

### Task 3: Building Consensus

#### **The big idea of this task:**

Each member of our community is created *b'tzelem elohim* (in the image of God). We should show each of them *kavod* (respect) by allowing them to share their opinions, even when they differ from our own.

#### **By the end of this task, campers will be able to:**

- Put into their own words quotes and teachings about *b'tzelem elohim* and *kavod*.
- Give examples of treating people *b'tzelem elohim* and with *kavod*.
- Use *b'tzelem elohim* and *kavod* as guiding principles to support building consensus, and active and respectful listening.

#### **During this task, campers will grapple with:**

- How can I be receptive to listening to the opinions of other campers?
- What is challenging for me when building consensus and how do I overcome those challenges?
- How do the principles of *b'tzelem Elohim* and *kavod* impact the way I build consensus?

#### **You know you have been successful with this task when:**

Throughout the remainder of the summer the campers actively listen and acknowledge the opinions of the other campers/staff even when differ from their own.

#### **Additional Resources**

- What is Consensus? (appendix 1)
- A secular website, <http://learningtogive.org/> has over 20 lessons that are easily adaptable to camp settings on reaching consensus

## Raising the Bar

### Ideas for further programs and integrating the task into the camp day

- Ask the campers to come to a consensus at their various activities around camp (determining who gets the tray of food for everyone in the dining hall, who gets first shower, etc). At the beginning of the day have the campers try and come to consensus on their own. As the day progresses model consensus language (asking others for their opinion). Then reflect on the experience at the end of the day.
- Begin the Task by giving campers a challenge around camp and then debriefing how they made worked as a group and made decisions. Some ideas for challenges:
  1. Drop an egg off a high place so that it will not crack
  2. Figure out how to get a bunch of items across the pool or lake
- Create “how to reach consensus” posters and put them around camp. Campers can create these posters during a second program, or they can be created by staff and posted. Ideas can be found at <http://learningtogive.org/youthworkers/7%20Growing%20as%20a%20Philanthropist/activity05.asp>
- Teach campers the song “B’tzelem Elohim” by Dan Nichols and ei18hteem. During the program, refer back to the song and ask campers how they think it applies to the process of reaching consensus. Lyrics and a recording can be found at [http://www.ruachcd.com/music/5761/btzelem\\_eloim.htm](http://www.ruachcd.com/music/5761/btzelem_eloim.htm) and chords can be found [here](#).
- Use the terms *b’tzelem elohi*” and *kavod* in cabins and during other camp activities. When discussing these terms during this program, ask campers where else they have heard these terms.

### Sample Activities

- Sample 1: Are You Listening?
- Sample 2: Going on a Trip
- Sample 3: Planet Zop Consensus Workshop 2011  
\*From the Jewish Community Federation San Francisco, Marin, Peninsula and Sonoma Counties

## **Sample 1: Are You Listening?** **Multiple Facilitators/Large Group**

### **Overview**

During this program, campers participate in a small group activity that simulates coming to consensus. Using the Jewish values of *b'tzelem elohim* and *kavod*, campers will create a set of “ground rules” in their teen foundations for reaching consensus.

### **Group Type**

Large Group (can be adapted easily for a small group by simply doing the introduction with a single teen foundation)

### **Space Needed**

Large area where campers can breakout into their teen foundations

### **Supplies Needed**

- Large piece of butcher paper for each teen foundation
- Glue stick or tape
- Markers
- A copy of Appendix 1 for each teen foundation leader

### **Prior to the Program**

- Read “What is Consensus” (Appendix 1). Use this sheet to help guide your explanation of consensus.
- Decide which facilitator will be leading the Introduction and Listening Activity

### **Timetable (50 minutes)**

5 minutes- Introduction/ Review

25 minutes- Listening activity

10 minutes- Consensus in our foundations

10 minutes- Wrap up

### **Introduction/ Review (5 minutes)**

1. Gather all campers together in to one group.
2. Spend a few minutes reviewing the material the full group of campers learned in the first session.

### **Listening Activity (25 minutes)**

1. Explain to the campers: This activity is a listening activity. Find a partner and sit across from one another. Pick one person to be the speaker and one person to be the listener. The person who is the speaker is going to have one minute to take a stance on a topic we are giving them. Make sure to talk about the answer for the

entire time. The person that is the listener can only listen, and cannot talk or ask questions.

