

Adonai S'fatai Tiftach:
Prayer and Spirituality at
Camp and Beyond

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RATIONALE

Since the emergence of the first Jew, there was Jewish prayer. Our ancestors pioneered new ways of relating to God and transcending the mundane while still being a part of it. As worship became more fixed, it became tied to the practice of sacrifices, but the spiritual elements of this practice never left. After the destruction of the Second Temple, our Jewish ancestors transformed the Jewish worship experience, and the prayer service and the siddur emerged. Throughout the generations, our liturgy and forms of prayer grew. As modern Jews, we are heirs to this beautiful tradition of striving for the sacred and connecting to God, ourselves, and the world around us. Prayer continues to evolve within Reform Jewish camps, and is a core element of the Jewish experience in which campers take part.

CONTENT:

Prayer is a central element of American Judaism, and is a particularly important piece of Jewish camping. Arguably more than anywhere else in the Jewish world, Jewish communities around America revolve around the synagogue. At its core, the synagogue is an institution of prayer with its major event being Shabbat services. T'filah has been the central vehicle through which Jews have connected to God, and through which they have attempted to express the wonder and awe that come when experiencing God's creations.

This curriculum is a guide for teaching Jewish liturgy, spirituality, and communal and private prayer. It is about the connections that can occur during Jewish worship: between an individual, a small group, a community, the world, Jewish tradition, and God. It will examine the liturgy found in several services. The prayers found in the curriculum

guide are largely in English translation, but also contain some of the rich Hebrew text that has been passed down to us and integrated into our prayer book. It will focus on Reform Jewish prayers, rituals, and practices concerning spirituality and worship. It will look deeply at the literal and metaphorical meanings of the prayers as well. Campers will be pushed to understand the traditional meanings of the prayers in the siddur in addition to finding their own meaning in the Jewish prayer experience. This curriculum will examine the importance of praying in a community while still maintaining a strong sense of self and individual spirituality. In short, it will analyze the keva (structure) of prayer deeply and add the kavanah (intention) that many times is left out of religious school prayer curricula.

It will also invite the learners to enhance the spiritual realm by going to the realm of social action, which true Jewish spirituality necessitates. In order to connect deeply to God and to the world that God created, one can act within the world to bring holiness into it. In order for Jewish prayer to connect an individual or group to the sacred within the world, Jews engage with the world rather than withdraw from it. Prayer, then, does not reach its true potential if it does not lead one to act righteously in the world, if it does not lead to the practice of tikkun olam, of healing the world.

This curriculum is driven by the following **ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS**:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals.
2. Jewish prayer calls us to widen our concern beyond the self and invites us to engage in the world to improve it.
3. Both spontaneous and fixed forms of prayer can connect us to God in new and vibrant ways.

4. The modern siddur is informed by traditional and contemporary Jewish rituals, texts, and history, while at the same time it informs Jewish practices and the ways in which we view our tradition.

LEARNERS:

This curriculum is geared toward campers going into 6th and 7th grades who are at camp for 4 weeks, though the curriculum may be adapted for sessions less than 4 weeks long. Most Jewish children at this age have started preparing for B'nei Mitzvah, and are engrossed in learning the prayers found in the siddur at their home synagogue. Many have started studying the Hebrew language, and are preparing to become full members of their respective Jewish communities. Due to the fact that they are studying the Hebrew pronunciation of these prayers at home, this curriculum guide will not focus on the reading and decoding of the Hebrew words in the siddur. The curriculum is appropriate for campers who have a Hebrew background as well as for campers who know little or no Hebrew. Any Hebrew that is used in this curriculum is translated and transliterated so as to be accessible to the wide variety of learners that camp supports.

This curriculum is appropriate for these learners because they are at an age where they have the capability to formulate complex ideas about God and are able to identify with the Jewish tradition. These campers have the cognitive ability to think figuratively when looking at Jewish texts, including the siddur. This curriculum will help guide them through this journey with the help of engaged and knowledgeable adult Reform Jews. These campers are at a time in their Jewish identity formation where t'filah is central to their understanding of Judaism, and they are able to connect personally and as a group to prayer experiences. The hope is that this curriculum will help them navigate this spiritual journey in modern and Jewish ways.

SETTING:

"A complete Shabbat is possible at camp because there is no intrusion of the outside world. Experimenting with laying t'filin or other ritual acts is possible at camp because no one will judge or criticize the learner for doing it 'wrong.' Prayer is possible at camp because it occurs as an integral part of daily life. Spirituality is possible at camp because camp is a spiritual place."¹

Camp is a unique setting for any type of learning. It is a place where the learning community is the same as the social group and the praying community. It is a place where people are able to explore spiritually, religiously, and personally. Campers and staff try many new things at camp, both good and bad. Camp is where many children have their first kiss, their first broken heart, their first cool Jewish role-model, their first meaningful prayer experience, and their first true identification as a Jew. While some of these learners may find great meaning in Jewish worship at home and at synagogue, this curriculum is designed to give campers new and meaningful prayer experiences, perhaps even for the first time in their lives.

Camp is a place that ideally (and many times practically) allows the campers and staff a sense of freedom to explore and experiment. This experimentation happens on the field, in the cabin, and perhaps most profoundly in the programming areas and prayer sites. Spiritual and liturgical freedom is a key element of the Reform Jewish camp experience. This freedom can lead campers and staff to try out all forms of Jewish worship, whether progressive or traditional. Campers are graced with passionate prayer role-models in the forms of counselors, unit heads, co-campers, faculty members, and

¹ Sales, Amy & Saxe, Leonard. *How Goodly Are Thy Tents*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2004. p. 143

song leaders, and each can inspire campers to try new things and find themselves in the traditional and creative religious services that occur at camp.

At camp, many individuals experience Judaism in a way they do not experience it at home. Shabbat as a special and spiritual day is a focus of camp, and many who have gone to camp name this as their most influential and inspiring Jewish experience. Prayer services are held on a daily basis, and blessings are said before and after all meals. This intense Jewish environment, which emphasizes prayer, is a unique and ideal setting in which to study and enact the meanings and practices within and beyond the siddur. That which is learned in an educational program can be implemented in the religious services and in the daily schedules of the campers. One saying that encompasses this idea that can be heard throughout camp staff training is, “Any moment can be a Jewish Teachable Moment, and anyone can be a Jewish educator.” These unique opportunities will be utilized in this curriculum, which is why it unfortunately would be difficult to adapt this curriculum to a religious school.

METHOD OF TEACHING:

In addition to utilizing the education block in the camp schedule, this curriculum will also put the programs into practice throughout the camp day. Daily prayer services will reflect the topics covered in the programs, and the curriculum will utilize other times during the day (i.e. at bed time, at meals, during a hike, upon waking up in the morning) to further the understandings of the campers concerning prayer and spirituality. In this way, campers will see that Jewish prayer can be an integral and inseparable part of Jewish life, not something that only happens in a synagogue at a prescribed time of the week (though this is also an important and potentially powerful setting for prayer).

This curriculum is designed so that the learners will develop a deep and complex Jewish identity that is centered on t'filah and will find personal meaning in Jewish rituals associated with Jewish worship. In order to accomplish this, the curriculum should be taught by a unit head with the advice and/or assistance of a faculty member. It is meant to be taught by individuals who are knowledgeable about Reform Jewish prayer as well as Jewish prayer in a more general sense. They should approach teaching this with a willingness to experiment, which is based in a secure foundation of Jewish knowledge and if possible, practice.

NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR

Shalom!

Before you begin teaching this curriculum, there are a few things that I think may help you along the way.

- ☉ There are a lot of programs and activities in this curriculum. In fact, there may be more programs than days you have for educational programming. You may choose to take out a few programs, or you may also want to find other times in the camp day into which you can integrate the suggested activities.
- ☉ After many programs, you will see an element titled “Additional Activity”. This is an activity that happens outside of the education block. It is an activity that is optional, but highly recommended. This element takes the learning out of the “classroom” and puts it into all aspects of camp, and therefore all aspects of Jewish life. The curriculum and the Jewish learning should be integrated as much as possible into the camp day. Feel free to add to the Additional Activities in order to tailor this curriculum to your specific camp setting, schedule, and culture.
- ☉ I believe that while camp is an amazing Jewish learning experience, the campers and the staff cannot survive on camp alone. They must take their camp experiences back with them when they return home to their families and their congregations. For more on the importance of helping campers transfer their experiences home, I humbly direct you to an article I wrote on the topic and the sources cited therein. This article is attached at the end of this curriculum guide.
- ☉ Although this curriculum is primarily designed for the campers’ benefit, I believe that learning and growth should be happening at all levels for those at camp. The curriculum assumes that counselors and educators have vibrant prayer lives, are knowledgeable about the siddur and Jewish prayer, and are open to experimentation with prayer and spirituality. Prayer is an evolving activity, and helps our understandings of God, Judaism, and ourselves transform constantly.
- ☉ The curriculum speaks freely and constantly about God. Campers will come with many different concepts and attitudes about God. Some may hold very strong

beliefs, and some may not have thought seriously about God ever before. In all cases, the educator should allow for a very broad understanding of God, and should never assume that their personal beliefs are shared by the campers. Just as you are entitled to your theology, so the campers are entitled to theirs.

- ☉ At its best, camp is a safe space in which the campers and staff feel free to explore, experiment, and reflect on Judaism. In order for this curriculum to work well, the campers and staff must be given this safe space, and must feel comfortable sharing deeply personal beliefs and practices with others.
- ☉ Prayer and spirituality can be very serious subjects. While appreciating the gravity of the topic, I urge you to try as best you can to have fun with this curriculum and to make it as engaging as possible. When campers see that prayer can be fun and interesting, they will engage with it on a significant level. This curriculum will hopefully instill love of Jewish tradition, prayer, the siddur, and God in all those involved.

☉ Finally, a couple of logistical comments:

- ☉ I assume the presence and use of the Reform Movement's siddur *Mishkan T'filah*. When using a siddur with this curriculum, it should always be the siddur with which the campers come into contact through constant use at camp. If your camp does not primarily use *Mishkan T'filah*, then use the primary siddur when teaching this curriculum.
- ☉ All translations of biblical text come from the JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh unless otherwise noted.

B'hatzlacha, I wish you a wonderful summer!

- Jake Singer-Beilin

UNIT 1: WHAT IS T'FILAH?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT RELATE TO THIS UNIT:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals
2. Both spontaneous and fixed forms of prayer can connect us to God in new and vibrant ways
3. The modern siddur is informed by traditional and contemporary Jewish rituals, texts, and history, while at the same time it informs Jewish practices and the ways in which we view our tradition

UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS:

1. Approaching fixed communal Jewish prayer seriously and intentionally can enrich our lives and our many relationships, despite the difficulties involved
2. Both tradition and innovation play significant roles in the ways in which we engage in prayer

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What roles do tradition and innovation play in communal prayer?
2. Why is it important for liberal Jews to engage in fixed prayer?
3. How does the centrality of Shabbat services influence Reform Jews' prayer experiences?

ASSESSMENTS:

- Campers will debate the validity of using t'filah as a form of healing

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

- Campers will be guests at a Shabbat wedding ceremony and reception

Program 1: What is Prayer?

Program 2: The Siddur and Fixed Prayer

Program 3: Kabbalat Shabbat – Receiving the Shabbat Bride

Program 4: Mi Shebeirach – Healing Prayer (Fully Scripted)

PROGRAM 1: WHAT IS PRAYER?

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to compare and contrast keva and kavannah, and use these terms comfortably
2. Campers will be able to articulate modern progressive Jewish views of God

ACTIVITY 1:²

- ☉ Jewish prayer is a mixture of keva (structure/fixed) and kavannah (intention/meaning).
- ☉ Campers will be broken up into two groups, and will engage in a two station rotation.
 - ☉ Rotation 1: Same keva, different kavannah
 - ☉ The song leader will sing several versions of the song “Hinei Mah Tov” with varying tempo and emotion.
 - ☉ The leader will then explain the meaning of the words to this song (how good and nice it is to sit together as brothers and sisters), and then engage the campers in the following discussion:
 - Did the different ways of singing this song change the way you felt about it? Why or why not?
 - Did one version go better with the words than another? Why or why not?
 - How did the different melodies make you feel?
 - ☉ Rotation 2: Same kavannah, different keva
 - ☉ The leader will then read the following phrases with the same emotion (can read them angrily, excitedly, or bored as long as all phrases are said with the same emotion)
 - Hear O Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is one
 - Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine
 - How good and nice it is to sit together as brothers and sisters
 - May the One who makes peace on high make peace on us and all of Israel
 - Shabbat Shalom
 - Boker Tov
 - Lailah Tov
 - ☉ The leader will then lead the following discussion:
 - How did it feel to hear all of these phrases said with the same emotion?
 - Was there a disconnect between the words and the ways in which they were said? Why or why not?
 - What could have made these words more meaningful?

² This activity has been adapted from a curriculum on Connecting to God used at Wilshire Boulevard Temple Camps

- ☉ The two groups will come back together for the following discussion:
- ☉ In Jewish prayer, there is both keva and kavannah, fixed prayers and the meanings behind them. Sometimes we focus more on the prayers themselves, and sometimes we focus on the ways these prayers are supposed to make us feel. Without keva we might not know what to say or how to pray. Our tradition gives us the words and the order in which we say them, and this can be incredibly helpful! Without kavannah, though, our prayers are just words without any meaning behind them. Most of the time, is it best to have a mix of keva and kavannah. The mixture of the two creates a prayer experience that connects us to our tradition, is powerful and meaningful, and hopefully will connect us to God.
- ☉ We will be talking a lot about prayer and spirituality over the session. When we talk about these things, we mean a mixture of keva and kavannah. Both are key to Jewish prayer!

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ When we think of prayer, we also think of God. In order to understand why we are praying, and to what/whom we might be directing these prayers, we must figure out what God means to us.
- ☉ Campers will get into groups of 10.
- ☉ The leader and counselors will hand out play-doh/clay to each camper.
- ☉ The campers will be instructed to form the clay into a figure. This figure should be a representation of God. It can be a representation of what they think God is or of what God means to them. They are not making idols since they are not saying that this representation is actually God, but just a representation of how they think about God.
- ☉ After they are finished, the campers will share their representations with their groups.
- ☉ The group leader will then collect all of the representations and make them into a big ball. The leader will explain that even though we all think of God differently, and have different visions of what God is or what God means to us, we are all thinking of the same God. In the Sh'ma, we say that God is one. God can be all the things that we just saw without actually being contained in any one of those things. That is why Jews can't have idols. God does not have a physical form, but God is in everything. As Jews, we can have many different ideas of what God is and we can all be correct.
- ☉ When we talk about prayer and about praying to God, it doesn't have to mean that we are praying to a man with a white beard on a cloud. When we talk about God this session, we are talking about the unifying force or being in the universe, and that force or being can be different to each and every one of us.

PROGRAM 2: THE SIDDUR AND FIXED PRAYER

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify the basic structure of the siddur and the themes of the prayers found within it.
2. Campers will be able to provide a rationale for praying according to this structure and with the traditional liturgy

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ Prior to the program, the leader will set up a human board game, with the board looking like a mountain range with three peaks (wavy line with three waves, See Resource 1-1). This game board represents the structure of a morning service, with one peak representing the Sh'ma, one peak representing the Amidah, and one peak representing the Torah service. The peaks should be labeled accordingly. There should also be a large spinner that tells the campers how many spaces to move in one turn. The game will consist of a series of questions, factoids, and challenges related to the siddur, its structure, and the themes of each prayer. Each square on the game board will lead to a fact about a prayer, a question about a prayer, or a challenge corresponding to a prayer.
- ☉ The leader will explain to the campers that a regular prayer service can be seen as a mountain range, with peaks and valleys. The service has spiritual and liturgical high points and low points. Today, the campers will go along this mountain range, but the journey will take some effort.
- ☉ Campers will get into 5 groups, and will designate 1 camper as the game piece and one camper as the group spinner. Each group will take turns moving along the game board and answering questions, receiving factoids, or completing challenges that have to do with the part of the service their "game piece" is on. If they are successful with the questions and challenges, they can move forward one space. If not, they stay where they are until their next turn.
- ☉ When one group comes to the end, they can split up and help the other groups reach the end. In this way, individual worshippers at a service can become a community.
- ☉ Possible Questions, Factoids, and Challenges:
 - Birkot HaShachar:
 - The blessings were originally recited at the home upon waking up in the morning, but now they are said in the synagogue
 - One of these blessings praises God for crowning Israel with glory. As a group, create a movement to go along with this blessing, then perform it in front of everyone
 - Are there more or less than 7 blessings in Mishkan T'filah's version of Birkot HaShachar? (More)
 - Pesukei D'Zimra:

- This is a set of psalms, which come from the last 5 chapters or the Book of Psalms in the Bible
- This section is all about singing the praises of God. As a group, write a short song praising God for a new day at camp!
- True or False, Pesukei D'Zimra can be translated into English as "Jumping with glee" (False, it can be translated as "Songs of Praise")

Barchu:

- The Barchu is a call and response prayer, with the leader saying the first line and the congregation responds with the second line
- How many people are needed in order to recite the Barchu? (10)
- Using no words, come up with your own call to worship

Creation and Revelation:

- The Creation and Revelation prayers change depending on whether they are said at night or in the morning. Yotzeir Or becomes Ma'ariv Aravim, and Ahavah Rabbah becomes Ahavat Olam
- According to the Jewish calendar, when does a new day begin? (At sundown)
- The prayer Yotzeir Or speaks of God creating light and a new day. As a group, choose your favorite song with the word "sun" and sing it for everyone

Sh'ma and V'Ahavta:

- The Sh'ma is surrounded by several blessings, some of which talk about love, freedom, and creation
- The Sh'ma says that God is one. As a group you must figure out how to say the word "one" in 3 different languages, not including English
- We are told that because of its importance, the Sh'ma requires a lot of focus when recited. Let's see if it's possible to recite the Sh'ma while doing other things. As a group you must all recite the Sh'ma while trying to balance on one foot while snapping your fingers
- In a traditional siddur, how many paragraphs are in the V'ahavta? (3, but in our siddur we only have 2 paragraphs)

Mi Chamocha and Hashkivenu:

