

THE KEHILLAH SUMMER EXPERIENCE – SAMPLE ITINERARY

The itinerary and program description for the Kehillah Israel Experience are subject to change at the discretion of the Nesiya Institute staff. Many program options, recreational activities, and free times are not listed, and will depend upon the energy and interests of the participants.

Though each group will participate in most of the activities listed, room and board arrangements and the order of activities will vary from group to group based on the ability of venues to accommodate a number of groups at the same time. **Before the start of the program, a calendar will be sent with exact dates and base locations for each group.**

Sunday, Day 1: Departure

North Americans meet Nesiya staff at one of the New York City airports for departure from the United States to Israel.

The Negev Unit:

“Creatures, Craters, and Creators”

Monday, Day 2: Arrival, Meeting and Traveling South

- Morning** Arrival at Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv Israel.
Meet Israeli participants and Nesiya staff. Load bus and travel south to Har Ha'Negev Field School in the Negev Desert.
- Afternoon** Arrival at Har Ha'Negev Field School, overlooking Ramon Crater, the world's largest natural crater, also known as the “Grand Canyon of Israel”.
Room lottery and settling in at Har Ha'Negev. Greetings and Welcome.
- Evening** Orientation to the Nesiya journey: Getting to know each other, "our culture," rules, and structure.
Intro activity to Negev

Tuesday, Day 3: Reaching for the Beyond

- Morning** *Lech Lecha* – Arts and text workshops exploring Abraham's journey to the Negev.
- Afternoon** To the desert: drive down into the Ramon Crater. Beginning of the “Noded” experience, a “wandering camp in the desert” led by an expert nature guide and the staff. The Noded includes: hiking, cooking and camping out, familiarization with the natural environment, journal writing and creative activities.
- Evening** Dinner and bonfire. Sleep-out on the crater floor.

Wednesday, Day 4: The Desert as "Hefker"

- Morning & Afternoon** Sunrise hike followed by a full day of outdoor activities and a drama/text workshop in the Ramon Crater.
- Evening** Dinner and sleep out at Be'erot Campground in Ramon Crater.

Thursday, Day 5: Becoming Like the Desert

- Morning** Conclude Noded wandering camp, including sunrise hike. Explore the theme of "Manna in the Desert", returning to the Har Hanegev Field School before lunch
- Afternoon** Lunch, showers, and rest.
Visit and exploration in the development town Mitzpe Ramon, examining the role of its immigrant communities in the history and current fabric of Israeli society.
- Evening** Free time and early lights out

Friday, Day 6: Sharing Shabbat

- Morning** Shabbat workshop - exploring meanings of Shabbat and different ways of celebrating it.
- Afternoon** Staff and participants prepare for Shabbat together. Personal preparations for Shabbat.
- Evening** Pre-Shabbat activity and candle lighting to welcome Shabbat together.
Participants choose prayer options or alternative activities. Shabbat dinner and optional singing.

Saturday Day 7: Shabbat in the Desert

- Morning** Shabbat morning options, including synagogues in Mitzpe Ramon. Group Kiddush and activity at base.
- Afternoon** Activity: "*My Relationship to Text*" – an exploration of the diverse approaches to Biblical text that exist in Judaism and within our group.
- Evening** Havdalah (conclusion of Shabbat and welcoming the new week).
Evening activity: "Café Bereshit," a student-led fun activity

Sunday, Day 8: Arts Workshops – Journeys in the Desert

- Morning** Program Committees: Introduction to program themes and preparation time for upcoming participant-led programs.
- Afternoon** Choice of arts workshops exploring the theme of Journeys and Place. Possible options include: creative writing, visual arts, drama, digital arts, music, or movement.
- Evening** Creative session about the nine days leading up to the Tisha B'Av fast, which commemorates the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (this activity varies based on the date of Tisha B'Av each year.)
Personal stories of arts educators, introducing themselves and their work

Monday, Day 9: A Desert 'Happening'

- Morning** Continuation of arts workshops.
- Afternoon** Workshop presentations to the whole group.
- Evening** Group meeting, and preparations to travel North.

