

Tefillah Track: It Doesn't Have to be Perfect, It Just Has to Be Yours *Specialty Track 2*

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SUMMARY:	In this session, we are going to use a few different sources to talk about perfection - why we care about it, and how it gets in our way of being effective educators of our campers and fellow staff. We will sing at the top of our lungs, crack our voices, and dance like nobody's watching, both figuratively and literally.- <i>Submitted by Sara Beth Berman</i>
TOPIC(S):	Prayer - Alternative, Prayer - Tefillah, Jewish Text
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<p>Essential Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Tefillah matter to me? • Why does Tefillah matter at camp? • How can I share my feelings about Tefillah with others at camp? • How letting the idea of perfection go positively impact Tefillah and programming at camp? <p>Knowledge and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will be able to communicate their feelings about Tefillah with others. • Participants will be able to demonstrate moments in camp where experiencing Tefillah is a wonderful way to explore personal and communal meaning. • Participants will have a feeling of freedom in creating interesting and engaging Tefillah programming, with a focus on openness to experimentation and exploration.
AUDIENCE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle School, High School, Staff • Large, medium, or small group
TIMING:	90 Minutes
APPENDICES:	<p>Essential Texts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most frustrating video ever made: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16v2eojZ_18 2. Pirkei Avot (handout) 3. Im Ain Ani Mi, Mi Li? By Beth Schafer (handout) 4. Periodic Table - Making Mensches: https://jewishcamp.org/making-mensches/
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Flip Chart / Flip Chart Markers • AV • Scratch paper for fellows • Markers for fellows, pen/cils • Handouts • Making Mensches Table

SET-UP DETAILS:

- Chairs and tables
- AV

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Opening Activity // Time: 15 minutes

1. We are going to write a few reflections now. You can either write or draw stick figures. You do not need to put too much information, just enough that you will be able to share with others.
2. On a piece of scratch paper, write down or draw...
 1. ...your perfect weekend.
 2. ...your perfect meal at camp.
 3. ...your perfect day off from camp.
 4. ...your perfect prayer experience at camp.
 5. ...your perfect prayer experience at one of your "home" communities.
 6. ...your perfect vacation.
3. Discussion - in a group of three, share your lists/drawings with your peers. Then, as a group, we'll think-pair-share:
 1. What was fun about listing some things that are perfect for you?
 2. What was challenging about listing these perfections?
 3. What was the hardest one to write, and why?

Step-by-Step Session Description // Time: 60 minutes

1. Keva and Kavannah (10 minutes):
 1. Before we move into dealing with our cultural obsession with perfection further, I want to make sure we discuss the component parts of any Tefillah experience, which will help us broaden what we are trying to learn and teach with this track. There are two parts of prayer, the fixed stuff we are supposed to sing, do, and say - Keva - and then there is the intention and meaning behind it all - Kavannah. Break into a group of mixed-camp backgrounds, and divide a sheet of butcher paper in half, writing Keva on one side and Kavannah on the other, and make a list of tefillah stuff that belongs on either side.
 1. Keva - set prayers, order of prayers, location of prayers, siddurim, prayer cards, visual tefillah, machzor Vitry (the first siddur, more or less!), chumash, PowerPoints, etc...
 2. Kavannah - speeches, song choices, what you skip (if you skip), what you add in, poetry, location changes, timing changes, tunes, meditations, stories, etc...
 2. Put it together (like Scattergories - go team by team, and make sure you add in from each group until everything is up on one master piece of paper)

3. Discussion Questions
 1. When you think about Keva and Kavannah, how do those distinctions come out at camp?
 2. How are you someone who cares about Tefillah? Keva? Kavannah? Why and how?
 3. Why do you care about Tefillah at camp?

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4. Which of these presents an opportunity for perfection? How and why?

2. The Most Frustrating Video Ever Made (15 minutes)
 1. We're going to watch the most frustrating video ever made.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16v2eojZ_l8 #sorrynotsorry
 2. Discussion questions:
 1. What was the experience like for you to watch this video?
 2. How was this video frustrating to you?
 3. If you could change one thing about this video to be even more frustrating, what would you do - and why?
 4. Think-pair-share - what does this have to do with tefillah?

