

Jump Off the Page: Creative Pathways to Prayer

A Guide to Creative Tefilot
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It's Sunday Morning of a USY kinnus or convention. USYers arrived on Friday and spent the last 48 hours seeing friends, meeting new friends, participating in fun activities, eating, and of course, praying. A significant part of each USY convention is praying. So, when Sunday morning rolls around, what do most USYers NOT want to do? You got it....pray! They want to hang out with their friends, recount all the memories of the weekend, and probably sleep because they were up all night playing poker, painting their nails, or just talking to their friends. Praying is NOT on their minds the Sunday of a USY convention, but what everyone dreads is that last service of the convention: Sunday Shacharit.

In a time when Judaism is constantly changing, we too must constantly change the ways in which we conduct services in USY. We must find new ways to find a connection to Tefilah, while always remembering to still keep it a religious service. Many USYers don't find a need to pray. They just find it a 'boring' part of USY. Services should not be boring.

How do we make services engaging and not boring? It's called *Creative Tefilot*. Both words are important.

- Tefilot: Comes from the Hebrew word *Tefilah*, or prayer. As Conservative Jews, praying is a central aspect of our movement. *To pray*, in Hebrew, is *l'hitpalel*. The root of *l'hitpalel* (p.l.l.) means to **judge oneself** or to **assess**. Tefilah gives us a chance to turn inward and think about ourselves and the world around us. We can add elements to structured prayer that are meaningful to ourselves and to each other as a group. Tefilah is the most important word of the phrase, because without it, there would be nothing to make creative or interesting.
- Creative: Comes from the English language meaning: *resulting from originality of thought, expression, etc.; imaginative* This is the most influential word of the phrase. Without it, services can sometimes be long and not engaging. Without it, USYers may not think outside the box and see how Tefilah and connect to their lives as Jewish teenagers.

This resource guide is to help YOU with creative services. Creative services are a vital part of many regions and chapters' tefilot. If they aren't, consider introducing them to your region or chapter!

B'hatzlacha, and good luck!

Daniel Novick
USY Religion/Education Vice President, 2008

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Creative Service FAQs

What is a Creative Service?

A Creative Service takes a traditional Jewish prayer service and adds creative components to it to make it more interesting and engaging. Usually, creative services are done for Shacharit, but you can do it for any service, on Shabbat or not.

Why should you do Creative Services?

Creative Services are extremely important. They allow USYers to experience something new, while keeping with the traditional prayer structure of the service. In an age when there isn't a huge appeal to pray from Jewish teenagers, we must find a way to encourage USYers to pray in a warm and inviting way. By conducting Creative Services, we are going the extra step to bridge a connection between USYers and *Tefilah*.

When do you do a Creative Service?

Whenever you want! You can do them during the week or on Shabbat! You can do them at a USY event, kinnus, or convention, or at your synagogue or summer camp. You can do them for Shacharit, Mincha, or Ma'ariv.

How do you do a Creative Service?

It's simple! All you got to do is use your imagination! Use your senses as you make a creative service. You can use different tools and techniques such as music, art, discussion, humor, stories, movement, contemplation, text study, chevruta exercises, games, trivia, and much much more. Just read on... :-)

Who do I contact if I need help making a Creative Service?

You can contact your youth director or advisor, President, or Rabbi if you need ANY help, advice, or suggestions. You can also e-mail reled@usy.org if you are looking for help. Don't be afraid to ask!

Ten Easy Steps to make a Creative Service

Step One: Coming up with a theme

The most important and hardest part of writing a creative service is coming up with a theme or topic that the service encompasses. When USYers have a choice of which breakout Shacharit to choose, they will choose the one that interests them most. So, it is imperative that you come up with a theme that is interesting. A creative service is not good unless it is 'CREATIVE'. Take some time to think of something USYers are interested in. Use the list on pages 10-12 to help you brainstorm for ideas, and feel free to use those ideas!

When coming up with a theme, remember a few things:

- 1) You should be able to connect a few of the prayers in the service to the theme
- 2) Know your audience! If you are writing a creative service for Kadimaniks, it might be wise not to do a service centered around life in High School. If you are doing a service for guys, it might be wise not to do a service about hair and nails. Get where I am going with this? Make it active or interactive and be aware of those who don't know the prayers.
- 3) Know when you are doing the service. Think about the season, month, time of day, etc... Also, turn on the news or Entertainment Tonight, that may help you come up with something centered around what's going on in society at the time. Pop Culture is a huge draw in! Use songs, news articles, media clips, etc...
- 4) You should be excited about the theme. Don't choose or make something that you are not interested in. If you aren't interested, then others won't be either!
- 5) Use costumes or props. You can dress up as Moses for Az Yashir, pretend you are Bilaam blessing the people for Mah Tov, hold a Tallit over their heads for Hashkivenu as the "wings of the Divine". Even one prop as a "grabber" to get people into a discussion.

Step Two: Pick a Service

Once you have a theme, you should choose a service that you want to make "creative". The most common to do a creative service for is Shacharit, but if you would like to do a Creative Mincha service, go ahead! It's all your decision! Once you choose a service, you should also find out how much time you have for the service. Check with your Youth Director or President to see how much time they are giving you for the service. A typical Creative Shacharit Service takes about an hour to an hour and 15 minutes. You might lose USYers' attention if it is longer.

Step Three: Open your Siddur

That's right, actually READ the prayers! If you do not know Hebrew, read the English. It's perfectly fine! Be sure to have a paper and pen with you! When you come across a line or even a word that has something to do with your theme, jot it down! Once you have gone through the service, go back to the beginning and do it again! Depending on how much time you have, you should be able to connect about 5-8 parts of the service to your theme. The most common prayers to use are:

- 1) Birkot Hashachar: page 10
- 2) Baruch Sheamer: page 54
- 3) Az Yashir: Page 92
- 4) Mi Chamocha: Page 104
- 5) THE AMIDAH!!!!!!!: Page 106
- 6) Adon Olam: Page 6

Step Four: Look at the Amidah!

The Amidah is bountiful with a bunch of prayers! Closely examine each prayer for real life application. You can find stuff about Israel in it, stuff about forgiveness, stuff about holiness, stuff about our forefathers...It's an AMAZING aspect of any service to use for a creative service.

IDEA: Make an Amidah "game of life" board game that takes you through the 18 blessings with a thought, discussion question, or activity for each. You could also have USYers learn the choreography of the Amidah by making up a dance with the words and steps.