Tuesday, Day 10: To Conquer or Be Conquered

- Morning** Responses to the Desert: Judaism and Zionism
Visit to the grave of David Ben-Gurion in Sde Boker, and creative activity exploring Ben-Gurion's vision for the desert. Closing activity to the Negev unit.
- Afternoon** Travel North. Reading of the play "*Leil Ha'esrim – Night of the Twentieth*," about a group of young people in the third Aliyah who are about to settle in the Galilee, and their attempt to build a new kind of Jewish community.
- Evening** Activity: *My Community* – exploring participants' visions for their ideal communities.
Settle into new base in the Galilee, in the North of Israel.

The Galil Unit:

“Searching for a Shared Purpose in History”

Wednesday, Day 11: In the Footsteps of the Rabbis

- Morning & Afternoon** Introduction to the Galil Unit: setting up a model to explore Jewish community throughout history.
Visit and tour of Tzippori, archeological site of Rabbinic and Roman communities, including an amphitheater, a Roman villa and synagogue ruins with depictions of the zodiac signs. Introduction to the Rabbis of the Mishna and the Talmud.
- Evening** Activity exploring the diversity of Jewish life and Jewish denominational movements in North America.

Thursday, Day 12: In the Footsteps of Pioneers

- Morning** Visit to Chavat Kinneret, one of the first kibbutzim in Israel, and site of the cemetery where early pioneers and Zionist visionaries, including Rachel, the well-known Zionist poetess, are buried. Participant-led activity on the pioneers.
- Afternoon** Visit to an active Kibbutz, where the group will meet with current residents and hear about the changing role of the Kibbutz in Israeli society today.
- Evening** Shabbat committees. Committee options may include: prayer and prayer alternatives, decorations, candle lighting and pre-Shabbat activity, Parshat Hashavua (Torah portion of the week), Havdalah, meals, songs and stories.
Drive to Tsfat and settle into new base.

Friday, Day 13: Here on the Face of the Earth

- Morning** Guided tour of historical Tsfat, learning about the mystical community of the 16th century, and visits to ancient synagogues. Visit with Kabbalist artist Avraham Loewenthal in his studio.
- Afternoon** Supervised shopping time and "Buy-Your-Own-Lunch" in the Artist Colony of Tsfat.
Personal and group preparations for Shabbat.
- Evening** Pre-Kabbalat Shabbat and candle lighting. Prayer options and other alternatives in the Old City. Shabbat dinner and optional singing.

Saturday, Day 14: Creativity and Spirituality in Community

Morning	Shabbat morning options and Kiddush. Creative study of the story of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who escaped the Roman persecution by living in a cave for twelve years.
Afternoon	Shabbat lunch and rest time. Introduction to Kabbalah – Jewish Mysticism. Discussion of key historical and contemporary figures in the Kabbalah movement. Study of Kabbalah movement and the ways it dealt with destruction.
Evening	Havdalah. Fun participant-led activity

Community Service Unit

“Giving and Receiving”

Sunday, Day 15 – Wednesday, Day 18: Community Service in the Galilee

The groups travel to four-day community service projects in the north of Israel, where they will work on an environmental art project with children at a special facility for children from troubled families. During these four days, each group will work in the mornings and enjoy a number of recreational and educational activities. The project will end with a community celebration.

Sunday, Day 15: Realities of Israeli Society

Morning & Afternoon	Travel to area of community service sites. Preparations for community service project. Getting to know the site, the staff, and the children. Settle into Yemin Orde, a boarding school for new immigrant teens, primarily from Ethiopia and the Former Soviet Union.
Evening	Drama workshop based on “ <i>Leil HaEsrin – The Night of the Twentieth</i> ” – Exploring the conflicts rising within a group of young pioneers, and the connections between their experience and our experiences today.

Monday, Day 16: Community Service Project (Erev Tisha B'Av)

Morning & Afternoon	Continue work on community service project. Preparations for Tisha B'Av, and pre-fast meal (date varies each year based on when Tisha B'Av falls).
Evening	Erev Tisha B'Av program including reading of Megillat Eicha (Lamentations) and optional evening prayer and study.

Tuesday, Day 17: Community Service Project (Tisha B'Av)

Morning & Afternoon	Optional reading of Megillat Eicha. Creative study on responses to destruction. Continued work on community service project. Optional lunch and rest time.
Evening	Break-fast meal

Wednesday, Day 18: Conclusion to Community Service Project

- Morning** Complete work on community service project, closing ceremony and goodbyes.
- Afternoon** Drive east to Kinneret Sea (Sea of Galilee). Swim and barbeque on the shores of the Kinneret at Hof Gofra, a retreat site.
- Evening** Sleep out on the shores of the Kinneret.

