

CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Parachute Tefillah

Eat Pray Invest

AUTHOR(S):	Sara Beth Berman
SUMMARY:	Do you ever think about where your prayers go after you think/sing/draw/scream/imagine them? Using a preschool classic - a giant parachute - think about the long-range impact of your prayers and where they go when they leave you. - <i>Submitted by Sara Beth Berman</i>
TOPIC(S):	Jewish Text, Prayer - Tefillah, Prayer - Alternative
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<p><u>Understanding</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tefillah can be fun • Learning about Tefillah can happen during fun experiences • My prayers may or may not work, but I can understand more of where they're going <p><u>Knowledge and Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will be able to communicate their feelings about Tefillah with others. • Participants will be able to imagine through a physical activity how their Tefillah may work • Participants will have a methodology for a fun Tefillah experience that brings joy to learners of all ages.
AUDIENCE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 years - 120 years of age • At least 10 people - the more the merrier - up to unit-sized
TIMING:	30 minutes
APPENDICES:	N/A – but you can always grab ad prayerbook/card to reference the Amidah text if you would like
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giant Parachute (alternatively - a large sheet or tarp will work) • Soft Balls of all different sizes and shapes - soft balls only
SET-UP DETAILS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open space, such as a gym, common room, or field • Enough room for participants to sit around the parachute

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SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- Grabber (5 minutes)
 - When participants arrive, meet them at the gym doors, and instruct them to walk and sit around the parachute, but far enough back that they can't touch it.
 - Once they're seated, start:
 - 19 Prayers, Flying through the air:
 - Does anybody know how many prayers are in the Amidah?
 - It's 18 prayers, plus one added on much later. So we could say 19 prayers, but more accurately, it's 18+1
 - In Hebrew, the Amidah is called the "Shmonah Esrei" which means 18!
- 19 prayers (10 minutes)
 - So what do we pray for in the Amidah? (Health, ancestors, strength, Israel, peace, etc.)
 - Why do we do the Amidah?
 - Possible answers:
 - It's a time for personal prayer.
 - It's part of the services.
 - It's part of tradition.
 - I think God is listening to me
 - Who are you praying to in the Amidah?
 - Possible answers:
 - They may be praying for something specific, like a good grade, or something more intense, like for someone who is sick to get well soon)
 - They may be praying to God or they may be thinking quietly to themselves.
 - How do we usually do the Amidah?
 - Standing
 - Discuss choreography - how you stand with your feet, how you dance back and forth, when you bow and bend and when you don't
 - But now, we're sitting and you'll see why:
- Everybody Gets a "Godball" (10 minutes) -
 - You're going to receive a small "Godball", and you must hold that Godball with *kavod* (respect) until you get your next instructions.
 - While I pass out the balls, think about which ball you want to get.
 - Once you have yours, look at it, check out its structure and get to know its skin.
 - Once you've gotten to know your ball, think for about 1 minute about what you're praying for, and who's listening.
 - Pair-Share: Turn to the person next to you, and tell them what you're praying for, if you're comfortable sharing, and who you're praying to.
 - Share yours or your partners' prayer with the group.
 - When you've shared, throw your ball into the center of the parachute
 - Once we're done sharing, throw all balls into the center of the parachute.
- I Throw My Prayers Up In The Air Sometimes (10 Minutes):
 - Review steps for successful parachute operation:
 - First, throw the balls into the center, gently.
 - Second, everyone hold the edge of the parachute.

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- Third, shake the parachute, up and down, up and down.
- Fourth, we're going to count to three. On two, lift your part of the parachute as high as you can, and on three, bring it right down to the floor, yelling out what your Godball's specific prayer/meaning is. (You might need to repeat these instructions)
- Questions:
 - Where did your Godballs go?
 - What did this have to do with your experience of God?
 - What did this have to do with your experience with prayer?
 - How did it make you feel to see all of the prayers rolling around when we shook the parachute?
 - What happened when the Godballs / prayers shot out into the world?
- **Bringing it Back to Camp (10 Minutes):**
- How would you use a program like this at your camp?
- How does this make you think about prayer differently?
- What modifications would you make to a program like this to make it work in your setting?
- How else could you use a preschool parachute in order to teach about something at your camp?

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

This works best in a contained space, like a gym or a hockey rink. It's not as good in a field, especially one that has tall grass or is near water, because you'll lose your supplies!