

POUR OUT YOUR HEART IN PRAYER
THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER

SYMBOLS KEY



Welcome



What I Know!



Vocabulary



Key Ideas



Text Study



Paraphrasing the Text



Discussion



Activity



Did You Know?



Personal Connection

AGENDA



Welcome



What I Know!



Vocabulary Preview



Key Ideas



Text Study One



Discussion



Text Study Two



Discussion



Text Study Three



Discussion



Activity



Text Study Four



Discussion



Activity



Did You Know?



Personal Connection



WHAT I KNOW!

- What is a prayer?
- What words come to mind when you think about prayer?
- What feelings come to mind when you think about prayer?
- Can you name any prayers you have said before or say regularly?
- What is one reason you might say a prayer?



VOCABULARY PREVIEW

Human spirit – the qualities and capabilities inside every person

Generosity of human spirit – to act with kindness without expecting anything in return

Take for granted – assume we will always have something

Important Hebrew Word

Commandment – *Mitzvah* (מצוה)



KEY IDEAS

- Prayer is a way for us to talk to God.
- Prayer can be used to thank God and to ask for help.
- Certain prayers are considered a Mitzvah to say.
- Prayer can help us feel more in control over things in our lives.



TEXT 1

BLU GREENBERG, *DAILY PRAYER AND BLESSINGS*

President of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA).



Prayer has a lot of purposes. People can pray when they are feeling scared, angry, grateful, or happy. Prayer helps us remember all the good things we have in life and brings us together as a community. At the same time, prayer can be something personal between you and God. Prayer can be a part of a daily routine or a chance to step out of your routine for a little while.





TEXT 1: DISCUSSION

- Blu Greenberg says prayer can be helpful when feeling scared or angry. Have you ever used prayer when you felt that way? What or who do you turn to when you are feeling challenging emotions?
- Do you feel like you would be more likely to pray when you are feeling happy? Why or why not?
- Have you ever prayed as part of a community or by yourself? If you have done both, which did you prefer?
- Do you pray every day? Is it part of your routine? Or is it something you do only on special days (Shabbat, holidays)? Is prayer something that allows you a pause from your routines?



TEXT 2

RABBI LAWRENCE HOFFMAN, *PRAYER REMINDS US OF LIFE'S TRUTHS* (2000)

Professor of liturgy at the New York campus of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.



Prayer can help us remain aware of why we are lucky to be alive. When we pray, we are reminded of important lessons of Judaism, and this helps us live our lives by those lessons.





TEXT 2: DISCUSSION

- Why do you think it may be helpful to be reminded, through prayer, that “life is worth living”?
- Do you ever find it hard to remember and feel connected to the Jewish lessons you have learned?



TEXT 3 MODEH ANI

I give thanks to You living and everlasting King for
You have restored my soul with mercy. Great is Your
faithfulness.

מוֹדָה אֲנִי / מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם שֶׁהַחַיְיוּת בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחֶמְלָה,
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:

Modeh / Modah ani lefanekha melekh chai vekayam
shehechezarta bi nishmati b'chemlah, rabah
emunatekha.*

**Modeh (male) / Modah (female)*



An example of a prayer that expresses gratitude is Modeh Ani. which reminds us of the importance of being thankful for all of life's moments.



TEXT 3: DISCUSSION

- What are you grateful for when you get up in the morning?
- What might saying this short prayer help you recognize or appreciate in your life?
- How can saying this prayer help you face challenges in life?



TEXT 3

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: GRATITUDE BRAINSTORM

Photo by Alina Skazka



Photo by Min An



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Photo by Kelly





TEXT 4

**RABBI AMY SCHEINERMAN,
*APPROACHING PRAYER***



One might find 3 different motivations (reasons) to pray:

1. It may help you to connect with God.
2. It is considered a *mitzvah* and therefore is something that God commanded us to do. It replaced the commandment of sacrificing animals to God, which is how ancient Jews connected to God.
3. It can be a personal experience that helps you think about yourself and what you want in life.





TEXT 4: DISCUSSION

- Which of these three motivations feels the most relevant to you? Do you like to pray to feel connected to God, to fulfill a mitzvah, or to connect more with yourself?
- Why do you think prayer is an obligation in Judaism? Do you think it should be a requirement or just a suggestion?
- Ancient Jews used to sacrifice animals and modern Jews pray. Is prayer a kind of sacrifice? What might you be sacrificing in order to pray?



TEXT 4
OPTIONAL ACTIVITY:
INSTEAD OF PRAYER....



DID YOU KNOW?

There are different items that you can wear while praying to feel even more connected to God. Many people wear a *Tallit* (prayer shawl), a *kippah*, or wrap *tefillin*. There are traditional versions of these prayer garments as well as more modern, customized versions!

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PERSONAL CONNECTION

Try waking up and saying *Modeh Ani* and/or writing a “I am grateful for . . .” list every morning for a few days. How does it make you feel? Does it feel like a routine that helps you start your day on the right foot?

מודה אני / מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים שהחזרת בי נשמתני בחמלה, רבה אמונתך:

Modeh / Modah ani lefanekha melekh chai vekayam shehechezarta bi nishmati
b'chemlah, rabah emunatekha.*

**Modeh (male) / Modah (female)*

