

SpeakChorus Torah Flash Mob Community Midrash

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Overview of the process

Facilitator Preparation:

- Choose text and explore broad themes
- Gather poetry, commentary, midrash related to those themes
- Adapt or refine the translation of the source text(s) as needed
- Consider nigunim and songs both for gathering and for use in the presentation
- Prepare text selection and writing prompts for Kriyat hakodesh
- Evaluate whether to use a shorter text than you originally planned on
- Get materials ready (either printed or online) for participants

Phase 1: Generating material: 1-2 sessions

- Use these techniques to generate material
 - Hebrew and/or English reading of the text
 - Torah Circles
 - Nigunim and songs
 - Movement
 - Kriyat haKodesh (contemplative read and writing)
 - Writing exercises
 - Poetry Slam read-aloud
 - Text study and discussion
- Record or scribe EVERYTHING: whatever people say or write becomes the material for the script. Sometimes a movement or a melody might become material. Sometimes people will come up with things you could never have anticipated! Transcribe or type up between sessions as needed.
- Asynchronous option - you can also give people access to a recording of you reading the text (slowly) and/or the text itself along with writing prompts they can use after they have listened to or read the text on their own time
- Zoom option - pretty easy to do reading aloud and discussion on Zoom, even movement. Singing doesn't work so well, though you can sing or play a recording and have them all be muted

Phase 2: Creating the script (in between sessions) - leave plenty of time for this!!!!

- Get all words transcribed start reading through them
- Look for opportunities to bring phrases and sentences and even sections together
- Discover the themes that have emerged
- Look for where you can add echoes, parallel phrasing, lists, etc.
- Create a rough draft and read through it
- Break up sentences and phrases into smaller chunks SpeakChorus style-start using color coding or different fonts

- Look for where you want the whole group to say something all together for emphasis and mark them
- Most of the script should be individuals or sometimes pairs or smaller groups
- If you have more than 8 people, consider breaking into two or more subsections (example: 18 people can be broken up into 3 groups of 6 and each take about a third of the script)

Phase 3 Working with the script and rehearsing

- Bring the draft to the group and have them read through it (assign temporary parts)
- See what obviously works and doesn't work
- Get feedback from the group - they will bring up things you may or may not have noticed
- Take notes/edits on your script (if you are doing this on a shared document, you may want to create a copy so you can always refer back to what you had originally)
- Read through again with any edits you and the group have made
- Check in on temporary parts assignment and change if needed
- Work on pacing, ensemble, including any songs or movements
- Remember to record your final runthrough, audio, video or both, especially if you won't be able to do so at the presentation
- Finalize all edits and print scripts or make available online to all the speakers

Sample outline with four sessions

SPEAKCHORUS TORAH: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF HOLY MIDRASH TELLERS: DAY 1

Session 1

INTRODUCTIONS AND ORIENTATION

Niggun and intro to the text

HEBREW READING OF TEXT-Part 1

Orientation to the process:

2 sessions of experiencing text, writing, mediation, singing, meditation, poetry, movement. 3rd session working with script and 4th session refining it.

What we as teachers do in the evenings. How we put it together. Ultimately it is an unfolding mystery.

We use your words but it won't necessarily be you who speaks them and it won't be even as to how many of each of your words get used, but there will be something of you in the presentation. The results will be a group midrash that will be spoken/sung as a Dvar Torah to be presented at a specific Shabbat morning service so you need to commit to be there.

Introductions I journeyed from _____ and rested at _____ (scribe/voice record)

TORAH CIRCLES (scribe/voice record)

Torah Circles – part 1 of text in English read 3 times (use different readers or go around the circle)

Talking Stick: What caught your attention?

MOVEMENT A somatic experience based on the rhythm of journeying, resting, then journeying again. Some resting longer than others. Notice what you get used to and how it feels to adapt a routine to a new place.

TEXT STUDY (scribe/tape)

Bring in commentary and discuss

Share one word (scribe)

Niggun

Writing exercise 10 WORDS

Write and if time share- then collect.

Prepare for poetry slam: hand out poems, have each one take one home

SPEAK CHORUS TORAH: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF HOLY MIDRASH TELLERS: SESSION 2

HEBREW READING OF TEXT

Niggun

Hebrew reading of part 2 over *niggun*

KRIYAT HA KODESH: CONTEMPLATIVE TORAH

Introduction and readings

Use 2 prompts for writing and discussion

MOVEMENT

Movement Physically representing some of the specific journeys (Exploding pomegranate, Banging on the gates to force a shift/aka Who's That Knocking, Bitterness, going from I Will Knead Bread to Rest Our Weakened Hands) shaking in fear, Assembly of voices.

(everyone hand in their writing)

MUSIC

Music: Teach and sing song snippet that we will incorporate

POETRY SLAM

Each person reads one of the poems we handed out in turn.

Followed by writing 15 minutes

Write 4 lines-be concise

TEXT STUDY

Text study (scribe/record)

Group creates one sentence (scribe)

Niggun

SHARE IF TIME

SPEAKCHORUS TORAH: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF HOLY MIDRASH TELLERS: SESSION 3

Start with niggun

Short Text study and share learning from week

Movement - Stretch

WORK WITH DRAFT

Hand out draft scripts. Work with draft, music. Read entire draft, give to groups to work on each section, read it through again.

SPEAKCHORUS TORAH: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF HOLY MIDRASH TELLERS: SESSION 4

Niggun

Rehearse with script

Record final rehearsal