

Mah Tovu

מה טוב הוא אוהלך יעקב



Category of Activity	Shabbat Activity (recommended for Parshat Balak).
Grade Level	5th-7th Grades
Time	Shabbat Evening - 40 minutes Shabbat Afternoon - 50 minutes
Method	Discussion in Pairs, Discussion Groups, Analysis of an Event.
Size of Group	Eidah , Small Discussion Groups, Pairs.
Keywords	Privacy, Secrets, Friendship, Personal Domain.

GOALS

1. Campers will have the opportunity to discuss the interpretations and meaning of Balaam's words, Mah tovu ohalekha, Ya'acov.
2. Campers will have the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about privacy, the individual domain in camp and in life at home.
3. Campers will have the opportunity to distinguish between maintaining privacy and issues of individual discretion on the one hand and sharing issues with friends, parents and/or teachers when in need of help on the other hand.

BACKGROUND

NONE

PLACE

Shabbat evening - A room for the Eidah to meet. The campers will go out meet in pairs and then return to the room for summation.

Shabbat afternoon - places for group discussions, 7-10 campers per group.

PREPARATION OF

SUPPLIES AND RESOURCES

Questions for discussion for camper pairs (one set of card per camper pair) to be used on Shabbat evening (see **Attachments - Part 1 Section 1**)

STAFF PREPARATION

1. The program leader should review the entire program with the Eidah staff in advance of its scheduled date.
2. The program leader should have a system for dividing the Eidah into pairs. This system can be random or a lottery of numbers, or a predesignated list.
The program leader may wish to consult with the Eidah staff as to the most preferable and appropriate method for the specific Eidah.
3. The program leader should prepare the question cards for the camper pairs (one set of cards per camper) to be used on Shabbat evening (see **Attachments - Part 1 Section 1**).
4. The group discussion leaders should be prepared for the Shabbat afternoon activity (see **Attachments - Part 1 Section 2**).

SETUP PREPARATION

NONE

METHODOLOGY AND

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Shabbat evening

1. On Shabbat evening, the program leader should ask the campers to divide into pairs according to the system which was determined in advance. (5-10 minutes).
2. Each pair should receive a set of discussion cards (Attachments - Part 1 Section 1). Each camper should receive one half of the pile. The pairs should go out to a designated place to discuss what is written on the cards (15-20 minutes).

3. When the campers return to the activity room, the Rosh Eidah or a program leader should summarize the program with the entire Eidah using the discussion guide questions (see **Attachments - Part 1 Section 2**). Additional questions may be asked. It is important for the staff to listen to any campers' ideas for possible implementation (10 minutes).

Shabbat afternoon

4. On Shabbat afternoon, group discussions should be held with 7-10 campers per group - see **Attachments - Part 2 Section 1**.

The excerpt and interpretation of Rashi should be taught first, and then the analysis of the event in **Attachments - Part 2 Section 2**.

ATTACHMENTS- RESOURCE TEXTS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part 1

Assignment Cards for Discussion in Pairs

Section 1

1. Why is it important for each one of us to protect our privacy?
2. Is it possible to protect one's privacy in camp? If so, how, and if not, what should we do about that?
3. Should we have secrets that we do not share with anyone?
4. What can we do to make sure that there is more privacy in camp?
5. With whom, if anyone, should we include our private thoughts?
6. How much can we rely on friends to keep a special concern private?
7. Are there times when one should break the trust of a friend if you believe that you are helping him/her?
8. In terms of issues of discretion and privacy, what would you like see happen differently in your cabin?

Section 2

Summation questions before the entire Eidah led by the Rosh Eidah or staff member

1. Who would like to include us in something interesting that was mentioned during your discussion (in pairs)?
2. Do you come up with any ideas that can be used in the life of the cabin or the Eidah?
3. What do we expect from our friends in the Eidah when it comes to issues of privacy and discretion? When do we feel that we can tell them personal things?
Are there times when it would be better to talk with an adult in camp instead of a friend?

Part 2

Section 1

Reading an excerpt and its explanation

מה טובו אהליך יעקב משכן ייך ישנאל: במדבר פרק כדה

How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel
[Numbers 24:5].

Balaam said this when he was asked by Balak to curse the People of Israel.

Once he saw how they encamped, he blessed them instead of cursing them.

Rashi explains to us that Balaam was impressed by the layout of the Israelite tents: they were built in such a way that each one was separate, facing another direction and maintaining its privacy, without invading the privacy of its neighbor.

Discussion Questions

This verse was said by a non-Jewish prophet. It was designated as the opening prayer in the Shacharit service. Why do think that was done?

What is special about maintaining privacy and discretion and not invading the domain of another?

Section 2

A Very Short Story

Yoni told his counselor, David that for several nights, Kobi, who sleeps in the bed above him, has not been sleeping and sighs many times in the night.

Yone said that Kobi seems to be sad a lot and not in a good mood. It seems to Yoni that Kobi has not eaten very well for the last few days.

"I'm worried about him," Yoni said to the counselor. "He's my best friend at camp. He told me that he received a letter from his parents but I don't know what happened".

David, the counselor, thanked Yoni and told him that he did an important thing in telling him about his cabinmate.

He promised to look into the matter. Later, Yoni felt that he had broken Kobi's trust. He regretted that he had said anything to David the counselor.

Discussion Questions

What do you think about Yoni telling his counselor David about his concerns for Kobi?

Did Yoni really break Kobi's trust?

What do you think you would have done if you were in Kobi's place and you found out that your friend told someone else some of your personal concerns or moods?

How would you behave in Yoni's place? Can you explain?

Were you ever in similar circumstances in the past? What did you do?

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