

## Crafternoon: Morning Edition

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**SUMMARY:** In this session we will ease into the day with hands-on craft activities and sharing gratitude.

**GOALS:**

- Reflect on gratitude, blessings, and what makes each of us thrive
- Learn about the Jewish lens we can apply to gratitude and blessings
- Start the day with a fun, hands-on, craft activity

**AUDIENCE:** This activity can be done in small groups of campers or staff of any age.

**TIMING:** 45 minutes

**MATERIALS:**

- Colored printer paper (cut into strips and small circles)
- Colored construction paper (1 sheet per person)
- Pens (1 per person)
- Scissors (for you to prepare the slips of paper ahead of time)
- Glue (several small bottles for participants to share)
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils (whatever you have! For decorations)
- Craft project instructions [here](#)

**SET-UP:** Participants should be seated around a table or in a circle on the ground. As we're dealing with small slips of paper, an indoor (or not windy outdoor) location is recommended.

## SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Introductions
- 00:05 -00:15 – Blessings
- 00:05-00:20 – Writing Activity & Discussion
- 00:20-00:40 – Craft time
- 00:40-00:45 – Closing

## SESSION OUTLINE

### 00:00-00:05 – Introductions

Introduce the session topic and lead the group in a round of introductions (name, pronouns, camp).

### 00:05 -00:15 – Blessings

Share a variety of Jewish texts/examples of blessings with the group on pieces of paper, shared at the end of this document

Explain/For your own context: Judaism is full of blessings. Traditionally, Jews say blessings before we eat (a different blessing for each category of food). We say blessings after we eat. There is a special blessing to say when one smells a flower. There is a blessing for hearing good news, and another for hearing bad news. There is a blessing for wearing new clothes. There is a blessing for lightning, thunder, and rainbows. There is a special blessing for seeing the ocean. There is one for seeing anything especially beautiful (including people). There is also a blessing for when one meets a scholar.

Ask each participant to pick a text that speaks to them – maybe they haven't seen it before and want to learn more, maybe they are very familiar and find it comforting, maybe it's inspiring, etc. Ask a few participants to share what they chose, and why

Explain the following:

- The Talmud (Menachot 43b) states that each person is obligated to recite 100 blessings each day, suggesting that we should live a life immersed in blessings, in gratitude. This is so important to the Jewish tradition that the sages wrote (Brachot 35a) that it is forbidden to benefit from the world without making a blessing. It could be said that the value placed on blessings is central to all of Jewish life.
- And yet, it's easy for the recitation of blessings to become rote. What are you really thinking about when you say *HaMotzi* (the blessing over a meal) at camp each day? How then can we make blessings transformative rather than transactional?
- It turns out that Judaism and positive psychology have something in common. One of the suggestions that come out of positive psychology about how to live a happy life is to write down the things for which you are grateful – your personal blessings. You might be surprised to find out that writing down even five things every day might really make a difference in the way you feel. This works when things are going well in your life. It also helps tremendously when things are not going so well.

### 00:05-00:20 – Writing Activity & Discussion

- Hand out 5 slips of paper (feel free to let them choose their color!) and a pen to each participant
- Ask each participant to think about what they are grateful for today – who are the people, places, experiences, or things that make them feel blessed. Write down one gratitude on each slip of paper.

### 00:20-00:40 – Craft time

Share with participants that it's said that on Shavuot (coming up later this week!), when the Israelites received the torah, the whole dessert bloomed! Out of our gratitudes and blessings, we're now going to create our own moment of blooming by making paper flowers out of all we are grateful for.

- Check out this [link](#) for visual instructions for making paper flowers:

Flower Making Instructions:

1. Take two of the paper strips and glue them together in the middle to make a cross. Glue on two more strips diagonally to make an 8-pointed flower.
2. Now take the end of one of the strips and glue it to the center of the flower. Repeat with the other 7 strips.
3. Glue a cut out paper circle the middle of the paper flower.
4. Glue the flower to a piece of construction paper to make a background for your flower card. You can double mount it if you like or fold it in half to make a greeting card.
5. Decorate the page as you wish! (Participants can collage using the Jewish text slips, add a stem, grass, whatever background feels good!)

### 00:40-00:45 – Closing

- See if a couple of participants would like to share their creations with the group
- Remind the group about the idea of saying 100 blessings a day, and if you have time, end with the game "Things That Are Good"

## BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

This activity can be run at camp with participants of all ages, and for a variety of purposes. It can make for a great "alternative prayer service," a cabin/group activity, an easy arts & crafts session, and more. Feel free to tweak the writing prompt if you'd like to use this modality to spark a different discussion.

### Sun

The “blessing of the sun,” or Birkat Hachamah, is arguably the rarest blessing in all of Judaism, recited only once every 28 years, when — per the Talmud — the sun is at the precise spot in the firmament as it was when it was created. The blessing was last recited in 2009 on the eve of Passover. The blessing is the same as said upon seeing other natural wonders.

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם עושה מעשה בראשית  
Blessed are you, God/the infinite, maker of the works of Creation.  
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, oseh ma'aseh b'reishit.

### A Wise Person

According to the Shulchan Aruch, the code of Jewish law, one should recite a blessing on seeing a wise person.

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו  
Blessed are you, God/the infinite, who has imparted wisdom to those that fear You.  
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she chalak mee chachmato leerayahv.

### Rainbow

Rainbows are deeply symbolic in Judaism. After the flood in Genesis, God says that a rainbow is a reminder of his promise never again to destroy the world with a flood.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם זוכר הברית ונאמן בבריתו וקיים במאמרו  
Blessed are You, God/the infinite, who remembers the covenant, and is faithful to God's promise.  
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, zocher habrit v'ne'eman biv'reetoh v'kayam b'ma'amarav.