Step Five: Write your script

You should always use a written out script when making and leading a creative service. This is when everything comes together. Start with the beginning of the service and go straight through until the end. When writing your script, be sure to EXPLAIN the connections you have made. For example, if you were doing a "Sports Shacharit", don't stop at Birkot Hashachar and say "This are the preliminary prayers of our service. It's the warm-up. Athletes have to warm up". You should explain the significance of the need to warm up in both an athletic event and in the prayer service. Here is an example of part of a script that introduces Birkot Hashachar:

"Okay, so I'm sure most of you did not get a lot of sleep last night. I mean, come on, it's a USY convention. But, you wake up every day and are expected to pray. People who work all day wake up and are expected to go to work (after Shacharit of course). Sports players can't just wake up and play a full game. They need to warm up. Same with Judaism and praying. The morning prayer service has it's own warm-up called Birkot Hashachar. Birkot Hashachar are the preliminary prayers that lead us to P'sukei D'zimra, which leads us into the Shacharit service. We need to be ready for the main part of the service, and therefore, we need this warm up as a "wake up" call. So, to warm up this morning before Birkot Hashachar, turn to your

neighbor and give him/her a nice, relaxing massage. Just as a massage relaxes an athlete's muscles before and after a game, a massage relaxes our own 'Tefilah muscles' to help us wake up and continue with the service. "

(Note: YOU CAN DO A MORNING STRETCH HERE AFTER ZOKEF KEFUFIM- WHO RAISES THE DOWNTRODDEN – SHOW EVERYONE YOU'RE SORT OF AWAKE WITH A GOOD STRETCH)

Not all scripts and intros to certain prayers have to be like this. But, you should make them engaging and interesting. This intro to Birkot Hashachar not only explained the need for the preliminary prayers, but it involved the USYers by having them give each other massages [although in this case, be sensitive to those not comfortable with touch].

The script is YOUR masterpiece. Do whatever you want with it, but remember these few hints:

- 1) Sometimes, shorter is better than longer
- 2) Keep it engaging. Don't have yourself talk for the whole thing. Involve activities or have volunteers do something. Get as many people involved as you can. It's sometimes boring to have the same person do the same thing!
- 3) Be SURE to make the connection to Tefilah! The whole point of a creative service is to make the act of praying as engaging as possible. Without a connection aspect of your script, it isn't a creative SERVICE.

To see a sample script, look at pages 14-29.

Step Six: Take a break

That's right....take a breather. Put it down for a night or two, and come back to it at a later time to look over what you did.

Step Seven: Have someone look over it

Ask your youth director, president, or Rabbi to look over your service and give you feedback. Ask them to be as honest as possible, because you want it to be perfect before you lead it. Once you get their feedback, make corrections and make a final script!

Step Eight: Put it into action

Once everything is prepared, you are ready to lead your Creative Service! Be sure to assign any parts for the service and make sure to go over it!

Step Nine: E-mail your service

E-mail your script to reled@usy.org, so we can have it to give to other Rel/Eds if they are looking for a creative service idea!

Step Ten: Create another one!

Okay, so the tenth is the easiest step! Go ahead and make another creative service to encourage USYers to become closer to Judaism and excited to pray!

Sunday Shacharit Live

Born out of the Seaboard Region of USY, Sunday Shacharit Live (SSL) is a mega Creative Service. An SSL service combines different aspects of technology to form an engaging, energetic, and ruach-filled Shacharit service. Clips from popular movies and TV shows are used in the service to help USYers think about certain prayers and themes of the Shacharit. Movies and TV shows that have been used include *Keeping the Faith*, *Dogma*, *High School Musical*, *Bruce Almighty*, *Evan Almighty*, *The Simpsons*, *Remember the Titans*, and so many more.

SSL also uses its own live band. Youth Directors, Advisors, and USYers who play musical instruments (mainly the guitar and drums) are involved and help make a great ruach-filled service. They play music to well-known prayers such as Modeh Ani and Ma Tov, Shema, Oseh Shalom, and Adon Olam, as well as other prayers too. There is a packet available with all the SSL songs.

So, when you combine the media clips and the band, you have the most energetic and awesome Shacharit service. SSL made its International USY debut at IC 2007, and has been done in many regions. Consider doing a Sunday Shacharit Live for your chapter or region's kinnus. It's a great way to get USYers involved with Tefilah and excited about praying.

See page 14 for a sample script of Sunday Shacharit Live.

Don't hesitate to contact Daniel Novick, 2008 USY Rel/Ed Vice President, at reled@usy.org if you are interested in using a pre-existing SSL or creating your own.

Creative Service Ideas

- **Sunday Shacharit Live**
 - o See page 9
- **Sports Shacharit**
 - o A Shacharit all about sports. You can talk about different games, athletes, or teams. You can add stuff about the olympics, too.
 - o You can do wake up stretches for Modeh Ani, show a clip of *Remember the Titans* and show the clip of the “pre-game pep talk” and relate it to *P’sukei D’zimra* being the “pre-game” for Shacharit, or connect the two words: minyan and team.
 - o To see a sample script, see pages 17-18
- **Learner’s Minyan**
 - o So, many regions do some form of a learner’s minyan. But, try something new with it. If there is learner’s minyan to help USYers learn melodies to certain prayers, make one centered around the themes or structure of the service.
 - o Instead of the same old learner’s minyan, make it a discussion minyan to help USYers learn and discuss the service. To help you with what to discuss, consult “Higher and Higher: Makin Jewish Prayer Part of Us” by Steven M. Brown. Contact the USY Office if you want a copy of it.
- **Yoga and Meditation**
 - o This service is all about your connection to your inner self through yoga and meditation. Throughout the service, USYers do yoga that represents themes of Shacharit and its prayers. It is a very relaxing service and helps USYers connect to Tefilah.
 - o A great start to thinking about this service is by looking at Psalm 35: “All my limbs shall declare, ‘O Lord, who is like you?’”
 - o A great book to use is *Jewish Meditation* by Aryeh Kaplan. You can also go online and print off kavanah cards (www.kavanahcards.com) and use them throughout the service. You can start off the service by doing simple yoga positions to “warm up”, representing *P’sukei D’zimra*. Have USYers perform different yoga standing sequences especially before the Amidah when we are supposed to stand upright and still, concentrating on the prayers and the connection to God.
- **Musical**
 - o Make a service all about music! You can have musicians come and play along. Or, you can just sing most of the prayers and teach different melodies. You can also create a song during the service that the USYers compose representing their views of Tefilah and Shacharit.
 - o Make this service a “ruach service” also, and teach USYers various zemirot from the B’kol Echad and explain to them where they come from. Some zemirot include:
 - Al Shlosa D’varim- Pirkei Avot
 - Baruch Eloheinu- Shabbat and Festival Mincha

