**Peulat Shabbat, Va’etchanan (Saturday, August 5)**

*By Sarah Binney, Nate Gillman, and Eliav Glam*

**Goal:** Have a meaningful discussion about the 10 commandments, and rules in general.

**Description:** Campers will participate in an activity where they sort camp rules in order of relative importance to them, and then they will discuss the importance of having rules in both secular and Jewish society.

**Summary of relevant part of Va’etchanan:** Moses recounts the 10 commandments to the Israelites.

***The peulah…***

**Introduction to peulah:**

1. A (preferably bearded) madrich, dressed up as Moshe, dramatically delivers/presents the 10 commandments to the edah.
2. Divide the edah into eight groups.

**Activity:** Given 10 camp rules (pre-separated and cut out on strips of paper), have the campers sort them in order of importance to them. They should justify to the madrich in charge why they choose that order.

**Discussion about activity:**

1. *Debrief:* how did people decide how to rank the rules in order of importance?
2. Was it difficult for everyone to agree on the relative importance of the rules *(hopefully yes)?* Why or why not?

**Discussion questions about rules in society in general, and rules in Judaism in particular**:

1. *Brainstorm:* Why do we have rules?
2. *List some camp rules whose rationalization isn’t immediately obvious, and explain the logic behind them.*
   1. After the bracha, we can’t get up from the table until “Bete’avon,” because it helps the kitchen staff bring food to everybody in a timely manner.
   2. After Birkat Hamazon, we must stay seated until a rosh comes to check that the table is clean, because we should be cleaning up our own messes.
3. Why is it necessary for us to follow even those rules that we might not understand?
   1. *Talking point:* *Kashrut –* Why are we told not to eat pork? The Torah gives the reason that pigs don’t chew their cud.
      1. In general, the Torah’s rules are very logical, but at times, there are some rules whose logic isn’t as clear, such as this one.
      2. But, we trust those rules which we don’t understand because there are others that we do understand.
      3. That’s just like how at camp, some rules may seem arbitrary, but we should still follow those because in general, the rules are good.
4. Why is it important for the Jewish people to have a covenant/agreement with G-d?
   1. It shows trust; to have a good relationship with G-d, trust must go both ways.

**Branch into a new discussion: adapting rules/tradition**

1. The Torah tells us that we should sacrifice animals. People stopped sacrificing animals because the second temple was destroyed (they would always do the sacrifices in the temple.) But, would we still be sacrificing animals if there were a third temple?
   1. Why shouldn’t we sacrifice animals anymore?
2. How do we decide which rules get changed and when?
   1. There is a lot of disagreement, even today, about which rules in the Torah should be followed.
      1. For example, some ultra-orthodox Jews believe very strongly girls should not wear tefillin.
   2. When groups of people (more or less) agree on *how* we change *which* rules, those people band together and form different sects of Judaism; that’s why we have orthodox Judaism, conservative Judaism, reform Judiasm, and other subdivisions of Judaism.
   3. Change doesn’t come from authority figures above; it comes from the people.
   4. It’s a revolutionary act to change the rules of a religion.