



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:

Welcoming the Stranger in a Nation of Immigrants



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: Group and/or small group discussion

Target Audience: Fifth grade and older

Setting: Inside or outside

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials:

- Picture of the Statue of Liberty
- Copies of Emma Lazarus' poem, *The New Colossus*
- Guide to the Statue of Liberty
- Butcher paper or chart paper.



OVERVIEW:

Every nation adopts symbols: a flag, a seal, an anthem, a motto. These symbols are chosen intentionally because they represent the values of the nation. Sometimes, however, events occur and objects take on a symbolic function without advance planning. This activity uses the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of American values, and explores the meaning of *The New Colossus*, the poem attached to its pedestal.

INSTRUCTIONS:

PART 1

1. Gather the participants in one spot.
2. Ask: have you ever been in a situation that made you feel like an outsider/stranger or you witnessed someone feeling like an outsider/stranger? Allow participants to share.
3. What would have helped you (or the other person) feel welcomed, and/or feel less like an outsider/stranger? Allow participants to share.
4. Explain: Jewish thought is very attentive to the status of individuals within a group. The Torah commands, over and over again, "...Remember you were strangers in the land of Egypt..." and dedicates an entire holiday, Passover, to remembering that experience.
5. Ask: Why do you think it is so important for Jews to remember their history of being strangers?
6. Explain: We're going to ask that question again, but this time, through the lens of American history, not Jewish history.
7. Show the group the picture of the Statue of Liberty.
8. Ask them what they think of when they see it. List their responses.
9. Now ask what they think someone from outside the US thinks of when they see the Statue of Liberty. List those responses, too.
10. Explain: The Statue of Liberty was a gift from France to the US to celebrate its centennial in 1876 (it actually was finally erected in 1886).
11. Ask if they know what the different elements within in the Statue of Liberty represent. Review, using the Guide to the Statue of Liberty.
12. Explain: In 1883, a literary auction was held to raise money to build the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. The first poem read at the event was *The New Colossus*, submitted by a young Jewish woman named Emma Lazarus (she died four years later). The poem was attached to the base of the pedestal in 1903. Ever since, it has explained the meaning of the Statue of Liberty to the world. We're going to look at that poem and see what we can learn.

PART 2

1. Divide the group into smaller groups (five to eight). Assign a staff person to each group.
2. Pass out copies of the poem.
3. Explain: Each group should read the poem and decide what the one, two, or three "big ideas" in the poem are. That is, what was Emma Lazarus trying to say about the Statue of Liberty and about America in her poem? (Remind them not to get bogged down in the details.)
4. When the groups have completed their reading and study of the poem, reconvene the group.
5. Ask each group to report its "big ideas." List those on the butcher paper/chart paper.
6. What's the connection between the Torah's message (remember being strangers in Egypt) and the Statue of Liberty's message (the items on the list)?
7. In a world (local and global) with legitimate and increased security concerns, how do we balance our right to be safe with our obligation to be welcoming?
8. Close by explaining: The 4th of July is an appropriate time to reflect upon the importance of welcoming strangers as expressed in both American and Jewish texts and traditions.

13 Symbolic Elements in the Statue of Liberty:

The Torch: A light showing the path to liberty

Crown: A symbol of divinity (like a halo)

Robe: A symbol of liberty

Spikes: The seven continents, or the seven seas

Windows: The 25 Gemstones found on earth

Broken Shackles (at her feet): Freedom from oppression

The Tablet: The rule of law

The Shape of the Tablet: A keystone, which is a symbol of cohesion (a keystone keeps the structure together)

Her Long Second Toe: A tribute to Greek heritage

An Active Stride: On the move and leading the way (she is not standing still!)

Pedestal: The power of ancient Europe, over which Liberty now presides

Shields (on the pedestal): Meant to represent the 40 States of the Union

Southeast Orientation: The Statue of Liberty faces out to sea, to welcome visitors

The New Colossus

by Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightening, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”