- Eretz Zavot Chalav- Torah
 - Hava Nashira- From Psalms
 - Kol Haolam Kulo- Psalms
 - Lo Alecha- Psalms
 - Yism'chu B'mal'chut'cha- Shabbat Amidah
- For a packet of guitar chords for the Shacharit Service, consult *Modeh Ani: I am Grateful*, arranged by Isaac Woloff.
- **Israelitastic** (or simply an Israel themed Service)
 - This service is all about Israel! You can do Israeli melodies to prayers, or talk about references to Israel in the Shacharit service. You can have Israelis come and lead it and talk about the differences between praying in Israel and praying in North America. You can show clips from Israeli television shows and use them to connect to Judaism.
 - Use songs such as “Yerushalayim Shel Zahav” and “Sisu et Yerushalayim” to add creative elements and discussion.
 - Write personal messages to be placed in the Kotel or project a picture of the Kotel onto a screen so that you can be praying virtually in Jerusalem.
- **Arts and Crafts**
 - Make a service about art! Have USYers create a work of art representing what they are thinking after reciting certain prayers, such as Birkot Hashachar and the Amidah. Have them present it to the group and have a discussion about what the prayer(s) is(are) about.
 - Make a Siddur picture book. Have each person draw a different prayer. Make sure there are no words, and use it in a future service.
 - Use play dough to re-create the Exodus from Egypt before or after reciting Az Yashir, or another important part of the service.
- **Shacharit on the Big Screen**
 - It's SSL without the band! Use clips from movies to help USYers connect to Tefilah. Use the list of movies in the SSL section of this resource guide if you need help thinking of movies.
 - Have USYers create their own movie scene about a prayer or their thoughts of a certain theme in the service. Have them either tape or perform their scenes for the other USYers.
 - Create an awards show (like the Golden Globes) and have USYers vote on their favorite prayer and present it their own Tefilah award.
- **Gospel Shacharit**
 - This is somewhat like musical Shacharit, except that the music is all done through your voices. A good way to start this service is by showing the *Ein Keloheinu* clip from “Keeping the Faith”. Involve A LOT of singing and clapping and dancing in this service!
 - Take advantage of Psalm 150 (pg. 88) and talk about the need to praise God as loud as we can and with a bunch of ruach and spirit.
 - Watch scenes from “Sister Act” and relate it to Judaism and Tefilah.
- **Shacharit through Drama**

- Make a service that allows USYers to act out certain prayers and their thoughts of Shacharit/Judaism. You can start off by playing the game “freeze” and give USYers scenes relating to Shacharit.
- Do a “talking to God” activity, when one USYer is God, and another USYer can ask God any three questions he or she wants. “God” has to answer the questions to the best of his or her ability. Discuss how hard it was to answer the questions and relate it to praying to God during Shacharit.
- Play “Whose Line is it Anyway” relating it to Shacharit
- **Sephardic Shacharit**
 - This service is usually done by a Sephardic Jew, who can teach USYers the Sephardic melodies and traditions. If no one knows the tunes, see if you can find a CD with Sephardic melodies to all learn together.
- **Nature**
 - Make a service about nature! This service is perfect for Encampments. Talk about references to nature in the service. You can go on a nature walk or conduct the service outside. You could also have people come to the service dressed in green. Also, you can use quotes on environment from the Torah and even secular sources.
 - Read “The Giving Tree”, pass around slips of paper with tips for preserving the environment, teach birkot hanehenin for beautiful sights in nature.
- **Linguistic Shacharit**
 - Make a service for USYers who like to write! You can breakdown words, write poems, look for themes in the prayers, etc... USYers can also form their own analogies that connect Tefilah to every day life.
 - Make a “Do-It-Yourself-Siddur” where USYers make a Siddur based on their own needs and their own ideas of what a prayer should be like.
 - Use the “Checklist for Creative Prayer Composition” below to give to USYers when they write their own prayers.
- **Candy Shacharit**
 - Make a service related to candy! Connect prayers to a different candy and have USYers guess why the candy is connected to a certain prayer.
 - See pages 24-26 for a sample script.

Checklist for Creative Prayer Composition

(Taken from Page 21 of “Higher and Higher: Making Jewish Prayer Part of Us”)

When you write a new Tefilah, or compose a song, dance, story, or prayer interpretation, see how many of the following questions can be answered positively.

- Does your prayer creation contain Jewish values?
- Does your prayer go beyond self-centered needs and include others?
- Is your language appropriate for confronting concerns and questions of ultimate importance?
- Does your creation go beyond “human-centeredness” to something greater? To God?
- Would it be meaningful to anyone else besides you?
- Does it reflect an ethical approach to life?
- Does it refer directly or indirectly to any Jewish sources (e.g., quotes from the Talmud, the Bible, Codes of Law, other prayers)?
- Is it well written (grammar, syntax, language)?
- Do the poetic images stand up to the overall theme of the prayer upon close inspection?
- Did you make a conscious choice to use rhyme or meter?
- Would your prayer creation be meaningful to someone living in a different time or place?
- Would it be meaningful 1,000 years from now?
- Can you honestly say you will be able to read (perform, sing, see) it over and over again?

Obviously, not every prayer creation has to meet *all* of these evaluative criteria and there may be criteria to be added if you do want something you develop to be valuable to yourself and to others. However, over a period of time, it will have to meet many of these standards.

SSL Sample Script

Sunday Shacharit Live
Daniel Novick, Seaboard Rel/Ed 06-07

Before Modeh Ani-

Good morning Seaboard USY, and welcome to Sunday Shacharit Live! I am your host, Daniel Novick. What is Sunday Shacharit Live? SSL brings the hottest movie clips and coolest musicians together in one service, to enrich your Shacharit prayer service experience. Yes, there are cool songs and funny clips, but they all have a purpose, and that is to allow you to connect with T'fillah and understand why there are certain types of prayers in this service. By the end of this service, it is my hope that you will understand more about Judaism and come closer to realize what you want to find in this religion. I would now like to introduce the SSL band to start things off with modeh ani. Please turn to page 2.

After Modeh ani-

So, it's the morning. We just woke up and what do we do? Pray! One of the first things we do every morning is thanking God for what He has done. We turn to page 10 every morning and recite these praises of God, however, do you really know what all of the blessings mean? Here is the regional board and co-chairs to better explain!

(after video clip). Please rise as we turn to page 10.

After Page 54, Baruch Sheamar.

You may be seated. We are well into the service at this point, and just recited Baruch Sheamar, which is another passage in the service in which we praise God. We are about to watch a clip from the movie "Kissing Jessica Stein". It is Yom Kippur morning, and Jessica is with her mother and grandmother in services. See what happens...

(after clip)

As you can tell, Jessica is trying to pray and repent, whereas her mother and grandmother really don't care and are more worried about her love life. It is obvious that the congregation is getting annoyed with these two women, so Jessica tries to tell them to be quiet, but it doesn't work. As we continue on with Pesukei Dezimra and the rest of the morning service, please be respectful of other people as they are trying to praise God and pray. If you have something really important to say to your friend, wait until after the service. You can do it! There are many prayers in this service that you can connect to. Take the time to read one of these prayers in English this morning, and connect it to your daily life.

So, what would a Sunday Shacharit Live be without audience participation. We continue on page 80 with Ashrei...make sure you are paying attention...if you are in the group that is called, you better respond!! You'll catch on...

