



Prayer Beads

Objective: To explore a more expansive concept of prayer and how prayer “works.”

Materials: Watercolor paper (11x14), watercolor sets and brushes, cups for water, glue, scissors, rulers, markers, masking or blue painter's tape, fine point markers or pencils, hairdryer, leather/plastic string, wooden skewers.

Description: Ask people to share how they pray. Talk about how prayer “works” using the list by Rabbi Amy. Tape watercolor paper to the table and invite people to relax into praying by painting with the watercolors. Play music and allow time for this process. While the papers dry, invite sharing around this experience. You may use a hairdryer if time is short. When papers are dry, cut them into long, skinny triangles (about 1 inch width on the wide end). Allow people time to write their prayers on these triangles, noting that the prayers will NOT be shared. Apply gluestick to the written part of the triangle. Using the wood skewers to keep an opening, roll the beads from the wide end to the small end. Thread with leather string to fit as a bracelet. Participants assist each other by tying the prayer beads onto their wrists. Conclude with a prayer or mantra

to “activate” the beads, as well as a photo of everyone’s bead in a huddle (see above).

A video to see how to make the beads: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8Y2ChCEg5g>

Reference for “How Prayer Works: <http://www.ajhr.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Eilberg-sermon.pdf>

What Does it Mean for Prayer to “Work”?

(adopted from list created by Rabbi Amy Eilberg)

Prayer may work in that one may have asked God for something which indeed came about.

Prayer may work by invoking a greater sense of God’s presence.

Prayer may work by way of distraction, momentarily pulling the one who is ill out of her pain and suffering into a place of beauty or transcendence.

Prayer may work by way of focusing more deeply on the pain or discomfort in the suffering person's life; in this way prayer can be deeply grounding and clarifying.

Prayer may work by quieting or centering yourself.

Prayer may work by significantly connecting the one praying or being prayed for with her community and tradition.

Prayer may work by helping the one praying or being prayed for to connect to a deeper level of the self which is already healed and whole, reminding the person of her essential wholeness.

Prayer may work in focusing the pray-er on the blessings in her life enabling her to magnify her sense of gratitude.

Prayer may work by helping to focus on what really matters in life.

Prayer may work by connecting people to each other.