### Seeing an Unusual Creature

Jewish law prescribes the recitation of a blessing upon seeing an unusual animal, though there is a wide range of opinions over just what kind of animal qualifies. According to Jewish legal codes, this includes a monkey, and an elephant.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם משנה הבריות  
Blessed are you, God/the infinite, who makes creatures different.  
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, m'shaneh habriyot.

### Thunder

The Mishnah states that one should say a specific prayer to be said over thunder.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם שכחו וגבורתו מלא עולם  
Blessed are you, God/the infinite, whose strength and glory fills the universe.  
Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shekocho ooh g'vuratoh mahlay olam.

### Beauty

The Shulchan Aruch states that one should recite a blessing when seeing a beautiful tree, animal or human.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם שככה לו בעולמו  
Blessed are you, God/the infinite, who has such things in his world.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, she kacha loh b'olamoh.

### Seeing 600,000 People

The source of this blessing comes from the Talmud, which explains that the blessing is meant to acknowledge the diversity of humanity and assert God's all-knowingness of what is contained in their hearts.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם חכם הרזים

Blessed are you, God/the infinite, knower of secrets.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, chacham harazeem.

### Gender Inclusive Shabbat Blessing of Children

It is Jewish custom to bless children each Shabbat and on every festival holiday.

יהי רצון ששבת זו תשרה (שמג זה ישרה) עלינו אורה, שמחה, ושלום.

Y'hi ratzon sheShabbat zo tashreh [shechag zeh yashreh] aleinu orah, simcha, v'shalom.

May this Shabbat [holiday] bring us light, joy, and peace.

Some may add this additional blessing: Be who you are –and may you be blessed in all that you are.

### After going to the bathroom: Asher Yatzar

"It feels weird to say and I do not think many people know it even exists, but it shows us, once again, how Judaism has a focus on slowing down and showing gratitude for something many of us don't even think about," Appel says of the rather esoteric recitation. "The blessing forces us to take a moment and be grateful for a body that works and allows us to accomplish the things we do every day."

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר יצר את  
האדם בחכמה, וברא בו נקבים ונקבים, חלולים  
חלולים, גלוי וידוע לפני כפא כבודך, שאם יסתם אחד  
מהם, או אם יפתח אחד מהם, אי אפשר להתקיים  
אפילו שעה אחת. ברוך אתה יי, רופא כל בשר  
ומפליא לעשות:

Baruch a-tah ah-doe-nai, elohaynu melech ha-olam, ah-share yah-tzar et ha-ah-dam bih-choch-mah, u-varah bo nih-kah-veem nih-kah-veem, chah-loo-leem chah-loo-leem, gah-loy vih-yah-doo-ah lif-nay kee-say kih-voe-deh-chah, she-eem yih-pah-tay-ach eh-chod may-hem, oh yee-sah-tare eh-chod may-hem, ee ef-shahr lih-hit-kah-yem vih-lah-ah-mode lih-fah-neh-chah ah-fee-loo shah-ahh ehh-chot. Baruch a-tah ah-doe-nai, row-fay kole bah-sahr ooh-moff-lee lah-ah-sote.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our G-d, King of the universe, who formed man with wisdom and created within him many openings and many hollow spaces. It is obvious and known before Your Seat of Honor that if even one of them would be opened, or if even one of them would be sealed, it would be impossible to survive and to stand before You even for one hour. Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all flesh and acts wondrously.

**For Hearing Good News**

By reciting this blessing when we hear good news concerning both ourselves and others, we are able to thank G-d for every detail of our lives—from the ordinary to the most extraordinary.

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who is good and does good.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַטּוֹב וְהַמְטִיב:

**Lightening & Shooting Stars**

One recites this blessing upon seeing lightning (the first time during a storm), a shooting star, comet, earthquake, volcano, tornado, hurricane, ocean or mountain (for the first time in 30 days).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עֹשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂה  
בְּרָאשִׁית:

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who re-enacts the work of creation.

**Prayer for waking up in the morning: Modeh Ani**

Modeh ah-nee lifanecha, Ru-ach chai v'kayam, she-hechezarta bee nishma-tee b'chemlah rabbah emunatecha.

I thank You, living and enduring King, for You have graciously returned my soul within me. Great is Your faithfulness.

**Blessing for a first time: Shehecheyanu**

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are you, the Eternal our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this moment.

**Before eating grain products – M'zonot**

Before eating non-bread (e.g. cake) products of wheat, barley, rye, oats, or spelt (and rice, according to many opinions):

ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא מיני מזונות.  
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're minei m'zonot.

Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, Who creates varieties of nourishment.

**Before drinking wine – Ha-Gafen**

This blessing is made for wine made from grapes, but not any other fermented drink. Wine made from other fruits, and other alcohols, require the Shehakol blessing (see below). Also, hands might be ritually washed first depending on the minhag of the person saying the blessing on the grape wine (see above).

ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן.  
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-gafen.

"Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine."

**Before eating fruit – Ha-Etz**

ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ.  
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-etz.

"Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree."

**Before eating non-fruit produce – Ha-Adama**

Before eating produce that grew directly from the earth:

ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי האדמה.  
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, bo're p'ri ha-adama.

"Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the ground."

**Before eating other foods – She-Hakol**

Before eating or drinking any foods not in the first four categories (meat, poultry, eggs, fish, dairy products, candy)

ברוך אתה ה' א-לוהינו מלך העולם, שהכל נהיה בדברו.  
Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha-olam, she-hakol nih'ye bidvaro.

"Blessed are You, LORD, our God, King of the universe, through Whose word everything comes into being."

Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam borei minei mezonot.  
Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates varieties of nourishment.