

Parachute Tefillah

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SUMMARY: Do you ever think about where your prayers go after you think/sing/draw/scream/imagine them? Using a preschool classic – a giant parachute – think about the long-range impact of your prayers and where they go when they leave you.

GOALS:

- We will be able to communicate their feelings about Tefillah with others.
- We will be able to imagine through a physical activity how their Tefillah may work
- We will have a methodology for a fun Tefillah experience that brings joy to learners of all ages.

AUDIENCE: 30 humans (if you need more people, we suggest multiple parachutes)

TIMING: 45 Minutes

MATERIALS: Giant parachute, one nerfy/Gator ball per participant, white copier paper (1 sheet per person), pen/cils.

SET-UP: Outside. If inside, you need a large space like a gym. High ceilings are key for this experience.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:05 – *Welcome, sit around parachute but please don't touch yet*
- 00:05-00:10 – *Grabber*
- 00:10-00:15 – *Digging into the 19 Prayers*
- 00:15-00:30 – *Parachute Rounds & Paired Debrief*
- 00:30-00:40 – *Prayer writing*
- 00:40-00:45 – *Large Group Debrief*

SESSION OUTLINE

- 00:00-00:05 – Welcome, sit around parachute but please don't touch yet
- 00:05-00:10 – Grabber – name/pronouns/camp & what is one request you would like to file with the universe?
- 00:10-00:15 – Digging into the 19 Prayers
 - Does anybody know how many prayers are in the Amidah?
 - It's 18 prayers, plus one added on much later. So, we could say 19 prayers, but more accurately, it's 18+1
 - In Hebrew, the Amidah is called the "Shmonah Esrei" which means 18!
 - So, what do we pray for in the Amidah? (Health, ancestors, strength, Israel/Palestine, peace, etc.)
 - Why do we do the Amidah?
 - Possible answers:
 - It's a time for personal prayer.

- It's part of the services.
 - It's part of tradition.
 - I think God is listening to me
 - Who are you praying to in the Amidah?
 - Possible answers:
 - They may be praying for something specific, like a good grade, or something more intense, like for someone who is sick to get well soon)
 - They may be praying to God or they may be thinking quietly to themselves.
 - How do we usually do the Amidah?
 - Standing
 - Discuss choreography - how your stand with your feet, how you dance back and forth, when you bow and bed and when you don't
 - But now, we're sitting and you'll see why:
- 00:15-00:30 – Parachute Rounds & Paired Debrief
 - You're going to receive a small Godball, and you must hold that Godball with kavod/respect until you get your next instructions.
 - While I pass out the balls, think about which ball you want to get.
 - Once you have yours, look at it, check out its structure and get to know its skin.
 - Once you've gotten to know your ball, think for about 1 minute about what you're praying for, and who's listening.
 - Pair-Share – Turn to the person next to you, and tell them what you're praying for and, if you're comfortable sharing, who you're praying to.
 - Share yours or your partners' prayer (with consent) with the group.
 - When you're done sharing, throw your ball into the center of the parachute
 - Once we're done sharing, throw all balls into the center of the parachute.
 - Successful Parachute Operation:
 - First, throw the balls into the center, gently.
 - Second, everyone holds the edge of the parachute.
 - Third, shake the parachute, up and down, up and down.
 - Fourth, we're going to count to three. On two, lift your part of the parachute as high as you can, and on three, bring it right down to the floor, yelling out what your Godball's specific prayer/meaning is.
 - Debrief Questions:
 - Where did your Godballs go?
 - What did this have to do with your experience of God?
 - What did this have to do with your experience with prayer?
 - How did it make you feel to see all the prayers rolling around when we shook the parachute?
 - What happened when the Godballs / prayers shot out into the world?
- 00:30-00:40 – Prayer writing

CORNERSTONE RESOURCE

- Now that you've assigned prayers to your Godballs, you'll also now get a chance to *write* your own prayers.
- A suggested format for prayer is "Gimme, Thanks, Oops, Wow" - these are the four words you could use to frame your prayer.
- You're going to spend time writing a one-sentence prayer that is personal but that you would be OK with sharing.
- Write or draw time
- Ball up and do the same parachute procedure with the balled-up prayers
- Debrief Questions:
 - Where did your written-out prayers go?
 - *Does this activity have to do with your experience of God? Why or why not?*
 - What was it like to write your own prayer?
 - How can this be applied to your life beyond this one program?

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP (00:40-00:45)

- 00:40-00:45 – Large Group Debrief – and how would you bring this back to camp?