

### Tefillah Track: It Doesn't Have to be Perfect, It Just Has to Be Yours It Just Has to Be Yours!

*Specialty Track 3*

<b>AUTHOR(S):</b>	Sara Beth Berman
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	Now that we've learned from each other and let go of impossible standards of perfection, we're going to work on what is going to be yours. Your camp has its own style, its own prayerful moments, its own traditions, songs, and favorite ways to reflect as a community. We're going to work together to create something that will add to your camp's prayerful experiences this summer. - <i>Submitted by Sara Beth Berman</i>
<b>TOPIC(S):</b>	Prayer - Alternative, Prayer - Tefillah, Jewish Text
<b>LEARNING OBJECTIVE:</b>	<p><b>Essential Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does Tefillah matter to me?</li> <li>• Why does Tefillah matter at camp?</li> <li>• How can I share my feelings about Tefillah with others at camp?</li> <li>• How letting the idea of perfection go positively impact Tefillah and programming at camp?</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge and Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants will be able to communicate their feelings about Tefillah with others.</li> <li>• Participants will be able to demonstrate moments in camp where experiencing Tefillah is a wonderful way to explore personal and communal meaning.</li> <li>• Participants will have a feeling of freedom in creating interesting and engaging Tefillah programming, with a focus on openness to experimentation and exploration.</li> </ul>
<b>AUDIENCE:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle School, High School, Staff</li> <li>• Medium, or small group</li> </ul>
<b>TIMING:</b>	90 Minutes
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<p><b>Essential Texts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anthem by Leonard Cohen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCS_MwkWzes">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCS_MwkWzes</a></li> <li>◦ Lyrics from Google</li> </ul> </li> <li>• #PolicyandChange meme</li> </ul>

<b>MATERIALS NEEDED:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Flip Chart / Flip Chart Markers</li> <li>• Leonard Cohen Lyrics Sheet</li> <li>• Paper / Pen/cils</li> </ul>
<b>SET-UP DETAILS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairs and tables</li> <li>• AV</li> </ul>

### SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

#### Opening Activity - How the Light Gets In // Time: 15 minutes

1. Listen to Anthem; hand out lyrics sheet. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCS\\_MwkWzes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCS_MwkWzes)
2. Discussion:
  - a. How does this help move our conversation about releasing ourselves from the pursuit of perfection?
  - b. How could you use something like this at camp?
  - c. Can you come up with an example of a crack that lets light in at camp?
    - i. ....in tefillah at camp?

#### Step-by-Step Session Description // Time: 65 minutes

1. **#policyandchange** (15 minutes) - In the last year plus, there has been a critical uprising of voices on social media about #thoughtsandprayers, with a move toward policy and change. I was particularly inspired by the idea of reframing something that's meant to be positive to be more actionable and positive, and I hope you will be, too.
  1. Write down two words to define your camp's prayer experiences at camp in the middle of a sheet of paper. (examples: holy & fun, engaging & exciting, religious & spiritual)
  2. Write down two words that you feel like will add to the overall experiences of everybody in your camp experiencing Tefillah. (examples: experimental & experiential, kid-led & communal, by unit & pop cultural)
    1. Do you want it to look like this meme?



3. Make your own simple version of this meme - put two words that you think your camp would use to define prayer, and think of two new words that can, in this case, move your camp toward a less perfect - and therefore more perfect - prayer definition.
4. Share!

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### 5. Discuss:

1. In this case, do you want to cross out any of the words, or make them work together? How and why?
2. What was it like to take two positive words and add two more in?
3. Do you think any of your word choices will be challenging for people at your camp to process? Why?

### 2. Programming & Action (50 minutes)

#### 1. Group Action (20 minutes):

1. Think of a song, prayer, or service that is beloved at your camp. Maybe it's "One Day" by Matisyahu, maybe it's Havdallah, or maybe it's Shabbat musaf. Let's write some favorites up on a flip chart.
2. Now, think of a song, prayer, or service that's kind of...not the best...at your camp. Let's write those on a flip chart, too.
3. Action!
  1. Team up with a partner. Each team will get a prayer or song from our group list. Find that prayer / song - I can help - either in one of the siddurim we have here, or on a website like build-a-prayer.org.
  2. You'll each get two slips of paper - one with an age group, and one with group size.
  3. You will have 10 minutes to create a skeleton of a program letting people experience your prayer or song, and then we'll share as a group.
  4. Questions to consider:
    - a. What's innovative about what you're doing?
    - b. What helps people drop the idea of perfection?
    - c. What was the best part of working with a partner on this?
    - d. What was most challenging about trying to develop your program?

2. Solo Action (30 minutes) OK, now that you've developed a bit with your partner, now it's your turn - and therefore, your camp's turn. Find a prayer or song from your own list (it's OK if it didn't make it to the flip chart). Take that prayer and workshop in your small groups how you can help break down the desire for perfection, and focus on the beauty of the good, and the beauty of the frustration. Since this is your camp, you get to make the decisions - age group and group size are up to you. Where is this going to work at your camp this summer - and how? Get to work!

#### 1. Share! Group Feedback!

#### 2. Discussion (10 minutes):

1. What was it like to try to do some work from a different angle on a prayer or song that's beloved, or panned, at your camp?
2. What will be your biggest barrier to making something like this work at your camp?
  - a. How are you going to combat this?
3. What do you think will happen at your camp when you try to pilot this idea that you just created?
4. How can you get your camp community to drop the idea of perfection this summer?
5. What was it like to choose a prayer/song/ritual to dissect in this way?



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### ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP:

#### (15 Minutes)

- What stood out for you when you were taking your focus from perfection?
- How will an activity like this change the way to you discuss / perform these prayers at your camp?
- How will this change the answer to the question: how do we Tefillah at camp?
- How does this improve our Tefillah experience?
- How will my community take it?
- What about the experience in this track most surprised you?