

## Rescuing the Wandering Jew

# Shalom Bayit

90-120-Minute Learning Experience

Before beginning, check out our [Facilitator's Guide](#), which explains how to use this learning activity as a set induction prior to watching the video.

*Shalom bayit* is directly translated as peace (or wholeness) in the home, but is often used as a generalized term for the value of making certain choices and compromising for the sake of creating unity in a community or society. Learners will come to understand that when we live together in a diverse community, we must work extra hard at understanding the value that our differences bring to the tapestry of our culture and society. Through gameplay, interactive discussion, debate, movement, and other experience-based activities, participants will encounter the challenge of pursuing that sense of peace as well as joy when unity is achieved.

### Activities (65-95 min)

*Supplies: Multiple blue tape rolls (one for every 3-4 people), Conflict & Resolution Signs (one set for every 3-4 people), blank paper, markers; large post-it sheets (one for every 2 people), pencils/pens.*

*Note: Some of the activities below are adapted from The Big Book of Conflict-Resolution Games by Mary Scannell.*

#### 1. Conflict Comfort (3-8 min)

- a. Stand in the center of the room and say: "I represent conflict. Consider how you typically react when you experience a conflict. Position yourself, in relation to me, somewhere in the room in a way that conveys your initial response to a conflict. Pay attention to your body language as well as your distance from the conflict."
- b. With people standing in their chosen spot, discuss:
  - i. What are some reasons you are standing where you are?
  - ii. For those of you that ran (not walked) as far as you could away from me, explain this reaction.
  - iii. For those of you positioned closest to me, explain this reaction.



- iv. If where you are standing signifies your initial reaction to the general concept of conflict, where might you stand if you were dealing with a conflict for a longer period of time?
- v. What are some things that would cause you to move?
- vi. How might our reactions influence the course of getting from conflict to resolution?

## 2. From Conflict to Resolution (12-18 min)

- a. Divide your group into subgroups of 3-4 people.
- b. Give each group a set of Conflict and Resolution signs, 5-10 pieces of blank paper, some markers and blue tape.
- c. Tell them to find a space near the wall where their team will work. On one side of their space they hang the Conflict sign, and on the other side of their space (3-5 feet apart) they hang their Resolution sign.
- d. As a team, come up with the steps that it takes to get from a Conflict to a Resolution. Write each step on a piece of blank paper and hang them, in order, between the Conflict sign and the Resolution sign. (5-7 min)
- e. Allow the groups to “museum walk” to see what other groups came up with. (3-5 min)
- f. Discuss:
  - i. What were some of the most common steps you saw on the walls among the groups?
  - ii. What were some of the most unique concepts you saw on the walls?
  - iii. What has to happen right before “Resolution”?
  - iv. Is there an additional step after “Resolution”? What could be added?
  - v. In what ways was “conflict” represented in your team’s experience in creating the steps?
  - vi. In what ways was “resolution” represented in your team’s experience in creating the steps?
  - vii. How might diversity of opinion and experience impact your ability to get to a resolution? How might it help you get to a resolution?
  - viii. How did compromise play a role in this activity?
  - ix. How did your group work to achieve *shalom bayit* in this activity?

## 3. Acting Out and Assumptions (18-28 min)

- a. Divide the group into pairs. Each person will have a chance to act, and each person will have a chance to be an investigator.
- b. The actors cannot speak or make any noise – only mime.
- c. The investigator can ask as many questions as s/he wants in order to get to the answer.



- d. The actor chooses a situation from his/her life experience in which he/she felt the most challenged, but then the most success when they accomplished the task.
- e. The investigator must continue asking questions until the actor is able to convey the scenario in such a way that the investigator can describe it correctly. (6-10 min)
- f. When all of the pairs have finished and each person has been both an actor and an investigator, bring the group back to discuss: (12-18 min)
  - i. How did frustration play out in your experience?
  - ii. When you were the investigator, how did assumptions about the other person influence your process?
  - iii. When you were the actor, how did the assumptions the other person made about you impact how you were feeling? How were you communicating?
  - iv. How did it feel when you finally figured it out?
  - v. How important is clear communication in getting resolution to a problem?
  - vi. How do questioning skills help us understand a situation better?
  - vii. What gets in the way of our willingness to ask questions when we are involved in frustrating situations or conflict situations?
  - viii. Were there times as a pair that you weren't sure you were ever going to get to a resolution? How did you handle that?
  - ix. In addition to questioning skills, what other skills are necessary to overcome assumptions?
  - x. What is the value of questioning skills to resolve conflict?
  - xi. How might this experience help us think about *shalom bayit*?

#### 4. Extreme Expressions (25-40 min)

- a. In a large space, explain that you will be playing several rounds of "silent line-up" games. (9-12 min)
- b. As a warm-up, have the group line up (shoulder-to-shoulder) in birthday order (Jan 1–Dec 31).
  - i. Discuss: What tools did you use to communicate when you couldn't speak?
- c. Thinking back to the first exercise we did today, line up in order of avoiding conflict to confronting conflict.
  - i. Discuss:
    1. If two people in this room were going to problem-solve together, which two would likely have the most success and why? How do we know this? (The two people in the middle).