- 1) USYers from Baltimore!
- 2) USYers from Montgomery County and DC!
- 3) USYers from Northern VA

- 4) USYers from Middle and southern VA, and NC
- 5) Staff!
- 6) Freshmen
- 7) Sophomores
- 8) Juniors
- 9) Seniors
- 10) RGB
- 11) EVERYONE!!!!

Great job everyone! Now, we turn to the middle of page 88, and here is the SSL Band!

Page 88- Here is the SSL band to lead us in another wonderful song.

Before Az Yashir pg 92...

We are about to recite Az Yashir Moshe, but do you really know what you are singing about? Maybe this clip can help you out. The scene starts right after Moses led his people out of Egypt...

(after clip). The first line of this song states, "then Moses and the people Israel sang this song to the Lord." The Prince of Egypt shows this exact phrase. Moses and his people were joyfully singing in praise, and needless to say, everyone was emotional, including Moses. If you have seen this movie, you might remember how Pharaoh and his chariots were washed up in the sea after all the Jews had crossed it. Moses and his people had been slaves for many years, so they have all the reason to shout in joy and sing their hearts out. We are reminded of this story every morning when we recite this song. When we recite this, think about how if it wasn't for Moses, we might still be stuck in Egypt as slaves. We are reminded of the joy it was for the people of Israel to finally be free.

DO Az yashir thru shema

Before Shema- Here is the SSL band again!

Before mi chamocha...

We are about to recite Mi Chamocha, which will lead us into the Amidah! Every month I send out a Daniel's Challenge Question. These questions are supposed to spark your imagination and encourage you to find a connection between you and Judaism. October's question dealt with picking your favorite media clip, and explaining how it relates to prayer. Rachel May won Daniel's Challenge for October, and I would like her to read her response after you view this movie clip that she chose to write about: Meet the Parents.

(After clip)

In *Meet the Parents*, Greg Focker (Ben Stiller) is asked by his fiancée's Christian father, Jack (Robert De Niro), to recite the prayer before the meal. Greg awkwardly attempts to "say grace":

"Oh, dear god, thank you, you are such a good god to us. A kind and gentle and accommodating god, and we thank you oh sweet, sweet lord of hosts for the smorgasbord you have so aptly laid at our table this day, and each day, by day, day by day, by day oh dear lord three things we pray to love thee more dearly, to see thee more clearly, to follow thee more nearly, day, by day, by day. Amen."

As a Jew, Greg is unfamiliar with Christian prayers. He feels that he must say it in a certain way in order for it to sound Christian so that he can make a good impression. However, the Jewish and Christian prayers for food are essentially the same. He misses the point that it is intention and *what* you say that is important, not *how* you say it. Similarly, Jewish prayers are written out only for guidance, but the fact of the matter is, it is better to say the prayer in a language you are familiar with and say it with meaning, rather than saying it in a traditional way without *kavana*. Therefore, it would have been better to say it in a way that felt more comfortable to him that was "religiously neutral".

As we are about to recite the Amidah, it is important to know that it doesn't matter what language you speak, or whether you know Hebrew or not. This is your personal and private time. Like Rachel said, it doesn't matter how you say something, it's what you say that counts. Also, you might have recognized that in between movie clips, a picture of the Western Wall is shown. It will also be shown during the Amidah, because we are reminded of Jerusalem every morning while reciting it. When you get to page 114, read the paragraph about Jerusalem. We are always told that we pray towards the Western Wall in Jerusalem. However, now, we can really pray towards the Western Wall, because it will be projected right in front of you!
(continue until adon olam)

Before Adon Olam-

I really really wanted to end with something BIG..REALLY BIG. So, I tried really hard to get a gospel choir to come to Fall Convention to lead us in Adon Olam. Well, it didn't work out, but I got a video tape of one singing Ein Keiloheinu...enjoy
(show clip). Now, although we don't say Ein Keiloheinu on weekdays, this clip shows us that we can have fun with T'fillah. While praising God, it is okay to break out into dance or song, because that shows Him that we really care and that we appreciate His goodness. So, during Adon Olam, be loud so that God can hear us! We are praising Him, so be excited!

Well, that ends our Sunday Shacharit Live. I hope that his service brought you closer to Judaism, whether it was by watching the Prince of Egypt or listening to a gospel choir sing. Whatever it takes, you should be excited and happy to pray.

Sports Shacharit Script

(written by Daniel Novick, Seaboard Rel/Ed VP 2006-2007)

Before praying:

Prayer/Tefilah is like a sports team. To work well as a team, you need teammates who can support one another. Without teammates, there is basically nothing you can do to win a game like basketball, soccer, football, or hockey. In T'fillah, you need a team to pray. Would anyone like to guess what this team is called? (minyan). Without a minyan, one can recite certain prayers (like the Barchu), but for something like Kaddish, one needs 9 other people to recite it. (which makes a total of 10 people). A minyan is like a team, in that if people don't do their part, then the minyan breaks apart and leaves someone who would want to recite Kaddish, or any other prayer that requires a minyan, unable to pray. Everyone in a minyan is important. Although there is a Sh'liach Tzibor (service leader), he/she is still apart of the minyan, just like an MVP is still apart of the team. So, as we begin the service, note how important it is to pray as a "team".

After Ma Tov:

Okay, so, I am sure some of you, or most of you did not get a lot of sleep last night. I mean, come on, it's a USY convention. You wake up every day this week earlier than you would on a summer vacation and are expected to pray. People who work daily wake up and are expected to go to work (after Shacharit of course). Sports players can't just wake up and play a full game. They need to warm-up. Same with Judaism and praying. The morning prayer service has it's own "warm-up" called Birkot Hashachar. Birkot Hashachar are the preliminary prayers that leads up to P'sukei D'zimra, which leads to the Shacharit service. So, to warm up this morning, turn to your neighbor and give him/her a nice, relaxing massage. Just as a massage relaxes an athletes muscles before and after a game, a massage relaxes our own "t'fillah muscles" to help us wake up and continue with the service.

Before Psalm 150, p. 58:

Picture you are at your high school's football game. How boring would it be without the marching band, cheerleaders, or music? When playing in a competitive sports game, it is nice to have a band or cheerleaders to support the team. Psalm 150 talks about praising G-d with drums, trumpets, cymbals, and other musical instruments. We are cheering and supporting G-d for what He has done and what He is doing for us. This just like a marching band cheering on its team. It's a morale builder for the team, and it might be a morale builder for G-d. Who knows?

Before Barchu, p. 96:

After warming up with Birkot Hashachar and P'sukei D'zimra, we have finally reached the Shacharit service. Consider this the "game" after all the warming up you have done to get ready to play. Since the game is about to begin, the players need to be introduced to the crowd.

Announcing the players is like the Barchu. The Barchu is the Call to Worship and like a sports game, you are calling on G-d saying, "I'm here!!"

