Chazan's wish to create strong relationships and a sense of community.⁴ As is mentioned on pages thirteen to fifteen, group dynamics are of vital importance in creating a sense of belonging for each participant.

Instructions: Ask the students to think of some guidelines that they feel would create a safe environment (have students generate list on own with staff as guides).

- Do not be afraid to personalize and expand the list of guidelines that have been given throughout the week.
- It might be useful to have some questions prepared that could guide them to guidelines you have in mind.
- Write or type guidelines for all to see.
- End the activity, asking participants the following: Is this something we are willing to commit to upholding when we meet? You could invite everyone to sign the paper, or just verbally agree.

⁴ This is outlined further on page fourteen.

Facilitator note: Be aware of what voices are and are *not* being heard. Make sure that everyone has the chance to offer up items for agreement and that everyone is engaged in the process. Once everyone has had the chance to contribute, question the group one more time—Is there anything else that should be included? Remind yourself and the participants that this is a "living" document—it can be added to or amended any time the group is together, the purpose being to create guidelines that help to hold everyone accountable for creating the community that will allow them to do the best learning and growing together.

- Be aware of the "kitchen-sink problem"—in an attempt to empower everyone and honor their voices, community agreements can often get extremely long and repetitive as we try to include every word they say. As facilitator, make sure that the agreement reflects the voices of the participants, but feel free to group items together or gently rephrase them when appropriate in order to keep the list manageable.

Below are suggestions for guidelines that should be enacted throughout the week.

Discussion Guidelines

- Use “I” statements.
- Laughter is appropriate if it is apparent the speaker wants you to laugh; otherwise we treat contributions seriously.
- Use affirmative non-verbals.
- Do not debate or in any way try to prove someone is “wrong.”
- Treat what someone says with respect. Respect means you appreciate someone’s right to his/her opinion; it does not mean you necessarily agree.
- Defer judgment—try to hear what the other person is trying to say. Do not judge; just try to understand it.

Dialogue Guidelines

- Each person has the right to define his or her own position regarding the subject.
- Look for ways to avoid uncomfortable confrontation, but invite conversation that is respectful and appropriate.
- Building community facilitates the discussion of issues.
- Dialogues are facilitated by establishing agendas, boundaries, and ground rules.

- Attempt to keep a balance in the number of participants and, if possible, in their gender and religion.⁵

Group Behaviors

- Use names when addressing each other.
- Give others an equal opportunity to participate.
- Show respect.
- No put-downs.
- Feel free to not answer a question that may be personal to you.
- No right or wrong answers.
- Defer judgement.
- Maintain group confidentiality.
- Risk at your own level.
- In one-on-one sharing give the essence of who you are, not the trappings (work, business, etc).

The Importance of Vocabulary

Time Frame: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Paper and pen.

Introduction: Tell a time when you had trouble explaining yourself or a concept because you did not have the vocabulary to do so.

Connection: This activity and the next one help the participants to have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to be an active participant in the education, as Joseph Reimer argued.⁶

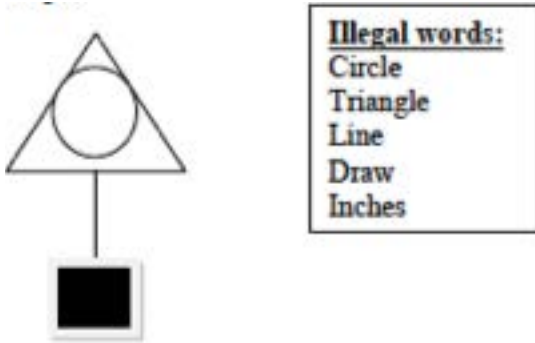
Instructions: Have students pair up and instruct pairs to sit back to back.

- Give one person in each pair a simple drawing or shape and give the other partner in each pair a blank piece of paper and a pen.
- The partner with the drawing should verbally instruct the other partner to draw the shape but they cannot use certain words that would be crucial for directions.

⁵ This minimizes feelings of defensiveness on the part of underrepresented individuals.

⁶ See page thirteen.

Example:



Discussion questions: Was it easy or hard to draw the shapes?

- Was it easy or hard to describe the shapes?
- Was this experience challenging? How so?
- What kind of difference would it have made if you had access to your entire vocabulary?

Conclusion: Relate back to your introductory story.

- Demonstrate the value of effective vocabulary.

Vocabulary Game

Time Frame: 10 minutes

Materials: Oversized vocabulary die.

Goals: To interact with the vocabulary in a fun and informative way.

Instructions: Create a 9-sided die (either out of a styrofoam block with the corners cut off, or bungee cords so it bounces) and on each side write a different vocabulary word. Have the participants take turns and roll the dice, then have them make up an example/definition of the word they land on.

Vocabulary

- *Defer Judgment:* To wait until you know someone before forming an opinion about him/her.
- *Prejudice:* Dislike of a group or a person based on their appearance or some other characteristic.

- *Discrimination*: The acting out of a prejudice. The way you treat someone based on his or appearance or some other characteristic.
- *Stereotype*: An idea about an entire group of people that is based on the actions of one member of the group.
- *Polarization*: Separating people based on a certain trait.
- *Minority*: a smaller group within a larger one.
- *Risk*: to do something without knowing if the outcome will be good or bad.
- *Risk Taker*: approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas and strategies, brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.
- *Support*: to be there for someone when he/she needs you.
- *Communication*: understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively to be able to work effectively in collaboration with others.
- *Open-minded*: understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, open to perspectives, values and traditions of others, accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, willing to grow from experience.
- *Religion*: a particular system of faith and worship.
- *Self-Concept*: the way you think about yourself.
- *Intersectionality*: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Be interested and interesting

Time Frame: 10-15 minutes

Goal: Learn what can be gained from listening.

Materials: stopwatch.

Introduction: Explain how often in the midst of a conversation we spend more time preparing what we have to say rather than listening to what the other person is actually talking about.

- *For example:* You have an answer for my problem before I have finished telling you what my problem is.
- You cut me off before I have finished speaking.
- You feel critical of my grammar, accent, culture, or way of doing and saying things.
- You are communicating with someone else in the room.

Connection: This activity, with its focus on listening to others, helps to create a safe and respectful group dynamic. This is argued for by both Joseph Reimer and Barry Chazan, see pages thirteen to fifteen.

Instructions: Divide the group up into two concentric circles facing each other.

- For three minutes have the people on the outside of the circle ask questions to those on the inside of the circle.
- The person on the outside must only ask questions.
- The next question must relate to what the person on the inside said in the previous answer.
- The person on the inside may not ask any questions.
- After the three minutes are up have the circles rotate to the left or the right.
- After the next round switch the roles of the inside and outside circles.

Discussion points: Speak to the importance of the ability to answer questions confidently and the ability to ask questions when you do not understand.

- How to listen effectively: Try to understand even if the content does not make sense.
- Grasp the other person's point of view even when it goes against your sincere conviction.
- Realize the hour I took from you has left you feeling a bit tired and drained.
- Refrain from telling the funny story you were just bursting to tell me.
- Held back the desire to give me good advice.

Writing Letters

Time: 10-20 minutes

Materials: Pens, paper, and envelopes.

Goal: To help the participants be intentional about what they want to learn during the week.

Connection: Writing letters is the first step to implementing a reflective mindset into the participants. As mentioned in Chapter One, the reflection should be continuous, allowing one to think critically about each experience individually and the experiences as a whole.

Reflection helps to create a constant experience as Dewey emphasized in *Experience and Education*.

Instructions: Tell a story about a time when you went into a situation with expectations and how those expectations helped you.

- Give students pieces of paper and pens and tell them to answer the following questions:
- What do you hope to learn this week?
- What are you most excited about the week?
- What are you most nervous about the week?

Four Corners

Time Frame: 15 minutes

Materials: Papers designating “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.”

Introduction: Share a time when you had a unique opinion about someone and you were in the minority. Everyone else disagreed with you, and while you understood their points of view, you stuck to your opinion.

Connection: This is the first activity that is geared towards stretching and creating a potentially challenging situation for the participants. Because of its focus on discussion, listening, and respect, it is also a great activity to help contribute to group formation and dynamics. It could result in dialogue, another way to aid in the participants’ growth and bring the group together.

Instructions: Emphasize Safety Guidelines, especially “I” Statements and avoiding debate.

- Have the students close their eyes and listen to each statement carefully before they move.

- Explain that they can choose one of 4 corners to go to that signifies how they feel about the statement. The corners are “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree.”
- Have them move silently to their position.
- Once they find their position, make sure they are respectful toward whoever is speaking. Ask the students to explain why they chose the opinion they did, allow for two to three different speakers to keep the flow of the activity.

Example Statements: I consider myself a minority.

- I feel like people know me well.
- I feel more comfortable when I am in the majority.
- It is okay to act differently around different people.
- One person can change the world.
- People who do not have friends of another race are prejudiced.
- In America, anyone can become president.
- I feel safe in my community.
- I aim to respect the equality of others even if it goes against my integrity.
- I prefer to be in diverse groups.
- I prefer to stand out.

Conclusion: Relate back to your first example. Explain that it was hard to take that stand, but in the end, you felt like a stronger person for believing and staying true to yourself.⁷

Sanctifying the Journey⁸

Introduction: Central to this activity is the image of dialogue as a journey. In the midst of traveling on separate paths, the opportunity for dialogue allows different individuals to meet,

⁷ This is a good time to let the participants have an hour-long lunch. Encourage participants to eat lunch together.

⁸ Activity inspired by Gary M. Bretton-Granatoor and Andrea L. Weiss, *Shalom/Salaam: A Resource for Jewish-Muslim Dialogue* (NY: UAHC Press), 85.

establish relationships, and together venture forth on a vital course of education, enrichment, and support.

Connection: Sanctifying the Journey aims to begin a dialogue about each individual's growth and how one's religion and community play a part in the process. When carried out effectively, this is a direct encounter with the religion because commonalities and differences are easily found. This activity is also person-centered because every individual's religious journey is different and personal. Lastly, this activity lends itself well to reflection, debriefing, and discussion—three methods that help to make the experience concrete and memorable.

Instructions: Divide group in pairs and have pairs read *Christian Prayer for Serenity* and *Tefillat HaDerech* and discuss similarities and difference between prayers.

Christian Prayer for Serenity

God, grant me (us) the serenity to accept
The things that cannot be changed,
The courage to change the things
Which should be changed,
And the Wisdom to distinguish
The one from the other.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as Jesus did,
This sinful world as it is,
Not as I would have it,
Trusting that You will make all things right,
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever in the next.
Amen.

Tefillat HaDerech: A Jewish Prayer for a Journey

May it be Your will,
Eternal our God and God of our ancestors,
to guide us in peace and sustain us in peace,
to lead us to our desired destination in health and joy
and to bring us home in peace.
Save us from every enemy and disaster on the way
and from all calamities that threaten the world.
Bestow blessing upon the work of our hands,

that we may find grace, love and companionship
 in Your sight and in the sight of all who see us.
 Hear our pleas,
 for You are a God who listens to our prayers and pleas.
 Praised are You, who listens to prayer.

Discussion questions: Discuss similar pilgrimages or times when one would often say the prayers above.

- Judaism: Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot
- Christianity: Via Dolorosa
- What does it mean to say these prayers for these occasions?
- How do these prayers make you feel?

Ideas on Inter religious Dialogue⁹

Time: 60 minutes

Introduction: The quotations given are designed to spark a more general discussion about the potential of inter-religious dialogue and to allow the participants to express their own expectations and motivations for engaging in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

Connection: The dialogue activities create a culture of discussion and contribute to the overall character of the group. They display the commonalities between Judaism and Christianity, helping one to understand both religions independently and together. This dialogue in particular fosters questions, allowing the participants to become educators and students at the same time. It forces the educator to step back, to engage in *tzimtzum*, and let the participants take over.¹⁰

Instructions: divide the group into pairs and have each pair read and discuss the quotations.

- Have each pair ask the following questions for each statement:
- How would you rephrase this statement in your own words?
- In what ways might this notion shape the structure or content of inter-religious dialogue?

Quotations:

⁹ Ibid, 78, 81-83.

¹⁰ This is explained further in Chapter Two.

1. “How true it is that one understands a faith better by knowing its believers rather than reading its theoreticians.”¹¹
 - a. This statement helps us understand that Jews and Christians can best learn about Judaism and Christianity through dialogue, rather than simply reading books or attending lectures. Instead, we have much to teach about our religious traditions by telling one another about our own religious lives. Recognizing each other not as official representatives of our entire religious traditions, but as individuals who express our religious identities in our unique ways, a seemingly abstract or distant tradition can come alive in a personal, understandable way.
2. “Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned about interpersonal and inter-religious dialogue in recent years is that we must make a determined effort to get to know people as they are, not as we, for whatever reason, would have them be.”¹²
 - a. This quotation urges us to put aside stereotypes and look at one another through lenses untainted by stereotypes and expectations. If dialogue is to be truly meaningful and transformative, we must demonstrate an ability to listen well and an openness to letting others surprise us, challenge us, and teach us.
3. “The first step toward understanding something alien is the discovery of some common element shared by both you and the other.”¹³
 - a. This comment emphasizes the importance of beginning dialogue with topics which will foster understanding and sensitivity.
4. “Only by directly confronting our deepest differences can we come to know one another fully. We are who we are as much by our divergence from one another as by our similarity. Paradoxical as it sounds, I do not think we properly comprehend our own religion until we see it in its distinctive difference from other human faiths.”¹⁴
 - a. This citation moves beyond the previous quotation, reminding us that inter-religious dialogue is not only a process of recognizing and celebrating

¹¹ Eugene B. Borowitz, “On Theological Dialogue with Christians,” *Exploring Jewish Ethics: Papers on Covenant Responsibility* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1990), 394.

¹² Eugene B. Borowitz, *Contemporary Christologies* (NY: Paulist Press, 1980), 7.

¹³ Jay Kinney, “Islam as Other” (lecture, Chicago: The Institute of Islamic Information and Education), 2006.

¹⁴ Eugene B. Borowitz, *Contemporary Christologies*, 20.

similarities, but also of confronting and grappling with differences. Although shared experiences and values provide a foundation for building camaraderie and understanding, we must be willing to move beyond the niceties of our commonalities and be able to face the harder task of dealing with our differences. In doing so, we will better understand other religious traditions and our own as well.

5. “Sensitivity and communication grow out of a mutual need to understand and to be understood.”¹⁵
 - a. This statement highlights some of the most important elements of inter-religious dialogue: Sensitivity to others’ beliefs and practices, openness to sharing one’s own faith, and a capacity to listen to others with respect and to acknowledge the integrity and divinity of their faith.

Conclusion: Bring the group back together to explain each quote and why each is important (example explanations are given above).¹⁶

Intersectionality and Identity

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Large pieces of Butcher paper and markers.

Goal: Celebrate different parts of our identity.

Connection: This activity is person-centered because of its focus on identity formation. In addition, it demonstrates to the group how the participants are connected. This is a fun, interactive way to have the participants get to know each other and to help them grow together. And it is a non-judgmental way for the participants to learn what is important to each person.¹⁷

Instructions: Trace each participant onto their piece of paper.

- Have them color in their outlines based on their multiple identities.

¹⁵ Michael A. Signer, “*Communitas et Universitas: From Theory to Practice in Judaeo-Christian Studies*,” in *When Jews and Christians Meet*, ed. Jakob J. Petuchowski (NY: State University of NY Press), 74.

¹⁶ This is a good time to let the participants have a fifteen to twenty-minute break to do activities they choose.

¹⁷ This is explained further in Chapters One and Two.

- Provide prompts but do not be too influential, allow for students to identify themselves with whatever terms they feel comfortable and connected to.
- Share the sketches with the rest of the group.

Tower Building

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Blocks, balloons, tape, sticks, paper.

Connection: Tower building is a fun activity that uses all the senses and is interactive. It is a form of kinetic learning. Chazan argues for experiences that have an element of fun while one is learning. As Reimer maintains, this pushes the participants beyond their comfort zones, challenging them to stretch and grow from this process. Because of the focus of privilege in this activity, participants are able to apply what they've learned to other areas of their lives, just as Kress argues for.¹⁸

Instructions: Divide the group into groups of four.

- Give each group a different set of materials.
- Send them to opposite corners of the activity space.
- Your first direction to the participants should be to build the tallest tower you can.
- Some participants (such as those who have access to blocks and tape) will have an easier time building a tall tower quickly.
- Other participants will struggle with this task.
- Tour the towers.
- What do you notice about the towers?
- Which ones were taller? Why? How?
- Tell the group that there will be a second round of building soon.
- Change an aspect of the game by either giving certain groups more materials or taking away materials from groups.
- Have the 2nd round of building.

¹⁸ This is expanded further in Chapter One.

- Change another aspect of the game by either giving certain groups more materials or taking away materials from groups.
- 3rd round of building.

Discussion questions: What did we change? Why?

- Did this make the game more fair? Why or why not?
- Was the game unfair at the beginning? Why?
- How does this relate to our vocabulary word “privilege?”
- How does this relate to our society?
- Do certain groups have more privilege today?
- What the responsibilities of groups with privilege have in order to bring about a more just society? Why?
- What is the responsibility of groups with less privilege in their work to bring about a more just society? Why?
- What can we do to fulfill these responsibilities?¹⁹

Before ending the day, recap the day, asking the following questions:²⁰

- What does it mean to truly listen?
- How do we learn while listening?
- Are listening and learning dependent on one another?
- What is the difference between hearing and listening?
- How do we practice and improve upon active listening?

¹⁹This is a good time to let the participants choose how they want to spend the rest of the day (there should be about 45 minutes remaining)—they can journal, play games, get to know one another, etc.

²⁰ Each moment of reflection is crucial to help create memorable and effective experiences. As Jeffrey Kress says, “reflection on an activity facilitates connections between new experiences and existing frameworks.” Shira D. Epstein and Jeffrey Kress, “Not Just Fun and Games: Preparing Teachers for Meaningful, Constructivist, Experiential Education,” Prizmah, Center for Jewish Day Schools. Accessed July 2, 2019. <https://prizmah.org/not-just-fun-and-games-preparing-teachers-meaningful-constructivist-experiential-education>.

Day 2 Theme/Goals

Theme: Teamwork

Questions to consider throughout the day:

- What does it mean to trust someone?
- How do we learn how to work together?
- Why is being part of a team beneficial?
- What does it mean to trust yourself?

