

NON-CLASSROOM ENRICHMENT

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Reality Television

Beginning with the 2000 American television debuts of **Survivor** and **Big Brother**, a new genre of television show was launched that placed “regular” people at the center of unscripted action, drama and competition. The Reality TV show was born. While the reality television genre has since expanded beyond its game show based competition roots to include “real-life” looks at different segments of the American population, we feel that while it may not be the most artistic form of television, it is a great model to be used as a basis for experiential education and for teaching about Israel.

Aside from the fact that the genre has become hugely popular in Israel – in 2008, one Tel Aviv school canceled a field trip so students could stay home to watch the finale of Israel’s version of **Big Brother**, and in 2011 the Israeli version of **Master Chef** was the country’s highest rated television program – it is a great way to engage learners and participants in a wide variety of challenges with both educational and social components, which are the cornerstone of any experiential learning project.

Competition-based reality television shows like, [Survivor](#), [The Amazing Race](#), and [Chopped](#) lend themselves best to experiential education, but we also have been successful implementing learning projects from non-competition based shows such as [30 Days](#) and [Restaurant Impossible](#); so feel free to try out any reality-based model for your program.

Reality television-based learning should be fun, challenging and provide opportunities for constructivist education and competition based learning. Just like many reality television shows and like all successful experiential learning, reality television-based learning should also include some element of reflection of what the individual or group has learned by participating. Depending on which show you base your program on, this type of program may require multiple staff/educators to supervise various stations and activities. Finally, today’s technology, including the quality of video equipment that is equipped on most smart phones, makes it even possible to record your program and create an actual communal or organizational reality television show.

How does one facilitate a reality television-based program?

1. Decide which show you are going to choose as the model for your program.
2. Once you have chosen the show which you will base your educational program on, devise a series of challenges that are similar to ones found on the show. In the examples above:
 - A **Survivor** modeled program will feature team building challenges that require teams to work together to achieve a common goal
 - An **Amazing Race** modeled program will feature activities similar to those found on a scavenger hunt
 - A **Chopped** modeled program may feature food based challenges, or require teams to work with a set of randomly collected objects to create something unique – or include both elements (ex: participants need to create a model of the Second Temple using candy – then get to act as the Romans and eat the Temple)
3. Make sure that you have sufficient materials, judges or team leaders if necessary, and appropriate space
4. Whatever format you choose, make it fun, interactive, and challenging and your participants are sure to have a memorable experience.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

CASE LEARNING ACTIVITY

SURVIVOR

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In this program, individuals will participate in a series of challenges based on the reality show **Survivor**. Participants will be divided into “tribes” of 5-10 team members. Each tribe will be asked to compete in five Israel-related educational challenges for which the teams will receive points for successful completion.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDING

A strong connection with Israel is a cornerstone of Jewish identity and experience.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the geography of Israel?
- Why was it important that Hebrew was chosen to be the language of the Zionists before the creation of the state?
- Why does Israel need to invest so many resources into water management?
- Who were some of the leaders of Israel and what did they accomplish?
- What is the significance of the Kotel?

OBJECTIVES:

Participants will:

- Compete in a series of five challenges related to different aspects of Israel
- Draw locations on a map of Israel
- Build their own Kotel and model water carrier
- Reflect on their experience

TIME RECOMMENDED:

60-90 Minutes

GRADE LEVEL:

All

ASSESSMENT:

In this project, each challenge is in effect its own assessment. Another variation, would be to include as part of a final tribal council program, having participants writing or sharing 3 things that they learned about Israel by participating in the program.

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CASE LEARNING ACTIVITY
SURVIVOR

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

Activity One:

1. Divide participants into tribes (teams) of 5-10 members. This activity is designed for 5 teams to compete – if you have more teams, feel free to add more activities. The program can also be done with as few as 2 teams.
2. There are three ways that we suggest running the challenge part of the program (feel free to adapt as necessary):
 - a. After dividing the participants, give each time a rotation schedule allocation about 15-20 minutes for each activity.
 - b. Give each tribe a list of the 5 stations and they will choose in what order to try and complete them. If doing the program this way, assign different point values to each activity with a set period of time to try and complete all of them. You can have multiple sets of the activities in case more than 1 group goes to that station or have teams make another choice if the station is already occupied by another team.
 - c. If working with 3 or fewer teams, have the competitions take place simultaneously with teams competing to try and finish first in order to win points in a head-to-head competition.
3. Whichever way you decide to run the program, here are the five challenges:

a. The Land of Israel

In this activity, tribe member will need to locate 12 places on a map of Israel using only the clues provided. The answers for each clue, which should not be given to the participants, are written in parentheses. Each tribe should be given a map to work with – for a more advanced challenge, give them a blank outline map and see if they can also place each location in the proper place.

