



Camp Israel

Written by Orly Kenneth

Educational Shlichah to the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington





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The following program was written by Orly Kenneth as a 10-day summer camp for 5th-6th graders. This project was done as part of the wider project, "Israel in DC", an initiative of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.

The goal of "Camp Israel" was to provide a meaningful learning experience intended to deeply strengthen the relationship between campers, counselors and Israel. To achieve this goal, we created an "Israel Emersion Camp" that would allow participants to experience Israel's history chronologically, in a hands-on way, over the course of the session.

The rationale behind the making of this program was that in typical Jewish day camps, Israel is treated as an independent time slot, running the risk that Israel be seen by campers as "just another fun activity". "Camp Israel" was created to offer a holistic Israel experience that combines all the fun elements of American camping with deep engagement with Jewish values, community building and the State of Israel.

We sincerely hope that you will make use of the content developed in Camp Israel in the service of engaging young Jews in your community with Israel.

B'hatzlacha!

Esti Moskovitz-Kalman

Education Director - Makōm

What is **ISRAELⁱⁿDC** ?

“Israel in DC” is an initiative of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Agency for Israel. The program is part of the North American Coalition for Israel Engagement (Makom).

Israel in DC is about deeply changing the relationship between the Washington Jewish community and Israel. It is about going beyond advocacy and philanthropy towards a model of engaging people with Israel’s multiple dimensions.

Israel in DC creates structures and opportunities in which educators can think and act strategically about engagement with Israel. Israel in DC produces new educational materials and resources for Israel engagement.

“Camp Israel”

In a typical Jewish day camp, Israel receives some slots of time in the form of “Israel day” or “Israel program” and, therefore, the educational message given to the kids is that Israel is equivalent to “art”, “sports” or “pool” – another “fun” program that kids go to for 45 minutes.

"Camp Israel" was created to offer a holistic Israel experience that combines all the fun elements of American camping with deep engagement with Jewish values, community building and the State of Israel. The idea behind Camp Israel is that the summer camp can lend itself to a meaningful learning experience intended to deeply strengthen the relationship between campers, counselors and Israel.



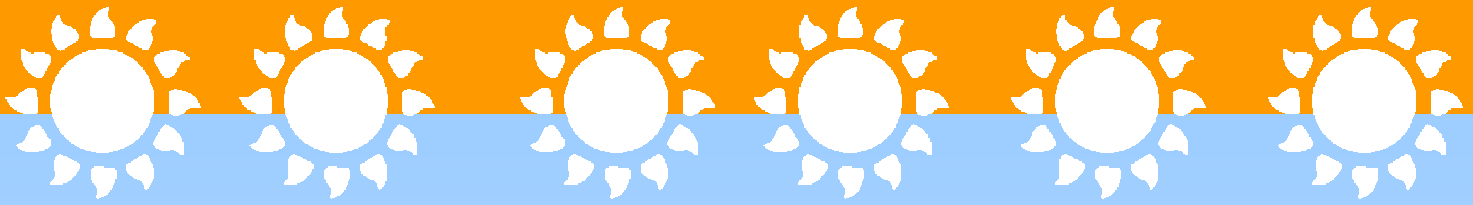
ISRAELⁱⁿDC

An Initiative of

*The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington & The Jewish Agency for Israel's
North American Coalition for Israel Engagement (Makom)*



makōm מקום
Israel. In Real Life.



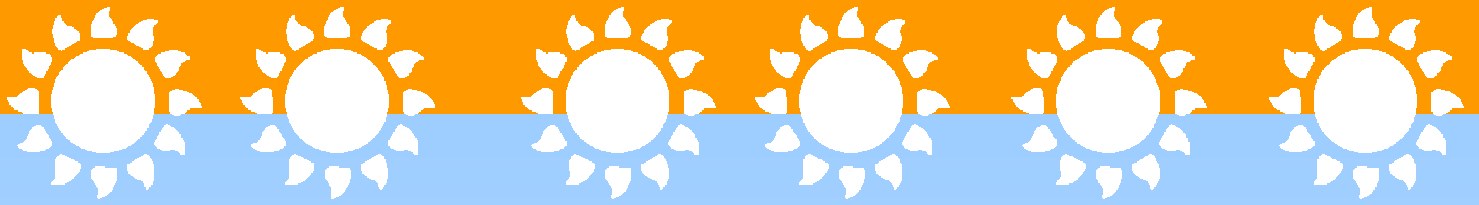
What is “Camp Israel”?:

"Camp Israel" is a two-week program (9:00-3:00 daily) to run in a JCC summer camp setting. It's an opportunity for 5th and 6th graders to learn about Israel in a totally unique way. Using a series of structured, guided narratives and the technique of active imagination, campers become part of true stories and assume the roles of key characters in Zionist historical events. They are asked to surmount a series of physical and intellectual challenges and to make difficult and potentially "life-altering" decisions. These decisions are based on a set of well defined Jewish values. They go through a process of value- clarification that reflects both the physical and social struggles involved in the establishment of the State of Israel and the on-going story of the Jewish State in our own time.

During the first day of "Camp Israel 2005", campers entered a "time machine" that took them back to 1930. Throughout the two-week session, they faced the wrath of growing anti-Semitism in pre-Second World War Europe, learned facts of the results of the Holocaust, experienced illegal immigration to Israel (Aliyah bet) on an "Exodus" boat (on the Potomac), declared the establishment of the Jewish State, helped acquire ammunition to fight the War of Independence, and finally created Jewish Kibbutzim and towns with schools, synagogues, museums, community centers, commerce and industry. They had two field trips and two overnight activities, including an encounter with a group of "Tzofim", Israeli scouts. By the end of the camp, they returned to 2005.

A. Goals of “Camp Israel”:

- To create an opportunity for youngsters to participate in the Israeli adventure in a holistic way that brings Israel to the center of their experience.
- To pilot a program that has the potential of becoming an impact program for the broader Jewish community in the area of experiential Israel education.
- To use Israel as a drive to bring previously non-affiliated families to the JCC and to the Jewish community.
- To provide an intensive training experience for the staff, encouraging them to examine seriously their own feelings regarding their Jewish values and the role of Israel in the formation of their Jewish identity.
- To create a vehicle that will continue to strengthen the relationship between the Federation and the Northern Virginia Jewish community.



Camp Israel

General Comments and Instructions

1. Camp Israel is based on a virtual reality experience. The campers become, from the first day of camp, the heroes of the historical story. The success of the camp depends on the ability of the counselors to “play” and maintain the flow of the historical story.
2. The everyday life in the camp is based on a great deal of decision making performed by the campers as a group. As the heroes of the story, they often find themselves at junctions of decision making, in which they have to use their knowledge, experience and moral values in order to influence their “life”.
3. The counselors have to be prepared for camp. They must have a good level of historical knowledge; they must be very flexible with the program, since many its parts are actually created in real time by the campers. Most importantly, in order to create the feeling of a Jewish community based on Jewish values, the counselors have to be able to mirror and reflect for the campers the way the campers' “life” is advancing according to their moral decisions.
4. Counselors have to meet every day after camp, evaluate the day and prepare for the next day. Helpful questions for the evaluation can be:

- Today the campers understood that/ learned the fact that.....
- Today the campers didn't understand that....
- The strongest/ weakest experiences today were.....because.....
- The campers got ...chances to make decisions today. How well did they do it?
- What do we need to emphasize tomorrow more in order to get the story flowing? Who will do it? When? How?