Goals: Examine notions of teamwork, and how teamwork is an essential part of interfaith awareness.

- Prepare for Day 3's theme of Community.

Trust Fall

Time: 10-15 minutes

Introduction: The goal of a trust fall is to provide a physical example to use in the discussion of risk taking, trust, and building community. This will help to develop a sense of trust between the participants and the staff.

Connection: A trust fall, while simple, carries a lot of meaning and effect with it. Trust falls contribute to the group's sense of trust and respectful behaviors, creating a safe space to which everyone feels they belong. It is feeling-focused and sensory, a kinetic way of learning about being responsible for others and ourselves. It lends itself nicely to a discussion about camaraderie, teamwork, and respect, three crucial elements of group dynamic.

Instructions: In small groups discuss the key points listed below.

- When ready, your small group forms a tight circle/clump. One volunteer stands in the middle of the circle/clump with his/her arms across their chest and with their eyes closed. Their feet should be touching.
- When the student is ready to begin, he/she will say "falling" to which the group will respond "fall on." At this point the student falls backwards. The rest of the group in the circle must support him/her as they move around.
- If the leader feels comfortable, it is best if they too take their turn in the middle.
- Consider dividing the group up by gender.
- Bring the group back together after everyone has had a turn to fall.

- Discuss the questions below.

Key points: Emphasize how important safety is so everyone is comfortable with the activity.

- Have a serious tone throughout the activity and emphasize maturity.
- If you feel that the environment is no longer safe (ex: someone is dropped) then stop the activity and talk about what happened.
- During discussions clearly show the parallel to real trust/risk/support situations.

Discussion questions: Was it harder to be in the middle or to be on the outside? Why?

- What did it feel like when someone fell straight on you?
- Did you ever feel like you might not be able to support the person? What happened?
- Was it more enjoyable when the circle was bigger or smaller?
- When was a time when you took a risk in your life?
- When were you part of a support group?
- Who do you support?

Conclusion: Relate the activity back to the theme (teamwork) of the day.

Explaining Stereotypes

Time: 20-30 minutes

Goals: To encourage empathy through skills such as active listening and considering different perspectives.

- To establish a sense of community among participants and staff.
- To provide opportunities to share and feel confident in one's story and identity.

Introduction: To continue introducing the idea of stereotypes and get participants thinking about the stereotypes they see in their own lives. Through this, we can begin discussing why stereotypes exist, the value/purpose that they serve, and how we can ensure that stereotypes do not lead to prejudice.

Connection: This activity is an example of how experiences draw from other parts of one's education and lifestyle. This can be a challenging activity because of its subject matter and its aim to change how one thinks about others and one's surrounding society. As mentioned in Chapter One, once the learner is involved in the experience, he/she is more likely to learn from it. Once the participants are engaged in a discussion about stereotypes, for example, they are expanding their prior knowledge. This activity in particular, will likely leave the

participants with more questions than answers because of how closely our society is structured on stereotypes.

Instructions: Have each participant fill out the following worksheet:

Thinking About Stereotypes

On your own, complete the following sentences. Forget political correctness or politeness; instead, record your first thought for each of these; do not spend too much time thinking about them. If you are not sure about some of them, that is okay—just leave it blank and move on. And you do not need to put your own opinion; think about what other people might say.

1. Many people think that all wives are expected to _____
2. Many people think that all husbands should _____
3. Many people think that all male athletes are _____
4. Many people think that all female athletes are _____
5. Many people think that all poor people are _____
6. Many people think that all politicians are _____
7. Many people think that all homeless people are _____
8. Many people think that all Christians are _____
9. Many people think that because he is Asian, he must be _____
10. Many people think that because she is quiet, she must be _____
11. Many people think females should be _____
12. Many people think males should be _____
13. Many people think that because she is fat, she must _____
14. Many people think that because he is skinny, he must _____
15. Many people think that all Americans are _____

Conclusion: Review the list and people's answers in small groups and discuss what some of the stereotypes are and where they come from.²¹

Cross the Line

²¹ This is a good time to give the participants a break for fifteen to twenty-minutes to do what they wish.

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Handout of scenarios and long piece of string/tape to lay horizontally across the room.

Goals: To learn more about each other.

- Realize things we have in common.
- Realize that it is okay to share with others things we are ashamed of.

Introduction: Set serious tone; emphasize silence.

- Tell group, “we live in a world full of insecurities and we keep things to ourselves. We want to help others, but we cannot help others if we cannot be let in and if we do not let them in.”
- Emphasize that this activity is confidential.
- Re-explain the sign language symbol for love. Explain that “if at any point you would like to show your support, your love, or you just want to show people you care, please hold up the symbol for love.”

Connection: Cross the Line is an excellent way to create a trusting and safe environment for the group. It directly involves the participants because the participants tell others their stories in a non-judgmental and safe manner. It is person-centered because each participant is in control of how he/she participates in the activity—it is his/her choice to cross the line and to let others in. This activity points to Kress’s argument for an engagement of the individuals’ emotions and spirit.

Read the following to the participants: This string is the line, the boundary, that separates us from everyone else. While this line may separate us physically, it brings us together because we all have things in common. I will read a sentence and if you fall into the category it describes, please cross the line.

After each time you cross the line, leader says the following: “Look to your left, look to your right, we are all in this together.”

Cross the line...

1. If you live in a house.
2. If you have your own car.
3. If you have a mental disability.

4. If you are an individual with special needs.
5. If you never feel hungry.
6. If you always feel like you have enough.
7. If your parents are divorced or separated.
8. If you've judged people before you have gotten to know them.
9. If your insecurities have ever dominated your life.
10. If someone has ever made you feel like you are not good enough.
11. If something about your appearance makes you unhappy.
12. If you are insecure about your weight.
13. If you are financially insecure.
14. If you've never had to worry about money.
15. If you have ever lost trust in someone close to you.
16. If you are a single parent.
17. If you have lost your parents.
18. If you are infertile and/or have had a miscarriage.
19. If you feel lonely.
20. If your life has been affected by cancer.
21. If your life has been affected by suicide.
22. If you ever felt like giving up on yourself was the only option.
23. If you have ever felt like you let your past hold you back from the person you want to be.
24. If you are comfortable with homosexuality.
25. If you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer, or transgender.
26. If you have been sexually harassed or been a victim of domestic violence.
27. If someone in your family is an alcoholic or has done drugs.
28. If you have been verbally abused in your workplace.
29. If you have not been paid the same as other employees in your workplace.
30. If you were scared to cross the line, but did it anyways.
31. If since starting this activity, you have given people an insight into your life that you would not have otherwise given.

Discussion questions (break into small groups): How did the exercise feel for you?

- Did you feel like you could be honest with your answers and responses to the prompts?
- Did you feel the support of the other people around you?
- Were there times when you were scared to cross the line? Why were you scared?
- Did you learn new things about your friends or about yourself?

Conclusion: Tell the participants the following, “thank you for crossing the line and being vulnerable with us. With everything there is a line. On one side of the line there is a greater challenge to make improvements happen and embrace our discomfort and failure. More results, more relationships, and more responsibility. On either side of the line there are people you admire—for how they respond to their mistakes or challenges and for how they have grown in the process. You can bounce back and learn from your mistakes and challenges. This is your chance to mend relationships, start new ones, and to be honest with yourself. Let’s start today.”²²

Bell Pepper Exercise

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Four bell peppers, four napkins (large enough to cover bell peppers), pieces of paper numbered “one” through “four,” and stand/table to put the bell peppers on.

Goals: To learn concepts of difference and discrimination.

- To provide opportunities to share and feel confident in one’s story and identity.

Introduction: This activity explores the ways in which humans naturally discriminate (in a neutral sense, meaning to differentiate between two things). Using bell peppers, it will be illustrated how people naturally have preferences, likes, and dislikes. Through discussion, the group will learn that although discrimination might be natural, it is not always a healthy thing when one discriminates between different people, and that one can be trained to overcome his/her natural tendency towards bias.

Connection: This activity lends itself well to creating a non-judgmental and safe discussion about how people make decisions and judgements in our world. While the activity has a playful premise, it is a serious exercise, pushing the participants to find more ways to be respectful to individuals. The playful characteristic points to Barry Chazan’s argument for

²² Consider taking an hour break for lunch after this activity.

implementing fun into effective learning. This activity contributes to the growth of each individual and of the group as a whole because of the difficult subject matter.

Instructions: Place four bell peppers on the table, covered by napkins with a number in front of each one.

- Reveal all four peppers, have the participants come and look at them.
- Ask them which pepper they think is the best.
- Take a vote and write the tally on a piece of paper.

Discussion questions: Why did/do you think the pepper that you chose was the best?

- What characteristics made it a better pepper than the others?
- What is the point of judgment? Must we judge?
- Is judging essential to our society's ability to function?
- Is othering a given in our society?
- Can society today exist without oppositions or hierarchy?

Conclusion: Tell participants the following, “in reality, we judge all the time. We judge one another, we judge fruits and vegetables in a supermarket, trying to figure out which one to buy, which person to be friendly with. We judge people by what they wear and how they smell; we judge what looks “good” when we try on clothes, we judge whether one school is better than another. We judge whether one religion is better than another.

- “We too are judged. People judge us. They size us up, assess who we are, draw conclusions. Institutions judge us, law enforcement judges us, our teachers judge us, some believe that a god or many gods judge us. Many factors feed these judgments. Preconceptions—and often misconceptions—play a role. So too does compassion, subjectivity and supposed objectivity.
- “Judgment implies a sense of ranking and it involves a kind of opposition. Inevitably this is a kind of othering: The recognition that there is an ‘us’ and ‘them.’”
- End the activity asking the participants what they have learned and how they will take what they learned back into their communities and apply it.

Dialogue by Parable

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Plant pots for planting and seeds, markers and paint to decorate pots.

Connection: This dialogue helps to move from tolerance of others to acceptance of others, as explained in the introduction to the curriculum. The activity aims to connect Christian lessons and values with the greater world so non-Christians can apply the value to their lives. This is an example of a direct encounter with Christianity. It integrates the values of helping others and being effective in small ways into the overall curriculum—an element that Chazan argues for throughout his works.

The Good Samaritan Parable

This parable is about a traveler who is stripped of clothing, beaten, and left half dead on the side of the road. First a priest and then a Levite comes by, but both avoid the man. Finally, a Samaritan happens upon the traveler and helps the injured man.²³ (The phrase “good Samaritan” means someone who helps a stranger).

Parable of a Mustard Seed

“He set another parable before them, saying: ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is smaller than all seeds. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.’”²⁴

Instructions: Read each parable in small groups. Have participants share a story about a time when they were a good Samaritan. Have participants relate the parable of the mustard seed to our world (i.e. the work of making the world a peaceful place takes only a small amount of hope and faith from each person to grow into something bigger).

- Bring in seeds and plants for participants to look at and have them plant seeds in individual pots to take home with them.
- Be sure to leave time for participants to decorate their pots.

Discussion questions: What small actions of faith/hope/justice/love could we do to change the world?

- How can we make the world a better place?²⁵

²³ Luke 10:25-37.

²⁴ Matt. 13:31-32.

²⁵ Consider taking a fifteen to twenty-minute break after this activity.

Self-Respect: The Power Within

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Markers, board or flip chart on which to write.

Goal: To identify power in many forms, including in the decisions one makes.

Connection: Focusing on self-respect inherently makes the activity person-centered and group oriented. This exercise creates confidence within the individuals because of its focus on creating power and self-respect. As Reimer argues, this aspect is crucial for implementing certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes into each participant. This is an interactive and engaging activity because the participants are directly involved, just as Chazan and Kress argue for.

Instructions: Prompt participants to discuss the things that give people power and write them on the board.

- Encourage all to explain their answers.
- Take a poll, item by item, to see how many agree that the things they listed really give people power.
- Ask the group to identify examples of people from the past who used these forms of personal power.
- Have the individuals name someone or something that has more power than they do.

Discussion questions: Does health give people power?

- Does wealth give people power?
- Does beauty give people power?
- Does physical size give people power?
- Does knowledge give people power?
- Does popularity give people power?
- Does the ability to communicate give people power?
- How do you define power?
- When do you feel powerful?

Conclusion: Lead participants to conclude that the ability to make choices is a kind of power. This is the kind of power we all possess.

Perfect Square

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Blindfolds and rope.

Goal: To build trust and a sense of team building between the participants.

Connection: A fun, light-hearted game that focuses on the participants working together is a great way to build the group's sense of responsibility and accountability for each other. It is sensory based using touch to create a trusting and safe environment. The next two activities are great examples of Chazan's argument to implement alternative, enjoyable, and interactive exercises.

Instructions: Put on blindfolds.

- Stand in circle holding a rope.
- Put rope on the ground.
- Step back from the circle.
- Step towards the circle.
- Work as a group to change the rope circle into a square, while keeping your blindfolds on.
- Do multiple rounds until the group understands the implicit message of the game.

Snake

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: blindfolds.

Connection: See above activity.

Instructions: Have participants stand in a line in a relatively open room.

- Place objects around the room that can be easily picked up.
- The first few people in the line will be blindfolded, and the last person can see.
- The sighted person will then direct the "snake" where to go to pick up the object by tapping the person in front of them on the shoulder, who will tap the person in front of them on the same shoulder, and so on.
- Once they've secured the object, the person in front moves to the back and becomes the sighted person.

Discussion questions: What was it like to be at the front of the line?

- What was it like to be at the end of the line?

- What was easier?
- What would have happened if someone in the middle decided to go against the group?

Strangers, Friends, Family, Me

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Markers and paper.

Goals: To provide a conversation about personal identities.

Connection: This activity prompts a discussion about identity and how others contribute to one's sense of identity. Because of the exercise's focus on the identity of individuals, it is inherently person-centered, as Chazan requests. It creates a dialogue about what the participants have in common and what is important to the group as a whole. In addition, this activity helps contribute to the creation of a safe and respectful environment because of its personal subject matter.

Instructions: Prompt a series of responses about personal identity.

- What is your name?
- What is your religion?
- What is your favorite thing about yourself?
- What are your hobbies?
- Create a series of concentric circles representing strangers, friends, family, and yourself.
- Fill in the circles according to the prompts.
- Share circles with the group.²⁶

Before ending the day, recap the activities and answer the following prompts:

1. What does it mean to trust someone?
2. How do we learn how to work together?
3. Why is being part of a team beneficial?
4. What does it mean to trust yourself?

²⁶ This is a good time to let the participants choose how they want to spend the rest of the day (there should be about forty-five minutes remaining)—they can journal, play games, get to know one another, etc.

Day 3 Theme/Goals

Theme: Forming Community

Questions to consider and answer throughout the day:

- How do we expand and combine our different communities?
- How do we work to build new communities and maintain friendships?
- What does it mean to truly be a friend?
- How is being a friend and being an ally related? How are they different?
- Why is unity important?

Goals: Demonstrate that we all part of a larger community.

- Demonstrate how we all can work together as a team to benefit each other.
- Maintain foundation for interfaith education and dialogue.
- Engage in interactive programming.
- Prepare for Day 4's theme of Reaching Out.

The Knot

Time: 10-20 minutes depending on how many rounds.

Goals: To build trust; to foster new friendships, especially between people of different backgrounds.

- To encourage empathy through skills such as active listening and considering different perspectives.
- To establish a sense of community.
- To inform the participants that there are different ways to solve difficult problems.
- To contemplate our roles in groups and how we take on problems together and individually.

Connection: The knot is part of the scaffolding method mentioned in Chapter Four—the participants are able create a good group dynamic because the activity requires the participants to work together to untie the knot. It is a fun way for the participants to lean on each other and to have a discussion about listening to each other. In this way, it builds positivity between the members of the group and it falls under what Barry Chazan would call an 'interactive learning game.' The discussion that follows the activity allows for the participants to reflect on their experience and further understand how they can continue to work together.

Instructions: Tell the group about a time when you were a leader or a follower in a group.

- Explain to the class that different situations call for different roles.
- If desired, you can complete your story at the end of the activity by telling the group if you succeeded or failed in the activity.
- Stress the Safety Guidelines and be sure to be respectful of gender and personal touch preferences.
- Tell the participants that some knots are impossible to untie.
- Have the participants form the knot in small groups (up to 8 people) by reaching one hand across the circle and grabbing another person's hand. The participants should not link two hands with the same person next to them.
- Have participants untangle themselves.
- Engage in discussion once untangled.
- Form a new knot to be untied and have participants untangle themselves without talking.

Discussion questions: Were you more comfortable talking or not talking?

- Was it easier talking or not talking?
- How was communicating with the rest of your group?
- What were the highs and lows of this experience for you and for your group?
- Did you strategize how to solve the knot before doing so, or did you act first?
- Was one person leading?
- Were you leader or a follower?
- Do you play different roles in different groups? If so, what roles can one play at a time?

Conclusion: Finish your story. Stress the importance of playing different roles in different situations.

The Lunch Date

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: The movie, "The Lunch Date."

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eputZigxUY8>
- *Goals:* To teach the students the dangers of prejudice.

- To encourage empathy through skills such as active listening.

Connection: This short movie, while somewhat dated, lends many lessons. It showcases two individuals, a white woman and a black man in a diner of sorts. The woman passes various judgments on the black man and demands certain tasks of the wait staff. She makes stereotypes and is disrespectful to the man because of her assumptions.

The film projects values of humility, impartiality, tolerance, and acceptance. Reimer asserts that all educational activities need to reflect the values one is trying to instill in the group. It gives the participants the chance to understand these values on their own and begin to form their own versions of them. As Mary C. Boys argues, “in pedagogical encounters, we don’t change other people. They change themselves. They construct their own understandings, they change their minds, they decide on alternative courses of action, they redefine their priorities.”²⁷ The sensitive content of the film allows the learners to explore and grow, as Reimer argues for in his description of experiential education.

Instructions: Begin with a story about a time when you had a prejudgment that was wrong.

- Before the movie—Ask the students if they remember what a stereotype is.
- Tell the students the movie is in black and white and ask them why they think it is.
- Ask the students to look for stereotypes and/or judgments in the film.
- Tell the students to watch every detail of the movie, because although the actors may not be communicating through speech, they still are communicating through their actions and expressions.
- Show the movie and pause it at your discretion.
 - Possible pausing points: (1:13) Why do you think she reacted this way?
 - (3:01) Does her statement surprise you? Why do you think she says this?
 - (4:30) What do you feel is important from this dialogue?
 - (6:31) What did she just accept from him? Is this significant?
 - (7:26) Why is she running?