- Speaker number 1, you love a certain activity at camp and you have 1 minute to advocate for every camper having it one period every day at camp.
  - Once they are done speaking for one minute, have them reverse roles and have the listener become the speaker and the speaker becomes the listener.
  - Speaker number 2, you love another type of activity and you have 1 minute to advocate for every camper having it one period every day at camp.
2. Have the campers pair up with another group (creating a group of four)
    - Ask the campers who were the listener during the first round to take turns explaining why their partner advocated for their activity. (1 minute each)
    - Then, have the listeners from the second round explain why their partner wanted another activity. (1 minute each)
    - Once all four of the campers have shared, explain to them that they now need to come up with an agreement on which activity every camper should have for one period every day at camp. They can only pick one activity.
  3. Explain to the campers:
    - We are going to continue this discussion within our teen foundations as we discuss how your group came to a consensus.

### **Consensus in our Foundations (10 minutes)**

1. Have campers get in to their teen foundation groups.
2. Once in the teen foundations, ask campers:
  - Think about when you were the speaker, how did it feel to have the undivided attention of your partner?
  - How did you know that your partner was listening to you? (*Answers: they were looking at me, they were able to repeat in the second activity what I had said, they nodded...*)
  - When you were the listener how were you able to remember everything that the speaker was describing? How did you show the speaker that you were paying attention? (*Answer: when someone is looking at you while you are speaking, they are validating what you are saying vs. not looking at the person it appears that you are not interested*)
  - Can you share with the group how you made your decision to choose the group's activity? (*Answers: voted, let one person decide, debate, negotiated*)
  - If you did not come to a decision, why were you unable to do so?
  - What were some of the challenges when you made your decision and how did you overcome them?
  - What did you learn from this activity about group decision-making?

- Although our teen foundations are not deciding which activity to have at camp, we do have to decide which organization we are going to support. Everyone may have different ideas about how to choose and it is important that everyone's voice be heard. This process is called "making consensus."
  - What do you think some of the challenges are that we might face when making a decision about which organization we want to support? (*Answers: not everyone is able to share their opinion, campers may feel bad if their opinion is in the minority*)
3. Explain to campers that there are two Jewish values that can help us when we are coming to consensus: *kavod* and *b'tzelem elohim*.
- The first term is *kavod*. We looked at the term *kavod* way back in our first task when we were learning about Jewish values for our teen foundation.
  - Does anyone remember what it means (*Answer: honor/respect*). A great Rabbi named Hillel taught us about *kavod*, he said "what is hateful to you, do not do to another." What do you think this teaching has to do with reaching consensus? (*Answers: you have to show honor to the people you are working with; I hate when someone doesn't take my opinion seriously, so I should listen to other people...*)
  - *B'tzelem elohim* is an idea that comes from the Book of Genesis in the Torah. We are told that when God created people, God created them *b'tzelem elohim* – in the image of God. *B'tzelem elohim* is really about how we recognize what is holy in ourselves and in others. How is thinking about *b'tzelem elohim* helpful in reaching consensus? (*Answers: when we realize we are all holy, then every opinion matters; treating others with respect is a holy action*)
  - Right now you are going to have the opportunity to think about how you will control how you respond to the other teen foundation members when we are going through the process of determining which organization we will choose.

### Wrap Up (10 minutes)

1. Ask campers, based on what you have learned today, what are some rules you would like our teen foundation to consider for coming to consensus? Looking back at the "choose an activity for camp" discussions, what do you wish the ground rules were? (*write the ground rules on a sheet of butcher paper and save to display during future tasks*)
2. These ground rules will become the ground rules for our teen foundation.

## **Sample 2: Going on a Trip** **1 Facilitator/Small Group**

### **Overview**

During this program a group of campers will be asked to brainstorm a list of items to bring on a camp trip and another group will act as observers so that they are able to provide feedback to the brainstormers. Once the brainstorming group creates the list they will be asked to narrow it down to a shorter list of items. The group will then come together to discuss their thoughts about how they reached the consensus and will end by determining how they are going to reach consensus when they choose an organization to fund.

### **Group Type**

Small Group

### **Space Needed**

Small room

### **Supplies Needed**

- Paper
- Pencil or markers for each camper
- 1 copy of Appendix 1
- Copies of the *B'tzelem elohim/Kavod* tally sheet – enough for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your group (appendix 2)

### **Prior to the Program**

- Read “What is Consensus” (appendix 1), use this sheet to help guide your explanation of consensus.

