

Nivonim Trip Proposals:

Below are a compilation of the 4 different places we looked into for our N1von1m trip. They are all preliminary findings, but we felt that we should look into different places keeping in mind distance, activities, kosher dining, and lodging. At the end there are notes from all of us which I personally believe allow us to move to make a final decision with your and Josh's approval.

Albany, NY

Things to do include:

-Thatcher State Park: the park has nice views, fields, and reservable picnic area things. There are a bunch of trails, including the apparently famous Indian Ladder Trail (I've never done it, but they talked about it a bunch on their site). If we get a sheltered picnic area its \$125 plus \$6 per vehicle we bring in

-Cooperstown: its the baseball hall of fame, its about an 1.5 hour drive from Albany. I couldn't find prices for it.

-The New York State Museum: not much to say, its a museum, paintings, exhibitions, what not. Its free though, which is nice.

-Howe Caverns: Its a series of underground caverns and rivers. It's pretty cool if you're into that sort of thing. The last time I was there I was 14 I think, and we had a pretty good time of it. Its also nice and cool cause its underground, which is great in the summer. The normal price per person is \$23, but we'd have to look into what the group rates are.

-Crossgates Mall: so I'll make it clear now, I personally feel that going to a mall during a camp trip is kinda a waste of time, but its sort of a big deal in Albany so I figured I'd put it on here. Its a pretty big mall, all the regular stores, blah. There is a movie theater if we're looking to bring our kids to see a movie though.

-Laser Tag: Personal favorite of mine, this place called Zero Gravity, group rates are \$12 per person for 2 games, \$14 for 3. Something to think about.

-Whitewater Rafting: I didn't look up many details on this or if its even possible by what camp is allowed to do, but I'd be pretty awesome to go river rafting.

-Bowling: there are a ton of bowling alleys in Albany, many of them have stuff like dollar bowl nights or rock 'n' bowl. Could be a fun night activity

-USS Slater: its a restored WWII destoryer that you can be guided around. Its pretty cool, another thing thats fun if you're into it. They have group tours and rates

Food:

The only thing I'd say is that there are no Kosher restaurants in Albany, theres one Kosher caterer but he's expensive, so we'd have to figure out how we're doing food. There is a Kosher supermarket and the synagogues have Kosher kitchens, and I'm always down for some group cooking. Anyways, this is what I have, let me know what you guys think.

Poconos/Philly--this one is much more complicated

Travel: To get to Camp Ramah in the Poconos from Camp directly, it would take 4.5 hours. To go to Philly first and then end up at Poconos would take approximately 8 hours. It takes 3 hours just to get from Philly to Poconos. This is A LOT of travel time!!

This particular trip can only work if we have 4 days. If we have less than that, travel will take up most of the trip--too much of the trip.

Potential Schedule of the trip:

Day 1: Leave Palmer, drive to Poconos. Have some sort of activity with the Gesher (Nivonim Age kids) at Poconos. Could be really great if we plan it well. Eat dinner with Poconos. *Sleep at Poconos.*

Day 2: Leave Poconos, travel to Philadelphia. Get to Philly by lunch time. Do some activities in Philly (see below). *Sleep at Conservative Shul in Philly/Suburb of Philly.*

Day 3: Do more things in Philadelphia in the morning and Afternoon. We could focus this day more on Community Service/Leadership/Journeys etc. Late afternoon, drive back to Poconos. Activities at Poconos either with Gesher or just by ourselves. *Sleep at Poconos. **OR: just stay in Philly and don't go back to Poconos at all.***

Day 4: Wake up. Drive back to Palmer.

Lodging: 2 Nights at Camp Ramah in the Poconos, 1 Night at a Conservative Shul in the Philly area (there are millions). Or 1 night at Poconos and 2 nights in Philly.

Things to do in Philadelphia:

National Museum of American Jewish History (There's an exhibit on Jewish Summer Camp. If we don't go as Edah, I'm going by myself.)

Franklin Institute (awesome science museum)

Constitution Center

Liberty Bell (lots of hype, but honestly not that exciting)

Philadelphia Jewish Sports Hall of Fame (yeah, that actually exists)

Potential Community Service idea: Volunteer at the Greater Philadelphia food bank. They take large groups of volunteers, and it's pretty fun. We'd mostly be sorting food in a big warehouse. I did it in Boston in High School and everyone had a great time--I assume this would basically be the same thing.

Eating:

There are MANY Kosher restaurants in Philadelphia. If we bring some food, have a some meals at Poconos, and get some sort of catering (better value than the deli from last year!) in Philly, we should be good.