²⁷ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other* (VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006), 111.

- (8:27) What does her reaction mean to you?
- (8:37) What do you think about this encounter? Does it mean she learned nothing from her previous encounter?
- Ask participants to recap the film.

Discussion questions: What did you think of the movie?

- What stereotypes/judgements did you see and when?
- Why do you think it was in black and white?
- What assumptions did you make about the characters?

Conclusion: Why do we use stereotypes? We use them because they help us to categorize and make sense of the world. We often have an overload of information to take in and process, stereotypes are mental shortcuts that allow us to process information quickly. But, when we do things quickly, we often make mistakes. We do not always see the whole picture. It is easy for stereotypes to lead to prejudice and discrimination when we allow the stereotype to substitute for actually getting to know someone. Instead, we need to engage with others to get to know them.²⁸

Growing Up Dialogue

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Pens and “List of Questions” for exercise.

Goals: To learn more about one’s own religion and the religions of others.

- To foster new friendships, especially between people of different backgrounds.
- To encourage empathy through skills such as active listening and considering different perspectives.

Introduction: This dialogue session aims to have the participants think about how roles and responsibilities of people change as people get older. As adults, how can we begin to think about what we are responsible for in this world? This session will focus on what it means to grow up. To do this, the participants will interview each other regarding this topic.

Connection: As explained in Chapter Two, dialogues allow for diverse narratives and to bring diverse groups of people together. The dialogue leads to discussion and the gaining of

²⁸ After completing this activity, have the participants take a fifteen to twenty-minute break to do what they wish.

different perspectives on the topic. It leads to broader and deeper questions, resulting in new bonds of friendship and loyalty based on learning together. A successful dialogue depends on collaboration and cooperation with others, helping the participants to shape positive or negative attitudes about other religions and people of other religions.

This dialogue is an example of my efforts to build a bridge between Judaism and Christianity; to create more areas of conversation and collaboration in our ever-fragmented world. It begins the process of moving from tolerance to pluralism to acceptance, as explained in the introduction to this curriculum.

Instructions: Explain the concept of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.²⁹ While a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is unique to Judaism, many other religions have similar rites of passage.

- Ask students what other examples of rites of passage that they know of.
 - If they are having trouble, mention the following ones for them to recognize: Baptism and Confirmation are two good examples.
- Divide the participants into groups of four or five.
- Hand out to each participants the “List of Questions” on the following page, which they can use to help record their answers.
- Tell the groups that they need to come up with one question of their own, in addition to the ones we have given them.
- Each group should start by discussing the questions among themselves and recording their answers in note form. Then the participants should find two people older than them to ask the questions.
- After completing the “List of Questions,” reconvene and each group will share what they discovered.

Discussion questions: Why do Jews become Bar/Bat Mitzvah at 12 or 13? Why not older or younger?

- What is the significance of this age?
- Did you find differences between the religions?
- How does each ceremony help the individual grow up and take responsibility?

²⁹ The religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish boy or girl who has reached the age of twelve or thirteen and is regarded as ready to observe religious precepts and eligible to take part in public worship.

List of Questions

- At what age do you think someone should be expected to be an adult?
- What do you think are some major differences between being an adult and being a kid?
- What kinds of responsibilities do you think 12 or 13-year-olds should be trusted with that younger kids should not be?
- What do you think is easier/better about getting older? What is harder/worse?
- Are your expectations about growing up the same as your family's? If so, how? If not, how are they different?
- What does it mean to be an adult? Share list of what BuzzFeed thinks it takes to be considered an "Adult."
 - Pay your own bills.
 - Have a full-time job.
 - Live outside of parent's home.
 - Do own laundry.
 - Cook for yourself more than twice a week.
 - Get an annual check-up.
 - Go to the dentist twice a year.
 - Take vitamins.
 - Floss daily.
 - Get a flu shot every winter.

Conclusion: At the end of the activity, students should be able to understand the weight of responsibility and which responsibilities they are responsible for. The phrase "growing up" or "grown up" is misleading because it argues that this can only happen during a certain time in one's life. "Growing up" is a process and it is one that we are continually working on as the world changes around us and as we get older and face new challenges.³⁰

Dilemmas and Decisions

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Dilemmas and Decisions worksheet.

³⁰ After this activity is finished, consider taking an hour for a lunch break.

Introduction: This program explores what it means to be a religious person and the events that mark our growth and the decisions that guide our daily lives. This is an opportunity for the participants to teach each other about their faith's lifecycle traditions. This program allows participants to discuss how their decisions and daily lives are affected by their religious heritage and ethnic identity.

Connection: This activity, like the one preceding it, is an example of a dialogue to bring Jews and Christians together to learn about their similarities and differences; and to use them to learn about more each other and themselves. It works to instill the values of hospitality, participation, mindfulness, humility, mutuality, and deliberation.

The dialogue is an example of an activity that uses the constructivist approach, as described in Chapter Two. This approach “creates opportunities and occasions in which students will, given their own questions, needs and purposes, gradually construct a more mature understanding of themselves, the world and the other—an understanding that must be their own.”³¹ And so, the learners are actively involved, just as Chazan asserts for in his description of experiential education.

Instructions: Ask Jewish students and staff to describe the background and customs of their lifecycle events.

- Ask Christian students and staff to describe the background and customs of their lifecycle events.
- Divide the participants into groups up to six people with equal representation of religions.
- Give each group a *Dilemmas and Decisions Instruction Sheet* and a set of Dilemma and Decisions cards. Have them read the instructions and start the activity.
- After each group discusses the dilemmas, bring everyone back together to answer the discussion questions.

Discussion questions: What other scenarios have you experienced that are similar to the situations you just discussed? How did you respond to them?

- How do these situations make you feel?
- Which issues generated the most agreement between the participants in each group?

³¹ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, 91.

- Which situations generated the most disagreement between the participants in each group?
- What factors do you think contributed to the differing opinions?
- What would you cite as the reasons for the similarities in your responses?

Conclusion: This activity is intended to point out the diversity of our communities and the complexity of our lives as Jews and Christians. The discussions allow the participants to discover when and how our religious traditions bring us together and set us apart, providing greater insight into our differences and similarities.

Dilemmas and Decisions Instructions Sheet

Dilemmas and Decisions is a simple activity—all you need to do is read a card and answer a question. While this activity does not demand any technical skills or scholarly knowledge, it does require openness, self-reflection, and imagination.

1. Beginning with the first card in the stack, select one member of the group to read the dilemma and decision out loud.
2. The person who read the card should answer the question and then explain how being a Jew/Christian influenced his/her decision
3. Give a person of the same faith an opportunity to respond to the situation and explain his/her answer
4. Ask the other group members to explain how they would respond to the dilemma

Repeat (1-4) until all cards are read and discussed.

Things to think about: Can you point to specific religious teachings that shaped your decision?

- What other factors besides religious values influenced your answer?
- Have you ever experienced a situation similar to the one described on the card?

Dilemmas and Decisions Cards

Dilemma:

A good friend comes to you and asks your advice about the following situation: Your friend is a single mother with a high school aged daughter and a son in junior high school. She earns enough money to support her family by herself and to maintain a modest three-bedroom house with two bathrooms, a kitchen, dining room, and living room. Her recently widowed father has suffered a mild stroke and is no longer able to live on his own. While your friend and her father live in the same city, her two siblings (a sister and brother, both of whom are married) live in a different part of the country.

Decision:

Your friend must decide how to respond to this situation. What advice would you give her?

Dilemma:

It is a week after Thanksgiving, and the stores in your community are already flooded with Christmas decorations and holiday gift items. Your seven-year-old child has come home from school and asked if your family can buy a Christmas tree and put up lights on the front of your house.

Decision:

What would you tell your child?

Dilemma:

You have just received a call informing you that the front of your synagogue has been defaced with swastikas.

Decision:

How would you expect the synagogue to respond to this situation?

Dilemma:

You have just found out that an extremely important meeting/appointment has been scheduled on the same day as Rosh Hashanah.

Decision:

How would you respond to this situation?

The Olympics of Community

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials: Sheet of blank paper for each participant; pencils/pens; markers/crayons; large picture of Olympic rings; roll of masking/painter's tape (or two ropes); 12 sheets of paper or pieces of cardboard.

Goals: Examine the importance of the many communities which each of us is a part of.

- Explore how our religious communities impact our own faith experiences.

- Consider how and why we build communities.
- Consider what our smaller communities might have to gain from one another, and how they might strengthen each other.

Connection: This activity hearkens back to German pedagogue Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel, who was mentioned in Chapter Two. He and Chazan would both argue (though two centuries stretch between these thinkers) that when participants are given the chance to be involved and engaged, they become part of the lesson and part of the knowledge. Because this activity gives the participants a fun way to further mold their community, it is an example of what Fröbel and Chazan were arguing for many decades ago. It is an example of an activity that allows for the educator to step back so that the participants can lead the activity—it is an example of *tzimtzum*, as explained in Chapter Two. The exercise aids the participants shaping their community, reinforcing values of teamwork, curiosity, and helping others.

Outline of Activity:

I. Olympic rings (20 mins)

Opening discussion: How many of us have watched the Olympics? What's your favorite thing about the Olympics? Why does the world bother with the Olympics (when you can compete anywhere, any time; when it takes so much work and money to host, etc)?

Who remembers the Olympic symbol? (the interlocking rings)

- Anyone know what they represent?
- What do you notice about the Olympic rings - arrangement, placement, etc.?

Individual Rings: Each participant is given a sheet of plain paper and a pencil or pen. On one side, they should take a few minutes to list as many communities as possible that they are part of (school, sports teams, congregation, neighborhood, family, friends, camp, etc. are examples if they need help getting started)

- Once they have had time to create a good list, ask them to draw their own set of interlocking rings that represent those communities (or, if they have a long list, several of the most important ones).³²

After a few minutes, invite them to share their arrangement and the places of importance and connection of their various communities. Then answer discussion questions below.

Discussion questions: Could/would your life be the same without any of the communities you mentioned in your list or in your rings? Why or why not?

- In Genesis 2:18, after creating the first man, God says, "It is not good that man should be alone." Why might God have said that?
- "If two people sit and share words of Torah between them the Divine Presence rests between them" - Mishnah (collection of Rabbinic law from the early centuries C.E.). What brings holiness into the presence of two (or more) people that learn together?
- How does being part of groups/teams/communities affect our self-sufficiency, self-reliance, self-confidence?

II. Our Own Tiny Olympiad: A Community of Competition

- This game should be played indoors or outdoors in a large open space. Big, double classroom would work.
- Using tape, two parallel lines are created about 30 feet apart. The space in between these two lines represents the river.
- This river is infested with man-eating piranhas so no player is to 'touch' the river.
- The players are split into two equal teams. Both teams start together on one side of the river.
- The teams are given equal pieces of cardboard or paper (about 6-7 each).
- When the game starts, each team must use these pieces to get across the river. They can be placed on the river as stepping-stones and can be moved around.
- The team must therefore share the cardboard pieces and attempt to get the whole team across to the other side of the river.

³² Their rings do not need to be in the same shape/layout as the Olympic ones. Whatever works for the way their communities are related. They can write the names of different communities in the rings.

- If anyone makes contact with the river (the floor space between the two tape), then he/she is considered “eaten up” and has to go back to the starting point.
- The team that gets its team members across in the fastest time wins.

Conclusion: Game should be followed by a quick debrief, time permitting: How did your team decide how to get across?

- Were everyone's ideas heard? Did you feel heard?
- Did anyone benefit from an idea other than their own?³³

Middot³⁴

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Tile (8.5X11 paper) with scenarios for Step 1 (see end of lesson); tiles for the Middot Periodic Table.

Goal: Engage with Judaism's 48 *middot* to generate dialogue about putting values into action.

Connection: Given that the activity's name, *Middot*, means values in Hebrew, one could argue that this activity works to instill various important values within the individuals participating. The activity lends itself well to a discussion about how to consistently create a community founded and resting on various values. Chazan demands that in order for an experience to be one of learning, a value needs to be understood or instilled. This activity is a great example of his demand because of its focus on explaining intentionality and respect between the group members.

Instructions: Have campers select scenarios and pair up to ask each other to describe their next action in the theoretical scenario.

- Have campers match their scenarios to the value on the *middot* periodic table which they believe represents the scenario best.
- Define *middot*—they are meant to guide us in our everyday lives. They are represented in our traditions.

³³ A positive answer to that last question is a good place to close with the importance of what we get out of the communities to which we give of ourselves.

³⁴ *Middot* is the Hebrew word for Jewish values; *middah* is the singular form.




- Have participants move to a different *middah* tile, and construct their own scenarios inspired by the *middot*.
- Lead participants in discussion of what they have learned about Judaism, values, and each other's ways of engaging in ethical behavior.

Discussion questions: What are some of the big values in your religious tradition?

- What is a value that you've embodied recently?
- What is a value that you have seen another participant embody this week?

Scenarios

- A listening ear: Your friend comes to you to tell you about a problem he/she is having in his work.
- A moment of pleasure: You have the day off from work or school.
- A moment of sleep: Your partner or roommate is making breakfast on Saturday morning, but you know they won't make you get out of bed.
- A moment of small talk: You remember something you have to tell your friend, but you are in the middle of a meeting.
- Acceptance of suffering: Your friend passes away tragically.
- An understanding of the heart: You hear your boss is saying racist things about your coworker.
- Asking and answering: Your friend tells you a statistic that does not sound right to you.
- Beloved: The co-worker asks to hang out with you after work.

 **KEY**
 **GENERAL RESOURCES**
MAKING MENSCHES: A PERIODIC TABLE


01 WISDOM WI	02 COURAGE CO					03 WONDER TR
04 UNDERSTANDING WI	05 ZEST & ZEAL CO	06 DECENCY & SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE HO	07 REVERENCE & AWE TR			
08 SENSIBILITY WI	09 CONFIDENCE CO	10 COMPASSION HO	11 JUSTICE JU	12 CALM & COMPOSURE MO	13 CONTENTMENT MO	14 LOVE TR
15 CURIOSITY WI	16 DISCIPLINE & WILL POWER CO	17 KINDNESS HO	18 COMMUNITY MINDEDNESS JU	19 ORGANIZATION & ORDER MO	20 HUMILITY MO	21 GRATITUDE TR
22 CREATIVITY WI	23 CONVICTION CO	24 LOYALTY HO	25 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY JU	26 PATIENCE MO	27 MODESTY MO	28 JOY TR
29 APPRECIATION OF OPPOSITION WI	30 PERSEVERANCE & GRIT CO	31 PURSUIT OF PEACE HO	32 COMPASSIONATE CRITICISM JU	33 FORGIVENESS MO	34 PIETY MO	35 WHOLENESS & PEACEFULNESS TR
36 FORESIGHT WI	37 INTEGRITY CO	38 LEADERSHIP HO	39 RIGHTEOUS JU	40 AMENABILITY MO	41 BALANCE & INNER BEAUTY MO	42 GROUNDEDNESS TR
						43 MAJESTY WI

One-word story

Time: 10-15 minutes

Goal: To show the possibilities of creating a story together.

Connection: The stories we tell are components of our identities; and they aid in shaping our identities as we grow from our experiences and hearing others' stories. This is an example of Reimer's recreational activities that is fun and learning-based, giving participants the opportunity to be fully engaged and to learn from one another.

Instructions: Have the participants tell a story one word at a time.

Discussion questions: What parts of the stories were the most important?

- What parts were the most fun?
- Were there any parts of the stories that we could do without?

Before ending the day, recap the day's activities, answering the following prompts:

- How do we expand and combine our different communities?
- How do we work to build new community and maintain friendships?
- What does it mean to truly be a friend?
- How is being a friend and being an ally related? How are they different?
- Why is unity important? ³⁵

³⁵ After completing this activity, let the participants choose how they want to spend the rest of the day (there should be about forty-five minutes remaining)—they can journal, play games, get to know one another, etc.

Day 4 Theme/Goals

Theme: Reaching Out

Questions to consider and answer throughout the day:

- How do we reach out to other people to include them in our communities?
- How do we use dialogue to engage with new people?
- What does it mean to truly be a friend?
- How is being a friend and being an ally related? How are they different?

Goals: Demonstrate that we all part of a larger community

- Demonstrate how we all can work together as a team to benefit each other.
- Maintain foundation for interfaith education and dialogue.
- Engage in interactive programming.
- Prepare for Day 5's theme of Growth.

Qualities of a Peacemaker

Time: 15-20 minutes

Goal: To understand what a peacemaker is and how to become one.

Connection: This activity breaks down what a peacemaker is and how one can become one in our modern world. While it is not a dialogue per se, it leads to a dialogue about what peace means for different people. In turn, it points to Mary C. Boys's discussion of how our differences, while sometimes divisive, can bring us together to form new relationships. This exercise helps mold the community into a peaceful one and can aid the community in helping the world become a peaceful place for all.

As Reimer and Chazan push for, this activity is engaging and fun. It uses different learning methods—participants are asked to write, discuss, and share their opinions and thoughts regarding the subject. A variety of learning methods helps to keep the participants engaged and it helps to continue the experiential continuum Dewey argued for.

Instructions: Have discussion about how to define a peacemaker.

- Ask participants to think of someone they consider to be a peacemaker, who they know personally or who is famous.
- Ask them to write down or draw what makes the person a peacemaker.

- Have participants share with the larger group the qualities of the peacemaker and explain why they think the person is a peacemaker.

Discussion questions: What is a peacemaker?

- What does it mean to be a peacemaker?
- How can we learn from these peacemakers?
- How can we become peacemakers like the ones described?

Community Tower

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Tower building materials.

Goal: To show the importance of community.

Connection: This fun activity emphasizes the importance of working together to create something. This is an example of an exercise that concentrates on forming the group's identity. As discussed in Chapter One, experiential education is grounded in relationships; and each person adds to the group's learning as a whole. In a broader sense, the activity lends itself well to a conversation about different people bringing different perspectives and how those perspectives can change others.

Building a tower together demands teamwork, listening, and patience from everyone. After the sculpture is knocked down, they may be unable to put it back together exactly as it was. So too with relationships—when one falls apart, it is hard to repair it to resemble what it was before. The relationship (and tower structure) depends on the creation and preservation of trusting relationships and strong foundations.