- True or false, the words for Mi Chamocha are originally in the Torah? (True, they come from the Book of Exodus) For an extra square, what is the Book of Exodus called in Hebrew? (Shemot)
- True or false, Mi Chamocha changes depending on the time of day it is recited? (True, the second stanza changes depending on when it is recited)
- The rabbis believed that they needed God's protection during the night because they believed sleep was 1/60th of death
- We learn that when the Israelites crossed the Red Sea to safety and freedom, they danced. As a group, create a freedom dance, and then perform it for everyone

Amidah:

- Another name for the Amidah is Shmoneh Esreh, which means 18. How many blessings are in a weekday Amidah? (19, the name is misleading)

- The Amidah is only recited aloud when there is a minyan, how many Jews do you need for a minyan? (10 Jews of age...over the age of 13)
- The first blessing of the Amidah is called Avot V'Imahot, meaning Fathers and Mothers. Name as many of the biblical fore fathers and fore mothers as you can (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah)
- During the first blessing of the Amidah, Avot V'Imahot, we bow out of respect for God. As a group, come up with a new way of showing respect for God that could be used in addition to bowing

Torah Service:

- Name the five books found in a Torah scroll. For an extra space, name them in Hebrew (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy/Bereshit, Shemot, Vayikra, Bamidbar, D'varim)
- In order to read the correct part of the Torah, we must roll it. Choose one member of your group to roll like a Torah and do a summersault or a cartwheel
- Each week we read a different portion of the Torah. What do you call a weekly portion in Hebrew? (Parashah/Parashat HaShavua/Sidra)

Aleinu and Kaddish:

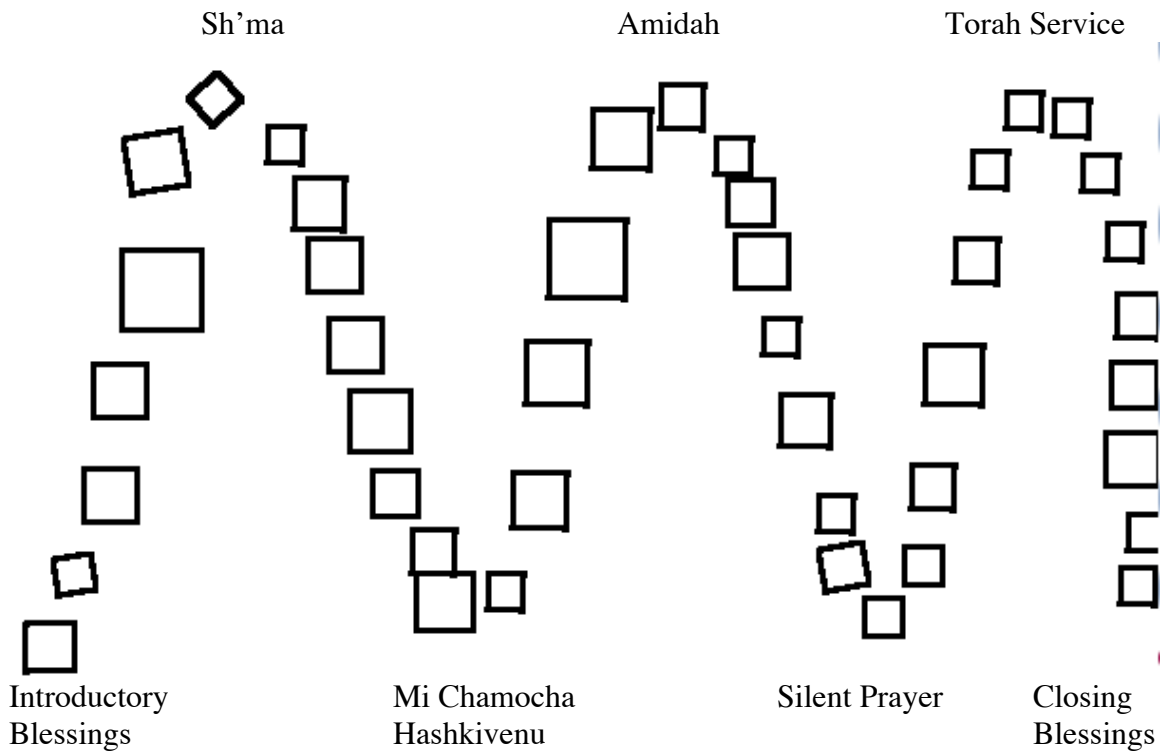
- True or false, the Aleinu prayer is the youngest prayer in the siddur, dating only to the year 1600 (False, the Aleinu is one of the most ancient prayers in the siddur, which was recited even in the Temple 2000 years ago)
- The Aleinu says God spread out the heavens. As a group, make a human cloud
- The Kaddish prayer, while recited by mourners, never mentions death. Instead it speaks of God's greatness

☉ In order to finish the game, the campers as a group must give one reason why they think it is important to know the structure of the service and the themes of the major prayers. Possible answers include:

- This has been done for generations and generations in Judaism. We are a link in this chain
- When we don't know how to pray or what to pray for, the siddur helps us with fixed prayers
- We want to be able to follow along with the community in order to be part of it
- Prayer is a mitzvah, a commandment. God says we should know how to pray
- Non-Jews may ask what Judaism says about creation, prayer, or God. Knowing the prayers in the siddur can help us to answer these questions

RESOURCE 1-1:

Game Board:



PROGRAM 3: KABBALAT SHABBAT – RECEIVING THE SHABBAT BRIDE

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify the elements of the service that appear only on Shabbat
2. Campers will be able to recognize the similarities between Kabbalat Shabbat and a wedding ceremony

ACTIVITY 1:

☉ Campers will get into groups, with one counselor per group. Each group will receive a translation of a piece of liturgy that appears only in the Kabbalat Shabbat service. The groups must study these texts and come up with no more than 3 sentences summarizing the text. They will need to present this to the group, and say whether or not this text makes them think about Shabbat and why.

☉ Possible texts include:

- Candle Lighting - Mishkan T'filah pg. 120
- Kiddush – Mishkan T'filah pg. 122-123
- Psalm 95 – Mishkan T'filah pg. 130-131
- Psalm 96 - Mishkan T'filah pg. 131-132
- Psalm 97 - Mishkan T'filah pg. 132-133
- Psalm 98 - Mishkan T'filah pg.133-134
- Psalm 99 - Mishkan T'filah pg. 135
- Psalm 29 - Mishkan T'filah pg. 136-137
- L'Cha Dodi - Mishkan T'filah pg. 138-139
- Psalm 92 - Mishkan T'filah pg. 140
- Psalm 93 - Mishkan T'filah pg. 141
- Shalom Aliechem - Mishkan T'filah pg. 142
- V'Shamru – Mishkan T'filah pg. 162
- Yism'chu - Mishkan T'filah pg. 162
- Kedushat HaYom - Mishkan T'filah pg. 172

ACTIVITY 2:

☉ Campers will get into small group, with one counselor per group. In these groups, the counselors will explain:

- In the poem “L'cha Dodi”, Shabbat is described as a bride. We rise at the end of this poem and face the entrance in order to greet this bride, just as we would in a wedding ceremony

- ☉ The counselor will then ask each camper to think of one thing we do in order to celebrate Shabbat that might also be done at a Jewish wedding. Examples³ include:
- On Shabbat we wear white and the table cloths are white, just like white is used in a wedding
 - We sing and dance on Shabbat, just like there is singing and dancing at a wedding reception
 - The Shabbat candles are radiant, just like a bride on her wedding day
 - We say Kiddush on Shabbat, and at a wedding
 - We eat a festive meal (and Oneg) together on Shabbat, and there is a meal after the wedding ceremony
- ☉ The counselor will then continue:
- In all these ways, the liturgy of the Kabbalat Shabbat service and the special ways in which we celebrate Shabbat make Shabbat into a wedding
 - We know that Shabbat is the bride, but who do you think is the groom and who are the wedding guests? (Some say God is the groom and we are the wedding guests, some say the people of Israel are the groom)
- ☉ No matter whether we are the groom or the guests, we know that it is our role to celebrate on Shabbat and also to rejoice with bride and groom. In fact, this is a mitzvah, a commandment. Tonight (even though it is not actually Shabbat), we will have a wedding reception. In order to do this though, we need decorations. It is your job to help out the Shabbat Bride by making the decorations for the wedding reception.
- ☉ The campers will then be able to make decorations, which will be used later during the reception. These decorations should be appropriate, and should have something to do with Shabbat (i.e. candlesticks, Kiddush cups, signs that say Shabbat Shalom and Bo'i Chalah).

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ As an evening program, the session will hold a wedding reception with Jewish music, dancing the horah, singing, food, beverages, and of course the decorations made in the programming block.⁴

³ This activity and some of the examples used have been adapted from Kadden, Bruce and Binder Kadden, Barbara. *Teaching Tefilah*. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 1994. p. 93.

⁴ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

PROGRAM 4: MI SHEBEIRACH – HEALING PRAYER (Fully Scripted)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to recall 2 traditional sources that serve as a basis for later Jewish healing prayers, both fixed and spontaneous
2. Campers will be able to compare and contrast the ideas of healing and curing
3. Campers will be able to judge the appropriateness of praying for healing in the synagogue with the congregation present

MATERIALS:

Text of Numbers 12 (Handout 1-1)
Handout 1-2
Handout 1-3
Paper
Pencils

TIMELINE:

0:00-0:10: Set Induction
0:10-0:30: Mi Shebeirach Comparison
0:30-0:50: Prayer for Healing Debate
0:50-1:00: Conclusion

ACTIVITIES:

0:00-0:10: SET INDUCTION

- ☪ When the campers are sitting down in a large group, the leader will quickly tell the story of Miriam and Aaron talking about Moses behind his back as found in Numbers 12. Four counselors will act out the text of Numbers 12:10-16 (See Handout 1-1).
- ☪ The leader will ask the campers the following:
 - Miriam was stricken with an illness. What did Moses do about this? (He asked God to heal her, he prayed)
 - Why do you think Moses would have thought to do this? (He had a direct connection to God, he loved his sister, it was all he could do)
 - Did Moses' prayer for healing get answered immediately? (Yes, but Miriam was not healed immediately)
 - How do you think Moses felt after realizing he wouldn't get his prayer granted immediately? (Sad, frustrated, angry, afraid for his sister)
 - Unlike Moses, we don't talk to God face to face. Why do you think some people turn to God when their loved ones are sick? (They don't know what else to do, they believe God will heal their loved ones, turning to God helps them help others)

0:10-0:30: MI SHEBEIRACH COMPARISON

- ☉ The campers will then be broken up into groups of 8, with one counselor leading each group. In small groups, the leader will begin by discussing with the campers:
 - Does anyone know of any ways Jews help heal each other?
 - Prayer is one way Jews help heal each other. Who knows what the name of the Jewish healing prayer is? (Mi Shebeirach)
 - You may not know that the Mi Shebeirach we say in service is not the original Mi Shebeirach. It is actually a very recent addition to the siddur.
- ☉ The group leader then passes out the handout with the text to the traditional Mi Shebeirach (titled Prayer for the Sick Person) as well as the text to Debbie Friedman's Mi Sheberach (See Handout 1-2). In groups of 2, the campers will read both prayers.
- ☉ They should write down:
 - The similarities between the prayers
 - The differences between the prayers
 - One thing they liked about each Mi Shebeirach
 - One thing they disliked about each Mi Shebeirach
 - Which prayer they would most like to recite in synagogue
- ☉ The groups will come back together and share their findings.

0:30-0:50: PRAYER FOR HEALING DEBATE

- ☉ Continue in small groups:
- ☉ At camp, and in many Reform synagogues, we recite Debbie Friedman's Mi Shebeirach as a way of praying for the healing of our loved ones. This was not always the case in Reform synagogues, though. For a long time, Reform Jews did not recite this blessing for healing of a loved one. While we don't know how that change occurred in every synagogue, we are going to try to recreate the debate that may have taken place at a congregational board meeting.
- ☉ The group leader will divide the small group in half. One half will have to argue against the recitation of the Mi Sheberach, and the other side will have to argue for the recitation of the Mi Sheberach. Group leads will receive potential talking points on Handout 1-3 in order to help guide the campers' conversations when they are having trouble. The groups will have 10 minutes to plan their arguments, and 10 minutes to debate.

0:50-1:00: CONCLUSION

- ☉ The leader will conclude with the following discussion:
 - We have all had a loved one who was sick.
 - Has anyone here ever said the Mi Shebeirach or another prayer for healing for a sick loved one?
 - How did it feel to say this prayer?
 - Did you think that the person was going to automatically be cured after you said this prayer?
 - If not, why did you say the prayer?
 - Did reciting this prayer lead you to act in a way that brought healing or comfort to the person who was sick?

- What is the difference between curing someone and healing someone?
- Has anyone ever been sick and heard that someone said a prayer for them?
- How did it feel to hear that someone had said a prayer for you?
- Why do you think that Mi Shebeirach is usually done in a synagogue, rather than alone or at home?
- Whether we are saying the Mi Shebeirach or some other prayer for healing, it helps to have someone else there when you are doing it. It may be in front of the whole congregation, it may be with a family member or a friend, or it may just be recited with God as the audience. In order to do what we can to heal a loved one, it helps to have support from someone else. Moses had support from Aaron and from God. Our synagogue and our camp are great places to find support and comfort in hard times. This support can have a great effect on us and also on the process of healing.

HANDOUT 1-1:

Numbers 12:10-16

¹⁰ As the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Miriam stricken with snow-white scales! When Aaron turned toward Miriam, he saw that she was stricken with scales.

¹¹ And Aaron said to Moses, "O my lord, account not to us the sin which we committed in our folly.

¹² Let her not be as one dead, who emerges from his mother's womb with half his flesh eaten away."

¹³ So Moses cried out to Adonai, saying, "O God, pray heal her!"

¹⁴ But Adonai said to Moses, "If her father spat in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut out of camp for seven days, and then let her be readmitted."

¹⁵ So Miriam was shut out of camp seven days; and the people did not march on until Miriam was readmitted.

¹⁶ After that the people set out from Hazeroth and encamped in the wilderness of Paran.

HANDOUT 1-2:

Prayer for the Sick Person

May the One who blessed our fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron, David, and Solomon, may He heal _____ who is ill. May the Holy Blessed One have mercy and speedily restore him/her to perfect health, both spiritual and physical; and let us say, Amen.

Mi Shebeirach

Lyrics by Debbie Friedman and Drorah Setel

*Mi shebeirach avoteinu
M'kor hab'racha l'imoteinu
May the source of strength,
Who blessed the ones before us,
Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing,
and let us say, Amen.*

*Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M'kor habrachah l'avoteinu*

*Bless those in need of healing with r'fuah sh'leimah,
The renewal of body, the renewal of spirit,
And let us say, Amen*

HANDOUT 1-3:

Talking points for group against recitation:

- God does not act miraculously heal people just because we ask
- People are cured through the use of medicine, not through divine intervention
- We are not doctors, and we do not know what is best for sick people
- Our time would be better spent tending to this sick person than saying prayers for them
- We shouldn't be telling God what to do, God know better than we do
- When praying for a loved one to be healed, we shouldn't have one fixed prayer to say, it should be spontaneous and come from the heart

Talking points for group in favor of recitation:

- Jewish tradition tells us to pray for sick loved ones, and it even shows us how
- Asking for healing is not the same thing as asking for someone to be cured miraculously
- When a loved one is sick we sometimes feel helpless. Even when we can't cure someone, we can do something
- Prayer can serve as a reminder to ourselves to help this sick person in any way possible (spend time with them, bring them food)
- Even if the prayer has no miraculous effect on the sick person, it comforts the one who is saying the prayer
- When someone doesn't know what to say, it can help to have word on the page that tell us what to say

UNIT 2: PRAYER IN THE LIVING SPACE

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT RELATE TO THIS UNIT:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals
2. Both spontaneous and fixed forms of prayer can connect us to God in new and vibrant ways
3. The modern siddur is informed by traditional and contemporary Jewish rituals, texts, and history, while at the same time it informs Jewish practices and the ways in which we view our tradition

UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS:

1. Jewish prayer can help us recognize holiness and bring it into seemingly ordinary places
2. Places we live, whether the cabin or the home, are places where Jewish prayer can take place on a regular basis
3. We have the ability to make camp a home for ourselves and others through the use of prayer and ritual
4. Prayer and ritual can help transfer the holiness of camp to the home

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. How do Jewish prayer and ritual enhance our living space?
2. How can we make the Jewish traditions our own while at camp and at home?
3. Where and when does holiness reside in our living spaces and in our daily lives?

ASSESSMENTS:

- Campers will help lead Birkat HaMazon at camp using their own interpretations of the prayer
- Campers will create a prayer for their cabin that incorporates the ideas found in this unit
- Campers will write additions to the traditional Havdalah service that can be used at camp and at home
- Campers will create new clues for a treasure hunt focusing on sites where prayer can transform the ordinary into something extraordinary

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

- Campers will engage in a treasure hunt around camp to find holy things in ordinary places

Program 1: Making the Ordinary Extraordinary

Program 2: Prayer at the Table

Program 3: Blessings at the Shabbat Table (Fully Scripted)

Program 4: Havdalah – With or Without a Lake

Program 5: Prayer in Bed

Program 6: Prayer for the Cabin

Program 7: Asher Yatzar - Don't Pray in the Bathroom

Program 8: Making the Ordinary Extraordinary...Again

PROGRAM 1: MAKING THE ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify places in their living space where prayer can occur
2. Campers will be able to give examples of ways they can make the ordinary into the extraordinary, one of which is prayer.

ACTIVITY 1⁵:

- ☉ The campers will go on a treasure hunt, exploring ordinary living places at camp. A counselor should be stationed at each site, with an envelope containing clues for the next site. (See Handout 2-1 for the list of clues). The list of sites is:
- Table in the dining hall
 - Outside a central bathroom with heavy traffic
 - Bed
 - Kitchen
 - Water fountain
 - Dresser/Shelves in a second cabin
 - Entrance to Camp
- ☉ Divide the campers into 7 groups. Each group is given an initial clue, which will start them off on the scavenger hunt around camp. Once the campers reach the correct site, they need to find a counselor. The counselor will instruct them to look for something extraordinary about this ordinary place. Once they have done so, they are given a clue that directs them to the next site.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Once all the groups have returned from the treasure hunt, the leader will engage the campers in a conversation about ways in which Jews acknowledge the holy/extraordinary in the ordinary/mundane. Recognizing the extraordinary elements in ordinary things is central to Judaism. Almost every room in our house or camp has something special or extraordinary about it, and the campers just found a few of them in the last activity.
- ☉ The leader will engage the campers in the following discussion:
- Sometimes we forget how special the place in which we live and spend our time really is.
 - How can we remind ourselves of the fact the ordinary places where we spend most of our time are actually really extraordinary?
 - Think about the first time you saw this camp. How did it feel to come through the front gate?
 - What was it like to step into the door of the cabin?