Before Shema, p. 100:

So, teams have uniforms, like hats, jerseys, shoes, and shorts. Guess what? Judaism has uniforms also! Our uniform includes things like a kippah, a tallit, and tefillin. You can't play a sports game without your uniform, so therefore, you can't pray without your "Judaism Uniform", especially in the Shema, when you need your uniform to pray when you kiss your Tzitzit. Also, you might be asking, "when do you know when you are supposed to kiss your tzitzit??" My answer is for you to look in your own personal "playbook", otherwise known as your Siddur.

Before Amidah:

This is the most important part of the service. Picture this: you are playing in a basketball game. Your team is down by 10 with 5 minutes to go. This is the most important part of the basketball game, although it is near the end of the game. Although the Amidah is near the end of the morning service, it is still the most important part.

Before Aleinu:

We have reached the cool down part of the service. We have warmed-up, played the game, and now it is time to cool down after we won (hopefully). When you cool down, you do exercises that slow down your heartbeat and relax your muscles. In Aleinu, it is not as much standing up and sitting down as the other parts of the service. You just bend and bow once and come back up once. It's a simple exercise that is like a cool down exercise. After we have won the game, it is time to celebrate. With Adon Olam, it has sooo many different melodies. So, when the Redskins win each of their games this year, the band will play "Hail to the Redskins" as a celebration song. Each team in the NFL has their own song that praises the team. Adon Olam is our team's song. It has many different melodies for each "team". For example, Seaboard Region's Adon Olam is to the tune of Centerfold. Each region, I am sure, has their own tune to Adon Olam that they like. However, it is the same prayer no matter how one sings it.

End: Whether it is football, basketball, hockey, soccer, baseball, softball, rugby, or lacrosse, sports are apart of many of our lives. By being in USY, Judaism is also apart of many of our lives. Connecting something we enjoy with Judaism, we can better understand why we pray and how we pray. So, enjoy your day, and play ball.

Toy Service Script

Created by Daniel Picus (with help from Gila Drazen and Elan Green)

Instructions: Every prayer need not be used (in fact, it would take WAY too long if they were). Eight to ten is probably a good number, but not the absolute limit. Before every prayer, the leader should ask the congregation what they think the toy will be, and to explain their answer. Once they find out what the toy is, they should be asked for their opinions as to why that particular toy was used. If a congregation seems very interested in a particular prayer, by all means have a discussion. After each introduction of a toy, the prayer should be done. It's probably a good idea to stagger the toys throughout the service, if only to keep the congregation guessing.

Page 2: Modeh Ani

Toy: Stuffed lion. When people wake up first thing in the morning, one of the first things they want to do is curl back up and go right back to sleep. However, the Sages tell us that each day is a new day, and that each dawn is a celebration of *Adonai's* creation. Further, they tell us that we should greet each new day as a lion, in our eagerness and impatience to worship the Holy One. So, like Simba is eager to be the king and return to his pride, so must we be eager and ready to put on our *t'fillin* and *davven Shacharit*.

Page 10: Birkot Hashachar

Toy: Baby piano. Each blessing on this page starts off the same way—*Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech ha'olam*. However, they all end differently. Each blessing follows the same structure, moving from a core structure to a specific ending. A piano has eighty-eight keys, each of them different. However, they are all basically the same. They all make noise. They all make the same *type* of noise. But each key, when you press it, has a sound slightly different than the last. Each blessing in *birkot hashachar*, when recited, can sound the same, but every one ends differently.

(Plunk a key each time a blessing is recited)

Page 50: Psalm 30

Toy: Doll house. This is a psalm for the dedication of the temple, which is here referred to as *habayit*. In Hebrew, *habayit* means house, not synagogue, temple, or holy place. In fact, the Temple Mount doesn't have the word temple in it either: it's just *Har HaBayit*. The Mount of the House. Perhaps this is to remind us that, as holy as the temple, or any temple or synagogue for that matter, is, it is still, first and foremost, our home. A home is a place where you are nurtured and grow up; our spirits grow, as does our knowledge of Judaism, at our synagogue. While dolls don't grow up, they certainly are nurtured (or ripped to bits, depending on the type of kid you are) by their owner in their dollhouse. Also, a real playhouse wouldn't fit into the suitcase.

Page 52: Kaddish Yatom

(No toy)

Page 54: Baruch She'amar

Toy: Mr. Potatohead. Each blessing of this prayer looks a little bit different. In fact, the only thing they have in common is the word *baruch*. The parts that make up Mr. and Mrs. Potatohead only have one thing in common, as well. All the shoes, eyes, noses, tongues and purses only have one thing in common, besides all being made out of plastic: they all come together to create something recognizable. Well, to some extent. As recognizable as a giant potato with eyes, arms, legs, and a facial expression can get. The blessings of *Baruch She'amar* each look very different, and follow different structures. However, together, they form the recognizable and critically acclaimed first section of the *Shacharit* service.

Page 80: Ashrei

Toy: Slinky. *Ashrei* is read as a responsive prayer. The *shaliach tzibbur* says one line, and the congregation says the next. A slinky is a responsive toy. You bump it on one hand, it goes over to the other. You bump it on the other hand, and it goes back to the first. If you let go and bounce it up and down like a yo-yo, it always goes back to where it started, back and forth, back and forth.

Page 88: Halleluyah (psalm 150)

Toy: Fake nose/glasses disguise kit. This prayer asks every breath of life to praise *Adonai*. All human beings breathe, at one time or another, through their nose. The nose has a lot of poetic symbolism in Judaism. *Adonai* breathed life into Adam through his nose, and whenever someone gets angry in the torah, it literally says that their nose gets hot. This disguise kit has a nose. You might not be able to breathe through it, but a nose it is.

Page 92: Az Yashir Moshe

Toy: Rubber Duckie. Does anyone know what *Az Yashir* really is? It's the song that *b'nai Yisrael* sang after they crossed the Sea of Reeds. Such an overwhelming passion overcame all of them that they simultaneously broke out into song. They sang of the glory of God, the rage of his enemies, and the triumph of their deliverance. In fact, one of the most well known prayers in our service comes from this passage: the *Mi Chamocha*. Every time we bathe, we release (or used to!) the Rubber Duckie from his bondage in the toy cabinet. He swims in the waters, and we part our hands to accept him. When he is accepted into our arms, he even manages to squeak in jubilation. Even more than that—a really famous performer sang a song about the Rubber Duckie on Sesame Street, one of the best known TV shows ever.

Page 94: Yishtabach

Toy: Toy crown. When you really want someone to get the picture, how many times do you tell it to them? Twice, maybe three times. However, in this prayer, we state that *Adonai* is our King and Sovereign no less than *five times*! Apparently, we really want to get it onto someone's thick head that *Adonai*, and no one else, is our king.

Page 94: Hatzi Kaddish

Toy: Hotwheels car. The *Chatzi Kaddish* moves us from one part of the service to the next, like a transition prayer. In this case, we are moved from all the preliminary psalms and prayers of *p'sukei d'zimra* to the blessings of *shacharit*. A Hotwheels car, like a real car, can move us from one place to another. Well, at least in our imagination. A real car does the actual moving.