Instructions: Have the group build a sculpture—each person adding one object from the room.

- Have participants stand in a circle and look at the sculpture they made.
- Have them close their eyes and knock down the sculpture.
- Ask participants to rebuild the sculpture.

Discussion questions: What skills did you use to rebuild the sculpture?

- Could you have done it alone? Why or why not?
- Can you describe the sculpture to the group?

- Have multiple people answer this question to show the difference in perspective.
- Imagine this sculpture is a conflict or other complex interpersonal or multicultural situation. What can you imagine the sculpture could represent?
- *Note:* Many ideas may come up and be worth discussion, but be sure the participants understand the importance of integrating multiple perspectives into the group, community, or even international problem-solving.

Conclusion: Each person can only see his/her own view of the sculpture and will miss elements of the structure that are hidden in angles that are out of view. This can be compared to differing perspectives in a conflict.

- Subjective perspectives are influenced by personal history, attitudinal bias, or variations in cultural understanding.
- Better understanding, recognizing, and hopefully respecting another's perspective on a conflict builds collective understanding of how each person is part of the conflict. This also opens communication for transforming stuck or hostile relationships.

Dissolving Stereotypes and Finding Common Ground

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Paper, pens or pencils, empty bag or container.

Goal: To recognize the need to look for the common ground in conflict situations and with people one assumes he or she does not like.

Connection: As mentioned in Chapter One, the group dynamic must rest on creating a safe environment for the participants; and there must be a sense of shared responsibility between the participants. Because each experience is person-centered in experiential education—each experience affects the learner's total being and contributes to his/her overall character and identity. This activity is a great way for the participant to connect what he/she is learning and what he/she is experiencing in life to continue to develop his/her character. This is part of the model of lifelong learning discussed in Chapter Four, where it is argued that the students' learning must be molded in order to create an increasing desire to learn.

This activity connects back to Day Two when the participants were asked to define stereotypes and reflect why people are categorized in these ways. This connection helps to

create a habit, to make the action of thinking about stereotypes part of one's daily routine, as explained in Chapter Four.

Working together to dissolve stereotypes and find common ground contributes to the group dynamic which is continually being built throughout this curriculum. This is a difficult task, one that can only be accomplished when participants are working together and sharing this weighty responsibility.

Instructions: Have participants brainstorm lists of groups that are famous for their rivalry (examples could include New York Yankees v. Boston Red Sox, Crips v. Bloods, Pittsburgh Steelers v. Cleveland Browns, Michigan v. Ohio State, etc.).

- Collect the lists and place the names of the rival groups in an empty bag or container. Shake the bag or container and then randomly pick the names of a pair of rivals. Divide the participants into two equal groups and have them sit on opposite sides of the room—facing each other. Explain that the two groups will be addressing each other as rivals, like the groups they have listed.
- Distribute paper to each person in both groups. Ask for each to make a list of likes and dislikes for each of the following categories: Food, clothing, hobbies, places, music, sports teams, and TV shows.
- Give each group time to discuss their likes and dislikes within their group and to form a group trait based on the things they have the most in common. Remind each group the opposite group is their supposed “enemy.”
- Have each group take turns reading aloud one of their group members' likes or dislikes. Explain that when one hears a like or dislike he/she agrees with, he/she should raise his/her hand. Assign one person from each group to be the record keeper to tally the number of participants from the opposing group who agree with a like or dislike.
- Analyze the end results of the tallies once each person has shared a like or dislike.

Discussion questions: How can we respect those who are different from us?

- How we can look beyond superficial stereotypes and find common ground with people who are different from us?
- How can we use our differences to build community?

Conclusion: While stereotypes are often inevitable, it is important not to rely on them when meeting new people and forming communities. It is best to learn from our differences and form diverse communities. Our society is structured on categories and a hierarchy, but our community need not follow those standards. It is our job to figure out how to accomplish this and grow our communities.³⁶

Respectfully Resolving Conflicts

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Paper, pens or pencils, dictionary, markers, board or flip chart on which to write, and “The Stages of Conflict” activity sheet for each individual.

Goal: To define “conflict” and identify individual conflict triggers.

Connection: Having a discussion and activity centered around resolving conflicts is important both for group formation and for individual growth. As Dewey argued, education “train[s] child[ren] in cooperative and mutually helpful living; foster[ing] in them the consciousness of mutual independence, and help[ing] them in making the adjustments that carry this spirit into overt deeds.”³⁷ Not only is this effective with children, but with adults it is even more so because they can use their wealth of past experiences to learn more about themselves to grow into more mature, responsible, and accomplished beings. As mentioned in Chapter Four, each experience gives the participants the opportunity to consider how one’s future experiences will be affected and how one will be changed as a result of the experience.

Instructions: Ask each participant what he/she thinks or when he/she hears the word “conflict.” Record the responses on paper, board, or flip chart. If working with a group of people, list similar responses together.

- Once all ideas are listed, ask participants to suggest a definition for “conflict.” Record the responses.
- Ask a volunteer to look up the word “conflict” in the dictionary. Compare the dictionary definition with the created definition of “conflict.”
- Pass out the “Stages of Conflict” activity sheet to all individuals.

³⁶ Activity adapted from Overcoming Obstacles, *Respect: It’s Up to Us. 15 Activities on Respecting Yourself and Others*. Overcoming Obstacles: Life Skills Foundation, 13. www.overcomingobstacles.org

³⁷ John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1924), 111.

- Ask the participants to explain the meaning of the saying, “That was the straw that broke the camel’s back.” Help all recognize that when people are feeling burdened, a small incident might “break” them. Explain that stress is like a burden that can be the catalyst that turns a small conflict into an out-of-control situation.
 - Point out that the relationship between conflict and stress is reciprocal: Conflict is stressful and stress can provoke conflict.
 - Emphasize that conflict is a part of life. But, we can all learn from conflict, and, in turn, try to make it a positive experience.
- Have participants record specific conflict situations that they would like to manage more effectively.

Discussion questions: How do you feel when involved in conflict?

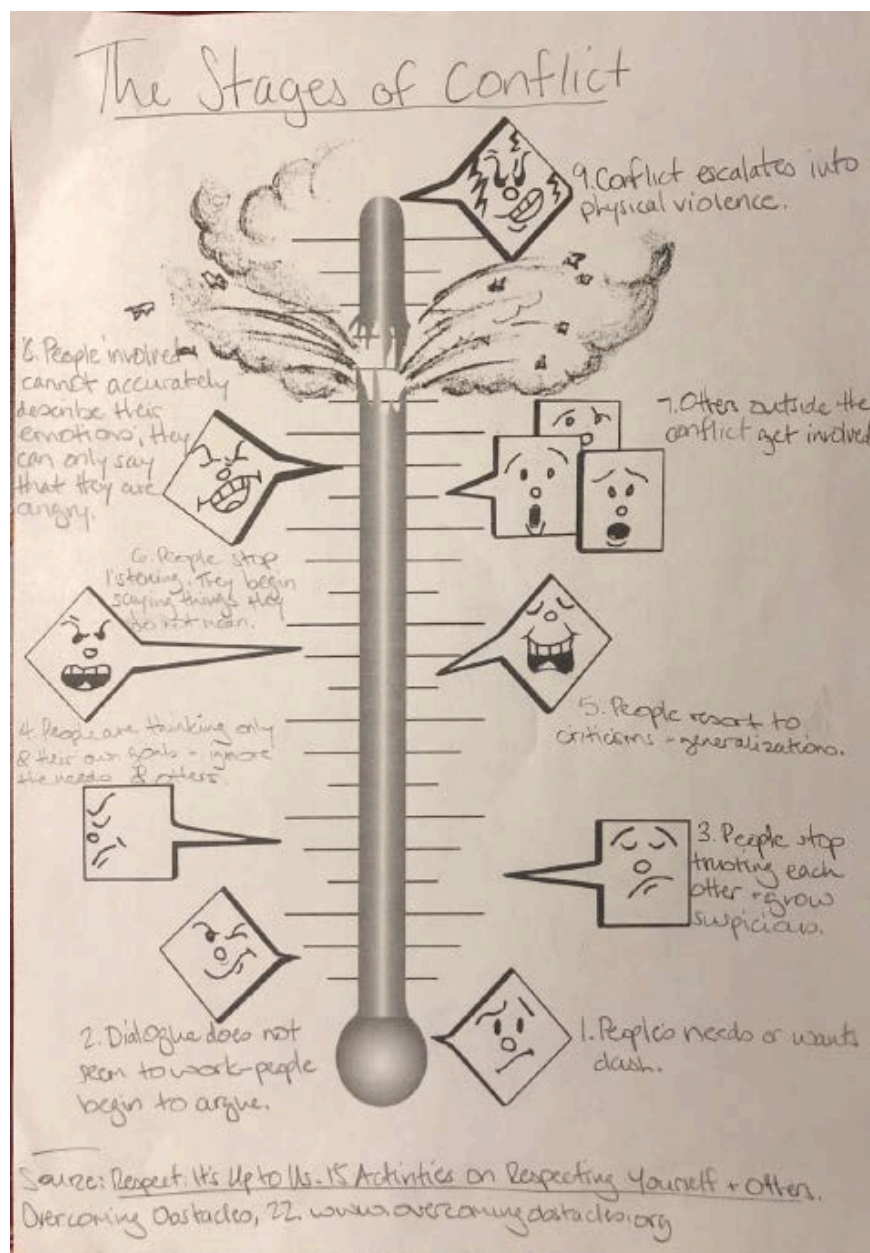
- What creates conflict?
- What are sources of stress for you?
- What situations in your life involve conflict?
- What factors are triggering these conflicts?

Conclusion: Conflict is inevitable and important to deal with instead of avoiding. Finding effective ways to solve conflicts helps individuals grow and form respectful communities.

Making conflict into a positive situation is the best solution.

- At the conclusion of this activity the participants will understand that a conflict is a *mental* struggle between two people; whereas physical struggles are often the result of the original mental struggle between two people.³⁸

³⁸ Activity adapted from Overcoming Obstacles, *Respect: It’s Up to Us*, 22.



Come, Let Us Bless

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials: Copies of handouts for each station, different kinds of foods, things with aromas (such as flowers, a spice box, or perfume), Shabbat candles, crucifix with the body of Jesus, shofar, and the cross.

- Have an area large enough to accommodate three stations at which people can gather in groups and also a separate working area for the participants.

Goals: To introduce various kinds of blessings to families.

- To compile a blessing book so that the learning experiences can be transferred to the home.

Connection: This activity is an example of an immersive activity or environment because it imitates real life experiences. The participants are learning by doing, the crux of experiential education. As explained in Chapter Four, taking part in a religious experience such as Shabbat or learning various blessings, one is able to understand the ritual in a direct, meaningful, and positive manner. For this activity in particular, one is able to develop his/her religious identity based on the new experience of learning about examples of Jewish blessings.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, education aims to give participants experiences that are within their zones of proximal development to encourage and advance their individual learning with skills and strategies. This activity is an example of scaffolding because the activity helps the student understand the blessings and then they are asked to create his/her own blessings to demonstrate what they have learning. Completing this activity helps both the educator and participant to see how they have grown and matured from his/her learning.

Instructions: Begin with explaining what a blessing is and why it is important that we say them.

- Have the participants share meaningful blessings that they know of.
- At Station 1 (*Birkot Hanehenim*), set up the foods and the things with aromas.
 - Tell the participants the following: “At this station you will see many different things. Look them over together. You may handle them if you wish. As a group, decide what all of these have in common.”
- Before moving on to Station 2, have the participants discuss the significance of all these blessings.
- At Station 2 (*Birkot Hamitzvah*), set up the Shabbat candles and the shofar.
 - Provide in the station a handout containing the appropriate blessings for each item.

- Tell the participants the following: “There are two symbols on this table. For each action there is a specific blessing. What do these things have in common? Why do they have specific blessings?”
- At Station 3 (*Birkot Hoda'ah*), have participants list ten things for which they are thankful for.
- Have participants compose a blessing or a prayer which reflects their personal response to God's world. It may be a blessing of thanks, praise, petition, or action, or it may even contain all of these elements.
- After everyone has completed the stations, bring everyone together for discussion and invite participants to share reactions and blessings.

Discussion questions: Why do we have blessings or benedictions for specific things?

- Why is there a specific blessing for food? And for spices?
- What is the difference between *Birkot Hanehenin* and *Birkot Hamitzvah*?
- How do these blessings represent our response to God's world?

Conclusion: This program ties in themes of personal choices, values, identity, and prayer. It allows participants to learn about Jewish blessings to be inspired to create their own blessings for things in their lives. It gives participants the opportunity to recognize the things they may take for granted and appreciate them.³⁹

Blessings for Station 1 (*Birkot Hanehenin*)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמּוֹצֵא לֶחֶם מִן-הָאָרֶץ.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam
hamotzi lehem min ha'aretz.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who brings forth **bread** from the earth.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי בָשָׂמִים.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam,
borei minei v'samin.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who creates different kinds of
fragrances.

³⁹ Adapted from Janice P. Adler, “Come Let Us Bless,” in *Learning Together: A Source Book on Jewish Family Education*, ed. Janice P. Adler (Denver: Alternatives in Religious Education, 1987), 176.
After completing this activity, give the participants an hour lunch break.

Blessings for Station 2 (*Birkot Hamitzvah*)

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצותיו
וצונו לשמע קול שופר.

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik
ner shel Shabbat.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who has sanctified us with
commandments, and commanded us to light the
Shabbat candles.

אשר קדשנו במצותיו, אלהינו מלך העולם, ברוך אתה יי
וצונו לשמע קול שופר

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lishmoa kol
shofar.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the
Universe, who has sanctified us with
commandments, and commanded us to hear the
voice of the **shofar.**

What Causes Anger?

Time: 10-15 minutes

Materials: Paper, pens or pencils, markers, board or flip chart on which to write.

Goal: To identify situations that make one angry and to create ways to reduce or control anger.

Connection: Just as the activities about conflict resolution aimed to aid in the participants' growth and camaraderie, so too does this activity. Understanding what causes each of us anger helps each of us work better with others and form more effective teams. This activity may take the participants out of their comfort zones because of its focus on anger. But as Reimer argued for, each experience should challenge the participant, helping them to grow and explore their feelings around anger, for example.⁴⁰ Having a discussion about anger has the potential to further open the participants' minds for more dialogue and learning opportunities as well.

Instructions: Ask the participants the discussion questions below and record all responses on board or flip chart. Encourage them to list as many situations as possible for each question.

- Once the list is exhausted, have the individuals write down five techniques that work for them.
- Give participants time to journal for 30 minutes immediately following this activity.

⁴⁰ Joseph Reimer, "A Response to Barry Chazan: The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*. Accessed June 25, 2019.
https://www.infed.org/informaleducation/informal_jewish_education_reply_htm.

Discussion questions: What makes you angry?

- How do you know when you are angry? Discuss the physiological reactions and explain how these are natural indicators of anger.
- If so many different situations have the potential to make us angry, what can we do to better be able to manage our anger and more effectively function? Here are some suggestions if they are having trouble: Controlled breathing, counting to ten, taking a walk, talking with someone, etc.).

Conclusion: Learning how to manage one's anger is important for both individual functioning and for functioning as a team or group. It is also helpful to know how to support others when they are angry. Quelling another's anger demonstrates camaraderie and support, both essential components of group formation.

What Do We Have in Common?

Time: 20-30 minutes

Material: Paper and pens.

Goal: To explore what it is like to meet people who seem different than us, and what it feels like to share similarities and differences between others.

Connection: Discovering what we have in common with each other gives us a sense of belonging and representation. As discussed in Chapter One, the group environment needs to foster a community in which all participants feel a sense of belonging. Every participant needs to feel safe within the group no matter what is being discussed. This helps to create trust between the participants. Creating a safe space rich with non-judgmental discussion is of high importance.

This curriculum argues that the two different religions of Christianity and Judaism have more in common than one might think. And those similarities can be used to surpass the differences and divisions that have been created between the religions over the centuries. The act of getting to know one another is the first step of experiential education—the education becomes person-centered and personal. Understanding what we already have in common with others, allows participants to be curious about themselves and others. They can begin a conversation to learn more about others and continue Dewey's process of lifelong learning.

Instructions: Divide each piece of paper into a 5X5 grid.

- Have the participants interact with each other, asking each other questions to find out what they have in common. For example: What's your favorite color? What's your favorite food? What's your favorite holiday?
- Fill in one square per commonality and have the participant who has it in common with the individual sign the corresponding box.
- Once each participant's grid is full, bring the group back together to answer the discussion questions.

Discussion questions: Discuss the similarities and differences found.

- Do you have things in common and things that are different with people from the same religion?
- Do you have things in common and things that are different with people from different religions?
- What are common things you had in common? Common differences?
- What are pluses and minuses of having things in common with others? How about pluses and minuses of having differences?
- What is it like to meet someone who seems very different than you for the first time? What happens when you spend more time with them?

Conclusion: Recognizing our similarities and differences helps us get to know each other better and to grow our community. It helps us find ways to connect and grow together as well.

How Does a Comic Affect Religion?

Time: 45-60 minutes

Materials: Resource notes and discussion questions for each group.

Goal: To understand the place of both Judaism and Christianity in the world.

- To identify how the religions are different and similar to each other.

Connection: This activity is an example of a dialogue that brings together groups to empathetically listen to one another. It focuses on inquiry and increasing understanding of how Christianity and Judaism are understood in our modern world. While this comic came out nineteen years ago, the message is still relevant: Christianity cannot replace Judaism and Judaism cannot replace Christianity. Each exists in its own way and has the right to do so.

This is an example of an inter-religious dialogue where the participants are learning in the presence of the other and encountering the tradition embodied in that other.

As argued in Chapter Two, engaging in an inter-religious dialogue helps one expand his/her own religious education, thereby providing them the foundation for self-understanding as a member of that religion. The dialogue brings about a difference in opinion perhaps; however, it can also create unity in how the participants are brought together and learn about each other. This results in a cohesive group bonded together by their experience—they have created a shared experience.

