

Turning Memory into Moments: Finding Time, Holding Space, Making Loss Sacred

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SUMMARY: Whether we have personally lost someone close to us or are carrying the grief of the world around us, prayer is a time and space that often reminds us of love and loss. Using blackout poetry, we will create texts that call out loud what we so often struggle to put into words.

GOALS:

1. To use text and poetry as a foundation for creating personal prayer.
2. To tap into individual creativity, especially for people who might otherwise be intimidated by the concept of writing their own poems or prayers.
3. To offer the space for participants to share their experiences of loss and to grieve out loud in a space that is safe and supportive.

AUDIENCE: This program is suitable for any age, as long as the texts are appropriate to the age group

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Copies of the three texts – 1 pp, plus a few extra
- Erasable pens – 1 pp
- Sharpie or black marker – 1 pp
- Big piece of paper/giant sticky note
- Some blank paper
- Rainbow scratch off cards

SET-UP: chairs around tables for easy writing or space on the ground with something to lean on

SESSION TIMELINE

Example:

- 00:00-00:04 – *Introductions*
- 00:04-00:10 – *The grief we carry*
- 00:10-00:18 – *Read each text aloud as an entire group*
- 00:18-00:28 – *Blackout poetry*
- 00:28-00:38 – *Sharing our prayers*
- 00:38-00:45 – *Reflections*

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:04 – Introductions

- Ideally, depending on the size group, it would be great to have everyone introduce themselves.
 - Who we are

00:04-00:10 – The grief we carry

- An open conversation to share our connections to prayer and grief
 - “In five words or less, who or what are you thinking about today?”
 - Write down names/concepts people share onto a big piece of paper
 - We will draw it on a rainbow scratch card for each participant while they’re doing the blackout poetry

00:10-00:18 – Read each text aloud as an entire group

- Ask for a volunteer to read each text aloud to the group.

00:18-00:28 – Blackout poetry

- Pick one of the texts that speaks to you. Using an erasable pen, cross off the words that don’t. If you make a mistake, not to worry – you can erase it!
- Once you’re sure about what you’ve crossed out, use the black marker to “blackout” those words.
- The words that are left are your new prayer.

00:28-00:38 – Sharing our prayers

- The first few minutes can be spent in small groups of 3-4 people, allowing participants to share their words more intimately if they would prefer to.
- Moving back into the large group, participants will be invited to share their words with the group as a whole.

00:38-00:45 – Reflections

- What was this process like?
- What did it bring up for you? Who or what are you thinking about or grieving today?
 - Continue to add on to the scratch card. Bring the color out of the black!
- Where and when could this be incorporated into camp?
 - Perhaps the activity could be done with a larger group, and then each day at a certain time, whether it’s prayers or a meal or bunk time, one person could share their poem and who/what they’re thinking about.

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

One way you could bring this back to camp is by using a text that is already significant to your camp community: a page from a prayer book, a camp song, a story that is told at camp. Let everyone create their own poem using the same words, rather than having options.

Alternatively, you can use a text thread to create an amazing poem! Print out all the words of the thread and then use blackout poetry to change its meaning!