### **Timetable (35 minutes)**

5 minutes- Review/ Introduction

15 minutes- Consensus activity

10 minutes- Discussion

5 minutes – Wrap-up

### **Review/ Introduction (5 minutes)**

1. Spend a few minutes reviewing the material the full group of campers learned in the first session.

### **Consensus activity (15 minutes)**

1. Explain to the campers that they are going to be participating in an activity where one part of the group is going to be brainstorming and the other part of the group is going to be observing. Assign  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the campers to the brainstorming group and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of

the campers to the observation group. The brainstorming group and the observation group should not communicate with each other.

2. Explain to the brainstorming group that they are going on a camp trip (*you should make up a location such as a hike, overnight, amusement park, etc*).

### **Raising the Bar**

#### **Ideas for further programs and integrating the task into the camp day**

- Make the activity more hands-on by having each camper come to the activity with one item they would bring on the trip.

3. Take the observation group to another area of the room so that the brainstorming group cannot hear and explain the following:
  - Watch the interactions between the campers on the brainstorming team and observe the ways that they reach consensus.
  - In order to help them organize their thoughts give them each the *B'tzelem elohim/Kavod* sheet. Whenever they feel that a camper is treated *b'tzelem elohim* or with *kavod*, they should write it down.
  - *B'tzelem elohim* means to be created in the image of God. *B'tzelem elohim* is really about how we recognize what is God-like in ourselves and in others.
  - *Kavod* means to show honor or respect to another person.
  - The definitions will also be at the top of the *b'tzelem elohim/kavod* sheet.
4. Bring the group back together and explain:
  - The brainstorming team should create a list of items that they think are essential to the trip (*do not tell them that they are going to have to narrow down their list*).
5. After the campers brainstorm a list of at least 20 items explain to them that they need to narrow down the list of items to 10 essential items for the trip.
6. Once they narrow down the list of items, bring the group back together for a discussion.

### **Discussion (10 minutes)**

1. Explain to the campers:
  - We are going to be having a discussion about the process you went through in developing your list of items for your trip. This discussion is important because it will help us to learn about coming to a consensus when choosing an organization to fund. We want to make sure that everyone feels supported when they leave the discussion. Please make sure to respect everyone's thoughts and opinions.

2. Ask the campers on the brainstorming team:

- How would you describe the method that you used in creating your final list of 10 items? (*Answers: we voted, we went with one person's opinion, we let each person choose one...*)
- What were some of the challenges that you faced when you were developing the list?
- How were you able to make sure everyone's voice was heard?

If everyone's voice was unable to be heard:

- What would you have done differently to make sure everyone's voice was heard?

3. Explain to the campers:

- You may have noticed that the observation group was taking some notes while you were speaking.
- We had you work on this activity together because the theme of today's task is consensus.

4. Explain to the campers that when we are in a group and come to a mutual agreement, this is known as a consensus. (*use the "What is a Consensus" sheet to describe consensus in more detail*)

- We can come to a consensus because we treat each other with *kavod* (respect). By respecting each other, it doesn't mean that we give everyone what they want, it means that we are open minded because we listen to each other's opinions. In Judaism we believe we are all created in *b'tzelem elohim* (in the image of God). *B'tzelem elohim* is really about how we recognize what is holy in ourselves and in others. By listening and validating another person's opinion we are recognizing what is holy in someone else.

5. Explain that the campers on the observation team had sheets of paper to help them formulate their thoughts about their observations while they watched the brainstorming team. They were given directions to "Write down when one camper treats another camper *b'tzelem elohim* and/or with *kavod*."

6. Have the observation team share a few examples of how their peers treated one another *b'tzelem elohim* and/or with *kavod*.

**Wrap Up (10 minutes)**

1. Ask campers: Based on what you have learned today, what are some rules you would like our teen foundation to consider for coming to consensus? Looking back at your "going on a trip" activity, what do you wish the ground rules were?

*(write the ground rules on a sheet of butcher paper and save to display during future tasks)*

2. These ground rules will become the ground rules for our teen foundation.  
(Remember to bring the ground rules to future sessions)

**Sample 3: Going on a Trip**  
**Multiple Facilitators/Large Group**

**PLANET ZOP CONSENSUS WORKSHOP 2011**  
**FACILITATOR NOTES**  
**Jewish Community Federation San Francisco, Marin, Peninsula**  
**and Sonoma Counties**

**\* Please be sure to retrieve the accompanying PDF of the Character Cards from the Additional Materials section**

**[[GOAL This should NOT be read out loud]**

This exercise will enable student groups to discover how they work together; and to use consensus to make difficult decisions. Teens must come to consensus on who they will populate a new planet with and will use discussion and on-the-spot consensus strategies.]]

