



*From the Jewish National Fund Eco-Zionism™ Conference,
sponsored by JNF to enlighten students and young people about
the connection between Judaism, Israel and the environment.*

Eco-Zionism™: the connections are natural

ARE YOU AN ECO-ZIONIST?

Guideline: Please take your time in answering these questions. Remember that these are personal answers. Be willing to entertain ideas that may even allow you to surprise yourself.

1. What do I feel is the connection between Israel, Judaism and the Environment?
2. What do I do in my daily routine to incorporate these three ideas?
3. What is one eco-Zionist activity that I care about and I might incorporate into my daily life?
4. How is Shabbat an environmental concept?
5. Which quote do I most closely identify with? Which quote do I least identify with?



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FACILITATORS GUIDE - *from the JNF Eco-Zionism™ Conference*

Defining Eco-Zionism™ & Our Link to Israel

Part 1. Introduction:

We are asking you to lead a small group discussion on the issue of “Defining eco-Zionism.” Below is a guide to running your session. Absolutely feel free to incorporate your personal ideas. However, in order to achieve the full effect of this program, please do your best to complete all sections. You have a total of an hour and a half.

Begin with an introduction (*Please use the paragraph below as a guide*).

What do you call this conference? Are you at a Shabbaton, and eco-trip, an Israel reunion, or is it just a chance to get out of your normal surroundings and meet new people? Or could this weekend be chance to get out into nature and explore your relationship with the natural world? There are many different definitions of the relationship between Judaism, Israel, and the environment. This weekend people have come from all different backgrounds and all different places to explore the side of them that the phrase “Eco-Zionism” connects with. During this weekend you will be given many opportunities to explore the beautiful surroundings, and discover for yourself what and eco-Zionist is, and how you identify with that term. Once you have begun to define what eco-Zionism means to you, you can begin to explore what it means to other people. Sometimes you will agree, other times you will disagree, but understanding yourself means that you should be able to respect other people's ideas and even learn from them. There are no right answers.

This program is the first in a series of programs that will help you to define what eco-Zionism means to you. Please take this opportunity to really consider who you are and who you can be.

Part 2. Solo Nature Experience/Questionnaire

We want the students to begin to appreciate their natural surroundings and start the thought process on defining eco-Zionism for themselves. The camp has a plethora of trees. Hand each student a questionnaire and quote sheet (see attached) and ask him or her to take it and find a quiet spot along side a tree. While there they should reflect on the 7 questions and quotes alone and think about nature and the impact it has on their daily lives. Tell the students to use their 5 senses to become one with nature. Remind them of what the five senses are (smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight). This exercise is most effective when there is complete silence. When students are finished they should make they way back to the group. You should set a time limit of 10 minutes maximum.





Part 3. Group debrief

Once everyone has had a chance to reflect on the questions and quotes, people should return to their small groups. You should then ask each person to pick a partner that seems like he or she would be the most different from him/herself. If people are shy, you should make the pairs. You should then explain to them that each of them will have to introduce their partner, and explain a few of their partner's answers. In addition, they will have to say one thing that surprised them about their partner's answers. The pairs are then asked to go, find a spot, and discuss their answers to the questions and what they experienced by being alone in nature.

Part 4. Group Introductions and Discussion

Now the introductions will be made. You should try to draw out the introducer/ introduce-ee pairs. Here are some suggestions:

- a. Hearing this person's ideas, are there any that seems like ones you might want to try to incorporate into your own belief/ practice?
- b. Did this person have any ideas that were new to you? Or that you hadn't thought about before?

Try and hold off a general discussion during the introductions, until everyone gets a chance to speak.

Once everyone has been introduced, you should then open up the discussion. Here is a guideline of where to lead the conversation:

1. When you were first confronted with these questions, what surprised you most about your own responses?
2. What was it like being introduced by someone else who may not have as full an understanding of your Jewish environmental ideas?
3. Were the introductions accurate? What would you have added to yours?
4. How did you feel being out in nature alone? What was something new that you experienced?
5. Having done this exercise, would you amend any of your answers?

(You may suggest that the partners check in with one another throughout the retreat.)

Part 5. Conclusion

As the facilitator, your job is to help the group come to some conclusion. However, we would like the students to come away with the following idea (in some form). Also, refer to the introduction.



There is no true definition of Eco-Zionism. However, figuring out what it means to us individually and combining that with what other people believe will give each of us a better understanding of the connection between ecology, Judaism and Zionism.



RELEVANT QUOTES *compiled by JNF's Israel Advocacy and Education Department*

And God said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the Earth, and every tree that has seed bearing fruit: they shall be yours for food." *Genesis 1:29*

"God created the desert to give man the opportunity to participate in the creation." *David Ben-Gurion*

Bal Tashchit - Do not waste or destroy any useful object. "When you lay siege to a city for many days to capture it by making war against it you should not destroy its tree, wielding an axe against it; for you shall eat of it but not cut it down. For the tree of the field is the existence of man..." *Deuteronomy 20:19*

She [the Torah] is a tree of life [a living tree - *etz chaim*] to those who grasp her; and happy is every one who holds her fast." *Proverbs 3:18*

Rabbi Yochana ben Zachai said, "if you have a sapling in your hand, and someone should say to you that the Messiah is coming, stay and complete the transplanting, and then go welcome the Messiah."

"If a man kills a tree before it's time, it is as though he had murdered a soul." *Rabbi Nachman of Breslov*

"More than Israel has the Shabbat, the Shabbat has preserved her" *Achad Ha'am*

"The contribution of the tree is not rooted in its magnificent branches, leaves, and fruits, but rather in its roots, which are held in a place where winds and storms do not reach." *Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*

"Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone; may it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grass - among all growing things- and there may I be alone, and enter into prayer, to talk with the One to whom I belong..." *Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav*

Eco-Zionism™ is "... a concern for nature with the love of a particular land, Israel."

Eco-Zionism™ is "... the preservation of the Earth and Judaism; the two are intertwined."

Eco-Zionism™ is "...the opportunity to participate in the creation of a better future for Israel, one based on peace, sustainability and a renewed sense of mission for the Jewish people."

