

INTERFAITH GRIEF CIRCLES FOR GAZA

This is a simple guide with some recommendations for organizing local interfaith grief circles to collectively mourn those who have died, and publicly recommit to work for justice.

Before event:

- Choose public location that is conducive to the tone of the event
- Invite co-sponsors and clergy leaders
- Notify media

Roles needed at event:

- Clergy prayer leaders, ideally minimum of 3 from different faiths
- Song leaders
- Readers of names
- Photographer/Videographer
- Media spokesperson
- Musicians (optional)

Materials Needed at event:

- List of names of those who have die ([link](#))
- Print outs of individual names (optional)
- Banners so that those walking by/media can see what this is about/our messages. (See www.jvp.org/toolkit)
- Flyers to hand out to those walking by (see www.jvp.org/toolkit)
- Candles and matches (optional)
- Print outs of prayers to be recited (optional)
- Gong/Drum (optional--for banging after each name of those killed)

Optional activities/elements:

- In your event announcement invite participants to bring objects for an altar and create a temporary altar in center of the circle.
- In your event announcement, invite participants to bring a rock to place on a makeshift tombstone--as is the tradition in Judaism, to leave a stone on a tombstone. Create a makeshift tombstone from cardboard or some such.
- In your event announcement, ask all participants to wear black and/or bring flowers
- Print out on a single sheet of paper with each name and age of those that have died and bring safety pins. Each participant wears one name.
- Light a shiva/memorial candle in the center/front or have all participants hold a candle
- Move together from the gathering to a more intense die-in action at a BDS target. When you arrive, each person recites name of one person who has died and then lays on the ground. All on ground are silent.

Sample flow for event:

I. OPENING

- Song leader gathers group into circle with song
- Clergy #1 welcomes everyone and introduces purpose and spirit of the gathering
- Clergy #2 offers prayers

II. READING OF THE NAMES

- Clergy #3 introduces reading of the names
- Names are read
- After each name is read a gong is sounded, a drum is beat, or everyone in the gathering invited to repeat a word or short phrase. For example: "ashamnu--we have been guilty", "we honor and remember," "rest in power"
- a moment of silence

III. Song

IV. Prayers of remembrance

- Kaddish--Jewish Prayer for the Dead is recited
- Other prayers for the dead recited by other clergy
- moment of silence

V. Sharing

- Clergy member invites everyone in gathering to huddle with 3-6 people near them to share what is on their hearts
- After some time for all the small groups to share, bring the group back together.
- Invite each participant to go around and share one word about what they are feeling

VI. SONG

VII. CLOSING

- Clergy #1 introduces closing
- Clergy #2 offers charge to group to continue to action, organize for justice

VIII. SONG

Sample prayers:

Ashamnu/Halleluyah

It is a Jewish tradition to confess our sins in the plural, knowing that, even if we personally have not committed every sin -- God forbid -- our souls are bound up one with the other. In this spirit I invite you to respond to each of these sentences by responding: ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ—we have been guilty

For the children living in fear from bombs **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

For the children killed by bombs **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

For the children made orphans by bombs **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

For the grieving parents **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

For valuing Jewish lives over lives of others **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

For ignoring the daily humiliation and violence of occupation **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

For not believing there is another way **ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ**

We must praise, halleluyah, for all the blessings of the sacred work to ensure justice and dignity for all people.

For the blessing of common purpose; **halleluyah**

For the blessing of supporting, in ways seen and unseen, the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people; **halleluyah**

For the blessing of participating, in ways seen and unseen, in the liberation of the Jewish people from the cruel role of oppressing another people; **halleluyah**

For the blessing of participating, in ways seen and unseen, in bringing peace, reconciliation, hope and healing to a wounded place in our world; **halleluyah**

For the blessing of living in a world in which healing is always possible; **halleluyah**

For the blessing of living in a world in which efforts towards love and justice always bring good, whether or not we witness their results; **halleluyah**

We must bring new light to shine, not on our guilt, but on our power, to ensure justice and dignity for all people.

Ashamnu- אָשָׁמְנוּ. Halleluyah.

Blessing for Healing



*B'rukhhah at [Yah](#), M'kor Ha-chayim,
ha-tomekhet banu b'haviyenu
Or l'choshekh,
marpei l'shever,
v'shalom l'khol yoshvei tevel.*

Blessed are you, Source of Life,
Who helps us to bring
Light where there is darkness,
Healing where there is brokenness, and
Peace to all of the earth's inhabitants

Source: www.ritualwell.org

Mourner's Kaddish

Reader:

*Yitgadal v'yitkaddash sh'mei rabba.
B'alma di vra khirutei v'yamlikh malkhutei,
b'chayeikhon u-v'yomeikhon u-v'chaye
d'khol beit [yisrael](#),
ba-agala u-vizman kariv v'imru amen.*

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵי רַבָּא :
אֲמֵן

Congregation:

*Y'hei sh'mei rabba m'varakh l'alam
u-l'almei almaya.
Yitbarakh v'yishtabbach v'yitpa'ar
v'yitromam*

בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ
וְיִמְלִיךְ מְלְכוּתָהּ, וְיִצְמַח
פּוֹרְקָנָהּ וְיִקְרַב מְשִׁיחָהּ :
אֲמֵן

*v'yitnasei v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'hallal
sh'mei d'kudsha b'rikh hu
l'ella min kol birkhata v'shirata
tushb'chata v'nechemata da'amiran
b'alma v'imru amen.*

*Y'hei sh'lama rabba min sh'maya v'chayim
[aleinu](#) v'al kol yisrael v'imru amen.*

*Ose shalom bimromav hu ya'ase shalom
aleinu v'al kol yisrael v'al kol yoshvei tevel
v'imru amen.*

Reader:

Let God's name be made great and holy in the world that was created as God willed. May God complete the holy realm in your own lifetime, in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel, quickly and soon. And say: Amen.

Congregation:

May God's great name be blessed, forever and as long as worlds endure.

Reader:

May it be blessed, and praised, and glorified, and held in honor, viewed with awe, embellished, and revered; and may the blessed name of holiness be hailed, though it be higher by far than all the blessings, songs, praises, and consolations that we utter in this world. And say: Amen.

May Heaven grant a universal peace, and life for us, and for all Israel. And say: Amen.

May the One who creates harmony above, make peace for us and for all Israel, and for all who dwell on earth. And say: Amen.

Source: www.ritualwell.org

יְהִי שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא
וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן׃

אמן

> עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם * בְּמְרוֹמָיו, ^ הוּא
< יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, ^ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל, ^ וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן׃

אמן