

Planners:

Rachel Greenspan, Carmi Mandelkern, Abby Schwartz, Zach Klein

Time:

30-40 minutes

Makom:

B-Side Migrash

Discussion Topics:

- Free Will
- Cursing
- Faith

1. Explain summary of Balak:

a. In this week's Torah reading, *Balak*, King Balak of Moab asks the sorcerer Balaam to curse the Jewish people. Instead of curses, only blessings come out of his mouth.

2. Read text from parshat Balak (kids also have a copy to read along)

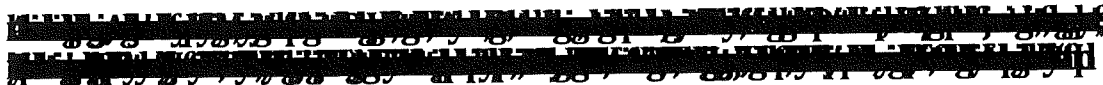
א-אֶת־בְּלִקְּאֵל־וַיִּתְּחַר י כִּפְּיוֹ; -בַּלְעָם, וַיִּסְפֹּק אֶת בְּלִעָם, -וַיִּיאַמְרָ בְּלִקְּאֵל לְקִיבֵא יְבִיקְרָאֲתִיד, וַהֲגִיה בִּרְכַּת־בְּרַךְ, זֶה שָׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים.	<p><b>10</b> Enraged at Balaam, Balak struck his hands together. “I called you,” Balak said to Balaam, “to damn my enemies, and instead you have blessed them three times!”</p>
לִדְאֵל־וְעַתָּה, בְּרַח יֵא מִקוֹמִי; אֲמַרְתִּי כִּי כְבֹד אֲכַבְּדֶךָ, וַהֲגִיה מְגַדְךָ. יְהוָה מְכַבֵּדְךָ.	<p><b>11</b> Back with you at once to your won place! I was going to reward you richly, but the lord has denied you the reward.”</p>
-וַיִּיאַמְרָ בְּלִעָם, אֶל יב	<p><b>12</b> Balaam replied to Balak, “but I</p>

<p>הֵלֵא, גַּם אֶלְבָּלְקָה:  שָׁלַחְתָּ, מֵלֵאכֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר  דָּבַרְתָּ לֵאמֹר--אֵלַי</p>	<p>even told the messengers you sent  to me,</p>
<p>בְּלֶקְמֵלֵא לִי-יִתְּן-אִם יֵג  לֵא אֹכֵל--בַּיְתוֹ, כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב  פִּי יִהְיֶה, לְעֵשׂוֹת לְעַבְרֵאֲתָ  טוֹבָה אוֹ רָעָה מִלְּבִי:  יְדַבֵּר יְהוָה, אֲתוֹ-אֲשַׁר  אֲדַבֵּר.</p>	<p>13 'Though Balak were to give me  his house full of silver and gold, I  could not of my own accord do  anything good or bad contrary to  the lords command. What the lord  says, I must say.'</p>

3. Discuss the following questions:
- Should God be able to control what you do?
  - Should God stop us from doing bad things or force us to do good things?
  - Is cursing always wrong?
  - Does faith sometimes go unrewarded?

Next, say this:

“So, we’re going to make a quick transition to a discussion about the recent deaths of the three Israeli teens who were kidnapped.”  
(or paraphrase), and read this article from [blog.timesofisrael.com](http://blog.timesofisrael.com):



Discuss:

- How does this make you feel?
- Do you have similar feelings about this topic and about camp?
- Do you think acts of evil are innate, or is evil thrust upon us?