Page 96: Barchu

Toy: Airhorn. The *Barchu* is basically a call to worship, like church bells or a muezzin calling Muslims to worship at a mosque. It serves another purpose, too: It wakes us up. It prepares us for the rest of the service by reminding us that we worship Adonai, and only Adonai. An airhorn wakes you up too. Not much explanation needed here—if you're asleep and you hear an airhorn, you wake up. If you're sitting around in services and hear the *Barchu*, you know that it's time to pray.

Page 100: Shema/V'ahavta etc.

Toy: Fuzzy dice. The *shema* reminds us that there is only one God, only one creator of the universe. In the prayer directly following it, we are instructed to keep the words that God has said to us close to us—specifically before our eyes and upon our gates. Now, no one I know of puts fuzzy dice in front of their door. But lots of people (and I mean lots! One of them is in this room!) hang fuzzy dice from their rearview mirror, so that it becomes a reminder before their eyes. In fact, there is even a big number one on both die—which is entirely what the prayer is about. Unity amongst the Jewish people, as well as the unity of God.

Page 104: Mi Chamocha

Toy: Guess Who™. “Who is like you, oh *Adonai*, among mighty? Who is like you, oh *Adonai*, abounding in holiness?” Who, indeed? The answer, of course is no one. There is no one to compare to *Adonai* in any way at all—unless, of course, you count *Adonai* himself. Which makes the answer one person. In the game Guess Who™, there is only one person who fits the description given by the other player. There is only one God—and while the target of Guess Who™ might not be awesome in praise and doing wonders, *Adonai* sure is.

Page 106: Amidah

Toy: Pogo Stick. The *Amidah* is, in many ways, the core of the service. It is the part where we are given the most time to personally connect with God, and where we literally rise higher and higher in hopes of attaining holiness. We also bow a lot during the *Amidah*, causing us to bend down. On a Pogo Stick, you start off going down. *Baruch atah Adonai*. We also go up a bit later—*kadosh kadosh kadosh*, as well as on *Baruch k'vod Adonai mimkomo* and *yimloch Adonai l'olam*. During the *Amidah*, we have to stand with our feet together. This is because the angels who attend *Adonai* only have one leg. We are trying to bring ourselves closer to God by being like the angels—whether it be standing with our feet together on the ground, or on a Pogo Stick.

Page 120: Oseh Shalom

Toy: Blanket. In *Oseh Shalom*, we ask God to spread peace over all of us, and all of *b'nai Yisrael*. We're asking God to spread peace over the whole world, just like God does in the high places, or heavens. A blanket spreads over us at night. If you're really small and have a security blanket, that can also bring you a sense of peace. *Oseh shalom* is like our security blanket. It reminds us of our hope that one day, peace will come.

Page 158: Kaddish Shalem

Toy: Toy: Hotwheels™ car. The *Kaddish Shalem* moves us from one part of the service to the next, like a transition prayer. In this case, we are moved from all the preliminary psalms and prayers of *p'sukei d'zimra* to the blessings of *shacharit*. A Hotwheels car, like a real car, can move us from one place to another. Well, at least in our imagination. A real car does the actual moving.

Page 160: Aleinu

Toy: Gumby model. “We bend the knee and bow, acknowledging the Supreme Sovereign, the Holy One....” We, as human beings, know that there is something greater than us—*Adonai*. In order to show our belief in *Adonai* and *Adonai's* greatness, we bow very low, bending our knees as well as our waist. Now, as awesome as Gumby is, he is by no means the mightiest cartoon character. In fact, just about any other character could give him a good whooping (well, at least the Ninja Turtles). However, Gumby knows this. He is very bendy—in fact, it is very easy to make Gumby bow to *Adonai*, because he knows that there is something greater than he is.

Page 162: Kaddish Yatom

(No toy)

Page 6: Adom Olam

Toy: Hourglass. *Adonai* was, *Adonai* is, and *Adonai* shall be. Those are an awful lot of time periods to keep track of—the past, the present, and the future. *Adonai*, as we learn in this prayer, has always existed. Even before time began, *Adonai* was there. Hourglasses are fairly old methods of keeping time, but also fairly failsafe (unless you drop it!). They remind us of the past, while sand runs from the present to the future. *Adonai* exists in all those times, and is always present. Once the sand runs out of an hourglass, it is still there. It doesn't just go away. However, on a watch, once the second hand passes that number, you have to wait a whole minute to see it again.

The Land of the Sweets Script

The following services were collected and compiled by Laura Belinfante, 2007 Rel/Ed IGB. Please feel free to use the entire script or just parts. You can add your own ideas and thoughts too! (Note: These services were written for Shabbat Shacharit, so the page numbers may be different depending on whether you are using it for weekday or Shabbat Shacharit)

The Land of the Sweets

Alternative *P'sukei D'zimrah/Shacharit*

Based on a service written by: Laura Belinfante, Far West Rel/Ed VP 06-07

Each prayer in the *Shacharit* service has been matched up with a candy that has a connection to or a meaning derived from the prayer. There are many explanations for almost all of the prayers in the *Shacharit* service, it would take a very long time to go through every single one. Choose about 10 of the prayers and spend more time on those, or select certain prayers during which you should distribute candy. The candies are nut free, but do have chocolate, so watch out for allergies!

Hand out a candy to each person, and try to have them guess why this candy was chosen. We can also have people guess which candy will be chosen for the next prayer. When a prayer does not have a candy, you can give a small explanation about what it is.

1. *Modeh Ani/Mah Tov* (page 2)

Lifesavers: G-d “saved” our lives while we slept, and returned them to us in the morning. The name of these candies is Lifesavers. Just as our life was spared, or saved, last night, so we woke up this morning.

2. *Birkot HaShachar* (page 10, please rise)

Jelly Beans: They all have the same main idea - chewy candy. However, each bean has its own flavor. This is the same with the *Birkot HaShachar*. All of the prayers have the same general idea - they are all about thanking God for everyday miracles and things that we take for granted, but each one has its own specific thank you and flavor.

3. *Ashrei* (page 80, you may be seated)

Sweet Tarts: Like Sweet Tarts, there are two different parts to *Ashrei*. It is read responsively, the leader and congregation exchanging every other line. A sweet tart has two different but distinct flavors: sweet, and sort of sour-tart. These represent the two readers of this prayer.

Activity Option: Have the group do a “popcorn” *Ashrei* as a mix of the two flavors. In English, have the group say lines as they please (though they have to go in order). Remind

people that if they feel that the line is meaningful, they should speak up and say it. Multiple people can say the same line at once.

