

Torah Time Live K'ton!

Kids Program Outline

Duration: 45-60 mins

Demo: Grades K-7+

Materials: pre-printed *parashah* plays and character signs, at least 6 kids including 3-4 good readers [probably 4th grade+]

Objectives

Through play-acting and open discussion, participants will be able to retain and comprehend both a story, either from Torah or Jewish folklore, and a Jewish ethic [*middah*]. As the module oscillates between active improv games and sedentary viewing of live-action scripted scenes [performed by older kids or lay people], the K-3 kids will have their energy levels satisfied and regulated while experiencing a fun and interactive morning in synagogue.

Enduring Understandings

Participants will be recall and comprehend:

1. The Torah portion read that holiday morning
2. A particular *middah*, or Jewish ethic
3. Various drama improvisation games

Procedure summary

The activity is centered around a 2-part play. After ice breakers and a brief introduction to the concepts of the play, the first half is performed for the younger kids, followed by discussion. Then a *middah* is introduced, with a funny skit demonstrating the *middah* for the younger kids. The *middah* is then reviewed, younger kids assessed, and if time allows, a drama game is used to assess and further comprehend the *middah*. Then the second half of the play is

performed by the older kids, followed by review, then assessment of the entire play through dramatic play. If time allows, more drama games are offered to fill the time.

Throughout the program, “improvised” drama games are utilized. These improv games have rules and structure yet allow for the kids to control aspects of plot and progression. In a synagogue service, kids can be either reluctant to participate or somewhat unruly. These types of games allow the kids to express themselves, to focus their energy into open-ended activity that gives them a voice and respects their ideas. Most importantly, the games serve various pedagogic functions as explained in the following section. Some games rely on word play while others are based on scene work.

Games may be used to:

4. introduce new material to students;
5. help jog students' memories on topics learned in the past;
6. review stories and ideas just presented to the kids;
7. or allow for open exploration of ethical behavior and choices made by characters in the stories.

Note

Some of the Torah portions read on a specific holiday don't easily lend themselves to a narrative play. In these instances, a Jewish folks story will be used instead. Either way, there should be a bit of review regarding the traditions of the holiday at the start of the program.

Modular framework for TTLK programs:

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>	<u>RUN TIME</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
1. Improv: Ice Breaker	Get the kids comfortable and working together	5-7 mins	This is the point where we wait for stragglers, so feel free to cut this off once you have a good number of kids
2. Improv: Unpacking the play	Introduce kids to basics of the holiday, then introduce the play with story concepts, characters, plot points	5-10 mins	<u>OPTIONAL</u> If kids already know the holiday or the story, or the holiday's already been discussed, then just summarize the first part of the story for them and move on
3. Older kids [grades 4+] present part 1 of the play	First half of the play is performed	5-7 mins	This also gets the kids quiet and focused after being up and active
4. Narrative assessment: rephrasing, retelling the scene they just saw	First half of the play is assessed	3 mins	
5. introduce theme of		3 mins	Unless facilitator thinks kids need

the <i>middah</i> , the topic of the Public Service Announcement [PSA]: ask them to relate, then relate theme to story			another game or quick period of activity at this point, kids remain seated
6. PSA play: present theme		5 mins	Kids seated and watching
7. Review/relate PSA	PSA assessed orally	3 mins	
8. Improv: Topic <i>middah</i> assessment	PSA assessed through games	10 mins	Period of activity
9. Older kids grades 4+ present part 2 of the play		5-7 mins	Kids seated again and watching
10. Review/relate story and theme	Quick review and assessment of the entire play, both halves	5 mins	OPTIONAL If time is running out, or kids are antsy and want to play more games, feel free just to review with them the highlights of the play, then move on
11. Improv: review/recall		5-7 mins per	Activities to review everything they've

story, scenes		game	seen and learned
12. Improv: timed game, kids' choice of topics		remainder of the time	<u>OPTIONAL</u>

Matrix of drama improvisation games for Jewish non-frontal teaching:

Issue/Decision		
Game Activity Function	Game Names	Game Brief Description
1. ice breakers [with Judaic-based suggestions]	Circle Memory Adding Game	Sit in a circle, each person says "When I went to the Seder, I brought ___" but must also say everything that all the previous people were bringing
	Repair Shop	Naïve: kids come up with a broken Jewish object and one endowment, then naïve player plays the shop owner who must figure out what the customer is trying to pick up [that's been repaired]
	Yes, Let's...	With suggestions related to a certain holiday/ceremony/Torah story, Scene with 2 kids where one suggest an activity, they both start doing it, then another says, "Yes, let's" and suggests new activity which they all do, and more kids enter and suggest new activities
2. Unpacking: Naïve games Games in which the players [kids] don't need to know	Slide Show	Facilitator ostensibly shows slides/phone pix from their trip to a certain Torah story – gives kids 5 seconds to pose any way they like, then freeze in position, and facilitator must explain that this is one of their pix from the story and explain what's going on in the pic
	Columns	2-4 kids stand on either side of the performing area/front of room,