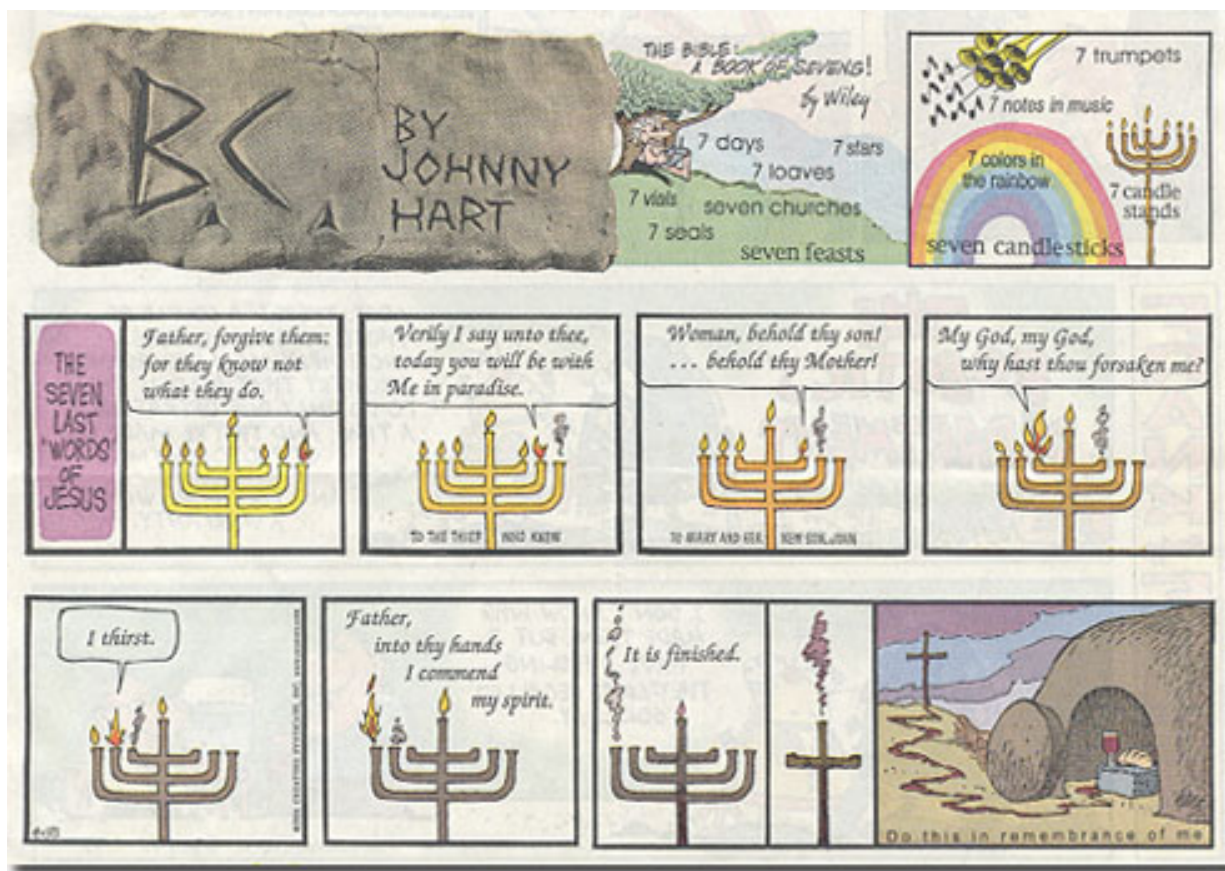
Instructions: Explain to participants that on Easter Sunday, 2001, Johnny Hart created a B.C. comic that infuriated the Jewish community. Share it with students and see if they can figure out why there was such an uproar.

- *Note:* Jews interpreted the message as Christianity replacing Judaism (note what happens to the menorah). This thinking is called Replacement Theology and strikes an extremely sensitive chord within the Jewish community.
- Divide participants into small groups, each to read and consider statements from Jews and Christians.
- Ask each group to share the viewpoint of the person they read.
- Discuss group reactions to the various positions.
- Brainstorm how they might respond to someone who comes to them with a view other than one with which they are comfortable.

Conclusion: This activity challenges participants to discuss how others describe religion and sometimes to the detriment of others. Participants are asked to understand how others' view on their religion play a part in how one chooses to be religious and follow their religion. After this activity, participants will understand how to best support other religions because they are different and because there are commonalities between all people. Participants will also realize how sometimes one's best intentions can still harm another person. This activity will help participants realize the power of others' actions and words.⁴¹

⁴¹ Activity adapted from Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz, Kara Tav, and Linda Silver, *The Crux of the Matter* (Cleveland: Project Curriculum Renewal, 2002), 7, 25-30.

Once completed this activity, give the participants a fifteen to twenty-minute break to recharge and refresh.



Group 1 Handout

Below is a statement made by someone concerning the relationship of Judaism and Christianity.

Read through and discuss it, using the questions below. When you are finished, your task is to create a sketch of the *menorah* and the cross to share this person's message with others in your class.

- "Jesus was a Jew who honored his heritage. The United Church of Christ and countless other Christian churches recognize the full integrity of Judaism."⁴²

Discussion questions: Are there any words or ideas here you do not understand? Try and figure these out as a group.

- What is this person's view of Judaism?
- What is this person's view of Christianity?

⁴² Rev. Larry Reimer of United Church of Gainesville.

- How does this person describe the relation between Judaism and Christianity?
- As a Jew, how does this description make you feel? As a Christian, how does this description make you feel?
- What questions might you ask the author?

Group 2 Handout

Below is a statement made by someone concerning the relationship of Judaism and Christianity.

Read through and discuss it, using the questions below. When you are finished, your task is to create a sketch of the *menorah* and the cross to share this person's message with others in your class.

- "There's no reason for anyone to assume that God has made a covenant with only one people. We all talk of God as omnipotent. I would feel that an opinion like (the comic strip's) would sadden our God as well."⁴³

Discussion questions: Are there any words or ideas here you do not understand? Try and figure these out as a group.

- What is this person's view of Judaism?
- What is this person's view of Christianity?
- How does this person describe the relation between Judaism and Christianity?
- As a Jew, how does this description make you feel? As a Christian, how does this description make you feel?
- What questions might you ask the author?

Group 3 Handout

Below is a statement made by someone concerning the relationship of Judaism and Christianity.

Read through and discuss it, using the questions below. When you are finished, your task is to create a sketch of the *menorah* and the cross to share this person's message with others in your class.

⁴³ Father John Gillespie, pastor of St. Augustine Catholic Church.

- “The Old Testament is a venerated part of the Christian Bible. Jesus made it clear that He did not come to replace the law of the Old Testament, but to fulfill it.”⁴⁴

Discussion questions: Are there any words or ideas here you do not understand? Try and figure these out as a group.

- What is this person's view of Judaism?
- What is this person's view of Christianity?
- How does this person describe the relation between Judaism and Christianity?
- As a Jew, how does this description make you feel? As a Christian, how does this description make you feel?
- What questions might you ask the author?

Hula Hoop Game

Time: 15 minutes

Materials: Hula Hoop.

Connection: This simple and fun game is a good way to break up the serious tone of the day. Chazan argues for each experience having a playful aspect to it several times throughout his writing.⁴⁵ So too does Reimer who maintains that each experience should be recreational, creating an immersive environment and playful experience.⁴⁶

In addition, this activity centers around the group working together to pass the hula hoop around the circle. The circle of participants cannot be broken, just as their team should not be dismantled.

Instructions: Stand in a circle holding hands and pass hula hoop all the way around the circle and over people's bodies (the hula hoop cannot be passed hand to hand).

- After a couple of rounds have a discussion about how flexibility and working together are important to every group.

⁴⁴ Linda Bowles, columnist.

⁴⁵ Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*, ed. Barry Chazan, Robert Chazan, and Benjamin M. Jacobs (NY: MacMillan, 2017), 19.

⁴⁶ Joseph Reimer, “A Response to Barry Chazan: The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education.” https://www.infed.org/informaleducation/informal_jewish_education_reply.htm.

Conclusion: Developing camaraderie and adaptability are important qualities for every group. Cheering on our teammates and working together help to grow and bond the group. These qualities reinforce the beauty of being part of a team and creating accountability and responsibility within the group.

Getting to Know Animals

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Animal notecards and something to write on.

Connection: This exercise is another fun way to discuss the serious topic of only hearing one side of a story. Finding the opportunity to listen and work together to solve problems contributes to the foundation of a team. Drawing an animal, for example, is a simple task. But when one is not given enough information, the task becomes difficult. So too with the sharing of our stories and daily experiences.

Reimer argues that each experience needs to help the learner grow in maturity and in education.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the experience will aid the participants in learning more about themselves to continue to grow into more mature, responsible, and accomplished beings. This simple activity allows for a synthesis of aesthetic, affective, moral, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions, as mentioned in Chapter Four.

Instructions: Tell the participants about a time when you heard only one side of a story and how this impacted your view of a situation. How did this limited perspective change how you viewed the situation?

- Introduce the game by saying, “Now we will work together to attempt to draw an animal.”
- Pass around a hat and have everyone take out one piece of paper.
- Play two rounds of the game.
 - First round: You can trade cards with two people in the group.
 - Draw the animal on your paper with the information you know about the animal.
 - Compare drawings.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

- Second round: Trade cards with everyone in the group.
 - Draw the animal on your paper with the information you know about the animal now.
 - Compare drawings.

Discussion questions: When was a time when you felt like people were only hearing one perspective? How did that make you feel?

- When was a time when you felt as though you only heard one perspective? Did you do anything to change that?
- Why is it hard sometimes to hear all the perspectives?
- What can we do to try to hear other people's points of view?
- What do our safety guidelines teach us about hearing different perspectives?
- What if you hear a perspective you do not agree with?
- What if you have a perspective that other people do not agree with?

Conclusion: It is often difficult to hear all perspectives of a single story. And individuals often share only one perspective of a given story. It is important to find ways to share and hear all perspectives of stories and situations. It is essential to consider how hearing other perspectives will influence our viewpoint and possibly change our opinion of the situation at hand. It is our job to ensure that all perspectives are heard and that no one's perspective is silenced.

Animals and Descriptions

Giraffe

This animal has a long neck
This animal has two horns

This animal has long legs
This animal has hooves for feet

This animal has a tail
This animal has spots

This animal has a long tongue
This animal has big eyes

Dolphin

This animal has a long whale-like tail
This animal has a long snout
This animal has a curved body
This animal has smooth skin

This animal has fins
This animal has a blow hole
This animal has sharp teeth

Alligator

This animal has scaly skin

This animal has four legs

This animal has a long tail
 This animal has sharp teeth
 This animal has short legs

This animal has a long body
 This animal has a long snout

Hippo

This animal has smooth skin
 This animal has big teeth
 This animal has four legs
 This animal spends a lot of time near water

This animal has small ears
 This animal is often fat
 This animal has a short tail
 This animal has a big nose

Before ending the day, recap the day's activities, answering the following prompts:

- How do we reach out to other people to include them in our communities?
- How do we use dialogue to engage with new people?
- What does it mean to truly be a friend?
- How is being a friend and being an ally related? How are they different?⁴⁸

⁴⁸ At the conclusion of this activity, give the participants the remainder of the day (forty-five minutes to an hour) to get to know each other, journal, play games, etc.

Day 5 Theme/Goals⁴⁹

Theme: Growth

Questions to consider and answer throughout the day:

- How do we expand our definitions of other religions?
- How do we move from only looking at our opinions to considering others' opinions?
- What does it mean to expand our communities to include those who are different from us?
- How can we use our similarities and differences to grow together?

Goals: Demonstrate that growth is an ongoing process.

- Demonstrate how all of us contribute to the group dynamic and to each individual's growth.
- Maintain foundation for interfaith education and dialogue.
- Engage in interactive programming.
- Prepare for Day 6's theme of Ritual.

Mirror, Mirror

Time: 30 minutes

Goals: To have the participants work together and pay close attention to each other. This goal should work to be maintained throughout the day.

- Creating connections between the participants and the staff.
- Figuring out how to learn from others and when to do so.

Connection: When participants are given the chance to observe others, they can find ways to learn from others. This helps to further grow the team and the individuals independently. The discussion following the activity helps the group learn about how one sets an example for others in every action he/she does. We do not have control over how our actions are interpreted or understood, nor do we have control over who decides to model their behavior off of ours.

This activity connects back to Day Two where participants were given three similar looking bell peppers and they had to choose which one looked the best based on a quick judgment. In our everyday life, we consistently decide who to act like and who to align ourselves with—

⁴⁹ Consider having the weekend portion of the trip at a retreat center, camp, or different space from the rest of the week.

this is how we construct our own independent identities. This contributes to the participants' zones of proximal development, as discussed in Chapter Four. The zone of proximal development is the distance between what a learner can do without help, and what they can do with support from another.⁵⁰ We can apply the zone of proximal development to this activity because one is attempting to imitate another while simultaneously forming his/her independent character.

*Instructions:*⁵¹ Divide the group into pairs, where one person in the pair is A (actor) and the other is B (mirror).

- Have the partners face each other, and B mimics everything A does.
- Periodically the leader calls out “Freeze!”
- When the leader calls out “defrost!” the partners switch roles.
- Alternatively, a group of participants could perform while the rest of the group watches and the remainder of the participants mimics them. Or, it could be done as a group where one student is the actor and the rest of the group mirrors participant A.
- Do a couple of rounds before bringing the group back together.

Discussion questions: How did it feel to model someone else's behavior?

- What, if anything, was easy for you in this activity?
- What, if anything, was difficult for you in this activity?
- How did you try to adjust and adapt to the unpredictable and changing behavior of the actor?
- How can this be applied to circumstances in everyday life?
- How can this be applied to situations that may arise during the rest of this learning experience?

Conclusion: In this exercise, the performer focuses on the other person. This exercise is focused on the connection between the participants and the present moment. In everyday life we are constantly changing and adjusting to the moment. We read into every action and piece

⁵⁰ A. Yasnitsky, *Vygotsky: An Intellectual Biography* (London and NY: Routledge, 2018), 24.

⁵¹ *Optional:* Music is helpful while playing. Select genre relevant to emotion attempting to appeal to. The music affects the types of movement the students come up with. The activity usually begins with slower music, as a means of allowing the participants to ease their way into this activity.

of information we receive from the people we interact with and from our environment. It is important to work to understand our reactions and how they affect our next actions.

Cards for our Neighbors

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials: Paper, pens, markers, and scissors.

Goals: To have participants realize the impact and importance of their neighbors.

Connection: As mentioned in the introduction to this curriculum, an encounter with a stranger is fundamental to one's learning process, in my opinion. As Dwayne Huebner argued, "Encounters with strangers are pathways to new understandings of how God and human beings are in relationship."⁵² One of the overall goals of this curriculum is to turn our world into our community and everyone is welcome—even those we do not know. This activity is an example of how the participants can begin to create more synergy for making this world a better place; and to be able to use our differences and similarities for the benefits they bring. Not only do we need to create peace between Christianity and Judaism, we also need to learn to foster peace between everyone. This exercise helps the participants move from tolerating others to accepting them as part of our ever-growing community. This curriculum is attempting to create a culture of curiosity about others and to use that curiosity to expand participants' minds and open their hearts to new beginnings and relationships. This activity is person-centered and highly interactive and engaging, exactly what Chazan argues for in his description of experiential education. In maintaining a value-driven curriculum, this exercise focuses on the value of caring for others. As Kress pushes for, this activity creates strong relationships and a sense of community between the participants.

Instructions: Explain the following—In Judaism, our most well-known and repeated commandment is to treat your neighbor as yourself. In Christianity, we are told to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are told to take care of our neighbors just as we would take care of ourselves. It is important to acknowledge our neighbors and thank them for looking out for us.

- If participants worry that they do not know their neighbors, Judaism tells us to care for the stranger, meaning those we do not know deserve appreciation and nurturing.

⁵² Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, xvi.

- Our neighbors are not just those who live on our block or in our building—as Joachim Prinz said, “Neighbor is not a geographic term. It is a moral concept. It means our collective responsibility for the preservation of [another’s] dignity and integrity.”⁵³
- Have participants think of people in their lives, especially their neighbors, who they would like to appreciate.
 - Participants will make cards for the people they wish to recognize together.

Conclusion: Caring for those around us helps us find ways to ensure camaraderie and to work together when the need arises. Thanking those around us builds a community of respect and generosity. These traits are important to emphasize as we continue to build our team and contribute to other teams.

Saying Grace, is it Graceful?

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: The film, *Meet the Parents*.

Connection: Leading a discussion about the practice of saying grace before or after meals begins a conversation about one’s own religious observances and how they might differ from other peoples. This is one example of how Christianity and Judaism are similar—both have the practice of saying grace, but it is executed differently in each religion. As Mary C. Boys argued, this is an example of religious education that has the potential to bring reconciliation among those of different religions.⁵⁴

This activity is interactive and brings in multiple senses to keep the participants’ attention focused on this somewhat weighty topic. It engages the participants cognitively, intellectually, and emotionally. This is an example of the teaching that Patty and David Kovacs are engaging in at The Family School in Chicago. They, and we too, are finding ways to have discussions about how religious practices are observed in the home and how those practices are a result of what students and adults have learned from school or work.

⁵³ Joachim Prinz, “Civil Rights,” Joachim Prinz. Accessed December 12, 2019, <http://www.joachimprinz.com/civilrights.htm>

⁵⁴ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, x.

Instructions: Show students the segment of the film, *Meet the Parents* in which the perspective son-in-law (a Jew) is asked to say grace before dinner at his almost-finance's home (a Christian), approximately twenty minutes into the film after the credits.

- Ask participants to consider why this is such a funny segment.
 - Why is it hard for Greg?
 - What knowledge or background does Greg draw on to accomplish the task?
- Have a discussion about the Jewish parallel for "grace before meals."
 - Be sure to discuss not only saying המוציא (*hamotzi*, the blessing before eating bread) is simply a blessing for bread but also ברכת המזון (*birkat hamazon*, the blessing after eating) which is the collection of blessings with which Jews thank God for food and sustenance.
 - Note: In Jewish tradition, we say a short blessing on each type of food that we eat, for example, we say a blessings with the words, "בורא פרי הגפן" (*Borei pri hagafen*; creator of the fruit of the vine) before we drink wine.
 - It is said that the rabbis realized that before eating, people are hungry and a long blessing may not be a practical choice. It is, however, important to note that the beginning blessings are not the central prayers thanking God for food and sustenance. The series of blessings said after the meal, ברכת המזון (*birkat hamazon*), thank God with a fixed and prescribed blessing.
 - This is congruent with the idea that Jewish food blessings are rooted in the concept of קבע (*keva*, routine or fixed/regulated), whereas Christian food blessings depends on the leader to pray spontaneous words from the heart.