4. Psalm 150 (page 88)

Chocolate: In this psalm, we are supposed to praise God with our whole being by dancing and singing loudly (even shouting!), and playing musical instruments. (Please note that we cannot play instruments on Shabbat). Chocolate is possibly the most popular sweet treat in the world, and fills us with joy. Haven't you seen those commercials where people talk about how happy they are when they eat a bar of chocolate? Well, that's how happy we are to praise God with our whole mind, body, and soul!

5. Shirat HaYam (page 92, please rise)

Laffy Taffy (saltwater taffy if possible): The Israelites had just crossed the Red Sea, which has quite a bit of salt water. The salt water taffy can, for our purposes, symbolize the water that they crossed. It is sort of a different way to celebrate their freedom.

6. Hatzi Kaddish (page 338)

Kit Kat: This candy has lots of layers of milk chocolate, wafer cookie, and chocolate filling. The *Hatzi Kaddish* separates different parts of the service. This *Hatzi Kaddish* marks the transition from *P'sukei D'zimra* into *Shacharit*, so the wafer represents the different parts, or layers, of the service.

7. Barchu (page 340)

Pop Rocks: WAKE UP!!! *Barchu* is thought of as the call to prayer at the beginning of *Shacharit*. At this moment, the warm up is over and we are in the game. Pop rocks are the noisiest candy around - they sizzle and fizzle in your mouth. These candies remind us to wake up and get ready for *Shacharit*. How could you fall asleep with pop rocks in your mouth?

Traditionally, people refrain from talking from this moment up until the end of the *Amidah*. Because this is a creative *minyan*, we will explain a few more things, but we will try to leave out any unnecessary noise and distractions.

Continue through services normally.

8. Ahava Rabah (page 346)

Hershey Kisses: *Ahava Rabah* is all about the love that exists between God and Israel. The *Shma* is surrounded by prayers proclaiming our love to God. What better way is there to show you love somebody with kisses?

9. Shma (page 346)

M&M's: These tiny chocolate candies are possibly the most popular in the world. M&M's are sold practically everywhere, and people internationally love them. The *Shma* is one of the best known prayers in the world. It is often one of the first prayers taught to young children. Both the *Shma* and M&M's are universal, making them a perfect match in our service.

Continue through services normally.

10. Amidah (page 354, please rise)

Do not distribute gum because it is disrespectful to have during services. However, explain the following match up:

Bubble gum (small pieces): The Amidah is the longest prayer in the service. There are nineteen individual blessings within the prayer. The first three are recited out loud, including the responsive *Kedusha* which mimics angels standing before God. After all the written prayers, people have a chance to say private prayers, and this can take a while. Bubble gum takes awhile to chew. It runs out of flavor eventually, but after other candies.

11. Kaddish Shalem (page 392, please rise)

Kit Kat: This candy has lots of layers of milk chocolate, wafer cookie, and chocolate filling. The *Kaddish Shalem*, much like the *Hatzi Kaddish*, indicates a separation in services. This *Kaddish* signifies the end of *Shacharit*, and this Kit Kat signifies the end of another layer of our services.

Inside the Human Body Script

Inside the Human Body
Alternative *P'sukei D'zimrah/Shacharit*

Ideal room set-up is in a circle. If that is not possible, a more group oriented setting (such as Sephardic seating) could also be nice. The feel of this *minyán* should be pretty organic and comfortable.

1. *Modeh Ani/Mah Tov* (page 2)

Modeh Ani is the prayer that we say when we first wake up. We thank God for restoring our souls to our now awake bodies. This is often the first prayer taught to children because it teaches gratitude for the gift of a new day of life.

Mah Tov is made up of several biblical verses. It is often recited upon entering a synagogue. The idea behind it is to express our appreciation for the ability to gather together in a *Makom Kodesh*, or holy space, to pray together.

2. *Asher Yatzar* (page 6, below Adon Olam)

Have everyone hold their noses. Have them stand up, sit down, walk around a little, stretch out. You can even play Simon Says with them. Basically, have them do a few minor physical things then ask the group to return to be seated again. Ask the group what they thought this had to do with prayer. Once they throw around some basic ideas, you can read the following:

The human body is a miraculous thing. This blessing is designed to acknowledge God's involvement in the intricacies of nature.

Read the blessing together in Hebrew, then in English.

3. Psalm 34 (page 62-65)

Psalm 135 (page 68-71)

Psalm 146 (page 82-85)

Psalm 147 (page 84-87)

These psalms have a lot of great imagery relating to physical aspects of spirituality. Divide the crowd into smaller groups. Have each group act out at least one of the physical images described in each psalm.

4. *Ashrei* (page 80)

Have the group do a “popcorn” *Ashrei*. In English, have the group say lines as they please (though they have to go in order). Remind people that if they feel that the line is meaningful, they should speak up and say it. Multiple people can say the same line at once.

5. ***Nishmat* (page 334)**

Nishmat is another prayer that praises God quite poetically in addition to drawing a strong connection between the spiritual and physical aspects of life. It is one of the last prayers included in *P’sukei D’zimrah*, and serves as a sort of preamble to the final blessing.

Read *Nishmat* out loud in English. It looks long and may seem tedious upon first sight, but it fits the theme perfectly. You can read it all together out loud, or have a few volunteers read different sections. You can go pretty much up until *Yishtabach* in English because it is very appropriate.

6. ***Yishtabach* (page 338, please rise)**

7. ***Hatzi Kaddish* (page 338)**

Hatzi Kaddish serves as a divider during services. It marks the end of one section of liturgy and the beginning of another. This *Kaddish* in particular signifies the transition from *P’sukei D’zimrah* and *Shacharit*.

8. ***Barchu* (page 340)**

Barchu is thought of as the call to prayer at the beginning of *Shacharit*. At this moment, the warm up is over and we are in the game. Traditionally, people refrain from talking from this moment up until the end of the *Amidah*. Because this is a learner’s *minyan*, we will explain a few more things, but we will try to leave out any unnecessary noise and distractions.

Continue through services normally, pointing out any relevant paragraphs as you go along.

9. ***Shma* (page 346)**

The *Shma* is another central part of Jewish prayer services. This statement avows the oneness of God, echoing the monotheistic basis of Judaism. You cover eyes while reciting it. The experience that you have at this moment during prayer is definitely characterized by a physical experience. The paragraphs surrounding the *Shma* discuss physical manifestations of spiritual ideas and feelings, as well as God’s worldly punishments for disobedience.

Continue through services normally, pointing out any relevant paragraphs as you go along.

10. ***Amidah* (page 354, please rise)**

The *Amidah*, also known as the *Shmoneh Esrei*, is thought of as the most important synagogue prayer. The words *Amidah* means “standing”, referring to the fact that we recite

this prayer while standing and facing the ark. The word *Shmoneh Esrei* means “eighteen,” referring to the eighteen original blessings of the Amidah. There are nineteen now (we added a prayer for peace), but nostalgia and a desire for peace leaves us hoping to return to the original eighteen.

The blessings can be divided into three categories – praise, petitions, and thanks. We praise God for being wonderful, ask him for things, and then thank him.

