



**JWB Jewish
Chaplains Council**
Serving Jews Who Serve®
a signature program of  JCC Association
of North America

TAG-tivities
TAG: Daily Living Through a Jewish Lens

TAGtivity:

Fourth of July Quote Gallery

TAG: Issues of Daily Living Through a Jewish Lens is a resource library of interactive and thought-provoking activities originally developed for JCC day and overnight camps and after-school programs. TAG activities—which address all aspects of life from hospitality, kindness, and sportsmanship to body image, diversity, friendship, community, and more—trigger conversation and reflection about Jewish meaning in today’s world. They incorporate drama, discussion, games, art, music, storytelling, and Jewish text study, enabling participants to access the relevancy of Jewish wisdom through various channels.

Initiated in 2004 by the Mandel Center for Jewish Education (MCJE), TAG resources provide flexible, engaging Jewish learning materials that reflect the JCC Movement’s pluralistic and inclusive philosophy. Designed to be used by camp counselors without specialized background or training in Jewish content or educational methods, TAG lets them adapt the materials to meet their needs and incorporate informal learning and Jewish wisdom into their campers’ experiences.

These **Fourth of July TAGtivities** are the newest addition to the TAG library, designed to help JCC campers and staff explore American ideals through a Jewish lens. JCC Association is happy to make them available to all Jewish camps and community organizations looking for meaningful ways to celebrate America’s birthday.

ACTIVITY SUMMARY:

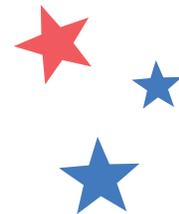
Format: Small or medium group quote activity

Target Audience: Fourth grade and older

Setting: Inside, in a room large enough to hold the group

Activity Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Quotes selected from the list provided at the end of the TAGtivity, enlarged so each quote is on a separate 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper.



OVERVIEW:

The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution are the two primary “foundation documents” of American society. Some scholars even call them “sacred civil scripture” because of their status and influence. But they were written a long time ago, and language has changed since then.

Different schools of interpretation have evolved to determine their meaning (mostly, this applies to the Constitution). Originalists claim the Constitution means only what the original authors intended. Living Constitutionlists claim its meaning evolves along with society.

This activity asks participants to apply their own interpretive lenses to reflect on the meaning of different phrases from these documents.

PREPARATION FOR THE ACTIVITY:

Choose the quotes you plan to use, and post them around the room.
(Feel free to take other famous quotes appropriate for the Fourth of July.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Gather the participants in one spot.
2. Ask the participants if they've ever read the Declaration of Independence, or the U.S. Constitution. *(It's likely they have done so in school.)*
3. Follow up by asking if they know what their role is in American life.
(It's the legal foundation for the governmental structure and the rights of individuals.)
4. Ask if they can name any of the rights expressed in the Constitution *(including the Bill of Rights)*.
5. Explain: Posted around the room are a series of excerpts from the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Please walk around the room and read each quote. When you've read them all, go and stand next to the quote that "speaks to you" the most. It's OK if more than one person chooses the same quote.
6. When everybody has read the quotes and chosen one, ask the groups to share with one another why those chose that quote and what it means to them. *(Alternately, you can do this with the entire group if it's not too large.)*
7. After each group has shared internally, ask a representative from each group to share some of what was said.
8. Ask everybody to sit down. Use the following questions to guide a discussion:
 - a. Were any of these quotes familiar to you? Were any of the quotes unfamiliar?
 - b. Was it easy for you respond to the quotes? Hard? Why?
 - c. Do you think people in the U.S. think about the meaning of these documents much? Why? Why not?
 - d. How do these quotes apply to life in camp?
 - e. Explain: There is a *midrash* (rabbinic explanation) that explains the Torah has 70 "faces" (*Bamidbar Rabbah*, 13:15-16). This is generally understood to mean that every letter, word, and verse, and word of the Torah can be interpreted in many ways – and they all can be correct. Does that "work" with documents like the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution?
 - f. Close by explaining text study is a part of every Jewish holiday celebration. Now it's become part of their July Fourth celebration, too.

QUOTES:

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

1. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."
2. "That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."
3. "...whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it..."
4. "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

U.S. CONSTITUTION

1. "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union..."
2. "...establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity..."
3. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."
4. "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press..."
5. "Congress shall make no law... abridging the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a list of grievances."
6. "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated..."
7. "...no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."
8. "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."
9. "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. "
10. "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States..."
11. "...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."