3. Ughhhh! That's Perfectttttt! (15 minutes)
 1. Earlier, we thought about what was perfect about prayer at camp. Now, I want you to think of a prayer or two that is beautiful in its imperfection. Think about what was so frustrating about the video we just watched - what is beautiful about imperfection?
 2. Let's look at the periodic table of Jewish values - the Making Mensches chart (<https://jewishcamp.org/making-mensches/>). Take a moment, and write down two things:
 1. First, the value that helps you be more perfect in prayer settings.
 2. Second, the value that helps you remain imperfect in prayer settings.
 1. For example, I relish in seder / order, and struggle with the zerizut / zest that comes from too much singing. Yes, really.
 3. Discuss in a group - what's more perfect for you? What's less perfect?

4. As the Good Book Says (15 minutes) -
 1. It's easy to say that we can learn from life's little imperfections. Let's see what *Pirkei Avot*, the Teachings of our Parents, has to say about perfection. In your same group, read over the text and discuss with the questions on the page with your partners.

Pirkei Avot	
הוא היה אומר, אם אין אני לי, מי לי. וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני. ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי	1:14 He [Rabbi Hillel] used to say: If I am not for me, who will be for me? And when I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, then when?
רבי שמעון אומר, הוי זהיר בקריאת שמע ובתפלה. וכשאתה מתפלל, אל תעש תפלתך קבע, אלא רחמים ותחנונים לפני המקום ברוך הוא, שנאמר (יואל ב) כי חנון ורחום הוא ארך אפים ורב חסד ונחם על הרעה. ואל תהי רשע בפני עצמך:	2:13 Rabbi Shimon says: Be careful in the reciting of Shema (and praying). When you pray, do not make your prayer fixed, rather prayers for mercy and supplication before the Omnipresent, blessed be He, as it says (Joel 2, 13), "For He is gracious and merciful, long-suffering and full of kindness, and repents of the evil." And do not be wicked in your own eyes.
רבי טרפון אומר, היום קצר והמלאכה מרובה, והפועלים עצלים, והשכר הרבה, ובעל הבית דוחק:	2:15 Rabbi Tarfon said: The day is short and the work is much, and the workers are lazy and the reward is great, and the Master of the house is pressing.
הוא היה אומר, לא עליך המלאכה לגמר, ולא אתה בן חורין לבטל ממנה. אם למדת תורה הרבה, נותנים לך שכר	2:16 He used to say: It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to

<p>הַרְבֵּה. וְנֶאֱמַן הוּא בֵּעַל מְלֶאכֶתְךָ שִׁישְׁלֶם לְךָ שְׂכָר פְּעֻלָּתְךָ. וַיְדַע מִתֵּן שְׂכָרְךָ שֶׁל צְדִיקִים לְעֵתִיד לָבֵא:</p>	<p>desist from it. If you have learned much Torah, your reward will be much; and the Master of your work is trustworthy to pay you the wage for your activity. And know the giving of reward to the righteous is in the future to come.</p>
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2. Discussion:
 1. Which text stood out to me the most and why?
 2. What do these texts have to do with the video we watched earlier today?
 3. Which text helps you reframe how you feel about perfection?
 1. ...perfection in prayer?
 2. ...perfection in camp?
 3. ...perfection in life?
 4. If you had to apply one motto to your quest to be outside perfection this summer, which sentence from these texts would you choose?

3. Sing It: Im Ain Ani Mi, Mi Li? By Beth Schafer (10 minutes) - this is a song from one of my camp friends, Jewish Rock Star Beth Schafer. I'm going to teach it the best way I know how, and you're going to join me in belting it out. (I don't have a great voice, but sometimes I try. Just enjoy the ride...)
 1. Teach/sing
 2. Discussion questions:
 1. What was it like to sing this song for you?
 2. How did you enjoy the lesson and the lyrics?
 3. What was different in the singing of the song from your life at home? Your life at camp?
 4. If you can take one message from Pirkei Avot and Beth Schafer's song from this session, what is it and why?

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

(10 Minutes)

- How would you use the resources we used today (or resources like them) with campers? With staff?
- How does zooming in on the frustrating bits of tefillah help you be less comfortable in prayer at camp? More comfortable?
- If you had to choose a song to help people just belt it out - and dance like nobody's watching - what would you use and why/
- Who at your camp would enjoy this sort of analysis and discussion?