Egalitarianism discussion

Program type: Discussion

Approximation length of program: 30-45 minutes

One line description: getting to know fellow chanichim by discussing egalitarianism at camp, exploring theology

Overall goals: learning how to discuss difficult questions, exploring Judaism and egalitarianism

Methods used: question walking game, group discussion

Supplies: paper with questions for counselors

Educational content: analyzing egalitarianism in Judaism, gender roles in judaism? responsibility vs privilege

Ideal location: Ohel (rain friendly)

Tzevet preparation: look over discussion questions and prepare answers, make groups

Instructions: break into groups of 8-10 people

1. Assure the chanichim that they are in a safe space, respect everyone’s opinions, etc.

* **Emphasize that this conversation may lean towards a gender binary, but we want to acknowledge that gender is on a spectrum and this is not a black & white conversation.**
* **Use only “I” statements-- we only want to be speaking our own experiences and not assuming facts about others**
* **Listen. Be respectful when others are talking**
* **Does anyone else have a ground rule they want to set??**

2. Tell the chanichim that one side is yes and one side is no. read opening questions regarding egalitarianism and have the campers move to where they feel comfortable (yes, no, sometimes)

3. Sit back down, begin talking about egalitarianism (what does egalitarianism mean to you? How do you see that at camp?)

4. Begin discussing tallit and tfillin. (Men are required to wear them at camp and women aren’t, is it possible to find meaning in Jewish traditions when you aren’t required to do them?)

5. Privilege vs responsibility: what do we have to do, either by gender or just as Jews, and what do we get to do? Is this fair? Are there a differ enough in numbers for genders? Bring out some rabbi excerpt…

6. If time, discuss gender roles in Judaism and where they are outdated/should the be updated?

Timeline: 5:00-6:00 pm

Settle down chanichim: 5:00-5:05

Instructions/reading groups: 5:05-5:10

Get into groups: 5:10-5:15

Play statement game: 5:15-5:25

Discussion: 5:25-6:00

Rain plan: Ohel

Opening questions:

1. Have you ever put on tallit/tfillin?
2. Do you wear them regularly at camp?
3. Do you feel comfortable wearing them?
4. Would you want to ever lead services?
5. Do you go to an egalitarian synagogue or school?
6. Have you ever felt uncomfortable partaking in any Jewish traditions?

Discussion questions (pick a couple for each step):

1. What does egalitarianism mean to you? How/where do you see egalitarianism at camp?
2. Is it possible to find meaning in a tradition that you are not required to partake in? Example: tallit at camp for girls… can/do they find meaning in wearing them after getting them for their bat mitzvahs?
3. We have been wrapping t’fillin as a Jewish people for centuries. What is the value of tradition? What traditions do you enjoy at camp? How do we create new traditions?
4. Is there anything you would change about the current traditions and gender roles in Judaism?
5. Privilege vs responsibility: what privileges do we have and what responsibilities do we have in Judaism?
6. Are there prevalent gender roles in Judaism based on different privileges/responsibilities?