

CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

Playing with Praying, *Start Your Day*

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TOPIC (S)	Prayer-Tefillah
SUMMARY	An exploration of how the words we say can both describe and prescribe the day we want to have. We'll look at selected prayers from the morning service to understand the power of spoken word.
GOALS:	Participants will be able to make personal meaning from the liturgy of the morning service, and will be able to identify ways they can use intention-setting to start the day they want to have.
AUDIENCE:	This conversation can work for any age (scaled appropriately), and ideal size is under 20 to enable group participation in the conversation.
TIMING:	30 minutes (but could be extended to be much longer!)
APPENDICES:	Playing with Praying Handout , Modeh Ani video
MATERIALS NEEDED:	Copies of the handout for all participants, ability to show the Modeh Ani video
SET-UP DETAILS:	This can take place in any space where a group can comfortably sit and be in conversation with one another. Sharing the video is beneficial but not essential.

SESSION TIMELINE

00:00-00:05- Introductions and Opening Prompt
00:05-00:15- Modeh Ani and Starting with Gratitude
00:15-00:25- Text Study and Conversation
00:25-00:30- Setting Intentions to Start Our Day

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00-00:05- Introductions and Opening Prompt

Depending on group size, go around, or answer in the Zoom chat (if virtual):
What are the first words you said out loud today?

00:05-00:15- Modeh Ani and Starting with Gratitude

Show [Modeh Ani video](#) by Meir Ariel (English subtitles available by clicking CC) and follow along with words on handout.

Discuss:

- What am I grateful for?
- What impact does it have on my day to utter words of thanks as the first words of the day?
- What are other “first words” that can have a similar impact on my day?

00:15-00:25- Text Study and Conversation

Choose one other prayer text from the [handout](#) and discuss:

- What are these words saying?
- How are they both descriptive (saying what already is) and prescriptive (declaring what we hope will be)?
- Are there any differences between saying these words alone vs. together with a group? What feels different?
- What kind of day are these words helping me begin?

00:25-00:30- Setting Intentions to Start Our Day

Ask all participants to think about the first few minutes of their daily routine (if no routine, at least think about the last few days or the next few days).

- What is the minute-by-minute breakdown of the first few minutes of being awake?
- What is something intentional you can incorporate into those first few minutes?
- What are the first words you would like to say out loud? Why?

Invite all participants to write down their intention for how they will start their day and place it somewhere they will notice it tomorrow.

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

- This session is flexible and can run as long or as short as the facilitator wants to take it (or as long as the conversation naturally flows). It will feel the most comfortable if participants are in a circle or some other non-formal arrangement.
- It could turn into a daily conversation using a different prayer as a prompt each day.
- It can also be used as a cabin activity to set an intention for how the cabin community as a whole will try to start their day together- the first words they will say to each other in the morning, etc.
- For younger participants, for a shorter session, and/or for a group that does not have a lot of personal experience with the words of the traditional liturgy, picking out specific lines and focusing on just those few words may provide a more accessible entry point into the conversation.