

EPA 109

Explanation of Winter Convention Theme:

The theme of "Why Pray?" comes from USYers' questions as to why there are so many services at conventions and, "Why do we pray so much?" The other part of the theme stressed skills. It has become very apparent, by the lack of volunteering to do things related to services, that our USYers are just not comfortable leading and participating because they just don't know how. Therefore, with the help of our Rabbinic Intern, Abbi Sharofsky (who compiled most of the materials, especially the session for Friday night), we came up with workshops.

The Friday night session was a study session, aimed at connecting the 10 Commandments (the parasha was Yitro) to the idea of praying. The conclusion that most classes came to was that praying is not IN the 10 Commandments, so why do we do it. The rest of the session had to do with that.

On Saturday afternoon, instead of having 2 one hour sessions, we divided the sessions into smaller time slots, with a break in between. So, they went to 2 workshops, had Chofesh, and then we had two more workshops. The teachers of the workshops stayed in their spots and taught the same thing 4 times---the USYers rotated. They got to select the workshops they wanted, and since there were 6 and 4 time slots, they got to do what they wanted to do.

Materials were provided for those teachers who were not comfortable coming up with their own materials. The sessions were:

- 1---Kabbalat Shabbat---learned a bit about why we have this service, and some new tunes.
- 2---Hagbah and Glilah---how to lift and tie the Torah.
- 3---Birkat HaMazon---how to lead it, but more importantly, why we do it and what the words mean.
- 4---Shacharit---how to lead the morning service---some new tunes
- 5---Gabbi/Torah Service---the how-tos and choreography of the Torah Service
- 6---Ruach---how to lead it and to practice a few of the more difficult songs.

The response from the USYers was very positive because the sessions were shorter, and they got to select what they wanted to do, and learned something they did not necessarily know before.

Sunday morning we continued the emphasis on prayer with a Candy Minyan, which I believe was done by Metny. It kept the USYers focused on the prayers and they actually

followed along. Before services, we had a mini Tefillin workshop where many staff people showed kids how to put on Tefillin.

Following services, we did a Summer Programs promotion using a skit done by Hanegev, and then each person received a B'Kol Echad that they could decorate (markers and stickers were provided) similar to the way Siddurim are decorated during Summer trips. It was a well received idea, and much less expensive than giving out T-Shirts.

EPA

Why Pray?

Friday Night Session – Winter Convention 2009

Goals & Objectives

- USYers will have the opportunity to discuss the role of prayer in their lives.
- Create a space where USYers can openly voice their opinions, concerns, and questions about prayer.
- USYers will be able to articulate the role of prayer in their lives.

Set Induction – What's Missing?

USYers will look at the text of the Ten Commandments and respond to the following questions:

- What is in this text? What is the point of this text?
- What is missing from this text?
- What types of things are we expected to do that are missing from this text?

Prayer and worship, central parts of Judaism, are missing from one of Judaism's most important texts. What does that say about the role of prayer and worship during Biblical times and what can that say about it today?

Most important question – Why Pray?

Activity – Tap In Conversation

In this activity, USYers will be given scenarios and ask to role play various parts of the scenarios. This is also an improv activity as at any point, other USYers who want to add to the conversation or change the direction may “tap in” and take the place of the current USYer who is playing that role. There will be three scenarios provided. Please do a fourth that the USYers create, or two of the ones here and two that they create.

Scenario 1 – The Bat Mitzvah Girl

The Bat Mitzvah Girl, her Mother, and her Rabbi are having a conversation. Bat Mitzvah Girl does not understand why she has to have a whole service. Isn't it enough that she gets up and just reads the Haftarah for a bunch of people and then has a party? Why is the service an integral part of the Bat Mitzvah experience? Should it be part of the experience?

Scenario 2 – The Old Guy in the Back of the Sanctuary

Old Guy has been going to shul as long as he can remember. He went to shul with his grandfather, his father, his son, and his grandson. Now, he goes to shul himself, because his grandson is in college and his son is busy. His wife died and he says kaddish for her every year. It is hard to go to shul sometimes, especially with all these new tunes and young rabbis. Old Guy meets with the Rabbi to have a conversation about going to services. He has some questions about things that have been going on in the service and would like some answers.

