**How to Plan a Song Session (1/20; 4:35pm – 5:45pm)**
SLBC 2017

*Goals*
1. Teach the participants the steps needed to fully plan a song session
2. Provide an example of song session planning
3. Plan and practice for a song session that evening

*Itinerary*
- 4:35pm – 4:55pm: program opening/framing. Josh, Carol and Josh a song session to sing at dinner
- 4:55pm – 5:10pm: use methodology below to break down the dinner song session into the various steps described below
- 5:10pm – 5:45pm: practice full song session led by Ramah track participants

**Song Session Planning Guide - Full Methodology**
1. **'Set the table'** – establish the facts about the song session that the leaders do not control (if the leaders can choose any of these, move to section 3)
   - What is the space? (Dining hall, cabin, small room, etc.).
   - What is the timeframe? (10 mins, 1 hour, etc.)
   - What tools are available to help you?
     - Think of tools that can enhance a song session and help you be successful. Some include additional (non- songleading) staff, tech/song sheets, instruments, etc. Are they readily available if needed?
   - Who are the participants? (young campers or all staff, large or small group, etc.)
2. **Establish goals**
   - Song sessions are not planned in a vacuum. Typically, when you lead a song session, it won't be the first instance of that particular setting (i.e. it's another song session after lunch, it's another evening program with an eidah, it's another opportunity to teach the staff their zimriyah song, etc.). What were the goals in the past, and did they work?
   - Potential goals:
     - Set a particular mood: energetic/loud (after a meal), quiet/slow (before bed), lead morning t'fillah, etc.
     - Teach new music (zimriyah, play, etc.), re-inforce previously taught tunes
     - Teach a new shtick / dance to an old or new song
3. **Determine 'logistics'** – plan the actual time that you will be singing! These should be planned within the framework of accomplishing goals set in step 2
   - Choose a set list (example set lists in separate handout)
     - Should there be an 'arc'?
     - Will everyone know the lyrics to each song chosen?
     - Set lists typically are determined through a 'unifying factor' (i.e. all Israeli songs, all Hinei Mah Tov, all Debbie Friedman, all 'camp classics' etc.), but can be whatever the leader feels can be successful
   - Select 'primary' and 'support' leaders *for each song*
     - The **Primary Leader** is the individual who actually leads the chosen song. Can be amplified, if available and necessary. This person should be the one teaching the song, leading dance moves, etc. This individual is who we would traditionally think of as the 'leader'. Unless there is a high level of familiarity between individuals, it is difficult to have multiple Primary Leaders per song
       - The Primary Leader should plan how to lead each song using the RTKS framework as applicable

- The **Support Leader(s)** are the other non-participant songleaders. They are tasked with helping the group stay focused, being 'hyper-engaged' through following the Primary Leader and engaging the participants. What does it mean to be 'hyper-engaged'? Body language and eye contact directed at the Primary Leader, making it clear that you are following that person, so that participants will direct their attention as well.
    - "What should I do during a song session?" is a common question asked by Support Leaders. The simplest answer is: *find participants who are already singing, and sing with them*
- What subset of songleaders are (or should be) participating?
    - Full 'SLBC cohort', just songleading staff, rosh eidah, etc.
- Instruments / props
    - Are instruments appropriate for this song session?
    - Is amplification available, and if so, would it be useful / additive?
    - Are there other materials needed (i.e. projector, song sheets, siddurim, etc.)?
- Determine 'blocking'
    - Where will the Primary Leader and the Support Leader(s) sit/stand during the song session? Where will the group be? Examples include:
        - Everyone sitting on the ground in a circle
        - Primary Leader and 1-2 Support Leaders on chairs in the middle of the dining hall, with the group surrounding them
        - Leaders on stage at the front of the room, group facing the front while standing
    - What happens in between songs? Should the Primary Leader for the next song physically replace the Primary Leader from the last song, or should the group focus their attention elsewhere?
    - Where should the Support Leader(s) go? Should they be concentrated in one area, or spread out?

4. **PRACTICE**
    - Full run-though of the song session, from beginning to end. Transitions count!
    - Preferable to practice in the actual space where you will be leading
    - Use the practice to determine if any tweaks are necessary

5. **Evaluation**
    - What went right? Did anything surprise you?
    - What can be improved for next time?
    - Any additional notes or things to remember for next time? Any follow-ups needed?


**Summary / 'Shortcut' Methodology**
*Don't have time to entirely plan out using the above steps? The below is a 'shortcut' method to planning a full song session*
1. Set the table
    - Who is participating? Where is the space?
2. Establish goals
3. Determine logistics
    - Pick a setlist
    - Determine the Primary Leader by song
    - Determine blocking
4. Practice!
5. Evaluation