<p>the story</p> <p>Games would be run by the facilitator as a means of introducing the basics of the <i>parashah</i>/holiday play</p>		<p>facilitator tells a Torah story but continually cuts off mid-sentence, taps a standing kid on the head or shoulder, at which point that kid must say anything to fill in the blank – story goes off the rails but leader may choose to reboot story, etc.</p>
	<p>Ballet</p>	<p>Silent ballet, possibly with music melodies being sung or kids drumming a beat: facilitator introduced or gets suggestion for Torah story that everyone might not know; tells everyone briefly the story, then that they're about to see a ballet in 3 acts; only need a few kids for this and the rest can watch; facilitator introduces each "act" by explaining what the kids are about to see, then the performers do whatever they want, possibly with facilitator prompting their movements or reminding them of plot points along the way</p>
	<p>New Choice</p>	<p>Facilitator introduces a Torah story to the kids, has a few of them act it out, but at any random moment, facilitator yells out "New Choice" and kid must redo whatever they've just said or done with a new choice, possibly sending things off the rails</p>
<p>3. Narrative assessment</p> <p>For Torah story review or Story assessment</p> <p>Games in which the kids have learned the story and</p>	<p>Bedtime Story</p>	<p>1-2 kids sit next to facilitator on end of stage and tell them it's bedtime; kids insist on hearing their favorite bedtime story, which happens to be the Torah story that's been performed in the play that day; facilitator launches into telling the story, stopping the story on occasion to ask the bedtime kids to fill in the blanks or say what happened next; as that happens, 2-3 kids appear mid-stage and</p>

<p>must present it for review</p>		<p>mime together the narrative the facilitator and bedtime kids are telling [and possibly getting wrong and/or correcting along the way]</p>
	<p>Press Conference</p>	<p>[my fave game for these groups, might be better for review of a story learned on another day] Naïve: group decides on a person, place, or thing from a Torah story; naïve kid comes in and is now portraying that suggestion BUT they're the only one in the room who doesn't know who they are; they then hold a press conference, facilitated by leader, during which kids ask the naïve kid questions, possibly leading questions, that the kid must answer directly...but it's through the context of the questions that the kid figures out who they are; they get to guess who they are after each question, with a max of 5 questions, after which they're told who they are and someone else gets a turn; could use up to 3 kids as naïve players</p>
	<p>[Replay] Countdown</p>	<p>2 teams of kids play out a scene from the Torah story of the day; this can be done as a competition; first team plays about 2 mins max, then the other team must perform the first team's scene as exactly as possible, matching movements and dialogue, etc; then the first team replays the scene they did but with an endowment granted by the facilitator or from the crowd; second team gets a different endowment and must replay the scene with it; 2 rounds for each team with different endowments; endowment could be anything from a changed environment [everything is made of melted cheese, they're on Mars, they're handgliding] to something changed about them [their mouths are full of jello, they have eyes on their</p>

		hands, they all love cocoanut and keep talking about them], etc.
	Foreign Dubbing	A scene from the Torah story of the day is played out for foreign audiences, with players in the scene using gibberish and players standing on the sides loudly interpreting into English what that person just said; each gibberish kid is assigned a sideline interpreter so there's no confusion for the audience; the funny is that the interpreters are trying to put words in the characters' mouths while characters are trying to do mime and use inflection to imply what they're saying along the way
4. Topic assessment Games allowing kids to explore <i>middot</i> , possibly using elements of their own experience	Pavlov	[warning: sophisticated game, maybe for older kids, but FUN to watch] 3-4 players come up and plug their ears; facilitator unplugs one at a time, each time getting a suggestion that, when a certain player does a certain action, the currently unplugged player must have a suggested response; then that player plugs their ears and facilitator moves onto the next player; after this intro, players work out a scene that addresses the <i>middah</i> , but chaos ensues as the responses kick in
	Emotoparty	Scene: Each kid gets a suggestion of an abject emotion, then all make up a scene depicting an example of the <i>middah</i> , with each kid maintaining their abject emotion – could be done as a replay with the initial scene done straight, then replayed with the emotions
	Yay! Boo!	Kids split into 2 teams; facilitator offers scenario in which <i>middah</i> will

		<p>play out, then tells both teams to dramatize this scenario; however, one team must present a useful, helpful, positive approach that truly emphasizes the benefit of the <i>middah</i>, while the other team ignores the <i>middah</i> and present us with the misanthropic, dystopian results.</p>
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