Scenario 3 – The Busy Parent

Busy Parent has a full time job, a spouse, two kids, a dog, a house, sits on the synagogue board, volunteers for committees, is active in the community, and when it comes to Saturday morning, just wants to sleep. This parent meets with some friends (two or three of them) for lunch one Saturday afternoon and complains that someone made a remark about how their family is never in synagogue on Shabbat. They are so busy! The most prayer they do is praying the traffic won't be horrible or that the babysitter won't get sick. How relevant is prayer in services, anyway?

Closing

After each scenario, take a few minutes to review what was said and get feedback from the other USYers. What were some themes? What were problems that came up for the various people? What is the role of prayer for the different people?

Give USYers the opportunity to add anything that may have been especially meaning to them, or to add something about why they do, or do not pray.

20 God spoke all these words, saying:

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה לְאָמֹר: ׀

²I the LORD am your God who brought you

²אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ ①

out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:

מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים ³*לֹא-יְהִיֶּה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל-פָּנָי:

³You shall have no other gods besides Me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the LORD your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the

⁴לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ: ⁵לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא פֹקֵד עֵוֹן ②

parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, ⁶but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

אֶבֶת עַל-בָּנָיִם עַל-שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל-רְבָעִים לְשִׁנָּאִי: ⁶וַעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים לְאֲהַבֵּי וּלְשִׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי: ׀

⁷You shall not swear falsely by the name of the LORD your God; for the LORD will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.

⁷לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת-שֵׁם-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׂוֹא כִּי לֹא יִנְקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר-יִשָּׂא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ לְשׂוֹא: ׀ ③

⁸Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.

⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

⁸זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: ⁹שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וַעֲשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתֶּךָ: ¹⁰וַיּוֹם ④

¹⁰but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-מְלֶאכֶה אַתָּה | וּבִנְךָ וּבִתֶּךָ עֲבָדֶיךָ וְאִמְתֶּךָ וּבַהֲמֹתֶיךָ וּגְרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ: ¹¹כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת-יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֶת-הַיָּם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל-פְּנֵי בְרֵךְ יְהוָה אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ: ׀

¹²Honor your father and your mother, that

¹²כִּי כָבוֹד אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְאֶת-אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן ⑤

you may long endure on the land that the LORD your God is assigning to you.

וַיָּרְכוּן יְמֵיךָ עַל הָאָדְמָה אֲשֶׁר-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ: ׀

¹³You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

¹³*לֹא תִרְצַח ׀

לֹא תִנְאָף ׀

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁴You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female slave, or his ox or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

לֹא תִגְנוֹב ׀

לֹא-תַעֲנֶה בְרַעְיָךְ עַד שִׁקְרָה: ׀

¹⁴לֹא תַחְמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ לֹא-תַחְמֹד אִשְׁתּוֹ רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדּוֹ וְאִמְתּוֹ וְשׁוֹרוֹ וְחֲמֹרוֹ וְכָל-שְׂבִיעֵי אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: ׀

שְׂבִיעֵי אֲשֶׁר לְרֵעֶךָ: ׀

Sessions Two & Three – Kabbalat Shabbat

Objectives & Goals

- Gain an understanding of the make up of Kabbalat Shabbat
- Learn about the possible meanings and interpretations of the components of Kabbalat Shabbat
- Learn the tunes and customs which USY has adopted for Kabbalat Shabbat

Set Induction (5-10 minutes)

- Have the USYers each say one adjective that describes the pace of the week. Examples may be "busy," "full," "hectic" etc.
- Then have USYers say one adjective that describes the pace of Shabbat. Ex: quiet, slower, different
- How do we make the transition from our busy week into welcoming Shabbat? Can we quickly go from one pace to another? Not really, so we have Kabbalat Shabbat to help us
- Share background information with USYers

Materials

- Each USYer will need a Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals (blue cover)

Background Information

- Kabbalat Shabbat is a kabbalistic service that was created by Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-72).
- It literally means "greeting Shabbat" and was created to be recited during the time when the sun sets and the day turns into twilight.
- Rabbi Luria would lead his followers, dressed in white, to the hills of Safed, in Israel, to greet Shabbat by chanting psalms and hymn, L'kha Dodi, which was composed in 1540. Once they greeted Shabbat, who was likened to a bride, they would "accompany" Shabbat back to the synagogue for Ma'ariv.
- Kabbalat Shabbat is a time when people can move from the weekday to the holy time of Shabbat.

