

CORNERSTONE 2017 RESOURCE

Six Word Memoirs & Prayers, *Eat.Pray.Invest.*

AUTHOR(S):	Caroline Rothstein
SUMMARY:	In "Six-word Memoirs & Prayers," we will turn our stories into personal tefilah by distilling our narratives into their one-line essence. – <i>Caroline Rothstein</i>
TOPIC(S):	Prayer – Alternative, Writing
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	The goal of "Six-word Memoirs & Prayers" is to teach participants how to express themselves in a concise, open, and authentic way through writing and words.
AUDIENCE:	This session works with any and all ages, and groups of any and all sizes.
TIMING:	45 minutes
APPENDICES:	Six-word Memoirs - EXAMPLES
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing utensils • Paper • Poster / Post-It with the <i>Shema</i> written in Hebrew, transliteration, and English
SET-UP DETAILS:	This should take place in a space where participants feel comfortable spreading out to write and also stay engaged in a circle/group.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

- Invite participants to find a seat in the circle and take a writing utensil and paper.
- Welcome participants and share workshop goal and agenda (2 minutes)
 - Workshop goal: to learn how to express ourselves in a concise, open, and authentic way through writing and words.
 - Agenda:
 - Introduction to Six-Word Memoirs
 - Writing activity
 - Debrief
 - Closing

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- Bring up confidentiality / asking questions / if need to leave = ok / available after / “I” statements
- Introduction to Six-Word Memoirs (5 minutes)
 - Introduction to six-word memoirs:
 - Framework of origin and background (per handout) – a movement and form made popular by Larry Smith and Tim Barko after revitalizing the Hemingway six-word story: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”
 - Share handout with examples – read through some.
 - An example of a six-word memoir that is also a prayer in Judaism is the *Shema*.
 - Highlight this on a large Post-It (or poster size piece of paper) with the *Shema* in Hebrew, transliteration, and English.
- Writing Activity (30 minutes)
 - Part 1: (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants to consider the Exodus (from Egypt) story, and write the story of the Exodus in six words.
 - Ask volunteers to share.
 - Part 2: (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants to make a list of 3 Jewish rituals, customs, or holidays/festivals.
 - Ask participants to circle one, and write it a six-word prayer.
 - Ask volunteers to share.
 - Part 3: (15 minutes)
 - Ask participants to make a list of 3 important, formative things that have happened in their lives. (2 minutes)
 - Ask participants to write their life story in a paragraph. (5 minutes)
 - After, ask participants to a) underline one line that surprises them, and b) star their favorite line. (2 minutes)
 - Now, keeping those highlighted pieces in mind, ask participants to now write their life story in six words. (3 minutes)
 - Ask for volunteers to share. (5 minutes)
 - Part 4: (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants to make a list of 3 important goals, hopes, or dreams.
 - Ask participants to now write a prayer for themselves and their lives.
 - Ask for volunteers to share.
- Debrief (5 minutes)
 - Ask participants how they might bring this back to camp.
 - Share/discuss ideas and ways to bring this program back to camp.
- Closing (3 minutes)
 - Thank participants for coming.
 - Ask everyone to share one word of something they’ve learned and/or are taking away from this session.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

- I encourage you to bring your own examples into the session and program beyond what’s provided on the appendix example sheet.
- I encourage you to pick additional prompts – for example, write a six-word version of a certain story in the Torah; write a six-word story about your first week at camp; write a six-word story about camp, etc.