

# HEBREW THROUGH MOVEMENT

אֲדָנִי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח



Originally developed as a complement to the JECC's curriculum,  
*Lakum ... La'amod, plus V'ahavta*

**Jewish Education Center of Cleveland**

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## INTRODUCTION TO USING HEBREW THROUGH MOVEMENT WITH PRAYERS AND BLESSINGS

This unit is one of a series developed by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland as a starting point for planning prayer and blessing lessons using Hebrew Through Movement. Indeed, the power of Hebrew Through Movement is in its ability to introduce and reinforce key vocabulary of Jewish prayers and rituals by using the foundational commands that have students walking, running, turning, and pointing. With HTM, students learn Hebrew by listening and reacting, and as a result, words and phrases stick in their heads much easier than when they attempt to memorize a list of words.

A few things to note:

- At the stage of language that Hebrew Through Movement operates, students will never fully be able to understand all the Hebrew words and phrases of a blessing or prayer. But they can be introduced to enough vocabulary so that the blessing begins to take on meaning.
- To work with the prayers and blessings, students need to have completed Foundational Level Five in the curriculum guide (available for free download from the home page of: [HebrewThroughMovement.org](http://HebrewThroughMovement.org)).<sup>1</sup> This level of learning provides the basic vocabulary to introduce and reinforce the complicated language of Hebrew prayers. Core commands that will be helpful include:

לָקוּם	get up
לְלַכּוֹת אֶל	walk to
לְקַפוֹץ אֶל	jump to
לְהַצְבִּיעַ עַל	point to
לְקַחַת	take
לְגַעַת ב	touch
לְהָרִים אֶת	raise up
לְהוֹרִיד אֶת	lower
לְשִׂים _____ עַל	put (the)(a) _____ on

- Most of the time, HTM focuses on individual words, but at times an entire phrase is offered as the object of a command.
- Note that the JECC develops curriculum in response to the needs of local Cleveland congregations. After evaluation and revision during a pilot year, our materials are then shared nationally. The Hebrew Through Movement lessons are embedded into two JECC prayer curricula:
  - *Lasim Lev* (a focus on the *Sh'ma* and its Blessings, plus *Kiddush*)
  - *Lakum...La'amod* (a focus on the *Amidah*, plus *V'ahavta*)

<sup>1</sup> Teachers gain the basic skills for working with Hebrew Through Movement through the 10 hour online-seminar offered by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland: <http://www.hebrewthroughmovement.org/online-seminar-registration.html>

Both are available for free download from JECCMarketplace.com. If your program needs a specific prayer, blessing, or vocabulary that is not included, use the general template provided in these lessons to create your own.

**This guide contains:**

- Suggestions for the vocabulary a teacher might choose in working with a prayer or blessing
- Ideas for teaching each of the chosen vocabulary words
- Resource Sheets with pictures that will help with the teaching of concepts (print these in color, preferably on cardstock; lamination is optional)
- Explanations of when students may have learned specific vocabulary if your program uses *Lasim Lev* or *Lakum...La'amod* OR if your program has been teaching the prayers/blessings in the same order by which these guides are organized.

**Three teaching tips:**

- Teachers are welcome to introduce vocabulary from this guide in any order they wish BUT it is helpful to complement student learning with words that match the current focus of their *t'fillah* class. Thus, if you are a Hebrew Through Movement teaching specialist, be sure to stay in contact with the classroom teacher so you choose the most helpful vocabulary, weekly
- Remember to start each lesson with a review of past vocabulary. This review should contain words students have already learned that will assist in the rest of the lesson. For instance, if you know students will be touching objects (לְגַעַת בּ) and picking them up (לְהָרִים אֶת), include those verb forms in the review.
- Anytime you complete a Hebrew Through Movement lesson based on a prayer, blessing or ritual, end your session by helping your students recite the actual blessing. This creates immediate and strong reinforcement between the vocabulary just learned and the actual prayer.

Vocabulary options for HTM are indicated in red:

אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח,

וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח is the meditation that we say just as the *Amidah* begins:

*My God, open my lips so that my mouth may tell of Your glory*

To help students understand some key vocabulary, introduce the Hebrew names of several parts of their head. Make sure to especially introduce the words that represent “doubles” on the head (ears, eyes, lips), at this point not teaching the singular (e.g., not one “ear” but two “ears”).

אָזְנִים / אֲזָנִים  
 עֵינַיִם  
 שְׁפָתַיִם  
 רֶאשׁ  
 פֶּה  
 אֶף

NOTE: If you are involved in teaching *Lakum...La'amod*, the *t'fillah* teacher will help make the transition from these words to the meditation. If the lesson timing is such that the *t'fillah* class has already happened before you teach the HTM vocabulary, end your lesson by having students find the related words on a prayer chart, and then pointing to that part of their body.

שְׁפָתַי - שְׁפָתַיִם  
 פִּי - פֶּה

Recite the meditation together.

Also, it would be helpful to next session's introduction to the *Amidah* if you also introduced the word לְעִמּוּד and gave commands like:

לְעִמּוּד עַל הַכֶּסֶּא  
 לְעִמּוּד עַל-גַּד הַדָּלָת  
 (use a photo for this!) לְעִמּוּד עַל הָאֶף



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וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

