



THROUGH ISRAELI EYES:

Session to prepare fellows for Israeli National Days 2024

Goals for this session:

- Fellows will feel a deeper understanding of the Israeli experience during the National Days.
- Fellows will explore their feelings and their individual place within the Israeli National Days.
- Fellows will reflect on how October 7 will impact this year's National Days.

This year presents an exceptional chance to deeply engage fellows in Israeli society without the need to venture far. Our goal is to connect the fellows to Israeli society through the frame of the National Days, and **through the Israelis they know best: their organizers, madrichim, and coordinators.**

What this session is **NOT**:

- Creating a pain/loss hierarchy when comparing this year's National Days to previous years.
- "Gatekeeping" connection to the National Days (Not allowing non-Israelis to feel connected to National Days).
- Competition of connection and closeness to tragedy, invalidating fellows' feelings and process.

It is best to do this session in the smallest group possible. For example, each city group should hear from their city Madrich/coordinator instead of the whole program hearing from the director/someone they don't know as well.

Part 1: Storytelling (20 mins)

This session provides an opportunity for the madrich/coordinator of the group to share their own story, and how they see the National Days. Through someone familiar sharing their story, the fellows can better understand the Israeli experience and how they might fit in.

- Organizers should think through the following prompts to decide how they want to tell their story, and which aspects they want to focus on.
- Fellows should write down things that surprised them, made them uncomfortable, and any questions they have.



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Organizer/madrich/coordinator shares their story, focusing on the following prompts/questions (no need to go into detail on everything, focus on the main points in bold)

- **What are the national days? Why are they a big deal?**
Specifically, why they happen after Pesach, in the order they do, etc.
- **About their experience growing up, commemorating/celebrating the national days**
 - Yom HaShoah (family connection, stories they heard, what they did to remember)
 - Yom HaZikaron (family connections, when they did army, what they did growing up, as an adult)
 - Yom HaAtzmaut (shift from Yom HaZikaron to Yom Haatzmaut, what they did growing up, what they did as adults, if they felt/feel "patriotic" and/or Zionist)
- **About their feelings on October 7 and following**
- **How (if) they are approaching this year's national days differently**

Fellows can ask questions they have at the end, but save the surprises/uncomfortable reactions for the breakout groups.

Part 2: Breakout groups (20 mins)

Fellows break into smaller groups to discuss the following questions:

- What things surprised you? What things made you uncomfortable?
- What were your preconceptions of your madrich's experience & perspective?
- Were they true or not? What was different?
- Can you find similarities between how you feel and how your madrich feels/what they've experienced?

Part 3: Closing (20 mins)

Come back together to a larger group

As a large group, discuss the following questions:

- How did this change your perspective? For fellows and for madrichim
- How are you now coming into the national days? What are you expecting from this year's national days?
- Do you have a role as the younger generation in sharing these stories and connecting to Israel? Do you have a responsibility? Why or why not?



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