You may teach when to bow and do other moves if you wish.

11. *Kaddish Shalem* (page 392, please rise)

Kaddish Shalem marks the end of a service. Three lines are added to the base formed by the *Hatzi Kaddish*. One line asks that our prayers be heard, and two ask for peace. The tone of praise is a nice conclusion to Shabbat Shacharit and our Learner’s Service.

Resources!!!

The USY office has numerous resources relating to creative tefilot. For additional resources, please contact Amy Greenfeld at greenfeld@uscj.org.

Websites:

www.jewfaq.org/prayer

www.myjewishlearning.com

www.kavanahcards.com (for the yoga/meditation service)

www.torah.org/learning/Tefilah

Books on Jewish Prayer and Inspiration for creative Jewish prayer:

****Higher and Higer: Making Jewish Prayer Part of Us* - Steven M. Brown***

Torah Yoga-Diane Bloomfield

Jewish Meditation- Aryeh Kaplan

Let the Earth Teach you Torah-Ellen Bernstein and Dan Fink

Karov Lchol Koravh: For All Who Call- a Manual for Enhancing the Teaching of Prayer

-Rabbi Jeff Hoffman and Andrea Cohen Keiner

Secular sources:

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

The Book of Questions by Gregory Stock

Would You? Questions to Challenge Your Beliefs- Evelyn McFarlane

Songs

Livin' on a Prayer- Bon Jovi

What if God were One of Us- Joan Osbourne

Waitin' on the World to Change- John Mayer

What if God Could Send His Angels? -U2

ONE- U2 (great one for discussing the Shema)

God Shuffled His Feet- Crash Test Dummies

Like a Prayer- Madonna

Stairway to Heaven- Led Zeppelin

King Without a Crown- Matisyahu

Jerusalem- Matisyahu

Good Morning Good Morning- The Beatles

Praise You- Fatboy Slim

Movies

Keeping the Faith

Dogma

High School Musical

Bruce Almighty

Evan Almighty
Remember the Titans
Kissing Jessica Stein
Wedding Crashers
The Prince of Egypt
Meet the Parents
Eight Crazy Nights

Resources to Inspire Creative Tefilah

“The old must be made new, and the new must be made sacred.”
—Rav Avraham Kook, first Chief Rabbi of Israel

Books

General Prayer:

- Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service- Reuven Hammer
- To Pray as a Jew - Dov Peretz Elkins
- A Guide To Jewish Prayer: Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz
- The Art of Public Prayer: Not for Clergy Only – Lawrence Hoffman
- L’elah L’elah/Higher and Higher: Making Jewish Prayer Part of Us – Steven M Brown
*A USY publication
- My People's Prayer Book Set: Volumes 1-10 – Ed. Lawrence Hoffman
- Or Hadash: Commentary on the Sim Shalom – Reuven Hammer
- Rediscovering the Art of Jewish Prayer- Rabbi David Golinkin

Creative resources:

- L’elah L’elah/Higher and Higher: Making Jewish Prayer Part of Us – Steven M Brown
*A USY publication
- Modim: We Give Thanks – Alisa Pomerantz Boro
- Karov L’chol Korav/For All Who Call: A Manual for Enhancing the Teaching of Prayer- Rabbi Jeff Hoffman, Andrea Cohen Kiener [with accompanying CD]
- The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath, and the New Moon Festival - Marcia Falk

- Toward Meaningful Prayer [I and II]: Inspiring Thoughts and Stories on Tefillah from Classic Sources- S. Feldbrand
- Talking to God- Naomi Levy
- Minding the Temple of the Soul: Balancing Mind, Body and Spirit [Yoga] – Tamar Frankiel, Judy Greenfeld [With musical accompaniment]
- Alef Bet Yoga – Steven A Rapp
- Book of Jewish Sacred Practices: CLAL's Guide to Everyday & Holiday Rituals & Blessings- Rabbi Irwin Kula and Vanessa Ochs
- Worship with Joy: A Demonstration of New Techniques and Models-
- Sedra Scenes: Skits for Every Torah Portion- Stan J. Biner
- God Whispers: Stories of the Soul, Lessons of the Heart – Karyn Kedar
- Three Times Chai: 54 Rabbis Tell Their Favorite Stories- Laney Katz Becker
- Filling Words with Light: Hasidic and Mystical Reflections on Jewish Prayer - Rabbi Lawrence Kushner and Rabbi Nehemia Polen
- Jewish Stories from Heaven and Earth: Inspiring Tales to Nourish the Heart and Soul - Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins
- Our Dance with God: Finding Prayer, Perspective and Meaning in the Stories of Our Lives – Karyn Kedar
- The Path of Blessing: Experiencing the Energy and Abundance of the Divine - Rabbi Marcia Prager
- PRAY TELL :A Hadassah Guide to Jewish Prayer - Rabbi Jules Harlow with Tamara Cohen, Rochelle Furstenberg, Rabbi Daniel Gordis and Leora Tanenbaum
- Soul Judaism: Dancing with God into a New Era - Rabbi Wayne Dosick

Music

Almost any popular song can be applied to a Jewish prayer in one way or another, you just have to think outside the box and be creative. For example, *One* by U2 is a great song to teach about faith, and monotheism in the Shema. But for specific Jewish music appropriate to use for Tefilah, read on!

www.Jewishmusic.com or www.oytunes.com for downloadable hits.

Jewish musical mavens who can help bring creativity to traditional nusach: (name, website, sample album)

- Craig Taubman –www.craignco.com - *The World is a Very Narrow Bridge*
- Shlomo Carlebach- www.Jewishmusic.com - *Hits of Carlebach*
- Sheldon Low –www.sheldonlow.com - *On One Foot*
- Debbie Freidman – www.debbiefriedman.com- *One People, Blessings*
- Rick Recht – www.rickrecht.com- *Shabbat Alive!*
- Avner Levi- www.jewishmusic.com - *Sephradic Super Party*
- Safam- www.safam.com
- Peter Halpern- www.urj.org- *Sweet Songs and Sacred Prayer*
- Sam Glaser- www.samglaser.com - *A Day in the Life*
- Joshua Nelson [Jewish Gospel] –www.joshuanelson.com- *Mi Chamocha*

Drama:

Sedra Scenes – Stan Biner

**Bibliodrama* – Dr. Peter Pitzele - www.bibliodrama.com

Parasha Plays – Richard J. Allen

Class Acts: Plays and Skits for Jewish Settings – Stan Biner

Kings and Things: 20 Jewish Plays for Kids 8-18 – Meredith Shaw Patera

The Magic Tanach and Other Short Plays – Gabrielle Suzanne Kaplan

*uses role playing as an excellent technique to engage with text through empathy and emotion

Enjoy these suggestions to enhance the experience of prayer for the Pray-er!

For additional suggestions please contact Amy Greenfeld (Greenfeld@uscj.org)