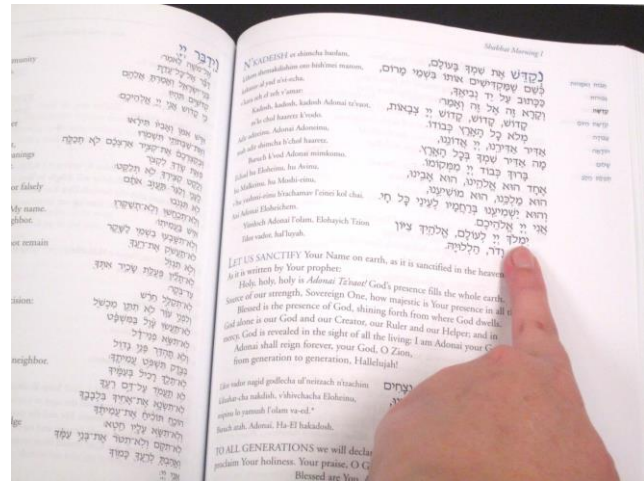


#OnwardHebrew: In the words of education directors

What are some successful models and strategies for *t'fillah* in an #OnwardHebrew program?

- Across #OnwardHebrew programs there is great variety in the choice of *siddur* (prayerbook) during all-group *t'fillah* (worship). Directors reported the following options:

- no *siddur* (all is aural/oral)
- a published *siddur*, either the adult one used by their synagogue or a children's version
- a *siddur* created by a group of children as a Project-Based Learning project and photocopied for all
- a photocopied *siddur* that each child personally illustrates over time
- *Mishkan T'filah: The Journal Edition*
- Visual *t'fillah* (i.e., words and images projected onto a screen)
- And no matter what the physical format, Hebrew language options include: Hebrew font only; Hebrew transliteration, and/or Hebrew font plus an English translation.



- **Structure ideas abound:**

- “Each week we focus on one prayer with *kavanah* (intent) and depth.”
- “We gather with an opening circle, our *t'fillah*. This is our anchor - it pulled us through the pandemic.”
- “It’s a teaching service. We have a cyclical curriculum and don’t do an entire service in one session, but rather focus on a few prayers. We see this as an extension of our children’s religious school time.”
- “Different grade groups have different foci – PreK through second grade have a very musical service, *t'fillah* for third through fifth graders incorporates regular worship and deliberate aural teaching of Hebrew words of specific prayers, and sixth and seventh graders have a *kavanah*-focused *t'fillah*.”

- “With our sixth through eighth graders we include *t’fillah* on a regular basis; this is not seen as ‘just’ B’Mitzvah preparation. These middle schoolers rotate through three types of *t’fillah*: *Keva* (it’s straight forward), *Kavanah* (they work with a set of prayers or ideas), and Experience (for



example, an outdoor physical journey through prayers or an in-the-moment task to create a prayer’s theme-based playlist).”

- “On the weekend, everyone is together as a group, but during the week teachers are asked to lead their own class’ *t’fillah*, either by themselves or teamed up with another teacher/class. Yes, some of the teachers don’t ‘get around to’ the midweek *t’fillah*, but we’ll work this out for next year....”
- “We have an educational program that includes Sunday classes for children and adults. We encourage the adults to join us for *t’fillah* so it’s an intergenerational service.”
- “At times we have a “family service” that includes children and parents.”
- **The choice of leader is key:**
 - “Some of our clergy are great leading children’s *t’fillah*, but others not so much. As respectfully as I can, I work out roles that fit everyone’s strengths.”
 - “I (the education director) made a conscious decision to be the *t’fillah* leader.”
 - “We use our clergy, especially the cantor, since it creates great consistency between the Shabbat service and what we do on Sunday with the children. Also, children get to see the dynamic *between* clergy when they are involved in our program’s *t’fillah*.”
 - “We have found great success with teen songleaders. It’s been great for the children to have these teens, just a bit older than themselves, in a leadership position.”