The tribe needs to locate each of these places on a map of Israel:

- i. The capital of Israel (Jerusalem)
- ii. Israel's busiest port (Haifa)
- iii. Israel's southernmost port (Eilat)
- iv. Herod's Summer Fortress in the Desert (Masada)
- v. Location of the American Embassy in Israel (Tel Aviv)
- vi. The first Kibbutz (Degania)
- vii. Center of Kabbalah (Tsfat)
- viii. Israel's highest peak (Harmon)
- ix. City named for the founder of modern Zionism (Herzliya)
- x. Place where Israel's first Prime Minister retired (Sde Boker)
- xi. The lowest point on Earth (The Dead Sea)
- xii. The place where the city's walls fell as Joshua's army marched around blowing trumpets (Jericho)

b. Hebrew Language

Hebrew is not only the language of the Torah, Jewish prayer, text and tradition it is also the modern language of Israel. Supplies needed for this activity: Poster board, magic markers and pencils.

In the 1940's the Jewish community in Palestine was made up of immigrants from many different parts of the world. An important development in both state-building and unifying the community was in the promotion of Hebrew literacy.

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SURVIVOR

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

b. Hebrew Language (continued)

[Using the Hebrew language poster information sheet](#) as well as higher resolution images of the actual posters on the information sheet: [poster #1](#) and [poster #2](#) , tribes will compare the posters created to promote the learning of Hebrew language in the 1940's.

After comparing the two posters and reviewing the information sheet, participants should discuss: Why was it important that Hebrew was chosen to be the language of the Zionists before the creation of the state? You may want to have them write down their answers or have each tribe send a text message of their answer to the facilitator for discussion at the concluding Tribal Council reflection session.

After they have looked at the posters and discussed the importance of Hebrew language, each tribe should create their own poster to encourage members of the community to learn Hebrew – the poster should include the reasons why it's important – either with words, images or both.

c. Great Leaders of Israel

In this challenge, participants will identify some the great leaders of Israel by constructing puzzles of them and matching the correct puzzle with the correct brief biographical blurb. In preparation for this activity, cut each of the [photographs found here](#) into pieces to make them into puzzles. Feel free to also use your own images if you prefer. After you have made them into puzzles, place all of the pieces into an envelope. You can either put each individual puzzle into its own envelope – or for a harder challenge, put all the puzzle pieces into one envelope.

Each tribe works together to assemble the 10 puzzles – you could also have them choose to do five of the puzzles. Once they have successfully put their puzzles together, they should identify the individual and then match the [bio from this sheet](#) to the correct person. *Note: Cut the bio sheet into strips in advance of the program.*

As an added step, you can ask each tribe to pick the individual they feel made the most contribution to Israel and present /defend their answer as part of the Tribal Council concluding activity.

d. Water

Water is a scarce and important resource in Israel. In this activity, tribes will look at a map (there are many available online) of Israel's National Water Carrier and [facts](#) related to water in Israel. After they have reviewed the information, the tribe should do the following:

- a. Where does the National Water Carrier start? Locate the place where it begins and circle it on the map.
- b. Discuss: Why does Israel need to invest so many resources into water management?
- c. Using the materials provided, create a workable water carrier. (This can be done by the tribe making a line and creating a waterway of aluminum foil, or by layering the Styrofoam cups and connecting them with straws – there is no right answer, tribes just need to be creative in creating a solution.)

Supplies – Styrofoam cups, straws, sand, plastic wrap, aluminum foil, water jugs, 3-5 plastic shoeboxes

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ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

e. The Kotel

In this activity, participants will learn about the importance of the Kotel (Western Wall) as an important Jewish symbol and link to ancient Israel.

Fill out the [grid](#) with the answers to these questions about the Kotel:

- i. Where is the Kotel?
- ii. What is the Kotel, and which time period does it come from?
- iii. Why do Jews consider the Kotel to be so holy?
- iv. What are some traditions Jews engage in at the Kotel?

After they have completed the grid, the tribe will build a model Kotel. To add a little challenge, they will need to build it in silence. The tribe will have 1 minute to plan how they are going to complete the activity, after which the building must be done in silence. During the 1-minute planning period, there can be no touching the materials. Using the paper bags and newspapers, the tribe will construct a model of the Kotel. The model Kotel will need to be at least 4 feet tall and be able to stand on its own.

Once they have successfully built their Kotel, the tribe should compose three prayers and place them in the cracks.

Supplies – brown lunch bags, newspaper or other stuffing, paper and pens for notes.

Activity Two:

Upon the completion of the five challenges, all participating tribes should gather for a reflective session called the Tribal Council. On the **Survivor** television show, it is at the Tribal Council where participants reflect on their experiences as well as vote other members off of the show. In this program, we will not be voting anyone off, but rather will use the Tribal Council as an opportunity for reflection. Questions to consider for discussion:

- What was something new you learned about Israel today?
- What was your favorite activity/least favorite?
- What was the hardest activity/easiest?
- Is there a topic about Israel that you would like to learn more about?