

D. PEULAT TZRIF AND HARGA'OT

The following is a rough list of peulot tzrif run by the Bogrim counselors this summer:

Girls: Taboo, chalk drawing, trading papers to write thank you notes to one another, Shabbat-ogram making, writing little known facts about themselves and having others guess who they were about, bunk bonfire, writing letters to themselves, making plastic rings, Apples to Apples, throwing a question ball, playing would you rather?, serious conversation about intermarriage and Jewish identity, passing around socks on which to write words in response to prompts, a show and tell of bunk members' random skills and talents, Hi Bob, Jolly Jungle Jar, bracelet making with each bead as one bunk member's wish for the summer, bracelet making as a string that ties the entire bunk together, end-of-summer superlative awards.

Boys: tying campers together and making them walk around as one, Frisbee, roof taps, spud, and bunk debates.

What follows is an elaboration on some of Bunk 41's peulot tzrif, by Morton Bast:

One of the strongest bunk activities that we ran this summer was the use of an object called the Jolly Jungle Jar, which was essentially a jar intended for the campers to fill with funny moments, wise observations, proud accomplishments, etc. Over the week the jar filled up with little pieces of paper, and on Friday nights after curfew, we would take them all out and read them to the bunk. In this way the campers were encouraged both to memorialize important moments by writing them down, and also to share these moments with the entire bunk, and support one another. At the end of the session, we split up the papers and sent each camper home with a packet of them. Our bunk ran this activity first session and not second session, and I believe that our second session campers would have benefited from it significantly.

Our first day peulat tzrif was also particularly successful, in which we gave each camper a pair of long white socks with their names on them, and passed the socks around in a circle writing words in response to prompts. As Bogrim girls, I think that they generally benefited from peulot intended to get them to share some of themselves and their thoughts with one another, and also from peulot that have a tangible object at the end that they can take home with them. They are old enough to be thinking very seriously about their summer experiences and why they were meaningful, but not too old to need some sort of physical, visual evidence. The boys also benefited from forced bunk unity, but often in different ways. Bunk 54's peulah of tying their campers together was very successful because it forced them to overcome social barriers by putting them in a ridiculous situation together.

Like already mentioned, Peulat tzrif is a valuable time that, when properly utilized, can add a lot to bunk unity and identity. Counselors need to be forced to create programs multiple times a week and empowered with resources to create really great programs for their kids. It was obvious that female counselors were much more motivated to use that time productively and in many cases, the development of positive bunk wide feeling was obvious for girls bunks. For the bunks that had distinct social dynamic challenges, this time could have been used in value added way to confront those issues and help the campers overcome and grow.

The purpose of hargaot is to get the campers into a "sleeping mode." They should be relaxing and calming. Here are a few ideas for hargaot that worked well for this Edah and this age group:

1. Asking other counselors in camp to come and share certain aspects about their camper experience with your campers, or tell about their life in general, special things that they

did. For example, JP came to bunk 42 and spoke with them about being in Israel and joining the army, which he will do next year.

2. Reading stories: you can choose any short story that you like, especially with girls. Or you can even start with a long book and read some every night.
3. Having the campers sit in a circle and just talk to each other or discuss current issues in the bunk could be very meaningful, especially for a "problematic" bunk. Sometimes just forcing them to spend time with each other could resolve a lot of problems.
4. Asking mishlachat members to come and tell about themselves and even about their camp experience so far.
5. Teaching the kids songs or just singing to them is a very popular harga'ah with these kids, especially on Friday night, when it's already dark and calm and they are not stressed about showering.

Campers of this age tend to appreciate the feeling that others are confiding in them or sharing a piece of themselves with them. The best harga'ot are those that are calm enough for nighttime, but also encourage the campers to think a little and make them feel more mature.

Like with Peulot Tzrif, it will be important in future summers to force counselors to really create meaningful harga'ah experiences almost every night of the week. Even though many counselors (especially male counselors) feel like this age group does not need harga'ot, they are misinformed; challenging counselors to plan for this time period can be really valuable for a bunk. It would be valuable to ask counselors to turn a schedule or calendar of Harga'ot that they plan on running every week