Activity (10-15 minutes)

- Depending on the number of USYers, break the class into pairs or small groups.
- Have each pair or small group look at a different part of Kabbalat Shabbat and go through the following questions:
 - How does this psalm or hymn help us transition from the work week into Shabbat?
 - What does this psalm or hymn say about God's role in creation?
 - What does this psalm or hymn mean to me as I prepare for Shabbat?

The psalms and hymns are as follows:

- 1) Yedid Nefesh – p. 14
- 2) Psalm 95 (L'chu N'ranena) – p. 15
- 3) Psalm 96 (Shiru L'Adonai) – p. 16
- 4) Psalm 97 (Adonai malach) – p. 17
- 5) Psalm 98 (Mizmor Shiru) – p. 18
- 6) Psalm 99 (Adonai malach) – p. 19
- 7) Psalm 29 (Mizmor l'David) – p. 20

There are other parts of Kabbalat Shabbat that are not included in this list. If there is time or the USYers want, feel free to have them explore the other parts using the questions above.

Sessions Two & Three – Gabbai Training/Torah Service Choreography

Gabbai Do's & Don'ts

All it takes to be a gabbai is the ability to read Hebrew quickly and accurately and follow along as someone reads Torah. The gabbai's job is to correct the Torah reader if he or she makes a mistake. The reason for making the corrections is that the Torah needs to be heard by the congregation with no mistakes. If more than a certain number of mistakes are made and not corrected, the reader has not fulfilled the requirement of reading Torah and the congregation which was listening has also not fulfilled their requirement. Correcting the Torah reading is more than just telling someone they messed up, it is helping everyone hear an accurate Torah reading.

There are at least two gabbaim. The first one, gabbai rishon, has the main responsibility of calling people up for the aliyot and directing traffic. The second one, gabbai sheni, has the main responsibility of checking the Torah reading. Both gabbaim are responsible for checking, but gabbai sheni should take the lead in this.

When serving as a gabbai rishon, here are some things to remember.

Do...

- Say the opening lines of calling up a person at a pace at which you are comfortable. The congregation will wait for you.
- Ask the person to say their name slowly and clearly. They can repeat it if you do not hear it the first time.
- Cover the Torah when you are calling someone up to the Torah for an aliyah and then uncover the Torah when the person is saying the blessings.
- The person saying the blessings should hold both of the handles of the Torah scroll while saying the blessing, kiss the appropriate place with a tallit, and then recite the blessing.
- Tell the person to follow the Torah reader and look at the Torah when the Torah is being read.
- Tell the person where to stand after they have finished their aliyah.

Don't...

- Get frustrated if you don't understand their name and make up something. Ask again.
- Forget which number of aliyot you are on.
- Forget to remind the congregation of the verse, chapter, and page number you are on in the humash.

When serving as gabbai sheni, here are some things to remember.

Do...

- Follow along with the reading with your finger on the word.
- Read the parsha ahead of time if you know you will be gabbai. If you do not, try to read a few lines ahead when there is a spare moment.
- Correct a person when they have said an incorrect letter, vowel, or not paused at the end of a verse.
- Decide beforehand if you will be correcting for trope. This is usually not necessary, it is the words which are most important.
- Pronounce the correction clearly and loud enough for the reader to hear it and say it again if the reader does not make the correction. The time to make the correction is right after the mistake. Two or three words later will not be helpful and only confuse the reader.

Don't...

- Lose your place.
- Think that the mistake is so small that it is not worth correcting. It needs to be corrected.
- Worry about embarrassing the reader. The reader knows that this is important and that you are not doing this to make him or her feel bad, you have a responsibility to make sure people hear the Torah chanted correctly.
- Let people from the congregation make corrections. There are two gabbaim and that is all that is needed.