Thursday, Day 19: New Frontiers

- Morning & Afternoon** Breakfast on the shores of the Kinneret.
Visit Gamla, a beautiful region featuring a 1st-century ruin known as the "Masada of the North."
- Evening** Settle into Tel Hai Youth Hostel, in the Northern Galilee. "Café Dilemma", exploring the cultural and social issues facing modern Israeli society.

Friday, Day 20: Borders and Sovereignty

- Morning & Afternoon** Visit to Har Ben Tal; lookout over the borders of Israel with Syria and Lebanon.
Swimming in waterfalls and natural pools of the northern Galilee, and an introduction to the history and politics of the region.
Shabbat committees, and personal preparations for Shabbat
- Evening** Pre-Kabbalat Shabbat and candle lighting. Prayer options and alternatives. Shabbat dinner and optional singing.

Saturday, Day 21: Constructing Covenants

- Morning** Shabbat morning options and Kiddush.
Creative Study: "The Two and a Half Tribes" – Exploring our connections with other Jews and Jewish communities
- Afternoon** Lunch and rest time.
- Evening** Havdalah

Sunday, Day 22: Arts Workshops: The Individual and the Community

- Morning & Afternoon** Choice of a range of two-day arts workshops exploring the theme of "Individual and Community". Possible options include: creative writing, visual arts, digital arts, drama, music, and movement, as well as a hiking and sleep-out option in the Golan.
- Evening** Creative evening activity together with artists.

Monday, Day 23: Arts Workshops continued

- Morning & Afternoon** Continuation of arts workshops.
- Evening** Presentations by each art workshop.

Jerusalem–Tel Aviv Unit

“Taking Place: The Struggle for Renewal in Judaism and Israel Today”

Tuesday, Day 24: Entering Jerusalem

- Morning** Drive to Jerusalem and opening activity to Jerusalem unit at Hass Promenade overlooking the Old City.
- Afternoon** Settle into new base in Jerusalem.
- Evening** Evening out on Emek Refaim, an area known for its coffee shops, boutiques, shopping opportunities and kosher restaurants.

Wednesday, Day 25: The Search for Sacred Space

- Morning & Afternoon** Visiting the old city and the Kotel: workshop and guided tour on "Holy Place." What is "holy?" How is this place holy to all religions? What makes it holy? How is it different for someone who lives in Israel compared to someone who lives abroad?

"Buy-Your-Own-Lunch" and shopping time in the Jewish Quarter.
- Evening** Visit to Kotel Tunnels.

Thursday, Day 26: Mapping Out the Israeli-Arab Conflict

- Morning** Seminar exploring the historical background and current conflict between Arabs and Jews in the land of Israel.
- Afternoon** Introduction and orientation to the Bedouin Encounter project which will take place in the following week. Preparation for the home hospitality weekend.
- Evening** Depart for Israeli Home Hospitality Weekend with Israeli participants or to visit family and friends. (Nesiya will make transportation arrangements with families, according to specified program rules and safety procedures.)

Thursday Eve., Day 26 – Sunday Morning, Day 29: Israeli Home Hospitality Weekend

Encountering the Non-Jewish Israeli Citizen:

“Relating to the Other”

Sunday, Day 29: Meeting a Minority

- Morning & Afternoon** Early morning pick-up from host family meeting points around the country.
Drive South.

Introduction to two-day cultural exchange with Bedouin high school students in Rahat, an Israeli Bedouin city near Be'er Sheva. Through arts activities and discussion, the groups will explore diverse influences on their beliefs, life-styles, and expression.
- Evening** Fun activity with the Bedouin youth.

Settle into new base in Arad.

Monday, Day 30: Exploring Cultural Identities

- Morning** Visit to Bedouin homes. Exploration of the differences and similarities between Bedouin and Jewish cultures.
- Exploring texts from Jewish, Islamic and Bedouin sources and using them as inspiration for a joint art project.
- Afternoon** Completion of project, closing circle, and celebration.
- Evening** Closing session on Bedouin unit.

Tuesday, Day 31: Tel Aviv – Building a Hebrew City

- Morning & Afternoon** Drive to Tel Aviv.
- Introduction to Tel Aviv's its history and place in contemporary Israeli society and culture. Exploration of Neve Tzedek, the first Hebrew neighborhood of Tel Aviv.
- Evening** Cultural event in Tel Aviv.