⁵ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

- What were you excited about?
- What were you nervous or anxious about?
- What kinds of things did you wonder about your cabin, the dining hall, or the field, and pool?
- If on your first day you had a sense of awe, wonder, excitement, or anxiety, how might you try and remind yourself of this feeling, even if you have been here for years now?
- What are some ways in which Judaism point out holiness in the places we live?
- How does Judaism differentiate between regular and special?
- Judaism helps us to see the distinction between the regular and the special in many different ways:
 - Differentiation of time
 - Differentiation of space
 - Rituals
 - Ritual objects
 - Use of Prayer – We will focus on this vehicle in the next unit

HANDOUT 2-1:

For a table in the dining hall:
3 times a day we come and sit
The nourishment makes us healthy and fit
To this flat place with hunger and zeal
We come to eat our tasty meal

For outside a central bathroom:
A great spot this is to sit and think
With mirror, towels, and especially a sink
After we stand up and give a flush
We then will clean our teeth with brush

For a bed:
Now here we lay our weary head
And think of sheep numbered in our head
In cabin _____ (insert cabin number or name) you may retire
And wake up with a renewed inner fire

For the kitchen:
Hot and cold scalding and frozen
In a large white bin are eggs of dozen
Milk and meat shall not be mixed
For on these counters our food is fixed

For a water fountain:
On days of heat we run with thirst
And stand in line if we're not first
It gives forth MAYIM like the rock of Moses
And if we miss we get wet cold noses

For dresser/shelves in a second cabin:
Undies, socks, pants, and shirts
This furniture also holds some skirts
In cabin _____ (insert different cabin number or name) we approach to dress
The thing that stores our Shabbat best

For the entrance to camp:
In buses or cars we first saw this place
As smiles and tears gleamed on our face
It's the first thing to see upon arrival or leaving
But it's not time to leave yet, so don't start grieving

PROGRAM 2: PRAYER AT THE TABLE

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify the ways in which reciting blessings at a meal can enhance the meal experience
2. Student will be able to analyze the way prayers at the table are done at camp, and propose alternative ways they might be done
3. Campers will be able to construct their own blessings and table rituals that go along with Jewish tradition

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ Each camper will get a piece of paper with several blessings of different kinds of food on it (see Handout 2-2).
- ☉ Around the programming space, counselors will be stationed with different kinds of food. The campers must go up to a counselor, figure out the right blessing to recite, and recite it.
- ☉ When the camper recites the right blessing, the counselor will give the camper a piece of this food, as well as a picture of the food (or clip art) to tape onto Handout #2 next to the correct blessing.
- ☉ Even though there are 6 blessings, there may be more than 6 counselors with more than 6 different foods.
 - Blessing 1: Bread
 - Blessing 2: Non-Bread grain products (i.e. cake, cookies, cereal)
 - Blessing 3: Grape Juice
 - Blessing 4: Fruit from a tree (i.e. nuts, olives, cherries, dates, grapes (!), raisins)
 - Blessing 5: Fruit from the ground (i.e. vegetables, corn, peanuts, sunflower seeds, strawberries)
 - Blessing 6: Everything else (i.e. water, meat, juices, eggs, dairy, hot chocolate)
 - For more foods, see http://home.comcast.net/~judaism/Siddur/transliterations/daily/ber_eating.htm

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Campers are broken up into 5 groups. Each group receives a section of Birkat HaMazon (the blessing after the meal) to study.
- ☉ Major Sections:
 - Thanking God for the food
 - Thanking God for the Land of Israel
 - Blessing over Jerusalem
 - Thanking God for God's goodness

- Extra Blessings (Harachaman)
- ☉ The text should have Hebrew, English, and Transliteration (the full text may be found here:
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/birkat_hamazon.pdf).
- ☉ At least one knowledgeable counselor should be in each group to lead the text study. The discussion should examine the theme of the section, and how its inclusion enhances the meal experience. One camper in the group should record the major points brought up in the discussion. After this discussion, the campers put their main points into sentence form.
- ☉ With the main themes of each section in mind each group will then compose their own interpretation of their section. This interpretation should take the form of a text, and should be appropriate to present to the rest of the camp at a meal.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ When it comes time to recite Birkat HaMazon, one camper should introduce the learning that the unit just engaged in. Instead of doing a traditional Birkat HaMazon, each group will present the interpretation of their section to the rest of the camp.
- ☉ Additionally, each group could present the main points from their discussion, and then lead the rest of the camp in their section. This could be done over the course of one meal or several meals, presenting one section at each meal.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ Reciting HaMotzi can serve to remind us of where our food comes from, and to be thankful for that. As a cabin group discuss where our food comes from, and how amazing it is that cooked food makes it to the table 3 times a day. The cabin group can put this amazement and thanks into action by making Thank-You cards for the kitchen staff and delivering them.

HANDOUT 2-2:

Blessing 1:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, ha-motzi lehem min ha-aretz
Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessing 2:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי מְזוֹנוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, bo'rei minei m'zonot
Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates varieties of nourishment.

Blessing 3:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, bo'rei p'ri ha-gafen
Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Blessing 4:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, bo'rei p'ri ha-etz
Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Blessing 5:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, bo'rei p'ri ha-adama
Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the ground.

Blessing 6:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָ בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, she-hakol nih'ye bidvaro
Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the universe, through whose word everything comes into being.

PROGRAM 3: BLESSINGS AT THE SHABBAT TABLE (Fully Scripted)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to explain their own Shabbat table rituals and how these rituals make the experience extraordinary
2. Campers will be able to judge when it might be appropriate to use alternative rituals and blessings, and when to use the traditional ones

MATERIALS:

Paper
Pencils
Film clip from Fiddler on the Roof
TV/Projector
Handout 2-3
Handout 2-4

TIMELINE:

0:00-0:10: Set Induction
0:10-0:30: Shabbat Table Blessings
0:30-0:50: Alternative Blessings over the Children
0:50-1:00: Conclusion

0:00-0:10: SET INDUCTION

☉ In cabin groups, the campers sit down in a circle and are given one piece of paper and one pencil per group. The campers must list as many ritual objects that they can think of that are used on Shabbat. They should only be given 3 minutes to make this list. The leader will shout “Pencils down!”, and will go around to each group, asking for one object they could think of. When this object is said, the other groups must cross it off their lists. Go around to all the groups until they are all out of objects on their lists.

☉ The leader continues:

☉ As you can see, we have many different things we use to make Shabbat special, and most of them are used on or around the Shabbat table. The Shabbat meal is an essential part of Shabbat, and we do everything we can to make it holy/special/extraordinary. Today, we will take a closer look at some of these objects and the rituals and blessings in which they are used.

0:10-0:30: SHABBAT TABLE BLESSINGS

☉ Play the scene from Fiddler on the Roof leading up to and including the song “Sabbath Prayer” in which the family prepares for Shabbat and engages in a table ritual (i.e. lighting candles, blessing children). Ask the campers:

- What kinds of rituals or blessings did you see in this scene? (lighting candles, Kiddush, festive meal, blessing children)

- Which of these rituals have you seen practiced at home or at camp?
- Which of these rituals look different from what you have seen at home or at camp?
- In the movie, how did these rituals/blessings enhance the Shabbat table experience?
- At home and at camp, how do these rituals enhance our experience at the Shabbat table?
- There are some blessings and rituals that are traditionally done at the Shabbat dinner table that we haven't mentioned yet. Before some Jews say Motzi and begin eating, they go to a sink/water source and wash their hands. When they do this, they say the following blessing:
Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam asher kidishanu b'mitz'votav v'tzivanu al n'tilat yadayim
Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us concerning washing of hands.
- How might this ritual/blessing help us prepare ourselves to bring in the holiness of Shabbat?

0:30-0:50: ALTERNATIVE BLESSINGS OVER THE CHILDREN

☪ The campers will receive the traditional blessings that parents recite over sons and daughters at the Shabbat table (see Handout 2-3). As a large group, read through these blessings and take any questions that might arise. Possible questions might include:

- Who are Ephraim and Menashe?
- Why is there a different blessing for boys than for girls?
- I've never heard these blessings before. Why not?
- Can people who are not parents recite these blessings over children?
- Is there a blessing for children to say over parents?

☪ Even though these are the traditional blessings, other blessings over the children have been written and used at the Shabbat table. On the same handout, the campers will find an alternative blessing written by Marcia Falk and her reasoning behind writing it. Study this alternative and discuss her rationale:

- Why does Falk say she wrote this alternative blessing?
- Do you agree with her reasoning? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is okay to change a blessing that Jews have been doing at the Shabbat table for centuries? Why or why not?
- How would you feel receiving the blessing that Falk wrote?
- Would you feel differently than if you received the traditional blessing from the same person? Why or why not?
- The song that we saw towards the beginning of this program, "Sabbath Prayer", can also be seen as an alternative version of the Blessing over the Children.
- Which parts are similar to the traditional blessing?
- What is different or new when compared to the traditional blessing?

- Out of the three Blessing over the Children we have seen, which one do you think this camp should use? Why?

0:50-1:00: CONCLUSION

- ☉ The leader will hand out song sheets (Handout 2-4), and a song leader will teach the song “Sabbath Prayer” in order to conclude the program.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ At the next Shabbat, the song leaders/camp directors may include the song “Sabbath Prayer” in services, during the Shabbat dinner rituals, or during the Shabbat song session.

HANDOUT 2-3:

Blessing over the Sons:

Y'simcha Elohim k'Ephraim v'chi Menashe
May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe
(Ephraim and Menashe were Joseph's two sons)

Blessing over the Daughters:

Y'simech Elohim k'Sarah, Rivka, Rachel, v'Leah
May God make you like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Leah

Blessing over all Children:

Y'varechecha Adonai v'yishmarecha
Ya'eir Adonai panav elecha vichuneka
Yisa Adonai panav elecha v'yasem l'cha shalom

May God bless you and keep you,
May God's light shine upon you and may God be gracious to you,
May you feel God's presence within you always, and may you find peace.
(Translation found in Mishkan T'filah, pg. 603)

From Marcia Falk's The Book of Blessings:

“The custom of blessing one's children on the eve of the Sabbath and holidays is an especially poignant Jewish ritual, but the content of the traditional blessing is rather puzzling. ...[I]t asks God to make the male child like Ephraim and Menashe; an adaptation for girls asks that they be like the foremothers Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. Why Ephraim and Menashe, one cannot help but wonder – indeed why any particular ancestors at all? In its specificity, this blessing seems restrictive rather than expansive; it doesn't open out to the range of possibility and promise that ought to characterize youth.”

Blessing of the Children

Heyeh asher tih'yeh
veheyeh baruch
ba'asher tih'yeh

Be who you are
and may you be blessed
in all that you are

<http://www.ritualwell.org/shabbat/shabbatlife/friday/primaryobject.2008-05-08.0877427485>

HANDOUT 2-4:

Sabbath Prayer from Fiddler on the Roof

May the Lord protect and defend you.
May He always shield you from shame.
May you come to be
In Israel a shining name.

May you be like Ruth and like Esther.
May you be deserving of praise.
Strengthen them, Oh Lord,
And keep them from the strangers' ways.

May God bless you and grant you long lives.
(May the Lord fulfill our Sabbath prayer for you.)
May God make you good mothers and wives.
(May He send you husbands who will care for you.)

May the Lord protect and defend you.
May the Lord preserve you from pain.
Favor them, Oh Lord, with happiness and peace.
Oh, hear our Sabbath prayer. Amen.

PROGRAM 4: HAVDALAH – WITH OR WITHOUT A LAKE

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to put the meanings behind the objects used in a Havdalah service into their own words
2. Campers will be able to plan a Havdalah service that can be done at their own home or synagogue

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ The leader will begin by saying:
 - We just studied all about bringing Shabbat in, and how we mark that day as extraordinary or holy.
 - We have a service/ritual that marks the exiting of Shabbat, and the separation between the extraordinary and the ordinary, between the holy and the secular.
 - This service is called Havdalah, which literally means separation.
 - There are 3 objects that are needed to conduct this service. Does anyone know what they are? (Wine/Juice, Spices, Multi-wick candle).
 - All of these objects help us separate between Shabbat and the rest of the week, but how?
 - ☉ In groups of 5, come up with your own reasons why these particular objects are used to help us separate between Shabbat and the rest of the week, between the extraordinary and the ordinary. Be ready to present your hypotheses.
 - ☉ After all groups are done deliberating, ask several groups to share what they thought of for each object.
 - ☉ The leader will then share some answers from Jewish tradition, though these are not necessarily the “right” answers:
 - Wine/Juice – Used at many ritual and prayer occasions to symbolize holiness, sweetness. We brought Shabbat in with the sweet wine/juice, and this helps us bring the sweetness of Shabbat with us for the rest of the week.
 - Spices – On Shabbat, we receive an extra soul (neshamah y'teirah), and this soul departs when Shabbat is over. The spices help to revive us after this extra soul has departed. In a way, these spices are like sweet smelling salts.
 - Candle – We brought Shabbat in with two candles, and we are separating from it with one candle with many wicks. We are extinguishing the light of Shabbat as a form of separation. Also, the many strands may symbolize the many types of Jews in the world, united as one people.
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/havdalah.html>

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ The campers will walk to the site where they normally do Havdalah at camp. The campers will sit in a circle or spiral, and the leader (or a song leader) will sing the tune to the Havdalah service without singing any words.
- ☉ The leader will explain that Havdalah is a service that utilizes all of our senses to create a holy moment. For many people at camp, Havdalah is special, unique, and extraordinary. The leader will instruct the campers to explore the site silently and alone. They will use their senses to find something holy or unique about this specific site. Once the campers have done so, the leader will ask the following questions:
 - What was one special or holy thing you found in this particular place?
 - How does it feel to stand in this space now?
 - How does it feel to come to this space to do Havdalah?
 - What about this place makes Havdalah different from other types of prayer?
 - If this site is used for other camp activities, what about the Havdalah service makes this place holy?
 - How could we take this aspect of the Havdalah service and use it to create holiness when we are not at camp?
 - How might you make Havdalah a special, unique, or holy experience at home or at your synagogue?
 - Havdalah is truly a special experience at camp, but it can be a special experience outside of camp as well. You may want to try finding beautiful places that utilize your senses around your home or your synagogue that will inspire you to pray and do Havdalah.
- ☉ The leader will then instruct the campers to look at the site in which they are standing.
- ☉ The campers should choose one thing from this site that makes them think about the Havdalah service.
- ☉ The campers should try and remember this aspect of the site every time they do Havdalah, whether it is at camp, at home, or elsewhere.
- ☉ Even though Havdalah can be done anywhere, it may help the campers to have a concrete thing on which to draw when doing Havdalah outside of camp.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ As a cabin group, campers may go to the art room and create Havdalah sets to bring home at the end of the session.

PROGRAM 5: PRAYER IN BED

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to summarize the theme of each Jewish bedtime prayer and apply this theme to their own life
2. Campers will be able to assess the appropriateness of Jewish bedtime prayers for use in their own living space

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ As campers come in, they should be put into a large circle, with their arms around each other. The song leader should lead them in their night-time ritual (i.e. closing circle which may include Sh'ma and Hashkivenu). After the campers have sung this once through, the campers are asked to sit down. By now they should be thoroughly confused and asking questions about what just happened. At first, the counselors and the leaders should feign ignorance. Campers may ask:
 - Are we going to bed now? (No, why would you think that?)
 - Why did we just do Hashkivenu/closing circle? (I guess we just felt like doing it. Is that a problem?)
 - Don't we only do that at night? (I guess; whatever you say.)
- ☉ After this goes on for a while, the leader will debrief the activity. The discussion should focus on how it felt to do a night-time prayer in the middle of the day.
 - At camp and in Judaism, we have specific prayers we say at night that prepare us for sleep.
 - The rabbis believed that sleep was 1/60 of death. Sleep can be a scary thing, where we have little control.
 - In a time like this, our tradition helps us get over this fear by turning to God for protection and courage.
 - It is traditional to say the Sh'ma and Hashkivenu before going to sleep.
- ☉ Some possible questions include:
 - Did saying these prayers at the wrong time confuse you? Did it feel wrong? Why or why not?
 - How is sleep similar to death?
 - Can you describe a time when you have been afraid of the dark or afraid of sleep?
 - How did you get over this fear?
 - What role can prayer play in preparing us for sleep?
 - We usually say certain prayers before bed at camp, but does anyone here pray before bed at home?
 - If you were to pray before bed at home, how could you do this without a song leader/big circle of friends?

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Campers are told to lie down and close their eyes.

- ☉ The leader guides them in a short meditation in which the campers should relax, but not fall asleep.
- ☉ After the meditation, campers will be asked to open their eyes, and slowly sit up silently.
- ☉ Once all campers are sitting up, the leader directs their attention to a poster with the words of Modeh Ani written on it:
 - Modeh ani l'fanecha melech chai v'kayam shehechezarta bi nishmati b'chemlah, rabah emunatecha
 - I offer thanks before you, living and eternal Ruler, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.
- ☉ The leader and the campers recite this prayer of thanks.
- ☉ Campers are told that this is the prayer we traditionally say upon waking up, and it is the first thing out of our mouths.
- ☉ Campers are then broken up into groups of 10, with one counselor per group. The counselor then leads the following discussion:
 - How did it feel to recite this prayer?
 - Why do you think Jews recite this prayer right after they wake up?
 - Modeh Ani tells us that God restores our soul every morning. Why do you think our souls need to be restored?
 - How do you usually feel when you need to wake up early in the morning?
 - Do you think you might feel differently if you praised and thanked God in the morning for a new day?
- ☉ Campers will then compose their own blessing to recite in the morning, keeping the themes of Modeh Ani in mind.
- ☉ They will share this blessing with their small groups, and will keep the blessing to put next to their beds for future use.

