Dear CRNE Tzevet Member, Kayitz 2013:

A couple of months ago my son was at tefillot with me on Shabbat morning. He had been in for the Shacharit Amidah, gone out to play in the courtyard during the Torah reading and now he was back in for Musaf. He said: "Abba, what should I say from the siddur?" I pointed to the beginning of Musaf Amidah and said, "Say that." He looked up puzzled and said, "Again."

My son was correct and probably not the first person/child to notice that we are saying the same prayers over and over again. Indeed, the Amidah prayer is traditionally said at least 3 times a day (4 on Shabbat and holidays, 5 on Yom Kippur) every day of the Jewish year. It seems that if the prayer is so central to our religious lives and we say it so frequently, we might as well try to understand it to the best of our ability.

This summer at camp we hope to do exactly that. One of our educational themes is the Amidah. This booklet contains source material for almost every one of the paragraphs of the Amidah. Each page begins with the Hebrew of the berakhah, an English translation, some explanation and many thoughts, quotes, stories, midrashim and other such material which should be a source to help you and your campers understand what they are saying.

You will all be attending some explanation sessions during Shavua Hakhanah as to how to use this material. But I'd like to emphasize here that the most important element of this program is that YOU TAKE OWNERSHIP OVER IT. Your chanichim know YOU. They respect YOU (even if they don't always show it). They are interested in what YOU think, how YOU act, what YOU believe in. The Amidah is an amazing prayer, and if you can use these sheets in the creative ways that YOU can think up, then you will be able to help your chanichim have a deeper understanding and appreciation of their prayers. Putting together these sheets is something that I can do. But as of now, like the Amidah itself, it is just words on paper. Making the Amidah meaningful, bringing it to the chanichim is one of the reasons that you are staff members here this summer.

Of course, I am around all summer to help you. Don't be afraid to come up to me at any time and say, Josh, I need some help understanding, or Josh, I'm not sure how to get my point across. You can usually find me in the library, at meals or wandering around camp. I'll even invite you to take a run with me in the early morning and we can talk over this material or anything else about camp you'd like to talk about. There are of course many other tzevet members whom you can use as a resource over the summer. We are all here to help you do as best of a job as you can. Please don't ever be afraid to ask.

Behatzlahah!

Josh Kulp (Rosh Bet Midrash, 2013)