Wednesday, Day 32: Center of Modern Israeli Culture

- Morning** Visit to Independence Hall, where the Israeli Declaration of Independence was signed. Gallery workshop and tour of art galleries.
- Afternoon** Free time to explore and "Buy-Your-Own-Lunch" on Shenkin Street.
- Tour of South Tel Aviv, and discussion of social justice issues with BINA: Center for Jewish Identity and Hebrew Culture
- Evening** Drive to Jerusalem and settle into base.

Thursday, Day 33: Loss, Memory, and Commemoration

- Morning & Afternoon** Visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust museum and memorial. Walking tour of Har Herzl, Israel's national cemetery, and burial place of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
- What are the cultural symbols and stories that shape Israel today?
- Picnic lunch in Jerusalem Forest.
- Evening** Shabbat committees.

Friday, Day 34: Shabbat in Jerusalem

- Morning** Walking tours in small groups through Jerusalem's diverse neighborhoods including opportunities to speak with residents. "Buy Your Own Lunch" in the Machane Yehuda Shuk.
- Afternoon** Shabbat committees and personal preparations for Shabbat.
- Evening** Pre-Kabbalat Shabbat and candle lighting. Prayer options at a wide range of Jerusalem synagogues, including Sephardic, Orthodox, Reform, Carlebach, Conservative, progressive Orthodox and others.
- Dinner and optional singing.

Saturday, Day 35: Conflicting Visions

- Morning** Shabbat morning prayer and activity options. Kiddush and Parshat Hashavua activity. Shabbat lunch.
- Afternoon** Rest time at base.
Creative study and discussion exploring different and conflicting visions toward the land, people, state, religion, and culture of Israel.
- Evening** Havdalah and participant-led activity.

Sunday, Day 36: Perspectives on the Israeli-Arab Conflict

- Morning & Afternoon** Talk and debate with activists and politicians from across the political spectrum on the topic of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Visits to relevant sites in the Jerusalem area.
- Evening** Evening concert with a popular Israeli musician.

Monday, Day 37: Departing Jerusalem

- Morning & Afternoon** Closing activity to the Jerusalem unit, and opening workshop for personal projects.
Travel south.
- Evening** Sleep out at base of Masada

Judean Desert Unit

“Creativity and Beliefs – Personal Projects

From Tuesday through Thursday, participants develop a personal project that explores a question, theme or issue that arose during their experience in Israel. Participants work with their counselors and arts educators in one or more media, including paint, sculpture, drama, creative writing, music, movement, etc.

Tuesday, Day 38: Masada – Memories and Myths

- Morning** Sunrise hike up Masada. Tour of site and participant-led activity. Lunch at base of the mountain. Swim in the Dead Sea.
- Afternoon & Evening** Settle into Ein Gedi Field School overlooking the Dead Sea. Rest time, and beginning of work on personal projects.

Wednesday, Day 39: Reflecting and Relaxing

- Morning & Afternoon** Continue work on projects, in consultation with artists, counselor-educators and peers.
Optional hike in the Ein Gedi nature reserve, with visits to waterfalls.
- Evening** Going home: beginning the process of transitioning into life back at home.

Thursday, Day 40: Bringing it Home

- Morning** Continue work on projects.
- Afternoon & Evening** Presentations of personal projects. Each participant will share his project with the group, and receive feedback, comments and questions.

Friday, Day 41: Shabbat in Ein Gedi

- Morning** Finish presentations
- Afternoon** Shabbat committees and personal time to prepare for Shabbat.
- Evening** Pre-Kabbalat Shabbat and candle lighting. Prayer and alternative options.
Festive Shabbat dinner and singing.

Saturday, Day 42: Looking Ahead

- Morning** Shabbat morning options. Kiddush and Parshat Shavuah activity
- Afternoon** Shabbat lunch and free time.
Creative study: *Jacob's Ladder* – How do we take this journey with us?
- Evening** Havdalah

Sunday, Day 43: Saying Goodbye

- Morning** Completion of program evaluations.
- Afternoon** Pack, and drive to Jerusalem Forest for closing ceremonies.
- Evening** Closing circles and festive final meal.
Say goodbye to Israeli participants and drive to airport for flight to New York.

Monday, Day 44: Going Home

- Morning** Early morning flight to New York
Arrival in JFK Airport at 6:00 a.m.