ACTIVITY 3:

- ☉ Traditionally, there are blessings for parts of the morning rituals. Blessings now in the Morning Service called Nissim B'Chol Yom or Birkot HaShachar originally were said upon doing specific acts associated with getting ready for the day (i.e. opening the eyes, standing up, putting on a belt, putting on a hat).
- ☉ Campers will be broken up into 14 groups, and each group will be given a piece of paper with one of these blessings on it (this can be photocopied from Mishkan T'filah, pp. 36, 38, 40). Their task is to read the blessing and come up with a morning activity that they think might correspond to it. They should then come up with a movement that goes along with this activity, and prepare to present it.
- ☉ Each group will present their blessing, the morning activity, and the movement that goes along with it.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ These actions and movements can be incorporated into the next several t'filah blocks during Nissim B'Chol Yom.

PROGRAM 6: PRAYER FOR THE CABIN

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to demonstrate ways in which their cabin-group is extraordinary
2. Campers will be able to compose a cabin prayer that mixes Jewish text with their own thoughts and beliefs

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ In cabin-groups, campers are given 10 minutes to go to their cabins, find 3 things that they believe represent the unique nature of their cabin, and bring those things back.
- ☉ Once all groups return, they need to create a presentation that shows why these things represent their unique cabin. All groups will present their 3 artifacts.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ In cabin groups, the campers will study the texts of several Birkot HaBayit (Blessings for the Home) (see Handout 2-5). Using this model, they will then compose a Birkat HaTzrif (Blessing for the Cabin), which includes the unique elements of their cabin as discovered in the prior activity.
- ☉ If the campers are having a hard time composing one, the counselor may prompt them with the following questions:
 - What do you think makes our cabin special?
 - If someone were to visit our cabin, how would you like him/her to feel?
 - What could you offer a visitor that others may not be able to offer him/her?
 - How is our cabin like a family?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ As a cabin group, go to the art room to design and create a Mezuzah holder to place on your doorpost.
- ☉ After creating the holder, the cabin may use their Birkat HaTzrif as the scroll, they may include a traditional text (Sh'ma and V'Ahavta), or they may write something completely new, depending on time and energy. Make sure the campers know what constitutes a traditional Mezuzah, even if you are deviating from that text. The Mezuzah holder and the scroll itself should reflect the unique and extraordinary character of the cabin group making it.
- ☉ This activity may be used as a substitute for Activity 2, or added on to it.
- ☉ This activity may also be adapted in order to teach Sh'lom Bayit if there are tensions or conflicts in the cabin group.

HANDOUT 2-5:

Birkat HaBayit #1

Blessing for the Home,
Let no sadness come through this gate,
Let no trouble come to this dwelling,
Let no fear come through this door,
Let no conflict be in this place,
Let this home be filled with the blessing of joy,
and peace.

Birkat HaBayit #2

May this home be a place
of happiness and health,
of contentment, generosity, and hope,
of creativity and kindness.
May all who visit and live here
know only blessing and peace.

Birkat HaBayit #3

May this home and this family
Always know only health and joy
With love and with peace,
with livelihood and with success,
Please bless, O God, this abode.
Amen, may it be Gods will!

Birkat HaBayit #4

May there be light, joy, peace and good will to this home.
May there be an abundance of blessings and holiness in every room and every corner.
And may the light of your Torah and commandments be ever radiant within it.
Amen. Amen.

PROGRAM 7: ASHER YATZAR - DON'T PRAY IN THE BATHROOM

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to explain the times of use and meaning of Asher Yatzar as understood by Jewish tradition
2. Campers will be able to give reasons why Jews do not traditionally pray in certain places (including the bathroom)
3. Campers will be able to explain how prayer can make an everyday act extraordinary

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ Campers will learn the prayer Asher Yatzar in English (Mishkan T'filah, page 32). The leader will ask:
 - What is this prayer about?
 - Other than in the morning service, when do you think one could recite this prayer?
 - Traditionally, this is the prayer Jews say after going to the bathroom. Why do you think there is a prayer for that?
 - Do you think saying this prayer after going to the bathroom would make you think any differently about this everyday action? Why or why not?
 - We are going to help the camp make this everyday action seem a little more extraordinary.
- ☉ Campers will decorate pages with the prayer Asher Yatzar on them (may be photocopied from Mishkan T'filah). They should be reminded that even though this is a prayer for the outside of the bathroom, it is holy and speaks of God. It should inspire people to pray rather than gag!

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ The leader will discuss the following with the campers:
 - While it is true that Judaism sees holiness in the ordinary, such as going to the bathroom, our tradition tells us that not every place is a place for prayer. When we place our prayer sheets, we won't actually put them inside the bathrooms, but right outside of them. This is because Jews are forbidden to pray in the bathroom.
 - Why do you think this might be?
 - Where else do you think it might not be good to pray?
- ☉ The leader will hold up pictures of different places, and each time will ask whether or not someone should pray there. Places may include: bathroom, synagogue, church, table, bed, cemetery, dirty alley, forest, restaurant, cabin, social hall...etc.
- ☉ One side of the room should be designated as "People should pray there", and the other side should be designated "People should not pray there". The campers

should move around the room according to their opinion. Each time, ask a few campers why they have chosen to stand where they are.

- ☺ Continue the discussion:
- If we decide not to pray in a specific place, does it mean that this place is bad? Why?
 - If this place isn't bad, why might we not want to pray there?
 - Jews are forbidden to pray in the bathroom, but that does not mean that what goes on there is evil or shameful. We are going to help remind the rest of camp about this by placing the prayer sheets we decorated, with instructions of when and how this prayer should be utilized, right outside of many bathrooms at camp (including in the cabins). This way, we will help our fellow campers make the ordinary into the extraordinary, and do so in a way that goes along with Jewish tradition.

PROGRAM 8: MAKING THE ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY...AGAIN

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to restate the aspects of ordinary places that make them extraordinary
2. Campers will be able to reflect on the previous unit and the ordinary places that prayer can make extraordinary

ACTIVITY 1:

☉ Campers will be reminded of the treasure hunt they went on at the beginning of the unit. In groups of 5, their task is to write new rhyming clues for the same sites they went to. Their clues should rhyme, and should include something they learned about prayer/ritual at that particular site (i.e. include a reference to Hashkiveinu or Modeh Ani for the bed, include a reference to Asher Yatzar for the bathroom). They should think about what makes a specific site special and how we can make it special.

☉ The sites are:

- Table in the dining hall
- Outside a central bathroom with heavy traffic
- Bed
- Kitchen
- Water fountain
- Dresser/Shelves in a second cabin
- Entrance to Camp

ACTIVITY 2:

☉ Once the campers have created their clues for all 7 sites, they will then join with one other group. While one group presents their clues in random order, the other group must guess where they are supposed to go. Both groups should present to each other. The clues are then compiled by the leader, and reviewed for assessment.

UNIT 3: PRAYER IN NATURE

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT RELATE TO THIS UNIT:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals
2. Jewish prayer calls us to widen our concern beyond the self and invites us to engage in the world to improve it
3. The modern siddur is informed by traditional and contemporary Jewish rituals, texts, and history, while at the same time it informs Jewish practices and the ways in which we view our tradition

UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS:

1. Jewish prayer helps us recognize and praise God as creator of the natural world
2. The beauty of nature can enhance the prayer experience and make us feel closer to God
3. God's omnipresence and holiness can be witnessed in our world through large and small natural phenomena

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. How can nature enhance our prayer experience?
2. What role does God play in the natural world?
3. How did our ancestors connect prayer with the natural world and pray while in nature?
4. How can we connect nature with prayer if we pray inside a building?

ASSESSMENTS:

- Students will create their own prayers and practices that allow them to pray in nature and with God's presence in nature in mind

MEMORABLE MOMENTS:

- Campers will travel all over camp, blessing the natural wonders they see
- Campers will go on a silent nature walk, using all of their senses to experience the holiness of the setting

Program 1: Nature in the Siddur

Program 2: Seeing God in the Natural World

Program 3: Blessings and New Experiences

Program 4: Does Nature Pray?

Program 5: Sights, Sounds, and Silence

Program 6: Bringing Nature Inside (Fully Scripted)

Program 7: Nature, God, and Me

PROGRAM 1: NATURE IN THE SIDTUR

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify references to nature in the siddur
2. Campers will be able to select a prayer about nature that they find meaningful and explain why
3. Campers will be able to distinguish God from God's natural creations

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ The leader will read the story of Creation (Genesis 1) while campers (2 per day of creation) dramatize the natural elements that are being created and the process of creation. The campers who are not performing will serve as the audience for the dramatization.
- ☉ A discussion stressing the difference between God and God's creations should follow. Some possible questions include:
 - According to the Torah, how did all of the elements in nature come about?
 - Many religions believe that natural phenomena are gods. What differences can you see between these beliefs and the creation story from the Torah?
 - What relationship does God have with nature in this story?
 - What relationships do humans have with God and nature in this story?
 - According to this story, does God act in nature?
 - Do you think God acts through the natural world?
 - How might we be able to experience God in the world?
 - How might we be able to acknowledge God for the beauty and power of nature?

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Each camper will be given a siddur that includes a faithful English translation of the main prayers. In groups of 5 or 6, the campers must find as many references to nature in relationship with God as they can. The leader can give hints to look at the following prayers:
 - Yotzeir Or
 - Ma'ariv Aravim
 - Gevurot (the line that changes according to the time of year)
 - Psalms in Kabbalat Shabbat
 - Aleinu (2nd paragraph)
 - Part of Nishmat Kol Chai (Ilu Finu)
 - Mi Chamocha, Psalm 114 of Hallel
- ☉ As small groups, the campers will choose their favorite image of nature in relationship with God in the siddur.
- ☉ The leader will give each group a piece of butcher paper and markers, and instruct the campers to draw what they imagine this piece of nature may look like in

relationship with God (i.e. draw the Red Sea splitting, the mountains trembling, the heavens and the earth being spread out, light rolling away from darkness and vice versa). Be sure to explain that you are not asking them to draw God.

- ☉ After they are finished, each group will share the text they chose and the artistic rendering of this text.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ The leader should save the artistic renderings, and bring them to the next t'filah service. These can be reexamined in order to inspire those praying when they get to a prayer about creation/nature.

PROGRAM 2: SEEING GOD IN THE NATURAL WORLD

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to list 3 large and small natural phenomena that Judaism sees as divine miracles
2. Campers will be able to explain in their own words what makes these small phenomena are miraculous
3. Campers will be able to identify Jewish texts that speak of God's creations and acts in the natural world

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ In small groups, counselors will lead a discussion that allows the campers to read, compare and contrast the texts on Handout 3-1, Exodus 19 and I Kings 19.
- ☉ Both texts show a prophet experiencing God and some sort of revelation on the same mountain (with a different name). There are many tremendous natural phenomena that are part of these experiences. The prophets (and the Israelite people) experience God in very different ways in these two texts.
- ☉ Some people find God in the extravagant rare natural events, and others do not find God in those events, but rather in silence and in the mundane, miniscule parts of nature. All of these can be called "miracles".
 - What might this mean for how we can find God in nature?
 - What might this mean for how we pray in nature?

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Campers sit in concentric circles, each with a partner. The inside and outside circle face each other.
- ☉ The leader will give talking prompts/questions that the campers will discuss with their partners. Campers should have about 2 minutes to respond to prompts and hear their partner's response.
- ☉ After one prompt, one circle rotates so the campers have new partners. The prompts get the campers thinking about how they view natural phenomena, and how others do as well.
- ☉ The prompts are as follows:
 - Share one time you have experienced a huge or rare natural event
 - Share one natural event that happens constantly which you have paid particular attention to in the last month
 - Share one natural event that has caused you to think about God, Judaism, or some force greater than yourself
 - Share one natural event that you wish to witness before you die
 - Share one natural event that you think a Jew might say was a miracle
 - Our morning liturgy has a prayer thanking God for our body. This prayer is also said after going to the bathroom. What is one other bodily function that you would like to thank God for?

HANDOUT 3-1:

Exodus 19

¹⁶ On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled.

¹⁷ Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain.

¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for Adonai had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently.

¹⁹ The blare of the horn grew louder and louder. As Moses spoke, God answered him in thunder.

²⁰ Adonai came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and Adonai called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up.

I Kings 19

⁸ He (Elijah) arose and ate and drank; and with the strength from that meal he walked forty days and forty nights as far as the mountain of God at Horeb (another name for Sinai).

⁹ There he went into a cave, and there he spent the night. Then the word of Adonai came to him. God said to him, "Why are you here, Elijah?"

¹⁰ He replied, "I am moved by zeal for Adonai, the God of Hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and put Your prophets to the sword. I alone am left, and they are out to take my life."

¹¹ "Come out," God called, "and stand on the mountain before Adonai." And lo, Adonai passed by. There was a great and mighty wind, splitting mountains and shattering rocks by the power of Adonai; but Adonai was not in the wind. After the wind -- an earthquake; but Adonai was not in the earthquake.

¹² After the earthquake -- fire; but Adonai was not in the fire. And after the fire -- a soft murmuring sound (a still, small voice).

¹³ When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his mantle about his face and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then a voice addressed him: "Why are you here, Elijah?"

PROGRAM 3: BLESSINGS AND NEW EXPERIENCES

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to acknowledge five things that can be seen as holy that are found in nature through the recitation of blessings
2. Campers will be able to identify natural events and occurrences that cause Jews to bless God
3. Campers will be able to compose their own blessings upon seeing natural phenomena

ACTIVITY 1⁶:

- ☉ The leader will give campers a sheet with traditional blessings upon seeing natural wonders on it. The campers will be broken up into small groups, and will then be given the following instructions:
 - One part of the morning service (Nissim B'Chol Yom) acknowledges the many miracles God performs every day. Miracles in nature can be big or small, apparent or hidden. Sometimes it just takes the right frame of mind to actually see them.
 - Find as many of the things on Handout #2 as possible. When you find the things on the list, say the appropriate blessing (if there is one) both in Hebrew and English.
 - If you find a natural wonder without a blessing listed, create one!
 - Take a mental picture (by blinking your eyes and saying "Click") of all or some members of your group with that object or natural wonder. You can visit them in any order.
 - Mark the wonders you find and keep track of how many you visit.
 - Be creative. Go to any place where you (as a group) may find God, even if it isn't on the list. (For the list see Handout 3-2)
- ☉ In small groups, with one counselor per group, the campers will find things all over camp to bless

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ When all groups have returned, the leader will bring all the campers together and ask them to think of their favorite natural wonder that appears at camp (sunset, waterfalls, waves, large trees).
- ☉ The campers will then come up with a prayer that they would like to say next time they experience this wonder. The prayer can take any form, including: a traditional written blessing, a dance, a song, an exclamation, a dialogue...etc.
- ☉ The campers will then share that wonder and that prayer with the group. After each prayer presentation, the entire group will say "Amen"!

⁶ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ The leader may print out copies of Handout 3-2 for campers to bring with them throughout the week. Campers will carry this sheet with them, and bless God for the natural wonders they see all over camp.

HANDOUT 3-2:

Seeing natural Wonders, including: Mountains, Sunrise, Desert, Lightning, or a Shooting star:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עוֹשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂה בְרָאשִׁית.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam oseh ma'aseh v'reishit.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who performs acts of creation.

Seeing the ocean:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה אֶת הַיָּם הַגָּדוֹל.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam she'asah et ha'yam ha'gadol.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who made the great sea.

Seeing beautiful trees or animals:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁכָּכָה לוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam she'cachah lo b'olamo.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has such in God's universe.

Smelling fragrant trees, shrubs, or aromatic bark:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא עֲצֵי בְשָׁמִים.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam borei atzei v'samim.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates fragrant trees.

Smelling fragrant herbs or plants:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא עֲשָׂבֵי בְשָׁמִים.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam borei eesvei v'samim.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates fragrant plants.

Smelling fragrant fruits:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַנוֹתֵן רִיחַ טוֹב בַּפְּרוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam ha'noten re'ach tov ba'perot.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, Giver of good smells.

Seeing strange-looking animals:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מְשַׁנֶּה הַבְּרִיּוֹת.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam m'shaneh ha'briot.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who makes the creatures different.

Hearing thunder or seeing a storm:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁכָּחוֹ וְגִבּוֹרָתוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam shekocho u'gvurato malei olam.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, whose power and might fill the world.

Seeing a rainbow:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זֹכֵר הַבְּרִית, וְנֹאֲמָן בְּבְרִיתוֹ,
וְקִיָּם בְּמֵאֲמָרוֹ.

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam zocher habrit v'ne'eman bivrito v'kayam
b'ma'amaro.*

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who remembers the covenant, is faithful to it, and keeps your promise.

Seeing a tree blooming for the first time that year:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁלֹא חִסַּר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם,
וַיִּבְרָא בוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבִים לְהַנִּיחַ בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם.

*Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam shelo chisar b'olamo klum, uvara vo briot tovo
v'ilanot tovim l'hanot bahem b'nei adam.*

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has withheld nothing from the world and who has created beautiful creatures and beautiful trees for people to enjoy.

Tasting fruit from a tree:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam borei pri ha'etz.

Blessed are You Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree

PROGRAM 4: DOES NATURE PRAY?

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to paraphrase the Jewish texts that speaks of nature's connection to God through prayer
2. Campers will be able to formulate and articulate an opinion as to whether or not nature has the ability to pray
3. Campers will be able to examine the claim made by environmentalism and by aspects of Judaism that nature is alive and has a relationship with God.

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ The leader will guide the campers in a values clarification activity.
- ☉ One side of the room is designated as "Strongly Agree", while the other is designated as "Strongly Disagree".
- ☉ The leader will ask the campers to stand where they fall based on personal belief, allowing them to be anywhere on the spectrum.
- ☉ The leader will read one of the following statements, allow for the campers to move, and then ask several to explain why they are standing in a specific spot. Make it known that all answers and positions are acceptable, but they may be asked to explain their reasoning.
 - I believe humans have the ability to pray
 - I believe animals have the ability to pray
 - I believe all living things, both plant and animal, have the ability to pray
 - I believe all natural things in the world, whether alive or inanimate, have the ability to pray
 - I have the ability to witness the prayer of nature through my five senses
 - I have the ability to witness the prayer of nature through another vehicle
 - I believe Jews can look to nature in order to learn new ways to pray
 - I believe God hears the prayers of everything that prays equally

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ The campers will be divided into small groups with one counselor per group.
- ☉ Each small group will study and discuss parts of Psalms 96 and 98, which appear in the Kabbalat Shabbat service. They will compare and contrast these Psalms with the text from Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav (see Handout 3-3).
- ☉ The conversation should focus on the ways in which these texts depict nature praying, and what we as praying individuals can learn from the ways in which nature prays.
- ☉ The conversation will also focus on whether the campers believe non-conscious things can actually praise God.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ③ Counselors may take their campers on a nature walk as a bedtime cabin activity, and then go stargazing.
- ③ During the walk and the stargazing, the counselor may read one or more of the texts found in Handout 3-3.

