



My Siddur

Submitted by: Yaniv Salzberg

Subject Area: Jewish Prayer (Tefillah)

Target Age Group: Kindergarten

Abstract:

Prayer requires active involvement, not passive rote learning. If a kindergartener makes his or her own Siddur and uses it to pray, the student will fill a deeper association with the prayer service. Through this extended project, the students will associate prayer with their own creative impulse and identify prayers with personal artistic experience. Coloring and creating a book is inherently fun. Students will be excited to finish a final product that they can use and eventually take home.

Materials Needed

- sheets with photocopies of the prayers and space left for additions
- markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.
- construction paper, glue
- digital camera
- lamination machine or plastic sleeves to protect sheets
- book binding machine or binder



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Procedure

Activity 1: Modeh Ani and Ma-Tovu

Photocopy a version of Modeh-Ani with translation. Around the writing, have students draw pictures of things that they are thankful for. Write what they say about their picture on their paper. Repeat the process on a separate Ma-Tovu page, but have students draw pictures of different places they can pray. Stress the theme that a person can pray anywhere, not just in synagogue.

Activity 2: Adon Olam

On the Adon Olam page, have students create a picture of the universe. Students can cut circles from construction paper to use as planets, the sun and stars. Stress the theme that Adon Olam is about the "master of the universe."

Activity 3: Bircot ha-shachar

Draw pictures for each prayer or take pictures of students acting out the blessings. The pictures must be small so that many of the prayers can fit on the same page.

Activity 4: Barchu and Shema

For barchu, take picture of students facing east and bowing for recitation of the prayer. For the shema, take picture of students with their right hands over their



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eyes and their eyes closed. Students should glue the pictures of themselves to each page.

Activity 5: Shmoneh Esre

Draw pictures of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to put on this page. Alternatively, have students draw pictures of their parents and grandparents to reinforce that this prayer is paying homage to ancestors.

Activity 6: Sim Shalom

Talk about peace. Have students draw a rainbow and a dove with an olive branch and remind them of the story of Noah. Since shalom also means goodbye, it makes a good last page for the Siddur.

Activity 7: Finishing the Siddur

Design a cover using construction paper. Bind the book. Have a party to celebrate the completion of their first siddur. After the book is made, it can be used to teach deeper lessons about the individual prayers. The lesson is not finished when the product is reached. The product is used as a vehicle for future lessons. Also, additional pages can always be added.

Questions to Consider

--What's the difference between personalized prayer and group prayer? Why do we all say the same Hebrew words if our personal prayers and messages are often different?



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--How should we treat the Siddurim? We say that the Siddur we made is holy, but what does that mean? How do we treat things that are holy? How do we know it's holy? What makes it holy?

--Some of the prayers contain the name of God? How should we treat papers with the name of God written on them? What is so important about this name?

--Who are we talking to when we pray? If God is inside of us, are we really talking to ourselves when we pray?

Comments and Feedback

This unit is essentially never-ending. Pages can always be added or changed in the Siddur. My students were very proud of their final product, and they use them every day during our school tefillah time. Because of this project, the students take ownership and personally identify with the prayers on a deeper level.

Additional Resources

(See attached sample Siddur pages)