Also, I don't know anything about how we would coordinate this with Poconos. Do we pay for our own meals? Do they even have a place where we could sleep? Is it too late to plan a trip to

Cape Cod

Travel: 2.5 Hours

Lodging: There is a conservative shul, Anshe Chesed of Cape Cod. BUT we can't stay there because they don't actually have a building--they meet in the conference room at the Cape Cod Radisson hotel.

There is a reform shul, Cape Cod Synagogue. Does it matter that they're Reform? They have services only on Friday nights.

Things to Do:

The beach, obviously

Chatham Anglers baseball game. Schedule [here](#). (They were the Chatham A's when we were in Machon but they officially changed their name to the Anglers...who knew?) There's actually an entire Cape Cod Baseball League, so there will be a game somewhere no matter when we go. Zooquarium- Combination Zoo and Aquarium. Kinda like a combination Pizza Hut/Taco Bell, but better.

Cape Cod Potato Chip Factory (seems awesome to me; got terrible reviews)

There's something called the "Cultural Center" that people seem to LOVE. But I can't quite figure out what it is.

There are a bunch of seemingly awesome minigolf places.

Eating: As far as I can tell, the only source of Kosher food in Cape Cod is the Chabad. So we'd have to bring basically everything.

The Bottom Line: Cape Cod is great with your family and if you wanna go shopping and stuff. Other than the beach, there's not a ton of stuff to do. And, the beach would be great, but if it rains we're out of luck. If either of you (Ben or Sara) can remember any of the things we did in Machon, I'd be happy to hear it! Also, there's just not a lot of Judaism/ Jewish life in Cape Cod

New York City

Transportation:

Palmer to NYC: 3 hour drive on school buses

Will need metro cards for all campers to get through the time there

If we want to leave the city then we will

NYC things to do:

Scavenger Hunt around Times Square. This is a great way for the campers to bond and explore a safe area of the city within specific perimeters.

Ground Zero. Obviously an extremely important and valuable place to visit. I also think would be a huge opportunity for many of the campers who otherwise have never visited

Museum of Jewish Heritage.

The Jewish Museum- Hosts an exhibit called "*Culture and Continuity: The Jewish Journey*,"!!!

Ha! Comedy Show (or the like)

JTS- tour and information session

Something in Central Park- leadership activities, place to eat and enjoy themselves

Community Service in NYC- would be REALLY interesting to do a midnight mitzvah run in the city

Possibly meet up with Berkshires in the City

NYC Places to eat:

Kosher Delight (Meat)

Café Roma Kosher Pizza (may be able to get better deal through Hillel)

Various other places, definitely not the limiting factor!

Places to stay:

Uptown:

The Jewish Theological Seminary

3080 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

212-678-8832

Downtown:

Town and Village Synagogue

334 East 14th Street

New York NY 10003-4296

(212) 677-1049

Poconos, because we would need to be on their calendar? We'll need to figure this out sooner rather than later.

Bottom Line: If we have 4 (basically full) days, this could be a really awesome trip. We don't have anyone in our edah from Philly, so it's not like this is going to be boring for anyone, even if they've been to Philly with family before. Granted, the drive itself is very long, and we'd be doing a lot of driving. But with 4 days, there is also ample time where we won't be driving. Also, I think the connection between our kids and the Poconos kids could be really valuable--most of our interactions with another Ramah is through a rivalry. It could be nice to actually have a positive experience with another Ramah. (Also, if they meet cool people, they'll be encouraged to go on Seminar to see them again). At Poconos, we could do some really great programs and facilitate some awesome discussions about camp, about being Jewish, about being leaders, about journeys, etc. This trip is a little complicated, and has a lot of moving parts. But if done right, it could be EPIC.

Overall Comments:

Ben: As for the other ideas, obviously NYC would be awesome, and I like the Cape idea too. My only issue with Philly is its going to be a lot of time on a bus, and while chilling on the bus with your friends can be fun, I wouldn't want to waste their trip time.

David: So these are two options. Clearly the Poconos option would be a lot better than the Cape Cod option, even if it is more complicated and has more driving involved. **Above all, I still think that NYC is the best option.**

Sara Miriam: I think that NYC and Poconos are the most fun and exciting options. I think NYC would be much easier than Poconos, but I'm not one to settle because something is easier. I LOVE the idea of combining with other Ramah camps, and I think that if we do NYC we should really look into spending a day with Berkshires similar to what we would do with Poconos. I think it's a huge opportunity to meet with Berkshires campers in a non-competitive way before Yom Berkshires and foster real friendships while doing community service or the like. There is WAY too much competition between our camps that could begin to be alleviated by participating in a day together. The problem with Poconos as David points out is the amount of time we need, although I'm not against driving back that third day to save money and food. I motion to take out Cape Cod and Albany