Discussion questions: Why do you think there are different religious customs surrounding eating?

- Does your family say grace before having a meal? Or some sort of blessing?
- What are some of the issues people face when bringing two religions together? Why do those issues occur?

Conclusion: Discussing how one practices his/her religion in the home is critical to learning about and creating one's own religious traditions. Taking a minute to bless food before or after meals helps to center us and to realize the effort that was put in to make this meal and to bring it to our table. Food often brings people together and this is also a blessing.

- Have the participants come up with a way to bless the food that brings in both traditions. Perhaps beginning the meal with spontaneous words from the heart and ending with a Jewish blessing.⁵⁵

The Sermon on the Mount and Judaism

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Board to write on.

Connection: Bringing in biblical text is a good way to start a conversation about how the two religions understand each other and how that has played out in history. It is important to have a discussion about how the two religions view each other both in scripture and in the modern day. The Sermon on the Mount is a well-known Christian text that mentions Judaism, making a distinction between Jewish and Christian law.

This activity helps to move the conversation from tolerance and pluralism to acceptance and understanding of those who are different from us. As argued in the introduction to the curriculum, John Stuart Mill said, "It is easy to be tolerant regarding what you really do not care about. The challenge is to be able to respect religious and moral differences while having deep connections."⁵⁶ This is a great inter-religious dialogue for Jews and Christians to be teachers to each other, as Mary C. Boys has argued in her works.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ After finishing this activity, give the participants an hour lunch break. They can begin lunch with their new blessing if you wish.

⁵⁶ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue*, ix.

⁵⁷ Boys argued "Judaism has become one of Christianity's more significant teachers because its continued existence and vitality pose questions to Christians which touch on the heart of [Christians'] faith." John H. Westerhoff, "Questions Which Touch on the Heart of our Faith," *Journal of Religious Education Association* 76 (1981): 25.

Because of their common roots and intertwined histories, Christianity and Judaism cannot fully understand themselves without the other. This is the key goal of the curriculum—to bring together Christians and Jews who already have much in common and who are willing to learn how the religions differ to enrich his/her own individual religious practice.

Instructions: Explain to participants the significance of the Sermon on the Mount, a sermon given by Jesus and recorded in the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.⁵⁸ It is very important because it makes a distinction between Jewish and Christian law.

- Write on the board this quote of Jesus from Matthew Chapter five, verse seventeen—
“Do not suppose that I have come to abolish the Law and the prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to complete.”
- Ask participants to hypothesize what this quote means. What words are familiar? What may not be? What do they think the Law is?
- Mention that Jews translate law as הלכה (halachah; Jewish traditional law), meaning the straight or right path. In this instance Jesus was referring to the words of Torah.
 - It might be helpful to explain the difference between the Tanakh (the Hebrew Scriptures) and the Christian Bible.⁵⁹
- Explain that the creation of a New Testament came about by the Christian idea presented in the Sermon on the Mount that suggests there are aspects of Jewish law that should be preserved, while being expanded upon and completed.
- Read the remainder of the quote: “I tell you this: So long as heaven and earth endure, not a letter, not a stroke, will disappear from the Law until all that must happen has happened. If any person therefore sets aside even the least of the Law’s demands, and teaches others to do the same, he will have the lowest place in the kingdom of Heaven.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Matt. 5-7.

⁵⁹ The Tanakh is divided into 3 sections: Torah/The Five Books of Moses, Nevi'im/Prophets, and Ketuvim/Writings). The Christian Bible also contains these sections, but adds the New Testament. Jewish law or Halacha comes from the Torah.

⁶⁰ Matt. 5:18-19.

- Note the “kingdom of heaven” refers to a spiritual kingdom where Jesus reigns supreme as the Lord. This is the place Jesus holds between the people and God.
- Explain that the Sermon on the Mount offers some clear statements that differentiate between Jewish and Christian values. Have participants work in pairs or small groups to analyze statements from the Sermon on the Mount which Jesus suggests ways of “completing” the Law (Torah), instead of abolishing it.

Discussion questions: Discuss some of the problems that can arise in society when people define behaviors differently. What happens when these behaviors come into conflict?

- Can the values/behaviors live side-by-side?
- Does one values/behavior have priority?
- Living with your family, attending religious school, and participating in other religious organizations have taught you about your religion. What do you know about other religions’ values, beliefs, and religious behaviors? What do they have in common? What is different?
- Think about what each religion has to say about how to treat other people; how does this inform our values?

Conclusion: This activity helps participants compare Jewish and Christian values and beliefs to learn what they have in common and what makes them different. Analyzing a text like the Sermon on the Mount in an interfaith group results in the participants finding new meaning in the text. And it helps participants realizes how similar or different the two religions are.⁶¹

Beginning Shabbat in the Beginning

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: A copy of the Tanakh to read the creation story in *Genesis*.

Connection: This activity is an example of an immersive experience in that it creates a “context in which the walls, the design, the architecture, etc. breathe and teach the desired contents.”⁶² In immersive learning, one action can often lead to many possibilities. As Shuki Taylor argued, each experience should shift leaders beyond observation, making them the

⁶¹ After completing this activity, give the participants a fifteen to twenty-minute break to recharge and refresh.

⁶²Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*.

protagonist in the story and in control of the activity.⁶³ The immersive quality of each experience allows for personal transformation and individual growth of each participant.

This is an exercise that brings in story, discussion, and reflection, three key methods of experiential education. As discussed in Chapter Four, one becomes a story bearer once he/she is part of the ever-evolving narrative of Judaism and Christianity. As they begin to understand Shabbat and put it into practice, they are becoming a living part of the ritual. The discussion element hearkens back to Steven Brookfield's point that discussion is the means for revealing the diversity of opinions that lies below the surface of any complex issue.⁶⁴ Lastly, reflection allows for connections to be made between previous, present, and future experiences, creating Dewey's continuum of experiences.

Instructions: Read through the story of creation in English (Gen 1, Gen 2:1-4).

- Discuss the main ideas, touching on how each element of the world is created and in what order.
- Divide the group into pairs to rethink the story of creation based on different perspectives.
 - Perspectives include: A baseball player (soccer player, football player, etc.)
 - An artist
 - A musician
 - A physician
 - An actor/actress
 - An architect
 - A gardener
- Bring group back together once discussion is completed and have participants share their descriptions of creation.
- Be sure to take time to point out that on the seventh day, God created Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest.
 - Engage in discussion about what this “rest” means. This will transition into explanation of Shabbat in next activity.

⁶³ Shuki Taylor, “How Do We Tell Our Stories? From Spectatorship to Identification to Spect-actor-ship,” EJewish Philanthropy. Accessed June 18, 2019. <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/how-do-we-tell-our-stories-from-spectatorship-to-identification-to-spect-actor-ship/>.

⁶⁴ Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, *Discussion As A Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2005), 9.

Discussion questions: What does God mean when God says “it was good” after creating each element of the universe?

- Why do you think God created the world in this order? Does it make sense to you?
- Why is it important that God rested after God finished creation? How can we apply this method to our own forms of work?
- How do you rest?

Conclusion: Understanding the beginning can help us understand the story as a whole. The creation story demonstrates how the world was put together and that it is our job to maintain it and keep it whole. Shabbat is a crucial element of Judaism—it demonstrates how Jews value work and rest and each other.

What is Rest? What is Shabbat?

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Shabbat candles, wine/grape juice, cup, lighter, challah/bread.

Connection: This is another example of an immersive activity because the participant is using a hundred percent of his/her brain, body, and senses. In addition, this exercise gives the participants the opportunity to see themselves fully in the experience because they are actively witnessing Shabbat by hearing the blessings, lighting candles, drinking wine, and eating challah. As discussed in Chapter One, when a learner is directly involved in the experience, one is more likely to understand the material and apply it later in life. Because participants are involved in the rituals of Shabbat in this activity, they are understanding and expanding their knowledge and skill set. When one is completely immersed in the activity, the learning becomes fun and natural.

Participating in the ritual of Shabbat creates a person-centered experience because the participants are at the center and the activity focuses on contributing to the participants’ growth. It can sometimes be a challenge to witness rituals of other religions and find personal meaning in them. Having the participants join in the ritual helps to alleviate this discomfort. But the discomfort is not a bad result, as Reimer argues—all experiences should challenge the participants. Lastly, the learning is participatory—everyone has the opportunity to speak, listen, and to be actively engaged in the learning.

Instructions: Bring the group together to explain Shabbat before bringing Shabbat into the group.

- Begin by sharing how you practice Shabbat and why this way of practicing is meaningful for you.
- Refer back to the story of creation—“And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it. God rested from God’s work which God had created. And God was refreshed.”⁶⁵
- Explain the commandment to remember and observe Shabbat—“Remember (*zachor*) the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”⁶⁶
 - “Keep (*shamor*) the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as Adonai your God commanded you.”
 - *Note:* The Sages teach us that *Shamor V’Zachor* directs us in both commitment and spiritual discipline.
- Explain the three rituals of Shabbat:
 1. Lighting candles: Candles are lit on Friday evening before sunset to usher in Shabbat and to usher in a time of holiness.
 2. Saying kiddish and drinking wine: In the Ten Commandments, the Torah commands us to “remember (*zachor*) the Sabbath day to sanctify it.” This teaches us that we are to verbally declare Shabbat holy, which we do when we make *kiddush*. The term *zachor* is associated with wine in numerous places in Scripture. Thus, the sages instituted that this mitzvah be done over wine.
 - a. The wine is also celebratory and demonstrates that Shabbat is a special, joyous, and festive day, unlike any other day.
 3. Saying hamotzi and eating challah: Challah means a loaf of bread; however colloquially it has come to mean a certain type of bread. Any dough which is made of wheat, barley, spelt, oat, or rye is considered to be a kind of challah. It is tradition that the bread be braided. This is because the challah loaf is generally oblong shaped, resembling the Hebrew letter *vav*, which the numerical value of six, so the two loaves

⁶⁵ Gen. 2:2.

⁶⁶ Ex. 20:8.

equal twelve.⁶⁷ The blessing over bread (hamotzi) is said together to thank God for the challah.

- Recite the blessings with group (see handout), light candles, drink wine/grape juice, and eat challah.

Shabbat Blessings

1. Candles

ברוך אתה יהוה אלוהינו מלך העולם	Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melek ha'olam	Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו	Asher kidishanu b'mitz'votav v'tzivanu	Who has sanctified with commandments and commanded us
להדליק נר של שבת.	L'hadlik neir shel Shabbat	To light the lights of Shabbat.

2. Wine

ברוך אתה יהוה אלוהינו מלך העולם	Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melek ha'olam	Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
בורא פרי הגפן.	Bore pri hagafen.	Who creates fruit of the vine.

3. Challah/bread

ברוך אתה יהוה אלוהינו מלך העולם	Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melek ha'olam	Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
המוציא לחם מן הארץ.	Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.	Who brings forth bread from the earth.

Before ending the day, recap the day's activities, answering the following prompts:

- What have you learned about Shabbat today?
- What have you learned about the Torah today?
- How are Judaism and Christianity related?
- What questions are you left with today?⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Rabbi Yitzchak Luria prays for twelve loaves of challah to evoke the twelve showbreads that were placed on the table in the Temple.

⁶⁸ After answering the questions, give the participants the rest of the day for free time.

Day 6 (Shabbat) Theme/Goals

Theme: Ritual

Questions to consider and answer throughout the day:

- How do we personally define ritual? How do others define ritual?
- Why are rituals important?
- What is the difference between a ritual and a habit?
- Can we engage in rituals of other religions? If so, how can we do that together?

Goals: Demonstrate that creating rituals are an essential part of religion and one's daily life.

- Demonstrate how all of us can build ritual together.
- Maintain foundation for interfaith education and dialogue.
- Engage in interactive programming.
- Prepare for Day 7's theme of Hope.

To begin the day, consider having Shabbat morning services with the group to give participants a chance to experience Shabbat as a whole. This service does not have to be the same as ones in a synagogue. It can just be a couple prayers and a short Torah service; or it can be a text study on the weekly Torah portion. Consider having the participants plan the morning service with you, giving them a chance to lead, learn, and lean on each other. The service need not last longer than an hour and a half. Remember that this portion of the curriculum focuses on helping the participants spend quality time together while engaging in certain religious customs.

Connection: Just as the previous day's activities were immersive and ritual-based so too is participating and witnessing a religious service. Giving participants the opportunity to experience something of another religion helps them to grow and to add to their ever-growing identity. As argued throughout this thesis, in pedagogical encounters, educators cannot change students. The students change themselves and construct their own understandings, deciding on alternative courses of actions and redefining their priorities, resulting in a desire to learn more. The change in priorities results in the growth of a person's identity and character. Witnessing another's religious practices allows participants to become curious and begin a journey of questioning both themselves and others. They are opening their minds to new beginnings and relationships.

After concluding services, give the participants free time for about an hour with options of going for a walk together, engaging in the study together, or playing quiet games together. This is also a good time for participants to write in their journals.

Connection: Giving the participants free time allows for personal reflection and growth. As argued many times in this thesis, reflection should be ongoing, allowing for the participants to retain what they have learned and apply it to their lives. In doing so, participants are thinking critically about the experience to put it in a larger context. Playing games contributes to creating a balance of fun and seriousness in the curriculum—it demonstrates the use of different multiple learning paths. As Reimer argued, free time inspires and creates relationships which in turn strengthen one's learning. Chapter One mentioned the 'pedagogy of participation,' where one participates once one finds joy in doing so.

Bring students back together for educational activities.

Connection: The next four activities are examples of fun and different exercises that allow for the learners to learn about the history of Judaism. The goal of these exercises is not to make the participants convert to Judaism or Christianity, rather to be educated and knowledgeable about Judaism and Christianity—to be Jewishly literate and literate in Christianity. Having a day centered on Judaism creates an immersive environment and allows for the participants to begin to understand the beauty of Shabbat and its importance. These activities hearken back to German pedagogue Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel who argued that when participants are given the opportunity to engage in an activity, such as this one, they become part of the lesson, embodying the knowledge imparted on them.

Match Game

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: Prepare cards in advance which match Jewish historical figures with each other, with events, concepts, and/or literature.

Goals: To teach participants about important religious, biblical, and political figures and time periods in Judaism.

- To help participants learn together about the history of Judaism from the biblical period to now.

Instructions: Distribute the cards randomly and tell people to find a match for their card.

- Some suggestions for cards include: Abraham, Sarah, One God; Moses, Miriam, the Exodus from Egypt; David, Holy Ark, Jerusalem; Hillel, Shammai, Talmud; David Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, May 14, 1948; Isaac Luria, Kabbalah, Tzfat (Safed).
- Once everyone has been matched up, discuss the matches with the whole group.

Jewpardy

Time: 25-35 minutes

Materials: Questions written ahead of time.

Instructions: Students assemble teams and create team name, which you may write on board to keep score.

- There is no buzzing in.
- Each team, on their turn, chooses a category and point value – higher values equals more difficult questions.
 - The team must agree on their answer (they might appoint a team captain if necessary).
 - If they fail to garner a correct submission, game play passes to the next team in order.
 - They may attempt to steal the points by answering correctly.
- Game play continues to pass until a correct answer is garnered or it returns to the original team.
- The next team always gets their turn regardless of who submits the correct answer.
- It is possible to deduct points from rowdy teams.

Jewpardy Game Board – Draw with chalk and erase or X out as questions are covered.

Hebrew	Ritual	Torah	Holidays	Food	Miscellaneous
100	100	100	100	100	100
200	200	200	200	200	200
300	300	300	300	300	300
400	400	400	400	400	400
500	500	500	500	500	500

Questions – Use the following or invent your own!

Hebrew

- 100 – Define halachah *Jewish Law*
- 200 – Define mitzvah *commandment*
- 300 – What is tzedekah? *giving to others/Jewish charity*
- 400 – Define kiddish *prayer for wine on Shabbat*
- 500 – Define brachot *blessings*

Ritual

- 100 – What is a tallit? *Jewish prayer shawl*
- 200 – Define motzi *prayer for bread*
- 300 – How many challot are served on Shabbat? *Two*
- 400 – What is Shabbat? *Jewish day of rest, falls on Saturday*
- 500 – Why are candles important in Judaism? *Make days holy, give light in a dark world*

Torah

- 100 – What is this week's Torah portion and what is it about?
- 200 – Name an important woman in the Torah. *Sarah, Miriam, Daughters of Zelopheched, Yael, Ruth, etc.*
- 300 – What is the creation story? *God created the world in six days, beginning with light and darkness. On the seventh day, God rested.*
- 400 – What was the paradise where Adam and Eve lived, at least at first? *Gan Eden, Garden of Eden*
- 500 – Name a Jewish holiday from the Torah. *Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, etc.*

Holidays/Lifecycle

- 100 – What is the Jewish Holiday dedicated to rest? *Shabbat*
- 200 – What is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah? *A coming of age ceremony that represents a child's ability to take on the Jewish commandments*
- 300 – What is the Jewish holiday explaining the Exodus from Egypt? *Passover*
- 400 – Name a Jewish ritual that must be performed outside – *Taschlich, sitting in the sukkah,*
- 500 – Name your favorite Jewish holiday.

Food

- 100 – What is your favorite Jewish favorite food?

200 – What number does two loaves of challot represent? *Twelve*

300 – Name a food grown in Israel? *Cherry tomatoes were invented in Israel*

400 – Name two of the 7 Species of Israel – *Dates, grapes, barley, olives, pomegranate, wheat, fig.*

500 – Name a kosher food produced by a non-kosher animal? *Honey (or human milk)*

Miscellaneous

100 – Name three things about Judaism that you have learned this week.

200 – What is a connection between Judaism and Christianity you have made this week?

300 – What do Judaism and Christianity say about your neighbors? *Treat your neighbor as yourself; care for stranger; love your neighbor*

400 – Name three things about Christianity that you learned this week.

500 – What is a question you still have?

Take an hour break for lunch together and give the participants an hour for rest and quiet.

Round Robin

Time: 60 minutes

Materials: Paper, pens, “Classified ads.” *Tanakh*, blank puzzle pieces, long table with information about charities.