2. How did you resolve conflict between you while you were lining up?
3. Were you surprised by where some people put themselves or where you ended up in the line? Does it change how you perceive them or will interact with them moving forward?
- d. Now line up from those who most easily express emotions to those who keep emotions tightly to themselves.
  - i. Discuss:
    1. Who in this line-up would be easiest to come to a resolution with if in a disagreement? Why?
    2. What assumptions do we make about those who are in positions opposite us?
    3. Were you surprised by where some people put themselves or where you ended up in the line-up? Does it change how you perceive them or will interact with them moving forward?
- e. Now line up from those who like to collaborate and compromise to those who stand firm in beliefs/decisions with very little room for being convinced otherwise.
  - i. Discuss:
    1. Which two people in this line-up would be the best people to work together on coming to a mutual agreement? Why?
    2. If you are choosing a team of people to work on a project from this line-up, would you most likely choose those who are most different than you or who are most like you? Why?
    3. Were you surprised by where some people put themselves or where you ended up in the line-up? Does it change how you perceive them or will interact with them moving forward?
- f. Discuss the overall exercise while they are in this formation:
  - i. Which spots are the easiest to decide on? Why? (Usually the extremes)
  - ii. Which spots are the most difficult? Why? (Middle spots)
  - iii. How did you feel if/when someone else pressured you into switching your spot?
  - iv. If you were able to decide quickly where you stood on any of the issues, how did you react when it took some people much longer?
  - v. How can we more accurately assess another person's perspective?
  - vi. In what ways does having a diverse group of people who experience conflict, collaboration and emotion differently help in teamwork?
- g. Now pair up the people in the room who are "opposite them" – meaning the two extremes are now a pair, and the next two are now a pair and so-on. If there's an odd number, the middle three can be a triad.



- h. Hand each pair a large post-it sheet and markers, a piece of plain paper and a pencil/pen.
- i. With your partner, on the plain paper, work to write a definition of “conflict resolution” using only positive terms/connotations. Then develop a 5-step process that two people should go through to reach *shalom bayit* when they are in conflict and having trouble resolving their differences. When you have a final version of these, write them in marker on a large post-it and hang it on the wall. (8-15 min)
- j. After allowing everyone to “museum walk,” discuss: (6-12 min)
  - i. What did it feel like going into a small project/being paired up with someone who was standing opposite you and different from you in a certain regard?
  - ii. What assumptions did you make going into this as a result of where they were standing in line?
  - iii. Did your self-identified personas on collaboration play out when working together? How or how not?
  - iv. How much did the more “stand your ground” person on the team have to force themselves to collaborate in order to get to a compromise in your task?
  - v. How much did the person who likes to “compromise” have to push themselves to stand up for themselves in this process?
  - vi. How does our willingness to compromise impact our ability to reach *shalom bayit*?

## Processing: Grade 8-Adult (10-15 min)

- What personality traits may impact the ability of two people or a group to get to a point of *shalom bayit* when they are having a disagreement?
- What skills do you think people need to have in order to reach *shalom bayit* during a time of strife?
- During the activities today, did you experience joy or pride as a result of reaching an agreement with another person or group of people? Explain.
- How does having a diverse group of ideas, opinions and experiences help us in reaching compromise? How does it hinder it?
- How do our assumptions about what someone else brings to a situation (experiences, personality, mood, etc.) impact our ability to reach unity?
- What does it mean to you to sacrifice something of yourself in order to reach a group resolution?



## Additional Processing: Grade 11–Adult

- Consider a time when you were in deep conflict with another person but eventually resolved it. What happened and how did you reach a resolution?
- Do you hold a grudge when you have had to compromise on something you don't think you had to? Or are you more likely to just let it go for the sake of *shalom bayit*?
- Is it true *shalom bayit* if one person is angry about having to compromise?
- What role do you think maturity plays in the ability of a group of people to work past their differences?
- How is *shalom bayit* different in a family setting than in a broader societal context?

## Video Viewing and Post-Video Reflection (15–20 min)

After doing these learning activities with your participants, watch the [video](#) together. Then use these discussion and reflection questions for a final conversation and wrap-up to the program.

- Considering the remarkable diversity of Jewish refugees coming to Israel from over 70 countries, do you think Israel has been successful in uniting people from vastly different communities and cultures?
- Robert Frost said, "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." We see this acutely with how Israel engaged in daring missions to bring in Jews from around the world. In what ways do you view Israel as your home? Or do you feel distant to the idea of Israel as a home?
- Israel is a country that was founded by European (Ashkenazi) Jewish leaders, but now, Ashkenazim represent fewer than 50% of Israeli Jews, with over 50% being of Mizrahi descent. Israel is also a country with an unparalleled diversity of Jews from vastly different cultures, communities and socio-economic statuses. If you could give advice to the leaders of Israel, what would you suggest as a way to unify these different peoples without stripping each community of its unique flavor and contribution?