HANDOUT 3-3:

Psalm 96

¹Sing to Adonai a new song, sing to Adonai, all the earth.

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult; let the sea and all within it thunder,

¹² the fields and everything in them exult; then shall all the trees of the forest shout for joy

¹³ at the presence of Adonai, for God is coming, for God is coming to rule the earth; God will rule the world justly, and its peoples in faithfulness.

Psalm 98

⁷ Let the sea and all within it thunder, the world and its inhabitants;

⁸ let the rivers clap their hands, the mountains sing joyously together

⁹ at the presence of Adonai, for God is coming to rule the earth; God will rule the world justly, and its peoples with equity.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratzlav:

How wonderful it would be if one could only be worthy of hearing the song of the grass. Each blade of grass sings out to God without any ulterior motive and without expecting any reward. It is most wonderful to hear its song and worship God in its midst.

- Sichot Haran 163, translated by Aryeh Kaplan

PROGRAM 5: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND SILENCE

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to describe the sights and sounds nature makes
2. Campers will be able to evaluate the appropriateness of using silence as prayer while in a natural setting
3. Campers will be able to use their senses to find holiness in the world around them

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ Campers will study Rebbe Nachman's Prayer (Handout 3-4) in small groups, with one counselor per group.
- ☉ Some possible discussion questions include:
 - Why does Rebbe Nachman think nature is so important to experience daily?
 - How is nature adding to his prayer experience?
 - Have you ever felt that you were able to pray better/easier when you were in nature?
 - Do you think it is easier to appreciate nature fully when you are in a group or alone? Why?
 - Do you think it is easier to appreciate nature fully when you are talking or when you are silent? Why?
 - What kinds of sights and sounds do you think inspired Rebbe Nachman to pray?

ACTIVITY 2⁷:

- ☉ The leader will take campers on a silent nature walk/hike through an isolated and natural part of the camp.
- ☉ Campers should be instructed to try to use their senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing when on the walk, focusing on one sense at a time (i.e. a couple of minutes for hearing, then sight, then smell, then touch). After they have done this, they can choose to linger on a particular sense, or try and integrate them all.
- ☉ If possible, the campers should be allowed to spread out and be alone in nature while still being watched for safety reasons.
- ☉ The leader will then bring the entire group back together, and debrief that silent nature walk.
- ☉ Questions may include:
 - When you were on this nature walk, did you feel closer to God than you usually do?
 - Usually when we pray we sing, clap, and are in a community. How did it feel to be alone and silent? Was it a prayerful experience?

⁷ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

- How did using your senses affect the experience? Did it enhance your spirituality or inhibit it?
- How might you do this when you are not at camp or not surrounded by wilderness?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

☉ This activity may also be adapted for a t'filah service for the session.

HANDOUT 3-4:

Rebbe Nachmann's Prayer

Master of the Universe, grant me the ability to be alone.
May it be my custom to go outdoors each day among the trees and grasses,
Among all growing things,
There to be alone and enter into prayer.
There may I express all that is in my heart,
Talking with (the One) to whom I belong.
And may all grasses, trees, and plants
Awake at my coming.
Send the power of their life into my prayer,
Making whole my heart and my speech through the life and spirit of growing things,
Made whole by their transcendent Source.
Oh! That they would enter my prayer!
Then would I fully open my heart in prayer, supplication, and holy speech;
Then, O God, would I pour out the words of my heart before Your Presence.

PROGRAM 6: BRINGING NATURE INSIDE (Fully Scripted)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to recall aspects of nature that help them pray
2. Campers will be able to provide a rationale for infusing prayer in a building with prayer in nature
3. Campers will be able to propose ways in which prayer in nature can be transferred to prayer indoors
4. Campers will be able to synthesize what they have learned in the past unit when creating a synagogue

MATERIALS:

Butcher paper
Markers/paint
Instructions for each group (Handout 3-5)

TIMELINE:

0:00-0:05: Set Induction
0:05-0:07: Campers Break into Groups
0:07-0:10: Give Instructions
0:10-0:40: Design Synagogue
0:40-0:55: Present Designs
0:55-1:00: Conclusion and Clean-up

0:00-0:05: SET INDUCTION

- ☉ 3 senior staff members, (i.e. Unit Head, Camp Director, Faculty Member, Medical Staff), posing as members of a Congregational Building Committee, enter while the campers are seated.
- ☉ They introduce themselves and tell the campers they represent a Reform congregation in the area. Their congregation is rebuilding the synagogue, and they need help. The committee members heard that these particular students have been studying about prayer in nature, so they are experts in the field by now...or they at least might have some useful ideas for rebuilding the synagogue in a way that incorporates nature into their prayer space.
- ☉ The committee members will ask the campers to please do their best, because the congregation is relying on them!

0:05-0:10: BREAK UP INTO GROUPS AND GIVE INSTRUCTIONS

- ☉ Campers will be broken up into groups of 7-10, with at least one counselor per group. They will be given a piece of butcher paper and markers/paint. They will also be given written instructions as follows:
 - You are a group of architects who have been approached by a Reform Jewish congregation. The congregation is completely renovating their synagogue building, and they want you to design the synagogue,

especially the prayer space(s). The congregation is a spiritual and prayerful community, but they feel like something was missing in their old building. They want you to design a building that allows them to incorporate nature in their prayer and in their building. The congregational leaders know that you have been learning about enhancing your prayer experiences through the use of nature. The congregational leaders believe that you may have ideas about bringing nature indoors for them. Design a synagogue, focusing on the prayer space(s), that meets their specifications. The synagogue must be functional as a prayer space, must be indoors, and must include elements of nature that aid in prayer. You have 30 minutes and you must work as a team, GO!

0:10-0:40: DESIGN SYNAGOGUE

- ☉ While the campers are designing the synagogue, the leader will visit the groups to answer questions and make sure they are on task. Counselors will be managing the groups and helping them when they are stuck, but the campers should be coming up with the bulk of the ideas and designs on their own.
- ☉ In order to make their blue prints 3-D, the campers may use pieces of nature that they can find around camp (i.e. leaves, twigs, pebbles, pinecones).
- ☉ For the list of criteria by which the design will be judged, see Handout #5.

0:40-0:55: PRESENT DESIGNS

- ☉ After all groups have designed the synagogue, they will present their design to the rest of the groups and also to the members of the Congregational Building Committee who will judge the designs. The designs should be judged based on the instructions given to the campers:
 - Does it incorporate nature?
 - Is it creative?
 - Is it functional as a communal prayer space?
 - Did they work as a team?
 - Is it indoors?
 - Is there anything specifically Jewish in this space?
 - Make sure campers articulate justifications, not just what they put, but also why they did so

0:55-1:00: CONCLUSION AND CLEAN-UP

- ☉ After all groups have presented, the leader will conclude by using the campers' ideas to show how the campers themselves can bring nature into an indoor prayer experience.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ If the unit prays indoors on a regular basis, some of these suggestions may be attempted during a unit t'filah service.

Handout 3-5:

- You are a group of architects who have been approached by a Reform Jewish congregation. The congregation is completely renovating their synagogue building, and they want you to design the synagogue, especially the prayer space(s).
- The congregation is a spiritual and prayerful community, but they feel like something was missing in their old building. They want you to design a building that allows them to incorporate nature in their prayer and in their building.
- The congregational leaders know that you have been learning about enhancing your prayer experiences through the use of nature.
- The congregational leaders believe that you may have ideas about bringing nature indoors for them.
- Design a synagogue, focusing on the prayer space(s), that meets their specifications. The synagogue must be functional as a prayer space, must be indoors, and must include elements of nature that aid in prayer.
- You have 30 minutes and you must work as a team, GO!

Criteria by which your designs will be judged:

- Does it incorporate nature?
- Is it creative?
- Is it functional as a communal prayer space?
- Is it indoors?
- Is there anything specifically Jewish in this space?
- Did you work as a team?

PROGRAM 7: NATURE, GOD, AND ME

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to create their own ways of connecting to God through experiencing and acknowledging nature
2. Campers will be able to articulate how experiencing nature can lead to wonder and awe, which can lead to an awareness of God

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ The leader will review some of the texts and ideas surrounding prayer in nature.
- ☉ Campers will compose a prayer that they would feel comfortable reciting when in nature. The prayer should allow them to experience the feeling of praying in nature, even when not in a natural setting. This prayer may take the form of prose, a formal blessing, a poem, a song, or a drawing. It can be a supplement to one of the texts they studied earlier in the unit, or it can be something entirely new.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ On another piece of paper, the campers will write a letter to themselves saying why it is important to experience prayer in nature. They will come up with one practice that they wish to do regularly alone or with family in order to find God through experiencing the natural elements (i.e. take a hike once a month, go to the beach, sit outside silently and listen to the sounds of nature once a week, walk barefoot on grass, grow a garden and eat from it). The letter should describe this practice and how often they wish to do it.
- ☉ The campers are given envelopes, into which they place the prayers and the letter. They will write their names and their home addresses on the envelopes, and then the leader will collect them all.
- ☉ At the end of the session, the leader will send the letters to the campers' homes so that the campers will be able to experience prayer in nature away from camp.
- ☉ The campers should open the letter when they receive it in the mail and try to implement its suggestions as soon as they can.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ Before the next prayer block, the leader will ask several campers to share their prayers during the service (if the service is held outdoors in nature).

UNIT 4: PRAYER THROUGH ACTION

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT RELATE TO THIS UNIT:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals
2. Jewish prayer calls us to widen our concern beyond the self and invites us to engage in the world to improve it

UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS:

1. Tikkun Olam, or social action, can be a spiritual experience that brings us closer to God
2. Jewish prayer calls us to widen our concern beyond the self and invites us to engage in the world to improve it
3. We can learn about ways to affect change in the world by looking at the ways in which Jews have done so in the past

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. How can prayer and spirituality lead to action?
2. How can engaging in Tikkun Olam and ritual lead to prayer and spirituality?
3. How can campers change the world in profound ways at camp and at home?
4. What role does the history of Jewish practice play in our practices today?

ASSESSMENTS:

- Campers will create a Plan of Action for engaging in tikkun olam after the session is over
- Campers will decide on a practice to institute in their own lives, and will share this with the group

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

- Campers will engage in a tikkun olam project and put their learning into action

Program 1: Going Beyond Spirituality
Program 2: Spirituality and Ongoing Mitzvot
Program 3: Spirituality and Ritual Practices
Program 4: What is Tikkun Olam? (Fully Scripted)
Program 5: Social Action Project
Program 6: Acting in the World Everyday

PROGRAM 1: GOING BEYOND SPIRITUALITY

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to explain the differences between spirituality and action in the world
2. Campers will be able to explain in their own words why action is necessary in religious life

ACTIVITY 1:

Counselors will act out the events found in Isaiah 58. The counselors should be fervently praying and asking God for mercy. They should emphasize their frustration that even though they are very spiritual and pious, God does not seem to be answering them. They are fasting on the right day, and they believe they are doing everything right, but they are still not getting any response from God. Then one counselor (Isaiah) will come in and him/herself as Isaiah, the prophet of Adonai. Isaiah will then deliver the following address to the counselors:

Isaiah 58:5-9:

Is this the fast I look for? A day of self-affliction? Bowing your head like a reed, and covering yourself with sackcloth and ashes? Is this what you call a fast, a day acceptable to Adonai?

Is not this the fast I look for: to unlock the shackles of injustice, to undo the fetters of bondage, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every cruel chain? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and to bring the homeless poor into your house? When you see the naked to clothe them, and never to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then shall your light blaze forth like the dawn, and your wounds shall quickly heal; your Righteous One will walk before you, the Presence of Adonai will be your rear guard. Then, when you call, Adonai will answer; when you cry, God will say: "Here I am."⁸

The leader will ask:

- What did these people think they were doing right?
- What did Isaiah say they were missing?
- According to this text from Isaiah, is it enough to be a spiritual person who prays and studies all day?
- What else must a Jew do?
- What is the danger of having Jews pray and learn all day? Aren't those good things?
- What are some examples of acting in the world that Isaiah gives us?
- Can we think of anything Isaiah left out?

⁸ Translation taken from: Stern, Chaim, ed. *Gates of Repentance*. New York: The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1978. pp. 346-349

Our tradition tells us that spirituality is a good thing, but it is not everything. You may have heard the popular saying “Pray as if everything depended on God, act as if everything depended on you.” We must go beyond prayer and study and make the world a better place through our actions. This might take the form of Tikkun Olam or social action. It may take the form of ritual, or it may take the form of doing other mitzvot, commandments. These are all ways in which Judaism tells us we can and should act in the world to improve it.

ACTIVITY 2:

Unfortunately, the Jews that the prophet Isaiah was talking to did not quite get the message. They are still not convinced that they need to act in the world in order to be righteous and pious Jews. Even if they did believe this, some of them aren't sure how they might do this! It is your job to convince them that it is necessary for them to act in the world to make it better. You must also come up with one concrete example of how to do this and present it to them.

Campers will be broken up into small groups, with one counselor per group. They will plan a presentation that shows the importance of action in Judaism and gives one example of going beyond spirituality by acting. This example should be something that prayer or Jewish tradition can inspire. (i.e. visiting the sick, consoling the bereaved, volunteering at a homeless shelter, collecting canned food, inviting someone who has no family around into a Pesach Seder, donating holiday presents to needy children, being nice to a brother or sister, honoring parents...etc.)

Once all groups have planned their presentations, they will present to the counselors who were in the earlier skit as the pious Jews.

PROGRAM 2: SPIRITUALITY AND ONGOING MITZVOT

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to describe how the prayer experience can influence how we act on a regular basis
2. Campers will be able to determine which mitzvot they find important enough to do on a regular basis

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ V'ahavta – Love and action
- ☉ The leader will begin by asking the campers to play a game. The leader will read some statements, and anytime the statement applies to a certain camper, or the camper agrees with it, they must stand up spin in place, and sit down. The leader may then ask one of the campers who stood up to elaborate if necessary.
 - There are people in the world whom I love
 - There are people in the world who love me
 - If someone loves you, that means you don't have to do anything for them
 - Certain responsibilities come with love
 - Sometimes I do special things for people I love without being asked
 - I know someone loves me because they tell me they do
 - I know someone loves me because they have shown me in some other way (how did this person show you?)
 - When I have done something special for someone I love, it has strengthened our relationship
- ☉ Campers will be broken up into small groups with one counselor per group, and will be given the text of the V'ahavta (see Handout 4-1).
- ☉ They will study this prayer, paying close attention to the relationship between the love and the actions described in the text. This prayer shows us that in order to be in a loving relationship with God, we have to act in certain ways. This relationship is not a free-for-all; responsibilities come with it. We call these responsibilities “mitzvot”, or “commandments”.
- ☉ We say the V'ahavta every day, and this prayer reminds us that we show our love for God by fulfilling mitzvot. We might differ over which mitzvot we should do, but filling our lives and our actions with mitzvot is a way to fill our lives and our actions with love.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ There are two different kind of mitzvot. One is called “bein adam l'adam”, which means “between one person and another”. The second is called “bein adam l'Makom”, which means “between a person and God”. As Reform Jews, we can usually see the value in mitzvot between one person and another, but it is harder for us to see the value in mitzvot between a person and God.
- ☉ In small groups, the campers will brainstorm as many mitzvot that they think might be between a person and God. It may happen that they list things that are

- not mitzvot. These are still acceptable responses. If possible, they should give a possible reason that a Reform Jew might want to do each mitzvah.
- ☉ After they have made their list, the small group should then decide on one mitzvah on which they would like to focus.
 - ☉ Once they have chosen this mitzvah, they will take a sheet of butcher paper, and write/draw the following:
 - The mitzvah
 - Why they think Jews should perform it
 - A picture that shows how to do this mitzvah or what the result might be
 - ☉ The groups will then share their posters, and then the leader will collect them.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ The leader will put up the posters around camp so that all of camp can see the value of performing certain mitzvot between a person and God.

HANDOUT 4-1:

V'ahavta

You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you are sitting at home and when you go on a journey, when you lie down and when you rise up.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be frontlets between your eyes.

You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Be mindful of all My mitzvot, and do them: so shall you consecrate yourselves to your God.

I am Adonai your God who led you out of Egypt to be your God; I am Adonai your God.

PROGRAM 3: SPIRITUALITY AND RITUAL PRACTICES

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to interpret spiritual meanings behind specific traditional Jewish rituals
2. Campers will be able to illustrate how inner spirituality can lead to outer expressions of devotion and identity

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ In the last program, we talked about acting according to the commandments found in Jewish tradition. Sometimes we do things that are Jewish, but aren't exactly commandments. Just because they aren't commandments does not mean that they are not meaningful, holy, or spiritual. They might have a basis in the Jewish religion, or possibly in the Jewish culture. In any case, these rituals are ways of acting Jewishly on a fairly regular basis. We call these minhagim (plural of minhag), which means customs. They can be customs done by a community, by a family, or even done by an individual.
- ☉ The campers will be divided into 5 groups and will rotate to 5 different stations.
- ☉ 5 counselors will be designated as station leaders. Each station leader will present a Jewish ritual that is not a direct mitzvah. They will present the ritual itself, the basis for the ritual in Jewish tradition, and the meaning the ritual has for them in modern times. The leader should encourage the counselors to be creative in their presentation styles (i.e. use props, act out what they are doing).
- ☉ Each station should take about 5 minutes.
- ☉ Some possible rituals are as follows:
 - Eating apples and honey on Rosh HaShanah
 - Making latkes on Chanukah
 - Having Shabbat dinner with loved ones every week
 - Singing in closing circle at camp every night
 - Cooking Matzah Ball Soup with grandparents
 - Baking Challah/Hamentaschen with a parent
 - Breaking a glass at a Jewish wedding and shouting "mazel tov!"
 - Dancing the Horah
 - Eating at a Jewish deli

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Each group will then be broken in half, so there are 10 groups of campers. In these smaller groups, the campers are given the following instructions:
- ☉ The Union for Reform Judaism has asked camp to invent some new Jewish rituals, and we need your help! Your task is to create a new Jewish ritual that many Jews can do on a regular basis. The ritual must be based on something in Judaism, either a holiday, a Jewish text, a prayer, a mitzvah, or an existing Jewish ritual. It should make the person who is engaging in it feel Jewish and feel a

sense of meaning. We know this is a difficult task, but if anyone can do it, you can! Go!

