



## Rescuing the Wandering Jew

# Shalom Bayit

### 40-60-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 (20-30 min)

*Supplies: Tug-of-war rope, pool noodle, flag, stopwatch; quotes on 11x17 posters, blue tape; non-stick flip chart paper and markers, table of random art supplies (construction paper, scissors, crayons, pipe cleaners, tissue paper, glue/glue sticks, paper plates, etc.)*

### 1. Tug-of-War (7-10 min)

- a. Divide the group into two teams.
- b. In a large space (outside on a lawn, in a gym or assembly room), lay out the tug-of-war rope and place the pool noodle on the ground in the center of the area.
- c. Place the groups on opposite sides, give them a minute to strategize, and have them play tug-of-war with the goal of dragging the other team across the pool noodle.
- d. Discuss:
  - i. What strategies did your team use?
  - ii. How did leadership play out on your team?
  - iii. Were the leaders more toward the front of the line or the back? Why is this a part of strategy?
  - iv. What role did communication between the two teams have in these rounds?



- v. What role did compromise and negotiation have between the two teams in these rounds?
- e. Now, set up the game again, tying the flag on the rope directly above the pool noodle.
- f. This time, tell the two teams that their goal is to maintain a taut rope with equal balance and tension across from each other, with the flag perfectly aligned above the noodle, and hold that balance for 30 seconds once it is achieved. Time them and give them a countdown.
- g. Discuss:
  - i. What strategy did your group use toward achieving success?
  - ii. How did leadership play out in your groups? Did it change from the last rounds? Why or why not?
  - iii. Were the leaders more toward the front of the line or the back? Why is this a part of strategy?
  - iv. What role did communication between the two teams have in this round?
  - v. What role did compromise and negotiation have between the two teams in this round?
  - vi. How is achieving balance more difficult or easier than the goal of one team beating the other?
  - vii. Which feels better: a team-win or a whole group-win?
  - viii. How did your group work to achieve *shalom bayit* in this activity?

## 2. Quote Me on That (5-7 min)

- a. For every 3-5 people in your group, hang one of these quotes on 11x17 posters (i.e., for a group of 10, place 2-3 posters; for a group of 20, place 4-5; etc.). Use various perspectives in the ones you chose.
  - i. "Compromise is what binds people together. Compromise is sharing and conciliatory, it is loving and kind and unselfish." — Ali Harris, *The First Last Kiss*
  - ii. "Compromise, if not the spice of life, is its solidity. It is what makes nations great and marriages happy." — Phyllis McGinley
  - iii. "Hillel used to say: Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and drawing them close to the Torah." — Ethics of the Fathers (1:12).
  - iv. "Sometimes in life, you do things you don't want to. Sometimes you sacrifice, sometimes you compromise. Sometimes you let go and sometimes you fight. It's all about deciding what's worth losing and what's worth keeping." — Lindy Zart, *Complete*
  - v. "Instead of either/or, I discovered a whole world of and." — Gloria Steinem, *My Life on the Road*



- vi. “You gave me two alternatives that you could live with, and I chose the one that I could live with. That’s how compromise is supposed to work.”  
– Stephenie Meyer, *Eclipse*
  - vii. “Exposure promotes understanding, understanding promotes empathy, and empathy promotes compromise.” – F. Allen Davis, *Continuous Improvement By Improving Continuously (CIBIC): Addressing the Human Factors During the Pursuit of Process Excellence*
  - viii. “It is always in your hands that the mutual relationship depends on your behavior. How to respect, tolerate, talk, and compromise with others.” – *Ehsan Sehgal*
  - ix. “Any court that continuously negotiates a compromise is praiseworthy... Which judgment involves peace? A compromise.” –Maimonides, Mishneh Torah Laws of Sanhedrin 22:4
  - x. “Any relationship (friend, romantic or business) that’s one sided isn’t one; it’s a one-way street headed in one direction... nowhere. Cultivation requires input from willing participants.” – T.F. Hodge, *From Within I Rise: Spiritual Triumph Over Death and Conscious Encounters with "The Divine Presence"*
- b. Give participants 2-3 min to walk around and read all the quotes.
  - c. Instruct the participants to stand under the quote that resonates with them the most.
  - d. Discuss: Ask a few participants to share why they chose the quote they did and what it means to them.
  - e. Explain that those standing under the same quote will be a group for the next part of the program. (If there is someone under a quote alone, ask them to choose a new group based on the quote they like the best among those that have groups under them).

### **3. Differences, Diversity and Developing Together (25-35 min)**

- a. Have each workgroup find a space to sit and work.
- b. Give each group a few sheets of chart paper and markers.
- c. Instruct them to hold one sheet of paper horizontally and make a column for each person in the group (they might need two sheets if they are a large group).
- d. For each person in the group, ask them to write down at least 5 unique strengths, traits, perspectives, or experiences this person may bring to the group. There should be no duplicates on the paper, and if someone else has the same item, it doesn’t get written on either list. (5-7 min)
- e. Ask each group to develop a ritual (consider including actions, blessings, readings, foods, clothing, symbols, etc.) that celebrates the differences of those in their group. (7-12 min)



- f. Bring everyone back together and have the groups enact their rituals. (9-12 min; depending on size the number of sub-groups, some may not get to go.)
- g. Discuss:
  - i. What challenges/struggles arose when your group was working together? How did you feel in those moments of strife?
  - ii. What compromises did you have to make in your groups in order to achieve group unity and group decision-making?
  - iii. Was *shalom bayit* achieved? Explain.
  - iv. How did your differences help your ability to come to a group decision? Hinder your ability to come to a group decision?
  - v. What does it feel like to be celebrated and to celebrate others based on differences?

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

- In what ways is it difficult to make group decisions when people come from diverse experiences, passions, knowledge, etc.?
- If people in your home/community/society are only pulling against you and not working with you, will you ever achieve as sense of *shalom bayit*? Why or why not?
- If in a certain situation you had to sacrifice a core value in order to achieve to *shalom bayit*, is it truly then a place of peace for all involved? Why or why not?
- What aren't you willing to compromise on for the sake of *shalom bayit*?
- Was there a time today that you felt unheard? Unrepresented? In what way? Did you voice that openly? If so, did it result in a lack of *shalom bayit* or did you/your group eventually get there?
- One of the quotes we saw earlier was: "It is always in your hands that the mutual relationship depends on your behavior. How to respect, tolerate, talk, and compromise with others." – Ehsan Sehgal. In what ways did you experience this today? How did it feel to engage in this work today?
- One of the quotes we saw earlier was: "We worked to find not a middle-ground, but a new ground that would support us both." – Jewelle Gomez. In what ways did you experience this today through our activities? How did it feel to create new ground?

## Additional Processing: Grade 11-Adult

- Consider the diversity that exists in a work team/sports team/youth group, etc. that you are a part of. How does that diversity challenge *shalom bayit*? How does it enhance *shalom bayit*?



- In your house, what rules or guidelines exist as a way to have *shalom bayit*? Who decides those rules? How are they reinforced?
- Describe a time when your home/work group/team/project group/community was in total chaos. Was a state of *shalom bayit* ever achieved afterward? If so, how? If not, what was holding it back from reaching that point?

## 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 primarily by European (Ashkenazi) Jewish leaders, but now, Ashkenazim represent fewer than 50% of Israeli Jews, with over 50% being of Mizrahi origin. 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?