Instructions: Each participant goes to each of the following three activities for twenty minutes.

*Classifieds*⁶⁹

1. *Purpose:* An opportunity to combine one’s knowledge of religion with one’s wits in developing clever classified advertisements based on what we have learned this week.
2. *Instructions:* Place folded slips with the individual classified ads in a container.
 - a. Participants take turns picking out, reading and trying to guess the person from the situation referred to in the ad.
 - b. After the group has gotten a taste of the activity, ask the group to develop their own classified ads.

⁶⁹ Activity adapted from Bernard Reisman and Joel I. Reisman, *The New Jewish Experiential Book* (NJ: KTAV Publishing), 327.

Classifieds

1. First couple created who are punished because they ate from the Tree of Knowledge.
Adam and Eve
2. The first book of the Torah. Begins with creation story. *Genesis*
3. Giver of the Sermon on the Mount and considered to be the savior of the Christian people. *Jesus*
4. What is the blessing below for? *Wine*

ברוך אתה יהוה אלוהינו מלך העולם	Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melek ha'olam	Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
בורא פרי הגפן.	Borei pri hagafen.	Who creates fruit of the vine.

1. Giving to others in the form of money or action. *Tzedekah*
2. Four men in Christianity who wrote the New Testament. *Mark, John, Matthew, and Luke*
3. Horn blown on *Rosh Hashanah*. From an animal that steps in to save Isaac from being sacrificed. *Shofar, Ram's horn*
4. Leader of the Jewish People who has a stutter. *Moses*
5. Hebrew word for Jewish Bible. Contains parts of the following words: *Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvi'im. Tanakh*
6. Large Jewish family wishes to rent spacious three-story boat for extended trip. Prefer gopherwood construction. Must be able to weather rough winds and high waters. Minimum 300x50x30 cubits. Animals must be welcome. *Noah and the flood.*

Mini-Tzedekah Fair: Set up booths or a long table with information about several charities. Have participants collect the information and decide which ones they would like to learn more about. When participants get home, they can decide if they want to donate to the organizations.

Puzzle: Every person is given a blank puzzle piece for him/her to decorate. Put pieces together to make a large puzzle. When the puzzle is completed, it will contain pictures of the what the participants learned about this week.

Group Mural

Time: 45-60 minutes (approximately thirty minutes for completing the mural and twenty minutes for the groups to introduce themselves).

Materials: Assorted craft supplies with sufficient supply for the size of the group; a large strip of brown wrapping paper or butcher paper, three feet wide (length is determined by the number of units: Allow approximately eight feet per unit for the individual murals).

Goal: To provide an opportunity for the participants to get to know each other. Activity begins with the process of linking the smaller groups into a larger whole. The activity gives the participants an opportunity to enhance their group pride.

Instructions: Divide the group into pairs.

- Stretch out the mural paper and mark sections for each pair.
- Each pair is asked to use the craft materials to make a graphic presentation that tells some salient facts about themselves and will serve as the basis for introducing them to the rest of the group.
- After the pairs finish their murals, the full mural is taped up on the wall, and each pair introduces each of its members via their artistic representation.
- The mural can remain hanging during the subsequent activities of the program and can be referred to by the leader at the conclusion of the program to remind the participants of where they were at the outset and where they after their work together.

After concluding this activity, have *Seudah Shlishit* with the participants. *Seudah Shlishit* is the third meal customarily eaten on Shabbat. This is a small meal, often consisting of foods such as salads, fruit, or veggies. After finishing this meal, do the ritual of *Havdalah* (the ritual that marks the separation of Shabbat from the rest of the week). This ritual involves a special Havdalah candle with several wicks, blessing a cup of wine, and smelling sweet spices. Consider turning the lights off during Havdalah. At the conclusion of Havdalah, the candle is extinguished in the wine.

Connection: Similar to the morning's activity of participating and witnessing Shabbat morning services, engaging in *Seudah Shlishit* and *Havdalah* gives participants the opportunity to directly engage with Jewish practices. It gives them the chance to take elements of the ritual and reflect on them to contribute to the development of their religious

identity. While they are only seeing and engaging in a snapshot of Judaism, participants can begin to understand Judaism as a whole—as a religion that makes distinctions between sacred and profane, focuses on the senses, cares for others, and brings people together for celebration and ritual.

Blessing	Hebrew	Transliteration	English
Wine	ברוך אתה ה', אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן	Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, Melekh ha'olam, bo're p'ri hagefen.	Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.
Spices	ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני בשמים	Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam, bo're minei b'samim.	Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who creates varieties of spices.
The spices are then passed around and smelled by those present.			
The candle	ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם. בורא מאורי האש	Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam, bo're m'orei ha'esh.	Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who creates the lights of the fire.
The candle is held up in the air and those present look at the reflection of the light on their fingernails.			
Separation	ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, המבדיל בין קדש לחול, בין אור לחשך, בין ישראל לעמים, בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה: ברוך אתה ה', המבדיל בין קדש לחול	Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam, ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'hol, bein or l'hoshekh, bein yisra'el la'amim, bein yom ha'sh'vi'i l'sheshet y'mei ha'ma'a'se. Barukh ata Adonai, ha'mavdil bein kodesh l'hol.	Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who distinguishes between the sacred and the secular, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six days of labor. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who distinguishes between the sacred and the secular.
The person who recited the blessings now drinks the wine and extinguishes the candle in the wine.			

Before ending the day, recap the day's activities, answering the following prompts:

- What have you learned about Shabbat today?
- What have you learned about the Torah today?
- What was your favorite part of Shabbat?
- What questions are you left with today?

Day 7 Theme/Goals

Theme: Hope

Questions to consider and answer throughout the day:

- How do we personally define hope?
- Why is hope important?
- How can we take what we have learned back into our individual communities?
- How do we inspire hope in others? Is this important or not? Why or why not?

Goals: Demonstrate that creating hope between individuals helps to maintain the camaraderie created throughout the week.

- Bring themes of the week together for reflection and future application.
- Maintain foundation for interfaith education and dialogue.
- Engage in interactive programming.

To begin the day, consider attending Sunday services with the group at a church to give them a chance to experience a little of Christianity. Another option is to have the group create and lead a service. This service does not have to be the same as ones in a church. It can just be a couple prayers and a short sermon; or it can be a text study on a Christian value. Consider having the participants plan the morning service with you, giving them a chance to lead, learn, and lean on each other. The service need not last longer than an hour and a half. Remember that this portion of the curriculum focuses on helping the participants spend quality time together while engaging in certain religious customs.

Connection: Just as the previous day's activities were immersive and ritual-based so too is participating and witnessing a Christian religious service. Giving participants the opportunity to experience something of another religion helps them to grow and to add to their ever-growing identity. Witnessing another religion's practices allows participants to become curious and begin a journey of questioning both themselves and others. They are opening their minds to new beginnings and relationships.

After concluding services, give the participants free time for about an hour with options of going for a walk together, engaging in the study together, or playing quiet games together. This is also a good time for participants to write in their journals.

Connection: See connection from Day Six on page 143.

Bring students back together for educational activities.

Connection: The next three activities are examples of fun and different exercises that allows for the learners to learn about the history and practice of Christianity. The goal of these exercises is not to make the participants convert to Judaism or Christianity, rather to be educated and knowledgeable about Judaism and Christianity—to be Jewishly literate and literate in Christianity. Again, these activities hearken back to German pedagogue Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel who argued that when participants are given the opportunity to engage in an activity, such as this one, they become part of the lesson, embodying the knowledge imparted on them.

Refuse to Stand Idly By

Time: 15-20 minutes

Materials: Global Issue Worksheet.

Goals: To have the participants discover and discuss the problems of the world and discuss how to go about solving them.

Instructions: Split participants into groups of three to five people.

- Give each group a worksheet.
- Have each group answer the worksheet's questions as a group. Bring participants back together for discussion.

Discussion questions: What do we do with these issues?

- If we think an issue is so important why are we not involved in that issue?
- What the challenges that prevent us from getting more involved?
- How do we decide which issues to invest our time into?
- How can we go about solving some of these issues?

Global Issues Worksheet

Write down five-ten issues that your group feels are the most crucial in the world

Issue #	Issue	How important is the issue (rank 1-5, 5=most important)	How much do you know about the issue? (5=knowing the most)	How involved are you in this issue? (5=very involved)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Bible Verse Hunt

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: One Christian Bible per group and list of clues about specific bible verses.

Goal: To help participants become more familiar with the Christian Bible.

Instructions: Instead of a scavenger hunt where a team goes off looking for items, reinforce the idea that answers can be found in the Bible.

- Divide the group into smaller groups of up to four people.
- Give each group a Christian Bible.
- Give each group a list of clues that line up with a specific Bible verse.
 - Mix up the list—give a few freebies by making some of the clues difficult to get wrong.
- Give each group twenty minutes to find all of the Bible verses.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ At the conclusion of this activity, give the participants a fifteen to twenty-minute break before taking time for lunch together.

After lunch, consider taking the group to an off-site location (for about two-three hours) where they can serve others. Some good choices include feeding the homeless, building homes with Habitat for Humanity, planting a community garden, or sorting items at a collection site.

Doing for others is an important facet of Christian teachings. The group will be able to practice delegating tasks, working together, and seeing how the efforts of one group can have a large impact on someone's life.

Wrap Up

When the group has returned from the service activity, wrap up the week, going back over each day.

Have participants open and read their letters from Day One.

- Ask participants the following questions: What surprised you this week? What expectations of yours were not filled? Which expectations were filled? What do you think will stay with you in the weeks and months to come?

Connection: Returning to the first day of the curriculum helps the participants connect the days and what they learned each day. It contributes to their overall reflection, allowing them to find ways to insert meaning and to decide what elements will be a part of their identity and future learning. As discussed in Chapter Two, reflecting gives students an opportunity to repeat back what they have heard or read allowing the teacher to hear any misconstrued ideas or misinformation and clarify for them.⁷¹ The repetitive nature of this activity hearkens back to Dewey's argument that a continuum of experiences rests on repetition to reinforce the crux of the experience, planting a seed in the learner. Patty and David Kovacs argued that the "act of repeating the [foundations of the subject matter] on a regular basis plants the growing seeds of meaning."⁷²

Emphasize the following to the group: This was not only an experience to give an in-depth background of both Christianity and Judaism; it was also a look at how a difference in religion can bring people together using experiential educational methods.

⁷¹ Patty and David Kovacs, *The God We Share: An Interfaith Religious Education Curriculum* (self-pub., Chicago, 2015), 80.

⁷² Ibid, 82.

*Closing Activities***Touch the Back of Someone...***Time:* 30 minutes*Goals:* To continue to build community.

- To reflect on past week of experiences.
- To thank others for their time and work in an implicit manner.

Introduction: During these past seven days we have learned from each other. We have benefitted greatly from just being with each other. This is an opportunity for us to express that gratitude.

Connection: The educator has the responsibility to create a safe and appreciate environment for the participants. They need to empower the participants to lead and to be an active part of the learning process. It is important to take time to have the group appreciate each other and express gratitude to one another. This cements the group because it demonstrates how they have grown together throughout the week and how everyone was needed create this unique experience. The group works to “express and reinforce values that are part of the culture of the society that created the group.”⁷³ The overriding value of the week was caring for others and creating a team as a result. Participating in this activity reinforces that value and brings it to fruition.

Instructions: Have participants sit in a circle as the leader selects three people at a time.

- These three people will touch others’ backs in response to prompts.
- One may touch more than one person for each prompt.
- After about ten prompts, choose new three people.
- Continue until all prompts are read and everyone has participated.
- Those who are not touching others’ backs sit in the circle with their eyes closed.⁷⁴

Prompts: Touch the back of someone...

Who you wish you knew better

Who has taught you something important

Who is a leader

Who has shared a secret with you

You admire

Who is a friend

⁷³ Barry Chazan, “The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education,” in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education*.

⁷⁴ Sometimes it also works to have people lying face down with their eyes closed - it is more comfortable and participants will be less likely to peek.

You trust
 You respect
 Who is a good listener
 Who is creative
 With good ideas
 Who is reliable
 Whose shoulder you could cry on
 Who you think are future leaders
 Who is creative
 Who makes you laugh
 Who you feel a connection with
 Who you would like to spend more time
 with
 Whose opinions you value highly
 Who you think has a good attitude
 Who you could relax and have fun with
 Who you would seek out for advice
 Who is a good listener
 Who you enjoy being with
 Who has had a positive effect on you
 Who put in a lot of effort
 Who works well with different people
 Who makes you smile
 Who you would feel safe crying with
 Who is important to you
 Who you would like to share more with
 Who you would like to be more like
 Who is a good friend
 Who shows enthusiasm
 Who has supported you
 Who has challenged you

Who is patient
 Who is forgiving
 Who you want to thank, but have not
 Who you have enjoyed getting to know
 Who has influenced you to work on
 bettering yourself
 Who has helped you
 Who can brighten your day
 Who carries the team
 Who has made you try harder
 Who has inspired you
 Who is fun to be with
 Who has touched your life
 Who gives it their all
 Who has given you good advice
 Who is special to you
 Who is strong
 Who does a good job
 Who challenges you
 Who shows compassion
 Who you appreciate
 Who you believe in
 Who has recently done something nice for
 you
 Who has a good sense of humor

Everyone pats themselves on the back

End the week by giving everyone a bracelet of sorts (this can be a piece of nice rope with the ends burned together or have the participants make their own matching bracelets. A little reminder of the past week and to continue to work to bring others together.

Connection: Giving participants something physical to hold onto aids them in returning to what they have learned this week. Their ongoing reflection helps them to retain the information and experiences intellectually, but a physical object instills an emotional connection to the week. Because everyone's object is identical, one can remember he/she is united and part of a team; a unique team that can be continually brought together but cannot be created again with other individuals.

Journal Questions (to use for the week)

1. What religious upbringing, education, and identities did your parents (or mentors) have?

Did this change over the course of their lifetimes?

2. How did your family decide how to raise you in terms of religious education and identity?

Were they in agreement on this decision?

3. Growing up, what religious life-cycle events—such as baby welcoming, coming of age ceremony, marriage, or funeral—did you experience with family or close friends? How were these ceremonies meaningful to you?

4. Which houses of worship, if any, did you attend in your childhood and adolescence? How often did you attend and for how many years? How did you feel about those experiences?

Which family members went with you, and how did you feel about that?

5. Describe any recurring religious practices in your home growing up. Did you pray or meditate together, or read from religious texts? When and where? At meals? At bedtime?

What prayers were said? How did you feel when engaging in these practices as a child?

6. Did your family eat foods associated with a particular ethnic or religious culture? What were they?

7. What annual holidays did you celebrate as a child? Did you understand those celebrations as religious, cultural, secular, or some combinations? How did these celebrations make you feel as a child?

8. Describe any special foods or meals associated with holiday celebrations in your childhood. Did you learn to prepare these foods or meals? Describe any aspect of those holiday celebrations that you experienced as cultural rather than specifically religious (such as dress, decorations, games, gifts). What did those aspects mean to you? How did they make you feel?

9. Did you attend religious school as a child? If so, when, where, for how many years, and how many days/hours per week? What did you learn there, both socially and educationally? How did you feel about this religious school experience as a child? How do you feel about it now?

10. Did you attend a religion-based summer camp, or a youth or teen group as an adolescent or in college? Describe how you felt about that experience at the time and how you feel about it now.

11. How comfortable or uncomfortable are you with religious practices or in houses of worship?
12. Are there religious or spiritual practices you do not currently observe, but that you would like to explore or that you intend to observe in the future?

Conclusion

This curriculum is an example of a way to use the methodology of experiential education as described in this thesis. It is only one example; experiential education can be used in different groups and for a different amount of time. In order for it to be effective it needs to accomplish the following three goals: First, a focus on providing knowledge of culture, beliefs and values, especially the ritual, history, and everyday practices of that culture. Second, the belief that one can live satisfactorily and comfortably in more than one group. And third, the ability to communicate in both cultures with each other. These goals are described in Day One as a way to set the tone for the group and the week.

As demonstrated in this curriculum, experiential learning ensures that the learners are directly linked to the content or subject matter. It can even be argued that “to learn from experience is to make a backward and forward connection between what we do to things and what we enjoy or suffer from things in consequence. Under such conditions, doing becomes trying: An experience with the world to find out what it is like; the undergoing becomes instruction—discovery of the connection of things.”¹

Linking each experience to the individual enables him/her to understand the subject in his/her own terms.² Learning by doing builds positive association through culture, language, and the environment.³ The positivity is a result of the creative activities, or games, which

¹ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (NY: MacMillan, 1916), 140.

² This value of experiential education appears in this curriculum during the following activities: Writing Letters (Day 1), Intersectionality and Identity (Day 1), Self-Respect: The Power Within (Day 2), One Word Story (Day 3), What do we have in Common? (Day 4), and Refuse to Stand Idly By (Day 7).

³ The activities that focus on learning by doing include: the vocabulary games on Day 1, Be Interested and Interesting (Day 1), Tower Building (Day 1), Trust Fall (Day 2), Cross the Line (Day 2), Bell Pepper Exercise (Day 2), Perfect Square (Day 2), Strangers, Friends, Family, Me (Day 2), *Middot* (Day 3), Come, Let Us Bless (Day 4), Community Tower (Day 4), Cards for Our Neighbors (Day 5), Hula Hoop Game (Day 5), Saying Grace, Is It Graceful? (Day 5), Beginning Shabbat in the Beginning (Day 5), What is Rest? What is Shabbat?

seek to link the subject matter to the experience and interests of the participants.⁴ The overall goal is to develop activities that connect learners with prior knowledge so they can experience the subject as relevant, meaningful, and applicable to their world outside of the learning environment.⁵ However, not all experiences qualify as experiences we can learn from—when one reflects on his/her past experiences, then the experience becomes experiential learning. Education has the power to transform, especially when process and resources that develop and build upon the interaction of participants are prioritized.

Joseph Reimer, one of the leading experts in experiential education, breaks down experiential education into three requirements: It needs to be recreational, ensuring the participants' comfort while giving each person a sense of belonging through engaging in fun activities.⁶ Each experience needs to ensure the participants' socialization—it needs to provide the participants with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes so they can be an active member of the community.⁷ And each experience must challenge the participants to

(Day 5), Shabbat services (Day 6), Group Mural (Day 6), Havdalah (Day 6), Sunday services (Day 7), and Touch the Back (Day 7).