**SET-UP**

Foundations should be broken into three groups (6-7 participants), with LC (Leadership Council) leaders distributed among the groups and leading the activity with support from staff and alumni observers.

**SUPPLIES FOR EACH GROUP**

- One set of Character Cards- Appendix 3
- One Planet Zop- Appendix 4
- Decision making grids and stickers for each participant (enough so that each participant has at least 5 small stickers that will fit on their grid)
- Alien Antennae for leaders of workshop (and maybe a few extra for those who want to wear them!)
- **(All of these supplies can be placed in one large envelope for each group)**

**TIME REQUIRED [50 MINUTES]**

**INTRODUCTION [5-10 MINUTES]**

Welcome to our workshop on consensus. Consensus is the process we use as a board to make important decisions, like choosing our mission statement or deciding where to allocate our money.

What do people know about consensus?

Take 2-3 responses and then say:

**Consensus means that everyone is heard and everyone can move forward. Consensus is never majority rule voting.**

### **THE CHALLENGE**

LC to put on alien antennae or other distinguishing costume item, put out Planet Zop and Character Cards in the middle of the circle, and read the following scenario:

“We are from the Planet Zop. Our planet has no life form on it yet, except for us, and we would like to populate it with good people from your planet to make it a good world. These fifteen people have been recommended, but our spacecraft can only hold five people from your planet. Please make a decision as a group as to the five people we can take.

Oh my, look at that time! We must depart from your solar system in 25 minutes exactly or else the mass disintegration program affecting all life in this solar system will boot up.

**Your group must reach a decision as to which five people should enter the spacecraft and start a new world on Planet Zop. You have approximately 25 minutes to reach this decision.**

We suggest that individuals get clear on their top choices first (as quickly as possible, 2-3 minutes), using grids and stickers, before group discussion begins.

### **GROUP USES CONSENSUS TO PICK PEOPLE FOR PLANET ZOP [25 minutes]**

Give five-minute warning at 20 minutes.

At 25 minutes, ask group to share their choices.

During process, all staff to watch for things that you notice about the group that you may reflect back to the group after consensus is reached.

### **DEBRIEF AND WRAP-UP [10-15 minutes]**

#### **Possible Debrief Questions:**

- How were decisions made?
- What helped or hindered the process?
- What did you notice about how people listened to each other [or didn't]?
- How was conflict managed?
- What role did you play in the group?
- Did everyone in the group feel heard?
- How would you do the activity differently if you were asked to do it again?
- What did you learn about using consensus?

## **WRAP-UP**

After debrief, have everyone refer to the Consensus handout in their binder. Have people read aloud the basic points. [If short on time, refer people to this handout in their binder, but do not read the whole thing aloud].

Thank you for participating in tonight’s dramatic consensus activity. We will face some challenging real-world decisions this year—good luck!

Appendix 1 – What is Consensus  
A Leader Resource

## CONSENSUS

*Based on a handout created by Jewish Community Federation San Francisco, Marin, Peninsula, Sonoma for the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Teen Foundation Retreat in November 2007*

### **Consensus is:**

- A mutual agreement among members of a group where all legitimate concerns of the individuals have been addressed.
- An agreement to move forward with a decision each member of the group can support even if they think it might not be the best possible decision.
- A process that fosters individual differences, personal self-reliance and self-esteem, creativity and innovation, cooperative attitudes, improved interpersonal communications and relationships, responsibility and accountability.

### **Consensus is not:**

- A unanimous vote—a consensus may not represent everyone's first priorities.
- The same as compromise.
- A majority vote where only the majority gets something they are happy with; people in the minority may get something they do not want at all.
- When everyone is totally satisfied.
- The way to make all decisions, no matter how insignificant.

### **Commitment requires:**

- Commitment to the process.
- Active participation of all group members.
- Creative thinking and open-mindedness.
- Skills in communication: active listening, conflict resolution, discussion, facilitation.
- Time.
- Self-reflection and an awareness of self and others.

## Appendix 2: B'tzelem Elohim/Kavod Tally Sheet

<b>B'tzelem Elohim &amp; Kavod Tally Sheet</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>B'tzelem elohim</i> means to be created in the image of God. <i>B'tzelem elohim</i> is really about how we recognize what is God-like in ourselves and in others.</li> <li>• <i>Kavod</i> means to show honor or respect to another person.</li> </ul>	
B'tzelem Elohim	Kavod