- ① When the groups have created their rituals, the campers will all come together and each group will present their ritual to the entire session.

 **PROGRAM 4: WHAT IS TIKKUN OLAM? (Fully Scripted)**

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to recall the origin of the idea of tikkun olam as told by Rabbi Isaac Luria and apply it to current practices
2. Campers will be able to compare and contrast Heschel's idea of praying with your feet with other types of prayer

MATERIALS:

Handout 4-2

Isaac Luria costume

TIMELINE:


0:00-0:10: Set Induction

0:10-0:25: Lurianic Kabbalah Story

0:25-0:50: Praying with Our Feet

0:50-1:00: Conclusion

0:00-0:10: SET INDUCTION


 The song leader will come in and teach the words to Dan Nichols' "L'Takein/Na Na Song".

 Lyrics:


- Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, shenatan lanu hizdamnut l'takein et ha-olam.

- Translation:

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has given us to the opportunity to fix the world.

 The song leader should stress that even though this song is usually sung in shirah without a thought, it is actually a blessing that praises God for letting us make the world better!

0:10-0:25: LURIANIC KABBALAH STORY

 The leader will come out dressed up and acting as Rabbi Isaac Luria. S/he will explain Lurianic Kabbalah as a story with God as a character:

- Before the Earth, the Sun, or anything else in the universe existed, all that existed was God.

- God filled the entire universe, and there was no room for anything else.

- God decided to create everything in our universe, including our world, the Earth, and everything on it, including us!

- In order to do this, God had to make room for Creation in the universe. There was no room because God took up all the space.

- God did something called tzimtzum, which means contraction. This means that God contracted some of God's self and made a vacuum, which would be filled with every part of Creation.

- In order to keep this space available, God created some vessels to put some of God's self in. These vessels would contain part of God so Creation could occur.
 - Once God created everything, the Sun, the earth, the Moon, and us, the vessels begin to break.
 - It turned out, that the part of God that was trapped in those vessels was too strong, so the vessels shattered and shards went all over the universe.
 - As part of Creation, it is our job to find these shards of the vessels and return them to their rightful place.
 - In finding these vessels, we are helping make God whole again, and we are fixing that which was broken.
 - In Hebrew, the word for "fixing" is "tikkun". The way in which we find these vessels and return them to their rightful place is tikkun olam.
 - When we engage in tikkun olam, we are making the world more whole, more complete. When we do this, we also make God more complete.
 - Our current ideas of tikkun olam originated with this belief. Rabbi Issac Luria, or the Ari, was the first one to tell this story about the beginning of the world. He was a kabbalist, a Jewish mystic in the Israeli town of Safed. This is where we get the term "tikkun olam," and this is where we get the idea that when we engage in social action, we are actually having a major effect on God and on the world. Even the smallest bit of tikkun olam that we engage in has the ability to affect God and the world in positive ways.
- ☉ The leader will then ask for questions or comments from the campers.

0:25-0:50: PRAYING WITH OUR FEET

- ☉ The idea of tikkun olam has come a long way since the times of Rabbi Luria. One rabbi who has influenced the way in which we look at tikkun olam, social action, is Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.
- ☉ Heschel is noted as originating the idea that we can pray with our feet. In order to figure out what this means, every camper should grab a partner and show their partner what they think it might look like to have their feet pray. Take 3 minutes to share this.
- ☉ The leader will bring the campers back together, and will give the campers a basic biography of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Joshua_Heschel
- ☉ Heschel was a rabbi, Jewish thinker, Holocaust survivor, and social activist. He was an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War and a proponent of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1965, he marched for Voting Rights with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama.
- ☉ Campers will be divided into small groups, with one counselor per group.
- ☉ Campers will be given Handout 4-2. They will read and discuss Heschel's quote, which ends with "I felt my legs were praying."
- What does he mean when he says he felt his legs were praying?
 - How is he reinterpreting Jewish prayer?

- Heschel sees engaging in tikkun olam as a form of prayer. In what ways can tikkun olam be like prayer?
- In what ways can it be different from prayer?
- ☉ The campers will then read the second quote on Handout 4-2, focusing on the following questions:
 - What is Heschel saying in this quote?
 - Why do people forfeit the right to worship God if they do nothing about injustice in the world?
 - For Heschel, is it enough to pray all the time, or do we have to do other things in order to serve God?
- ☉ The group leaders will conclude the discussion by saying:
 - Heschel believed that tikkun olam was a key way to serve God. It is something that can be inspired by spirituality, but can also be a spiritual experience in and of itself. Because of Heschel, Judaism now has an idea of “praying with your feet”. This means that we express our spiritual selves and connect to Judaism, to each other, and to God by standing up, speaking out, and acting in the world to make it a better place.
- ☉ Now that we know what Heschel meant when he coined the term “praying with our feet”, the campers will get back together with their partners and will show them what they think it might look like to have their feet pray.

0:50-1:00: CONCLUSION

- ☉ The leader will get the campers back into one big group and will ask the following:
 - What kinds of things did you show your partner the first time you were with them?
 - What kinds of things did you show them the second time you were with them?
 - What changed?
 - Did anything stay the same?
 - Do you think Heschel’s idea of having his feet/legs pray is a helpful image to keep in mind when engaging in tikkun olam?
 - Can you think of any other images that may help us think about what it means to engage in tikkun olam?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ At the next song session, the song leader may choose to teach and sing songs about tikkun olam, such as Dan Nichols’ “L’Takein (The Na Na Song),” Rick Recht’s “Shalom Ba’Olam,” and Cantor Wally and Craig Rosen’s “Fixin’ the World.”

Handout 4-2:

"For many of us the march from Selma to Montgomery was about protest and prayer. Legs are not lips and walking is not kneeling. And yet our legs uttered songs. Even without words, our march was worship. I felt my legs were praying."

- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1965

"Please demand of religious leaders personal involvement not just solemn declaration. We forfeit the right to worship God as long as we continue to humiliate Negroes... The hour calls for moral grandeur and spiritual audacity."

- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel in a letter to President John F. Kennedy, 1963

PROGRAM 5: SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to pray by engaging in tikkun olam
2. Campers will be able to initiate future spiritual tikkun olam projects at camp and at home

ACTIVITY 1⁹:

- ☉ The campers will engage in a social action project. This project should either correspond to the NFTY Social Action theme for the year (<http://www.nfty.org/resources/actiontheme/>), or should correspond to the camp theme for the summer if possible. It should be a project in which the campers can be active and feel like they are making a difference. If possible, the project should also be something that can be done with a sense of spirituality or prayer.
- ☉ Some examples include:
 - Making Get Well cards for children in the hospital
 - Beautifying camp by cleaning it, picking up trash, and recycling
 - Raising money for a cause they find important
 - Writing letters to their congressional representatives on an issue on which Judaism has a stance
 - Putting together care packages for soldiers or needy people
 - For more ideas, visit www.rac.org

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Individually, campers will create a Plan of Action for themselves. This Plan should give specific reasons to engage in tikkun olam in the future, ways in which it might be seen as a prayerful experience, specific causes they care deeply about, and specific activities that they can do both at camp and at home.
- ☉ Once all campers have finished, the leader will collect the Plans of Action for assessment. They will be returned on the last day of camp for the campers to take home with them.

⁹ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

PROGRAM 6: ACTING IN THE WORLD EVERYDAY

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to judge which types of action they find to be spiritually inspired and spiritually fulfilling
2. Campers will be able to incorporate spiritually based action into their daily lives

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ Each counselor is assigned a different action, which can be in the realm of ritual, mitzvah, or tikkun olam. They will be stationed around the room and outside of it as space allows. The campers will approach the counselors, at which point the counselors will begin to act out their action. The campers will have to ask the counselor what they are doing and why they are doing it.
- ☉ Campers will be given a chart (see Handout 4-3) and a pencil. They will have to go around the room and gain the information necessary to fill out as much of the chart as they can. Questions on the chart they will have to answer include:
 - What is the action?
 - Did a spiritual experience lead to this action?
 - Can this action lead to spiritual experience?
 - How does this action make the world better?
 - Could you do this action at home?
- ☉ Possible actions for the counselors to act out are as follows:
 - Light Shabbat candles
 - Volunteer at a soup kitchen
 - Attend Shabbat services regularly
 - Visit sick children in the hospital
 - Help parents with household chores
 - Wear a kippah on a regular basis
 - Read the weekly Torah portion with family members
 - Tutor younger students in a particular subject
 - Pay attention to what they are eating (i.e. kosher, kosher style, eco-kosher, vegetarian, organic)
 - Smile and say hello to people with whom they come into contact
 - Sing in the choir
 - Visit a home for the elderly and read/talk to the residents
 - If they see recyclables in the trash, take them out and put them in a recycling bin
 - Walk or ride a bike instead of asking for a ride to somewhere nearby
 - Volunteer at the local animal shelter
 - Plant trees and flowers in their yards/start a garden

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Campers will examine their charts from the previous activity with a partner.
- ☉ Based on this chart, they will choose at least one action that they will do for the rest of the session, and also when they return home. Each camper will help talk

this out with his/her partner, and will help them in the decision making process. The final decision, however, remains in the hands of the camper who will be taking this action on as a regular practice.

- ② Once all of the campers have decided on an action they want to institute, they will come back together in a large group and the leader will ask for some of the campers to share their decisions.
- ② The leader should be paying attention to the decisions the campers made and their reason for making them as a form of assessment.

HANDOUT 4-3:

What is the action?	Did a spiritual experience lead to this action?	Can this action lead to spiritual experience?	How does this action make the world better?	Could you do this action at home?

UNIT 5: PRAYER IN THE SYNAGOGUE

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT RELATE TO THIS UNIT:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals
2. Jewish prayer calls us to widen our concern beyond the self and invites us to engage in the world to improve it

UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS:

1. The synagogue is the central Jewish communal institution where meaningful prayer can take place
2. Being part of a synagogue obligates the Jew to be part of his/her community in deep ways
3. Although synagogues have evolved over Jewish history, certain aspects of this institution are constant and can connect us to Jews of the past, present, and future

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. How is prayer in a synagogue community different than prayer anywhere else?
2. How can prayer in a synagogue be most meaningful to a young progressive Jew?
3. What are the benefits and responsibilities that come along with being part of a synagogue community?

ASSESSMENTS:

- Campers will present innovations they would make to a synagogue's services in order to invigorate the synagogue's prayer life

MEMORABLE MOMENT:

- Campers will experience a prayer service in which everything is done differently than usual in order to begin a conversation about innovation and change within a community

Program 1: A Synagogue is Unique (Fully Scripted)

Program 2: Synagogue as a Prayer Community

Program 3: Innovation in a Community

PROGRAM 1: A SYNAGOGUE IS UNIQUE (Fully Scripted)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to explain why a synagogue is a unique place in which to pray
2. Campers will be able to differentiate between prayer at camp and prayer in a synagogue

MATERIALS:

Decorations for each synagogue
Handout 5-1
Paper
Pencils

TIMELINE:

0:00-0:05: Set Induction
0:05-0:35: Synagogue Rotation
0:35-0:55: Mah Tovv Haiku
0:55-0:60: Conclusion

0:00-0:05: SET INDUCTION

- ☉ The leader will ask the campers to think of a place that is designed for Jews to come together for prayer.
 - What are some things that this place might have? (prayer books, seats, beautiful things to look at, good acoustics, ark, podium)
 - People of all religions come together to pray in their houses of worship. Jews pray together primarily in synagogues. Today, we will take a closer look at what a synagogue is and what makes it such a special place.

0:05-0:35: SYNAGOGUE ROTATION (4 stations x 6 minutes/station plus 6 minutes transition time)

- ☉ The programming space is divided into 4 areas (some of which may be outside or even all over camp). Each space will be a different type of synagogue, with one or two counselors stationed in that space.
- ☉ The campers are broken up into 4 groups, with one counselor per group. The groups will rotate to these different areas in order to experience all 4 synagogues. In each place, the leaders should present the different synagogues respectfully, without denigrating the various traditions.
- ☉ **Synagogue 1:** Modern Reform synagogue. There is mixed seating in rows, or in a half circle, with the prayer leader at the front on a small bimah (stage). The leaders should engage the campers in some familiar prayers, possibly with guitar

or piano. There may be ornamentation such as (fake) stained glass windows, and an ornate ark (made out of butcher paper or cardboard boxes). The leader should be wearing a colorful kippah and a small tallit.

☉ **Synagogue 2:** Orthodox Ashkenazic synagogue. A mechitzah (divider) is set up in the synagogue. Males and females are separated, and must sit on their own side of the mechitzah. The prayer leader should be at the same level as the worshippers, and should be in the front. If possible, this should be a fairly small, confined space with little ornamentation other than a simple ark. Everything should be facing east. The leader should be wearing a black kippah and a large black and white tallit. The leader should explain these basic elements of the synagogue and who prays there.

☉ **Synagogue 3:** Sephardic synagogue. A mechitzah (divider) is set up in the synagogue. Males and females are separated, and must sit on their own side of the mechitzah. The prayer leader should be in the middle of the male campers, and everyone should be facing east. There should be Middle-Eastern looking ornamentation, with an ornate ark. The leader should be wearing a large kippah and a large tallit. The leader should explain these basic elements of the synagogue and who prays there (Traditional Jews with ancestors from Spain, the Middle-East, and North Africa).

☉ **Synagogue 4:** Classical Reform synagogue. There is mixed seating in rows, with the prayer leader at the front on a high bimah (stage). There should be much ornamentation, done in European style. The leader should be dressed nicely and should be wearing no ritual garments. The leader should read the following with very proper pronunciation:

- “Let us adore the ever-living God, and render praise unto Him who spread out the heavens and established the earth, whose glory is revealed in the heavens above and whose greatness is manifest throughout the world: He is our God, and there is none else.

We bow the head and bend our knee and magnify the King of kings, the Holy One, the Ever-blest.

May the time not be distant, O God, when Thy name shall be worshipped in all the earth, when unbelief shall disappear and error be no more. We fervently pray that the day may come upon which all men shall invoke Thy name, when corruption and evil shall give way to purity and goodness, when superstition shall no longer enslave the minds, nor idolatry blind the eyes; when all inhabitants of the earth shall perceive that to Thee alone every knee must bend and every tongue give homage. O may all, created in Thine image, recognize that they are brethren, so that they, one in spirit and one in fellowship, may be forever united before Thee. Then shall Thy kingdom be established on earth and the word of Thine ancient seer be fulfilled: The Eternal shall rule forever and aye.

On that day the Eternal shall be One and His name shall be One.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Text taken from the Union Prayer Book, 1906, pp. 48-49

0:35-0:55: MAH TOVU HAIKU

- ☉ Now that the campers have experienced several different types of synagogues, they will explore how Jews enter synagogues, no matter what the type.
- ☉ Campers will get into groups of 7-10, with one counselor per group.
- ☉ The group leader will lead the campers in a short text study with the first few lines of Mah Tovv (See Handout 5-1). Talking points include:
 - Part of this text is from the Book of Numbers, and is said by a non-Jew, Balaam, who was sent to curse the Israelites but ended up praising them and complimenting their camp
 - Other parts of the prayer come from different parts of the Bible
 - Traditionally, this text was recited upon entering a beautiful synagogue
 - The text is now said as an opening prayer in a service
 - Ask: Why do you think this text is recited upon entering a synagogue?
 - Ask: Do you think God dwells in synagogues when we pray?
 - Ask: What makes a synagogue different than any other building?
- ☉ The group leader will ask the campers to think about one thing at their home congregation that helps with the prayer experience, something that is particularly beautiful. It should be something unique to a synagogue, which cannot be found at camp (i.e. full-time rabbi, cantor who sings melodies they are familiar with, air conditioning, comfortable chairs, a siddur they are familiar with, stained glass windows, a beautiful ark, shade from the sun...etc.)
- ☉ Each camper will choose one of these things, and will be given a piece of paper and a pencil. The campers will have 5 minutes to compose a haiku (3 line poem: 5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables) about this one thing at their congregation and how it helps in the prayer experience.
- ☉ The campers will then get back together in their small groups to share their haiku poems.

0:55-1:00: CONCLUSION

- ☉ The song leader will ask the campers to close their eyes and imagine seeing their home synagogue. S/he will then lead the campers in the song “Mah Tovv”

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☉ Before the next prayer service, the leader will gather the campers at the entrance of their prayer space. As they enter and find their seats, the song leader will lead the campers in one version of the song “Mah Tovv”.

HANDOUT 5-1:

Mah Tovu

מה טובו אהליך יעקב,
משכנתיך ישראל.

ואני ברב חסדך אבוא ביתך,
אשפחוה אל היכל קדשך ביראתך.

?? אהבתי מעון ביתך,
ומקום משכן כבודך.
ואני אשפחוה ואכרעה,
אברכה לפני ?? עשי.

ואני תפלתי לך ?? עת רצון,
אלהים ברב חסדך,
עוני באמת ישעך.

Ma tovu ohalekha Ya'akov, mishk'notekha Yisra'el.
Va'ani b'rov hasd'kha, avo veytekha,
Eshtahaveh el heikhal kodsh'kha b'yir'atekha.
Adonai ahavti m'on beitekha, um-kom mishkan k'vodekha.

How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel!
And I, with Your great loving-kindness, shall enter Your House;
I shall prostrate myself toward Your Holy Temple in the awe of You.
Adonai, I love the dwelling of Your house and the place of the residence of Your glory.