⁴ I believe all the activities are fun and engaging. However, the ones that concentrate on creating an enjoyable and positive environment include: Tower Building (Day 1), Perfect Square (Day 2), Snake (Day 2), The Knot (Day 3), The Olympics of Community (Day 3), Community Tower (Day 4), What do we Have in Common? (Day 4), Hula Hoop (Day 4), Getting to Know Animals (Day 4), Mirror, Mirror (Day 5), Match Game (Day 6), Jewpardy (Day 6), and Group Mural (Day 6).

⁵ These activities include: The vocabulary games on day 1, Four Corners (Day 1), Explaining Stereotypes (Day 2), Cross the Line (Day 2), Dilemmas and Decisions (Day 3), *Middot* (Day 3), Qualities of a Peacemaker (Day 4), Dissolving Stereotypes and Finding Common Ground (Day 4), Saying Grace, Is It Graceful? (Day 5), Match Game (Day 6), Jewpardy (Day 6), Round Robin (Day 6), Refuse to Stand Idly By (Day 7), and Bible Verse Hunt (Day 7).

⁶ This element of experiential education is demonstrated in the following activities from the curriculum: Creating a Community (Day 1), Trust fall (Day 2), The Knot (Day 3), and Touch the Back (Day 7).

⁷ The second characteristic of Reimer's is evidenced in the following activities from the curriculum: Ideas on Inter-religious Dialogue (Day 1), Dialogue by Parable (Day 2), Growing up Dialogue (Day 3), Let Us Bless (Day 4), Grace (Day 5), Sermon on the Mount (Day 5), and all the activities done on Day 6 (Shabbat).

encourage them to stretch themselves and grow towards a more complex participation in one's religious life, for example.⁸

Barry Chazan, another expert in this field, adds to these requirements. He argues that the learning must be person-centered, affecting the learner's total being and character.⁹ The experience must be sensory to enable one to understand a concept, fact, or belief in a direct way.¹⁰ The curriculum should follow the values of the religion, for example, focusing on holidays, lifecycle events, texts, and cultural and peoplehood experiences.¹¹ An interactive environment is essential to create an active interchange between the participants and the education.¹²

Experiential learning is best carried out in groups under thirty people—when done in small groups, learning as a result of broadened perspectives occurs.¹³ Furthermore, the interaction of a "small group of peers with the subject matter and among each other constitutes a significant dynamic in the communication of content and the effecting of

⁸ The final element of experiential education is shown in the following activities: Cross the Line (Day 2), the conflict resolution activities (Day 4 and 5), How Does a Comic Affect Religion? (Day 4) and the service activity on the final day of the week.

⁹ This value of experiential education appears in this curriculum during the following activities: Writing Letters (Day 1), Intersectionality and Identity (Day 1), Self-Respect: The Power Within (Day 2), One Word Story (Day 3), What do we have in Common? (Day 4), and Refuse to Stand Idly By (Day 7).

¹⁰ Sensory activities include: Tower Building (Day 1), Perfect Square (Day 2), Community Tower (Day 4), Hula Hoop Game (Day 5), Shabbat services (Day 6), Group Mural (Day 6), Havdalah (Day 6), Sunday services (Day 7), and Touch the Back (Day 7).

¹¹ The activities that focus on understanding values include: the vocabulary exercises from day 1, Sanctifying the Journey (Day 1), Explaining Stereotypes (Day 2), Bell Pepper Dialogue (Day 2), Dialogue by Parable (Day 2), Growing Up Dialogue (Day 2), Lunch Date (Day 3), *Middot* (Day 3), Qualities of a Peacemaker (Day 4), Dissolving Stereotypes and Finding Common Ground (Day 4), Come, Let us Bless (Day 4), How Does A Comic Affect Religion? (Day 4), Cards for our Neighbors (Day 5), Saying Grace, Is It Graceful? (Day 5), The Sermon on the Mount and Judaism (Day 5), and What is Rest? What Is Shabbat? (Day 5).

¹² The majority of the activities are interactive in nature. However, the ones that concentrate on interaction the most are as follows: Four Corners (Day 1), Dilemmas and Decisions (Day 3), Mirror, Mirror (Day 5), Beginning Shabbat in the Beginning (Day 5), Match Game (Day 6), Round Robin (Day 6), and Bible Verse Hunt (Day 7).

¹³ The activities that focus on group formation are as follows: Be Interested and Interesting (Day 1), Trust Fall (Day 2), Cross the Line (Day 2), Snake (Day 2), Strangers, Friends, Family, Me (Day 2), The Knot (Day 3), Olympics of Community (Day 3), Respectfully Resolving Conflicts (Day 4), What Causes Anger? (Day 4), Getting to Know Animals (Day 4), Jewpardy (Day 6), and Touch the Back (Day 7).

personal change.”¹⁴ The learners share responsibility for the learning agenda and the maintenance of a supportive emotional climate.¹⁵ Each individual is seen as a vital source of information; the learning is grounded in relationships; and no one is a sole practitioner in this work.

As a result, experiential education creates a culture based on the setting, values, and behaviors used throughout the learning experience. It is an education that engages, focusing on creating positivity and the development of one's identity. This methodology can only be carried out successfully when the facilitator educates through the words, values, deeds, and behaviors deemed important by the group and subject. This shapes a culture of Jewish values and experiences, for example.

Religious education is, in my opinion, the most effective and important way to use experiential education. Inter-religious learning leads to broader and deeper questions. A new bond of friendship and loyalty based on learning together is created.¹⁶ In a country where intermarriage has become prevalent within Judaism, accounting for almost half of the Jewish married households, it is crucial to enact a culture of pluralism and learning together. I believe those of different religions can and need to be brought together for education. Mary C. Boys, author of *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other*, argues that "religious education holds the key to reconciliation among those of different religious traditions.”¹⁷

¹⁴ Barry Chazan, "The Philosophy of Informal Jewish Education," in *Cultures and Contents of Jewish Education* (NY: MacMillan, 2017), 37.

¹⁵ The curriculum's beginning goal of creating safety, dialogue, and behavior guidelines on Day One puts this into practice.

¹⁶ Mary C. Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989), 73.

¹⁷ Mary C. Boys and Sara S. Lee, *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other* (VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006), x.

Religious education aids in moving from tolerance to pluralism and acceptance.

Tolerance does not lead to understanding the other; rather it permits people to live alongside those who differ from them without demeaning them. Furthermore, tolerance does not require people learn anything about the other. Whereas pluralism demands the pursuit of understanding. It is built on an encounter of commitments and a respect for difference that flows from knowledge of one's own tradition.¹⁸ It is more productive to transform a coincidence of coexistence into opportunity for friendship and education. We can make the world a better place if we use our differences and similarities for the benefits they entail.

In my opinion, experiential education should be the standard educational method used for religious education. In addition and as evidenced in this thesis and curriculum, experiential education is an even better method to engage people of difference because of its focus on dialogue and group experiences. The dialogue provides an explanation for how Christianity and Judaism are related—"Dialogue is the clarification and fulfillment of God's will of which holy purpose Judaism and Christianity are surely related parts."¹⁹ Engaging with another group helps us grow in our own theologies and develop new insight into our religions. This engagement is "like a mirror in which I see myself in a new light, which would not be accessible to me without the reflection in the image and faith of the other."²⁰ Learning from those who are different from us has the power to transform us and in our world of growing religious persecution, it is vital that we engage with others using experiential learning.

¹⁸ Ibid, 8.

¹⁹ Emerson S. Colaw, "Why Dialogue?" in *When Jews and Christians Meet*, ed. Jakob J. Petuchowski (Albany: State Univ of NY Press), 175.

²⁰ Mary C. Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions*, 38.

Appendix

*Sample Birthright Israel Itinerary*¹

Day 1 Departure from home city.

- Participants and staff meet at central airport to begin making new friends and creating relationships.

Day 2 Arrival in Tel Aviv

- Explore one of Israel's beautiful national parks in the mountainous north.
- Head north to see the historic Sea of Galilee.

Day 3 Exploring the north

- Hike one of Israel's tallest mountains.
- Explore the magical, mystical and mountainous city of Tzfat. Be inspired by the artwork of Tzfat's Kabbalistic artists.
- Raft down the waters of the Jordan River.
- Take a dip in the therapeutic hot springs at Hamat Gadar.

Day 4 Golan Heights

- Climb Mt. Bental to take in a magnificent view of the Golan Heights.
- Climb down the Banyas, enjoying the pools, waterfalls and streams.
- Learn about and sip the wine that Israel has become famous for.
- Travel to Jerusalem via bus.

Day 5 Jerusalem

- Visit the promenade to take in a panoramic view of Jerusalem.
- Travel to The Western Wall and experience the Temple Mount as it existed thousands of years ago.
- Hit up the famous Shuk, and experience the best sights, fragrances, and unique foods of Israel.
- Spend Shabbat in Jerusalem.

Day 6 Shabbat in Jerusalem

- Option to snooze or peruse Jerusalem.

¹No author, "Classic Trip," Birthright Israel Foundation. Accessed Jan 6, 2020. <https://birthrightisrael.com/itinerary/classic>.

- Enjoy a traditional kiddush meal before heading out on a relaxing stroll through
- Jerusalem's limestone alleys and blossoming parks.
- Enjoy the night life of Ben Yehuda, trying shawarma and falafel.

Day 7 Remember and Renew

- Visit Yad Vashem Memorial and Museum, Israel's Holocaust Memorial site.
- Visit Mt. Herzl to learn about the founders, visionaries, and heroes that made Israel
- into a reality.
- Travel to Judean Desert via bus.

Day 8 Masada and Ein Gedi

- Climb the Roman Ramp to the top of Masada to catch a sunrise.
 - Tour the mountaintop fortress of Masada.
- Frolic in the refreshing waters of Ein Gedi, a literal oasis in the desert.
 - Float in the Dead Sea and roll in exfoliating and revitalizing mineral mud.

Day 9 Startup Nation

- Visit David Ben Gurion's desert home and learn about his vision to transform a barren landscape into a thriving oasis.
- See Israel's unmatched agricultural prowess while lunching on fresh produce from the Salad Trail.
- Travel to Tel Aviv to explore the markets, shops, and busy streets on your own.
- Enjoy a night out in one of Tel Aviv's happening neighborhoods.

Day 10 Tel Aviv

- Explore the streets where modern Israel was born.
- Discuss and reflect on Israel's ideas, values, and future at Rabin Square.
- Play in the sand and relax on the beach.
- Stroll through Jaffa seaport, a model of peace and co-existence.
- Visit the Israeli Innovation Center by Taglit, meet with local entrepreneurs.

Nostra Aetate:

Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

Second Vatican Council, October 28, 1965

1. In our time, when day by day people are being drawn closer together, and the ties between different peoples are becoming stronger, the Church examines more closely her relationship to non-Christian religions. In her task of promoting unity and love among individuals, indeed among nations, she considers above all in this declaration what people have in common and what draws them to fellowship.

One is the community of all peoples, one their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth.¹ One also is their final goal, God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extend to all humankind,² until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light.³

People expect from the various religions answers to the unsolved riddles of the human condition, which today, even as in former times, deeply stir people's hearts: What is humanity? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve? Which is the road to true happiness? What are death, judgment and retribution after death? What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?

2. From ancient times down to the present, there is found among various peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human history; at times some indeed have come to the recognition of a Supreme Being, or even

of a Father. This perception and recognition penetrates their lives with a profound religious sense.

Religions, however, that are bound up with an advanced culture have struggled to answer the same questions by means of more refined concepts and a more developed language. Thus in Hinduism, people contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an inexhaustible abundance of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. Again, Buddhism, in its various forms, realizes the radical insufficiency of this changeable world; it teaches a way by which people, in a devout and confident spirit, may be able either to acquire the state of perfect liberation, or attain, by their own efforts or through higher help, supreme illumination. Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing "ways," comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men and women. Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom people may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself.⁴

The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons and daughters, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these people.

3. The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth,⁵ who has spoken to humanity; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all, let them together preserve and promote social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.

4. As the sacred synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it remembers the bond that spiritually ties the people of the New Covenant to Abraham's stock.

Thus the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are found already among the Patriarchs, Moses and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ—Abraham's sons according to faith⁶—are included in the same Patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage. The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in His inexpressible mercy concluded the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that well-cultivated olive tree onto

which have been grafted the wild shoots, the Gentiles.⁷ Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, Our Peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles. making both one in Himself.⁸

The Church keeps ever in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen: "theirs is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the law and the worship and the promises; theirs are the fathers and from them is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4-5), the Son of the Virgin Mary. She also recalls that the Apostles, the Church's main-stay and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ's Gospel to the world, sprang from the Jewish people.

As Holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation,⁹ nor did the Jews in large number, accept the Gospel; indeed not a few opposed its spreading.¹⁰ Nevertheless, God holds the Jews most dear for the sake of their Fathers; He does not repent of the gifts He makes or of the calls He issues—such is the witness of the Apostle.¹¹ In company with the Prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and "serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Soph. 3:9).¹²

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues.

True, the Jewish authorities and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ;¹³ still, what happened in His passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, nor against the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed

from the Holy Scriptures. All should see to it, then, that in catechetical work or in the preaching of the word of God they do not teach anything that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ.

Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any person, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.

Besides, as the Church has always held and holds now, Christ underwent His passion and death freely, because of the sins of humanity and out of infinite love, in order that all may reach salvation. It is, therefore, the burden of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

5. We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat anyone as a brother or sister, created as he or she is in the image of God. People's relation to God the Father and their relations to others as brothers and sisters are so linked together that Scripture says: "The one who does not love does not know God" (1 John 4:8).

No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between individual and individual or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned.

The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against people or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12),

and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all people,¹⁴ so that they may truly be children of the Father who is in heaven.¹⁵

Notes

1. Cf. *Acts* 17:26
2. Cf. *Wis.* 8:1; *Acts* 14:17; *Rom.* 2:6-7; 1 *Tim.* 2:4
3. Cf. *Apoc.* 21:23f.
4. Cf 2 *Cor.* 5:18-19
5. Cf St. Gregory VII, *letter XXI to Anzir (Nacir), King of Mauritania* (Pl. 148, col. 450f.)
6. Cf. *Gal.* 3:7
7. Cf. *Rom.* 11:17-24
8. Cf. *Eph.* 2:14-16
9. Cf. *Lk.* 19:44
10. Cf. *Rom.* 11:28
11. Cf. *Rom.* 11:28-29; cf. dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium* (Light of nations) AAS, 57 (1965) pag. 20
12. Cf. *Is.* 66:23; *Ps.* 65:4; *Rom.* 11:11-32
13. Cf. *John.* 19:6
14. Cf. *Rom.* 12:18
15. Cf. *Matt.* 5:45

Text Study for the Educators

A large component of your teaching is creating and using the material provided to implement person-centered education. Teaching based on the participants' needs aids in building their confidence and sense of belonging in the group. It helps them create an identity with the material to use it again in the future for further learning and perhaps even teaching others. The following three texts demonstrate the importance of teaching according to each individual participant's needs.

Text 1:

Proverbs 22:6

Train a lad in the way he ought to go;	תִּנְחֵם לְנֶעַר עַל־פִּי דְרָכּוֹ
He will not swerve from it even in old age.	גַּם כִּי־יִזְקֵין לֹא־יָסוּר מִמִּנְחָה:

When teaching, it is important to ask ourselves, is our teaching appropriate for us or for the student we are teaching? Our teaching should be according to each student we are teaching.

Text 2:

Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Spirit of Jewish Education," *Jewish Education* 24, no. 2 (Fall 1953), 19.

"Everything depends on the person who stands in front of the classroom. The teacher is not an automatic fountain from which intellectual beverages may be obtained. The teacher is either a witness or a stranger. To guide a pupil into the promised land, the teacher must have been there themselves. When asking themselves: Do I stand for I teach? Do I believe in what I say?, the teacher must be able to answer in the affirmative. What we need more than anything else is not textbooks, but text people. It is the personality of the teacher which is the text that the pupils read; the text that they will never forget."

--The teacher is of utmost importance to the students and participants. However, the knowledge the teacher is attempting to impart on his/her students cannot be done if the teacher does not believe in what he/she is teaching. If the teacher does not see the effect and influence of what he/she is teaching, then the lesson cannot be learned by the students. The teacher's personality needs to reflect the values he/she is teaching.

Text 3:

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (Germany, 1808-1888), *Commentary on Chumash, Genesis 25:27*

“ויגדלו הנערים ויהי עשו איש ידע ציד איש שדה ויעקב איש תם ישב אלהים” *When the lads grew up, Esav was a man who understands hunting, a man of the field, and Jacob was a totally dedicated man, living in tents*” (Hirsch Chumash Translation)

Our Sages never hesitate to point out to us the errors and shortcomings, both great and small, of our forefathers, and precisely thus they make Torah great and glorious, heightening its instructiveness for us...an observation made by our Sages indicates that the sharp contrast between the grandsons of Avraham was caused not only by their natural tendencies, but also by mistakes in their upbringing. As long as they were little, no one paid attention to their hidden natures; they were given the same upbringing and the same education. Their parents overlooked the cardinal principle of education, train a lad in the way he ought to go (חנוך (לנער אל-פי דרכו).

To attempt to educate a Ya'akov and an Esav together in the same classroom, in the same routines and in the same manner, to raise both of them for a life of study and contemplation, will inevitably mean to ruin one of the two. A Ya'akov will draw from the well of wisdom with ever increasing interest and desire, whereas an Esav will hardly be able to wait for the

day when he can throw away books and, together with them, a great life mission of which he was taught in a one-sided manner, totally unappealing to his nature. Had Yitzhak and Rivkah delved deeply into Esav's nature, had they asked themselves how even an Esav—with the strengths, skills and courage latent within him—Ya'akov and Esav would have remained twin brothers in spirit and in way of life.”

--Ya'akov and Esav were such different individuals, yet they were taught in the same manner, overlooking what was read in Proverbs 22:6, train a lad in the way he ought to go (חֲנוּךְ לַנֶּעַר אֶל-פִּי דְרָכָו). Yitzhak and Rivkah did not treat their children differently—their children's misbehavior and deception is because of their parents' mistreatment. An educator needs to understand the needs of each participant and cater accordingly to that participant's nature. It is crucial that the teacher work to make the education person-centered, using different modalities and paying attention to each individual throughout the lessons.

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