PROGRAM 2: SYNAGOGUE AS A PRAYER COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to discuss the ways in which community enhances prayer
2. Campers will be able to recognize the synagogue as a place in which meaningful communal prayer can occur

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ In small groups, with one counselor per group, the campers will engage in a text study looking at the ways in which Reform Judaism has viewed the synagogue as a place for community and prayer. They will examine the different ways in which the synagogue and its roles have been described in several CCAR platforms¹¹ (Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinic organization of the Reform Movement, see Handout 5-2).
- ☉ They will then create their own platform, describing the community and prayer aspects of a synagogue as would like it to be.
- ☉ When all groups have finished, they will join with one other group and share their platforms.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ A counselor or an educational leader will share with the campers a time when s/he went to synagogue in order to recite Kaddish. The speaker should present the Jewish law that 10 adult Jews are needed in order to recite Kaddish. They should also speak about how it felt to recite this prayer in a community, and how it might have felt if s/he did not have a community to recite it with.
- ☉ The leader will then ask the campers:
 - Who here has ever gone to temple to recite Kaddish?
 - Has there ever been fewer than 10 people at your temple when you went to recite Kaddish?
 - Why do you think Jewish tradition requires there to be 10 Jews present in order to say this blessing?
 - In what ways does the presence of a community help people in the mourning process?
 - What are some other instances in which a community might help with the prayer experience?
- ☉ Pirke Avot 2:5 states “Al tifrosh min hatzibbur/Do not separate yourself from the community”. This text is telling us that just as we benefit from the presence of community in prayer and at other times, we have a responsibility to be part of the Jewish community for others. We do this by joining in our synagogue’s activities, praying with the group, and being there for others when they are in need.

¹¹ <http://ccarnet.org/documentsandpositions/platforms/>

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☺ At the next song session, the song leader will teach the song “Al Tifrosh Min HaTzibbur” by Cantor Wally and Tammy Schachet-Briskin. Lyrics can be found at http://www.RuachCD.com/music/5761/al_tifrosh.htm

HANDOUT 5-2:

"The Columbus Platform" - 1937

The Synagogue is the oldest and most democratic institution in Jewish life. It is the prime communal agency by which Judaism is fostered and preserved. It links the Jews of each community and unites them with all Israel.

Prayer is the voice of religion, the language of faith and aspiration. It directs man's heart and mind Godward, voices the needs and hopes of the community and reaches out after goals which invest life with supreme value. To deepen the spiritual life of our people, we must cultivate the traditional habit of communion with God through prayer in both home and synagogue.

Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective - 1976

The past century has taught us that the claims made upon us may begin with our ethical obligations but they extend to many other aspects of Jewish living, including: ... private prayer and public worship; daily religious observance; keeping the Sabbath and the holy days; celebrating the major events of life; involvement with the synagogues and community; and other activities which promote the survival of the Jewish people and enhance its existence.

A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism

Adopted in Pittsburgh - 1999

We pledge to fulfill Reform Judaism's historic commitment to the complete equality of women and men in Jewish life.

We are an inclusive community, opening doors to Jewish life to people of all ages, to varied kinds of families, to all regardless of their sexual orientation, to (*gerim*), those who have converted to Judaism, and to all individuals and families, including the intermarried, who strive to create a Jewish home.

We believe that we must not only open doors for those ready to enter our faith, but also to actively encourage those who are seeking a spiritual home to find it in Judaism.

We are committed to strengthening the people Israel by making the synagogue central to Jewish communal life, so that it may elevate the spiritual, intellectual and cultural quality of our lives.

PROGRAM 3: INNOVATION IN A COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify issues that can arise when innovating communal prayer
2. Campers will be able to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of modern innovations in prayer

PRELIMINARY ACTIVITY¹²:

- ☉ This activity should be done during the service that occurs before this programming block.
- ☉ The service leader will lead a service in which everything is done differently than usual. If a certain prayer is usually done in English, it should be done in Hebrew and vice versa. If one tune is usually sung, another will be used. If responsive reading is the norm, then the leader should read everything on his/her own and vice versa.

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ In a large group, the leader will debrief the last service they experienced together in which everything was done differently.
 - How did it feel to be a part of this service?
 - What made the experience pleasurable or distasteful?
 - Did this type of service make you look differently at the liturgy and at the way in which we normally pray?
- ☉ The group will then create 2 lists. One will be negative things that can come from innovation in prayer, and the other will be positive things that can come from innovation in prayer. The leader will write these lists on poster paper for all campers to see.
- ☉ Possible negative answers:
 - Changing the tradition upsets people who are tied to it
 - Innovation can create discomfort, whereas familiarity can be very comfortable
 - People may not know the words to a new tune, and will not join in
 - Regular worshippers may not like new people or a new energy
- ☉ Possible positive answers:
 - Innovation brings in new people
 - Innovation creates a different energy
 - Changing a service makes people look at the meaning of the words in ways they do not usually look at them
 - Judaism is an evolving religion, and its forms of prayer have never stayed the same for too long

¹² This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

- Only through innovation can you discover tunes, readings, and ways to pray that lead to a more intense and effective prayer experience
- ☉ The leader will conclude the discussion by saying:
 - Innovation is necessary if we want prayer to be meaningful and relevant. Many issues can arise when we try to change prayer, and these should be taken very seriously.
 - This does not mean we should not try to innovate. It just means that we should think about Jewish tradition and about the community before we do so.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ In small groups, the students will engage in a case study of a synagogue that has services in need of innovation (See Handout 5-3).
- ☉ The students, acting as the Ritual Committee of the synagogue, need to think of suggestions for making the services meaningful, engaging, and filled with integrity.
- ☉ After all groups have finished, they will present their innovations to the entire group.
- ☉ The group leader should be paying close attention to the group presentations, and should use these observations for assessment.

HANDOUT 5-3:

Temple Beth Or is a Reform synagogue with 500 families. It has services on Friday night and on Saturday morning. Friday night services have an average attendance of 30 people, with the majority being over the age of 50. The cantor has been singing the same tunes for 10 years, and the people who regularly come to services are comfortable with these tunes, even if they are not the most engaging or exciting. The cantor does the majority of the singing, with only a few people joining in. There is a piano player who provides the musical accompaniment. Most of the community participation comes during responsive readings, which people read without really understanding the meaning. Some Hebrew is used in the service, but since the congregants do not understand Hebrew, it is used sparingly. People seem to be bored in services, not paying much attention to what they are doing there.

Saturday morning services are usually reserved for B'nei Mitzvah and the friends and families of the 13 year olds.

As a group, place yourself in the shoes of Temple Beth Or's Ritual Committee. Several congregants have approached you and complained about the prayer service that occurs in your synagogue. It is your job to rethink the prayer service that happens at this synagogue and suggest changes that can make for more engaging and more meaningful prayer experiences at this synagogue. When you are making these changes, remember to keep Jewish tradition in mind. The prayer life of this congregation depends on you!

UNIT 6: PRAYER FOR THE SELF

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS THAT RELATE TO THIS UNIT:

1. Jewish prayer enables us to connect to our tradition, our Jewish community, and ourselves as spiritual individuals
2. Both spontaneous and fixed forms of prayer can connect us to God in new and vibrant ways

UNIT UNDERSTANDINGS:

1. While we are responsible to uphold our Jewish prayer tradition, we must also decide how prayer can best fit into our lives on an individual level
2. Jewish traditional prayer can inform our actions and bring meaning to our lives in deeply personal ways

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. How can Jewish tradition best inform my personal prayer practices?
2. In what ways can I bring holiness into the world?

ASSESSMENTS:

- Campers will create an ideal type of prayer service synthesizing the ideas that emerged throughout the entire curriculum

MEMORABLE MOMENTS:

- Campers will engage in a guided meditation as a form of prayer
- Campers will plan and lead prayer services for the entire camp

Program 1: Holiness within Ourselves

Program 2: Meditation and Preparation for Prayer

Program 3: Prayer Garb, Does it Help Or Hurt? (Fully Scripted)

Program 4: Personal Prayer Style and Schedule

Program 5: T'filah Planning Session

Program 6: T'filah Planning Session

PROGRAM 1: HOLINESS WITHIN OURSELVES

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to identify the themes of purity and holiness of the self as found in classical Jewish texts
2. Campers will be able to incorporate these themes into their regular life in prayer and in action

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ The campers will be divided into small groups, with one counselor per group.
- ☉ In these groups, they will study the prayer “Elohai Neshamah”, which can be found on page 34 of Mishkan T'filah (or at the beginning of any morning service in another siddur).
- ☉ The groups leader may ask the following questions:
 - According to this prayer, where does purity/holiness come from?
 - This prayer says that our soul is pure and that it came from God. What if you don't believe in a soul? Can you still be pure/innocent?
 - Do you think it is possible for a person with purity at his/her core to act in an impure way?
 - If one acts in an impure way, what is one way they could return to being pure/innocent/holy?
 - How could this knowledge affect the way you act in the world?
 - If we all have a pure “soul”, how can this affect the way in which we approach prayer?
 - Do you think prayer has a purifying power? Why or why not?
- ☉ The study should focus on the following:
 - Unlike some religions, Judaism believes that human beings were created innocent and pure. Judaism has no original sin; we all start life as holy beings.
 - Traditional Judaism tells us that God implanted a soul within us. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that we have a soul that God created. No matter what our theological belief is, this text tells us that there is something special about being a human being. Humans have the potential for holiness, which means rising above our animal instincts.
 - The prayer tells us that with this holiness, we can pray to God and serve God. It is this unique holiness that allows us to make the world better.
 - Since we were all created with a pure soul within us, we are all worthy of engaging in the act of prayer. While we may think that we are too insignificant to matter to God, or to the world, this text shows us that even though we are one of many, we matter. Each and every one of us is significant. Each and every one of us has the potential to reach the holiness and the purity that we had at our own creation.
- ☉ In the small groups, the campers will share one specific instance in which they felt unique, holy, innocent, or pure.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ The leader will present the following to the entire group:
 - Rabbi Bunim of P'shiskha says: Every person should have two pockets, each containing a slip of paper. On one is written: I am dust and ashes. On the other: For me the world was created.
 - When might you want to look at the first quote (I am dust and ashes)?
 - When might you want to look at the second (For me the world was created)?
 - How might each quote influence the way in which you go about your daily activities?
 - How might each quote affect the way in which you approach prayer?
 - How can personal balance enhance the prayer experience?
- ☉ Each camper will then receive both quotes, each on one slip of paper. The campers will also receive art supplies, and will be instructed to decorate the slips of paper in a way that illustrates how they want to feel after reading one or the other (for example, after reading the slip that says "I am dust and ashes" they may want to feel humble, calm, selfless, or part of the whole – so they may draw anything that reminds them of these attitudes or emotions, including a small person in the midst of many other people and things, a serene landscape, cool colors. The leader should make a large sample version prior to the program in order to show the campers).
- ☉ Once all of the campers have finished, they will be asked to place one slip in each pocket, and to try and keep them in their pockets throughout the rest of the session and as long as they can after they return home.

PROGRAM 2: MEDITATION AND PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to discuss the ways in which meditation can aid in preparation for and practice of Jewish prayer
2. Campers will be able to apply meditation to Jewish prayer settings as a regular practice

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ The campers will be divided into small groups with one counselor per group.
- ☉ The campers will study the text from Mishnah Berakhot 5:1 (see Handout 6-1). The counselor will ask the following questions:
 - How did the rabbis and the ancient Jews prepare for prayer?
 - This text shows complete focus on prayer and obliviousness to the outside world. Is this how you pray?
 - Do you think this is actually how the ancient Jews and the rabbis prayed? (They most likely did not pray in this way, but the text shows an ideal to strive for)
 - Is there a more modern practice that might be similar to the ways in which the ancients prepared for prayer? (meditation, controlled breathing)
 - Do you have any rituals or practices that help you prepare to pray?
 - Usually we think of meditation as a Buddhist, or Eastern practice. After seeing this text, do you believe meditation can be Jewish? Why or why not?

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ Each small group will get markers and a sheet of butcher paper.
- ☉ As a group, they need to brainstorm as many rituals and practices as possible that can serve as preparation for prayer. These practices should put the worshipper into the right mood and frame of mind for prayer.
- ☉ Each group will then present these ideas to the entire group.
- ☉ The leader will keep a list of these suggestions, and will share them with the camp's other staff and faculty members for potential use throughout the camp either before or at the beginning of t'filah blocks.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY¹³:

- ☉ At the next t'filah block, the leader, a faculty member, or a counselor skilled in leading meditation should lead the campers in a liturgically based guided meditation/controlled breathing exercise.

¹³ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

- ☉ If possible, the campers will lie down in a relatively isolated outdoor space (although indoor is also acceptable) and close their eyes. It is okay if they fall asleep, but they should try to stay awake.
- ☉ Aspects of the liturgy that may be included in the guided mediation include:
 - Elohai Neshama – The words to breath and soul in Hebrew are very closely connected (Neshama = Soul, Neshimah = Breath)
 - Think of a place/person/thing that makes you feel calm, whole, and connected to God. With that place/person/thing in mind, listen to the Sh'ma being recited by the leader.
 - Mi Chamocha is a prayer about freedom. Think about things in your life that are stressful or aggravating, and free yourself from them by breathing them out with each and every breath. Then just let them go.
- ☉ After the meditation, debrief the experience with the campers, asking how it felt, how they might be able to do this at home without a guide, and what connection they thought it had to Jewish prayer and liturgy.

HANDOUT 6-1:

Mishnah Berakhot 5:1

One may stand to pray only in a solemn frame of mind. The early pious ones used to tarry one hour before they would pray, so that they could direct their hearts to the Everpresent One. While one is praying, even if the king greets him, he may not respond. And even if a serpent is entwined around his heel, he may not interrupt his prayer.¹⁴

¹⁴ Translation adapted from: Neusner, Jacob. *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988. p. 8.

PROGRAM 3: PRAYER GARB, DOES IT HELP OR HURT? (Fully Scripted)

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to explain how tallit, t'filin, and kippah can serve as spiritual aids for some Jews
2. Campers will be able to provide a rationale for or against the use of ritual garb in their own prayer practices

MATERIALS:

Handout 6-2
Pencils
Lined Paper

TIMELINE:

0:00-0:05: Set Induction
0:05-0:30: Panel Discussion
0:30-0:40: Prayer Garb Questionnaire
0:40-0:50: Share Responses
0:50-1:00: Conclusion

0:00-0:05: SET INDUCTION

☪ Two counselors will stand up in front of the campers praying. One will be wearing no prayer garb (counselor 1), while one (counselor 2) will be wearing a kippah, a talit, and t'filin (if available). They will each start to look at each other, and then quickly go back to praying. They will continue this several times, until they begin the dialogue:

- Counselor 1: Hey, what are you looking at?
- Counselor 2: Me, what about you!? Why are you looking at me when I'm trying to pray?
- Counselor 1: Well you were looking at me too!
- Counselor 2: Okay, fine, I was just noticing that even though you're praying, you're not wearing a kippah or a talit, or t'filin. But why were you looking at me?
- Counselor 1: Well I was just noticing that you *were* wearing all that stuff! Why are you wearing that anyway? Doesn't it distract you or get in the way?
- Counselor 2: No, it actually helps me get in the right frame of mind for praying. Why aren't you wearing all this stuff, doesn't it help you pray?
- Counselor 1: No way, I'm much more comfortable not wearing all that! I don't really understand how it could help me pray better.
- Counselor 2: Wow, I had never thought about the fact that a talit or a kippah could actually impede someone's prayer. Crazy!

- Counselor 1: Yeah, and I had never really understood that it could actually help someone pray, I just don't get it. Is it still cool if I pray here with you?
- Counselor 2: Sure thing, it doesn't bother me if it doesn't bother you.

- ☉ The leader will then explain to the campers that today they will be taking a closer look at the reasons behind wearing or not wearing different Jewish ritual garments.
- ☉ Some Reform Jews choose to use them, and some do not. For some, they enhance the prayer experience and help them feel more Jewish, whereas for others, they don't.

0:05-0:30: PANEL DISCUSSION

- ☉ The leader will assemble a panel of 3-4 people at camp to speak about the use of kippah, tallit, and t'filin. The panel should include adults who have thought seriously about the prayer garments they use or do not use. These adults may be faculty members, unit heads, specialists, counselors...etc. There should be a mix of people who use/wear certain prayer garments and who do not.
- ☉ The leader will introduce each member of the panel to the campers. Each member on the panel will present:
 - their current practice
 - the process of deciding to wear what they do
 - what texts, if any, inform their practice
 - what the practice means for them during prayer
- ☉ After each member of the panel has presented, the leader will take questions from the campers for the panel to answer. This should be an examination of the ways in which ritual objects can help or hinder the prayer experience.

0:30-0:40: PRAYER GARB QUESTIONNAIRE

- ☉ Campers will be given Handout 6-2 and a pencil, and will be asked to work alone. When filling out this chart, there is no right or wrong answer. This activity is a way for the campers to reflect on their own practices and to begin to think of a rationale for their current practices.

0:40-0:50: SHARE RESPONSES

- ☉ Once all campers have finished the sheet, they will find a partner with whom to share their reflections.

0:50-1:00: CONCLUSION

- ☉ The leader will bring the campers back together, and will ask them to share one thing they learned from talking to a partner about their use of Jewish ritual garments, or one thing they learned from listening to the members of the panel.
- ☉ The leader will then conclude by saying:
 - Even though we have different practices, we are all Reform Jews and we pray in the same services. Some of us pray better when not wearing any specific ritual garb, and some of us pray much better with it. Camp is a

great place to experiment with these different things. I encourage you all to try a practice that might be different than the way you normally pray. If you usually don't wear a talit, try it for one day. If you usually wear a kippah for prayer, see what it feels like not to wear it for a service. Finding out how we pray the best we can is a journey, and it helps us a great deal to try out new things along this journey.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

- ☺ An adult at camp who has t'filin and knows how to wrap them will be available for a block of free time during the day. During this time, campers who want to learn how to wrap t'filin will find the adult in a designated area. The adult will then teach the camper how to wrap t'filin and say the blessings for doing so. This should be an optional activity for any campers who wish to learn, and should not be required.

HANDOUT 6-2:

Please take some time to think about these questions and answer them honestly. There is no right or wrong answer. This is simply a way for you to decide what kippah, tallit, and t'filin mean to you as a Jewish worshipper.

1. In the past, I have worn the following Jewish ritual garments (circle as many as are applicable):

Kippah/Yarmulke

Tallit

T'filin

Other:

2. When I used these I felt _____.

3. I believe these ritual objects help me pray more sincerely. True or False

If True, how?

If False, why not?

4. I believe these ritual objects connect me more closely to other Jews. True or False

If True, how?

If False, why not?

5. I believe these ritual objects help me connect to God. True or False

If True, why do you think this is?

If False, who do you think this is?

6. In the future, I would like to try wearing _____ when I pray (This may be something you have tried before, or something you have never tried).

7. In what ways do you think these ritual objects can affect prayer and spirituality?

PROGRAM 4: PERSONAL PRAYER STYLE AND SCHEDULE

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to plan and enact a prayer schedule and style that is meaningful to them
2. Campers will be able to integrate what they now know about prayer into their plans for future practice

ACTIVITY 1:

- ☉ As a synthesis activity, campers will journal while answering the prompts on Handout 6-3. The prompts point to ideas that have emerged throughout the entire curriculum. In order to reflect on what they have learned, they should spread out and go to a comfortable place.
- ☉ This is an activity not to be done in groups, so the counselors should circulate, making sure the campers are focusing on their own work and being available to answer any clarifying questions.
- ☉ When all campers have finished writing, the leader will collect the responses for assessment.
- ☉ After assessing, the leader will return the responses to the campers for them to take home in order to inform their prayer practices outside of camp.

ACTIVITY 2:

- ☉ The leader will gather the campers back together, and will discuss the following:
 - While we cannot all create our own ideal prayer communities, we can choose how we as individuals pray.
 - We can work within an existing structure (i.e. a synagogue, a family, a camp) and find a type of prayer that works for us.
 - We can share our visions for prayer with the leaders of our institutions, and volunteer to enhance the prayer experience for people in these institutions.
 - In the next few days, we as a session will lead services for the entire camp. This is our chance to show camp what t'filah can be at its best!
 - Thinking back on your ideal prayer types, and also on the learning we have done this summer, what are some aspects of prayer that you think are essential to include in this service?
- ☉ The leader will brainstorm these aspects of ideal prayer with the campers, and will record their ideas on a large poster/white board. These ideas will be put to use in the next two sessions, when the session plans the prayer service for the camp.

HANDOUT 6-3:

Name: _____

Cabin: _____

As an individual who has now studied Jewish prayer extensively, you have been asked by a group of Jews to create a prayer style and schedule for them to follow. They have no preconceived notions about Jewish prayer, and would like to join you in your ideal type(s) of prayer. Create your ideal type of Jewish prayer, utilizing the new knowledge you gained during this past session at camp. You may want to use the following questions to guide your writing, but it is not necessary to do so.

Who is in your prayer community?

What is their age?

What is their gender?

Is the community composed of Jews?

Is the community composed of non-Jews?

Is prayer done communally, or individually?

When do you pray?

How often?

At what time of the day?

Do you use a siddur to guide your prayer?

If so, which siddur?

Do you use an existing siddur, or do you create your own?

Where does your community pray?

In a synagogue?

At home?

In which room?

Outdoors?

How does your prayer space come across to the five senses?

How do you pray?

Do you pray out loud?

In what language?

Do you pray silently?

Do you pray by acting in the world?

Which actions constitute your prayer?

Are musical instruments used in your prayer?

Which ones?

Are arts or hobbies used in prayer?

Why do you pray?

Do you pray for your own sake?

Do you pray for God's sake?

Do you pray for the sake of the community?

PROGRAMS 5 AND 6: T'FILAH PLANNING SESSIONS

OBJECTIVES:

1. Campers will be able to construct a prayer experience that is spiritually meaningful to themselves and to others
2. Campers will be able to model serious and meaningful Jewish prayer for others

ACTIVITY¹⁵:

- ① As a final project, the session will lead one prayer service for the entire camp. They will work with the song leader and with any faculty members to create this service. The service can be as traditional or as creative as the campers decide. This decision should be made as an entire group, and if they desire, they may choose a theme, structure, or mood for the service based on what they have learned over the course of their time at camp.
- ① The leader should facilitate a brainstorming session, taking ideas from as many campers as possible. After the leader takes all ideas, the session will vote on their favorite ideas.
- ① The campers should divide into groups according to interest and role for the planning and implementation of this service. One counselor will lead each group and direct them.
- ① Two sessions will be given to the planning of the service, and the session leader will coordinate the planning and implementation.

¹⁵ This activity will serve as a Memorable Moment

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Comins, Mike. *A Wild Faith: Jewish Ways into Wilderness, Wilderness Ways into Judaism*. Woodstock, Vermont, Jewish Lights Publishing: 2007.

I used this book primarily in Unit 3: Prayer in Nature. The book contains helpful ideas for activities and practices to do when praying in nature, and gives Jewish reasons for doing so. It makes a case for using nature as an aid in prayer and spirituality. This book can be particularly helpful when attempting to utilize the natural setting of camp to its fullest. It brings together meditation, outdoor activities, and Jewish tradition in order to create a complete picture of the place nature can hold in the life of a Jew.

Frishman, Elyse D., ed. *Mishkan T'filah: A Reform Siddur*. New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2007.

This is the Reform Movement's new siddur, and as of 2008 was being used in all URJ camps. I recommend using this siddur for the curriculum if it is the primary siddur used at camp. It contains traditional Hebrew text with slight variations from an Orthodox siddur. It includes faithful and gender neutral English translations, as well as interpretations of each prayer. I have used the translations found in this siddur throughout the curriculum guide. Some translations and interpretations will need unpacking for campers, as they are geared toward an adult audience.

Hammer, Reuven. *Entering Jewish Prayer*. New York: Schocken Books, 1994.

While I did not use this book directly in the curriculum guide, it is an interesting and accessible introduction to Jewish prayer. Some of the content found within may be of a more traditional leaning than most Reform Jews, but the book still gives the reader great insight into the evolution and practice of Jewish prayer. I recommend familiarizing yourself with this book in order to better understand the topic of this curriculum guide.

***JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003.**

This Hebrew Bible contains all books of the Torah, Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). The translation is academic and from a Jewish point of view. When using translations from this text, I have altered them to be as gender neutral as possible. This text is incredibly helpful for both the original Hebrew text and the English translation.

Kadden, Bruce and Binder Kadden, Barbara. *Teaching Tefilah*. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, Inc., 1994. p. 93.

This book is full of activities and texts that the educator may find useful for teaching prayer and spirituality. I found it useful when attempting to teach Shabbat and the L'cha Dodi prayer. It is a good resource to have, but not necessary for the implementation of this curriculum guide.

Sales, Amy & Saxe, Leonard. *How Goodly Are Thy Tents*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2004.

Although I did not directly use this book in the curriculum guide, I recommend it to anyone wanting to know more about how camp affects the camper and the staff member. It is an ethnographic study of American Jewish camps, written by two psychologists. It focuses on the camp as a socializing experience. It gives the reader great insight into the role culture and enculturation play at camp.

The Union Prayer Book: for Jewish Worship. New York: The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1906.

This prayer book was used for years in classical Reform congregations. It favors flowery English over the traditional Hebrew of many of the prayers, though does include some Hebrew. I use a popular text from this prayer book that was used instead of or in addition to the Aleinu. It gives the campers a taste of the type of prayer that occurred in classical Reform synagogues in America.

Zeldin, Michael. "Making the Magic in Reform Jewish Summer Camps." A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006. pp. 85-116.

In this article, Zeldin explores what makes camp a magical place, and how it can do this better. He makes the case for the importance of enabling campers to bring their camp experiences back home. The curriculum is designed with this goal in mind. At all times, I tried to create ways campers and staff members could transfer the learning they do at camp back to their homes and congregations. Zeldin also makes the argument that magic at camp does not just happen, but it is thoughtfully created by camp leadership. I urge you to read this article in order to better understand your role in creating this magic at your own camp.

Jake Singer-Beilin
December 18th, 2008

NO LAKE NECESSARY – TAKING CAMP BACK HOME

It is the last day of the summer. It was a summer that saw over 1,000 Jewish children come through the gates of the camp, and live there for a week or more. Campers crowd into the *Chadar Ochel* (dining hall), dreading to hear their name called so they can board a bus or a car, and travel back home. One 15 year-old camper, Josh, hears his name over the loudspeaker. Already teary-eyed, he begins crying and hugging his cabin-mates, counselor, and CIT. While tears are streaming down his sunburned face, he croaks out one hoarse wish: that the summer would continue just a little bit longer. He boards the bus, and watches the camp grow smaller as he descends the hill towards civilization. He reaches his home synagogue, and finds his entire family standing there expectantly. He is elated to see his family, and immediately begins to tell them all about his experience at Jewish summer camp. The reunion is bittersweet, because even though he is now with his family, it will be 330 days until he will return to the trees and outdoor chapels of his beloved camp. On the ride home, Josh offers unceasing descriptions of his all too short life at camp. He speaks of what it was like to eat, sleep, and play in a Jewish setting. He describes an unforgettable Shabbat experience, rousing song sessions, and reciting prayers before and after every kosher-style meal. His passion for Judaism and for life at camp is intense, and he wants to hold on to that intensity as much as possible. What will Josh and campers like him find when they return to their homes, synagogues, and religious schools? Will they find a community that is as compelling as the one they just left behind? Will they experience fun and meaningful services and educational

experiences? In most cases, the answers to these questions are not promising. When it comes to similar Jewish experiences, too often we let our campers down once they have exited the camp gates and traveled home.

The effectiveness of overnight Reform Jewish summer camps in instilling Jewish identity and creating positive and educational Jewish experiences for youth has been widely stated and has been shown in innumerable studies. URJ and other Reform Jewish camps provide an experience that immerses its participants and staff members in Jewish living for a prolonged period of time, and Judaism becomes normalized in these settings for campers who may not associate with Judaism or identify strongly as Jews in non-camp settings. While camps have been very successful in creating meaningful and intense Jewish experiences on site, the challenge they and other Reform and community institutions now face is how to transmit that strong Jewish identification and community to a non-camp setting; in short, how to take camp home at the end of the summer.

URJ Camp Kalsman director, David Berkman writes, “the Reform Movement is facing a particular challenge of late because of the differences in experiencing Jewish culture and community at camp versus the camper’s home synagogue.” He adds, “If one of the great successes of Jewish identity at camp is a sense of *kehilah* (community), what do we offer our youth when they go home?”¹⁶ Many times campers come home from camp enthusiastic about Judaism and looking for a place to continue some of the experiences they had at camp, only to find that the non-camp Reform world has little to offer in terms of continuing that intensely Jewish experience. Camp directors as well as

¹⁶ Berkman, David. “Camping as Sacred Time”. *Sh'ma*. November 2007. 38.645: p. 19

synagogue educators and academics recognize this problem, though little has been done within homes and congregations to remedy the disconnect.

The responsibility, while partially on the shoulders of the home congregation of these campers, does not lie entirely there. Reform Jewish camps also have a responsibility to aid in this transition from camp to home, and yet they have not been doing so effectively. While a comical anecdote, I find it very troubling to hear the oft-quoted complaint from former campers that “it is impossible to do Havdalah back home because there is no lake!”¹⁷ Campers are not seeing the possibility of continuing Jewish rituals on their own, or within their family and congregation due to what they see as the uniqueness of the camp experience. While this is a multifaceted issue, camps must do more to show their campers that it is important to continue these practices throughout the year and must also show them how to do so. While other changes are needed, the camp program itself needs to change in order to remain relevant, and “ultimately, if the effects are not expanded, immersion experiences risk becoming a virtual reality whose impact on Jewish life diminishes every day upon return.”¹⁸ This is an unacceptable outcome for an experience that is so effective when the campers are actually at camp.

Berkman writes, “congregations must build on the successes of summer camp and camps must partner with the congregations they serve to ensure that the excitement of the summer flourishes when a camper returns home.”¹⁹ The relationship between camps and synagogues needs to be more communicative and more reciprocal. Families must be included in this conversation in order to make the home a place for Jewish fostering

¹⁷ Zeldin, Michael. “Making the Magic in Reform Jewish Summer Camps.” *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006. p. 111.

¹⁸ Valley, Eli. “After the Immersion Experience: What Next?” *Contact*. Winter 2008. 10.2: p. 2

¹⁹ Berkman, 2007, p. 19

identity and ritual practice in addition to the camp and the synagogue. Professor of Jewish Education at Hebrew Union College, Michael Zeldin supports this notion, arguing, “the challenge for Reform Judaism is to create many more venues in which former campers can find sparks of what they experienced as the camp Judaism of their youth.”²⁰ Sales pushes for a constant and fluid Jewish education rather than a sporadic and disjointed one in saying, “camp alone cannot create committed and educated Jews, but rather needs to be part of a continuum of Jewish education.”²¹ While camp is extraordinary in creating Jewish identity and affiliation, it is not the only place a young Reform Jew should be able to find his/her place in the movement and in Judaism. Jewish education, then, should take place at camp as well as in the congregation and at home. What’s more, the young Reform Jew should feel welcome to explore and experience Judaism in all of these settings, with each informing and enhancing the others.

That is not to say, though, that camp, home, and synagogue must be the same. Indeed, each can function as a unique entity and thrives because of important differences. As Sales points out, “the goal of follow-up cannot be to make home like camp or to extend camp into the school year.”²² Camp works because it is entirely unlike other settings, but the Judaism found there does not have to be separate from the Judaism found in other settings. Indeed, the Judaism of camp can complement and enhance the Judaism of the home and the synagogue. Any solution to this complex problem, then, must value the distinct organizations and must not undermine their uniqueness. Rather than seeing this as a problem, it can be quite an exciting opportunity to attempt many different types of education and Jewish experience. Finding a solution to this issue will have a positive

²⁰ Zeldin, 2006, p. 112

²¹ Sales, Amy L. “FollowingUp on Intensive Jewish Experiences.” *Contact*. Winter 2008. 10.2: p. 10

²² Ibid

effect on all Jewish educational settings, and because of this, all of these institutions are must take it upon themselves to be part of the solution.

Some solutions have already been suggested by those in the field of Jewish education. Sales suggests that camps stay in constant contact with their campers throughout the year, that programmers utilize the close relationships that form at camp, and that congregations create camper-friendly settings to give campers places where the skills they learned at camp can be developed and continued while not at camp. She also calls for educators to work with the camps in creating a curriculum that mirrors what the campers learn during the summer.²³ Zeldin also offers some concrete suggestions in this regard. He believes camps should provide digital materials containing prayers and music used at camp, camps should work with synagogues to create a matched curriculum, campers should be given responsibilities within the synagogue, and synagogues should hold camp-style services soon after the campers return at the end of the summer.²⁴

In addition to the ideas put forth by Zeldin and Sales, there are others things camps, synagogues, families, and the Reform Movement can do in order to aid the process of bringing camp home. Some of these efforts are easy to implement, while some are more long term and would require a greater amount of resources. One small thing congregations can do is give campers the opportunity to plan and lead camp-style services with the clergy members several times throughout the year. Camps can utilize new networking technologies such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs, SMS, Second Life, instant messenger, and video chat in order to keep in touch with their campers and create online communities where campers can share stories, communicate with friends, and

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Zeldin, 2006, p. 111

maybe even engage in Jewish ritual practices. While at camp, campers can be told explicitly how to practice a certain ritual while not at camp. For example, the camp leadership could teach the campers how to do havdalah at home where there is no lake and no song leader. Synagogues can include Israeli dancing and a song session, both core elements of a camp-style Shabbat, as part of their Oneg Shabbat festivities once or twice a month.

On a more complex, and indeed more expensive level, there are several more options. Religious school teachers can be trained in experiential education, and can be encouraged to attempt this style of teaching in a setting that tends to be more formal. Congregations can create intense and compelling Jewish communities that are based on strong vision and vibrant culture. This step would take aspects of camp that make it successful, but would also allow for congregations to remain distinct from other Jewish communal institutions. The Union for Reform Judaism currently holds a successful song leader training program called Hava Nashira, and song leaders are key to most camp services, song sessions, and educational programs. The URJ, in partnership with Hebrew Union College, can create a more extensive song leader training program. This program would not only create song leaders to bring camp-style worship into non-camp settings, but would also educate song leaders Jewishly. This Jewish education would enrich services and song sessions at camp, as many song leaders do not have any formal Jewish educational training. Hebrew Union College has a responsibility to train their Cantorial students in this type of music, as it is the type of music through which involved youth, and some adults find connection and meaning. The College Institute is already heading in this direction as evidenced by the fact that they hired on the Jewish musician, Debbie

Friedman, to the faculty of the School of Sacred Music. While creating a song leader training program would require a considerable amount of resources, it would significantly and positively impact the camps themselves and would make the transition from camp to synagogue and home much easier.

I am not so idealistic to realize that this solution will meet resistance, and that it is only a partial solution. Some congregations are ready for bringing more of camp within the walls, but others are not. The Cantorial program at HUC has a long-standing history of success, and this solution does not diminish what this school has accomplished. There is little precedence for formally professionalizing the field of song leading, and some might argue that this is not the direction in which the College-Institute should go. Jewish professional fields, however, are always in flux. In order to remain relevant and meaningful, Jewish institutions, including the College-Institute, must adapt and work to solve the issues that arise in the Reform Movement and in the greater Jewish world. Despite these challenges, and others, I believe that this solution will help our Jewish educational institutions to become more closely linked, which will in turn make the transition from camp to home much easier and more fruitful.

Synagogues and homes can never be the same as camp, and they should not try to be. The institutions within the Reform Movement, however do have a responsibility to make it easier for campers to bring what they learn at camp back into their every-day lives. Synagogues and families can learn quite a bit from a Reform Jewish institution that inspires youth to love being Jewish and love being with Jews learning about Judaism and living within it comfortably. These various institutions of Reform Jewish life can and should enrich each other. The possibility is there, and there are many avenues through

which we might reach the goal of a smooth transition. In doing so, we can show the youth of this movement that Judaism is not something that only happens once during the year, or even once a week. We can show them that Judaism is something that is lived constantly, and can take many different forms, all of which are valuable. I have presented several solutions, but these ideas do not constitute all of the possibilities for dealing with this vexing issue. In finding these potential solutions, we can see that this issue is not too big to solve. *Lo va'shamayim hi*,²⁵ it is not in heaven, it is very close to us, it is possible, and if the camp, the synagogue, and the home all work together, we will do it.

²⁵ Deuteronomy 30:12

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