

High Holidays

AT HOME





SHANAH TOVAH!

What a strange year it has been. And hard, too.

Now we're starting a new Jewish year. This is a time when we can take a deep breath and think about ways to make ourselves and our world better.

THE JEWISH NEW YEAR, when we celebrate the “birthday of the world,” is all about growing. We look back at the old year and take responsibility for our actions. We reconnect with our family and friends and look ahead with hope to a sweet new year.

For the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Making Things Right), many families normally go to synagogue. This year, to stay safe, many are staying home.

For this unusual new year, PJ Library is offering you and your family an opportunity to explore ways to connect with the High Holidays **at home**. We hope this guide can support your Jewish New Year journey during this year and in the future, as your family continues to grow and celebrate.

Let's begin our new year together! *Shanah tovah!*

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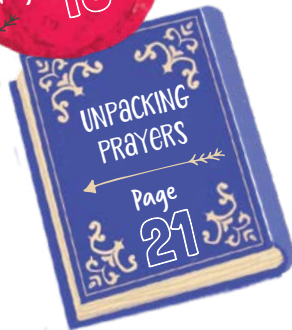
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ROSH HASHANAH

The Jewish calendar is based on the cycle of the moon, which grows into a full moon and then disappears about every 30 days. The Jewish year does not begin on January 1, but rather in the fall with the transition from the “moon” month named *Elul* to the “moon” month of *Tishrei* (typically sometime in September).

In Jewish tradition, people gather during *Elul* in the pre-dawn darkness to sing songs called **Selichot** (Hebrew for “forgiveness”). Then Rosh Hashanah begins on the first of *Tishrei*, when the small crescent of the new moon appears in the evening sky.

The Jewish New Year is called **Rosh Hashanah** – *rosh* is “head” and *hashanah* is “the year.” In Hebrew the word for “year” (*shanah*) comes from a root meaning “to change.”

Each new year is an opportunity for change and growth. How will the world change this year? How will you change this year?

In this first section, your family can work together (and be creative!) preparing for Rosh Hashanah.



GETTING READY



SWEET GREETINGS

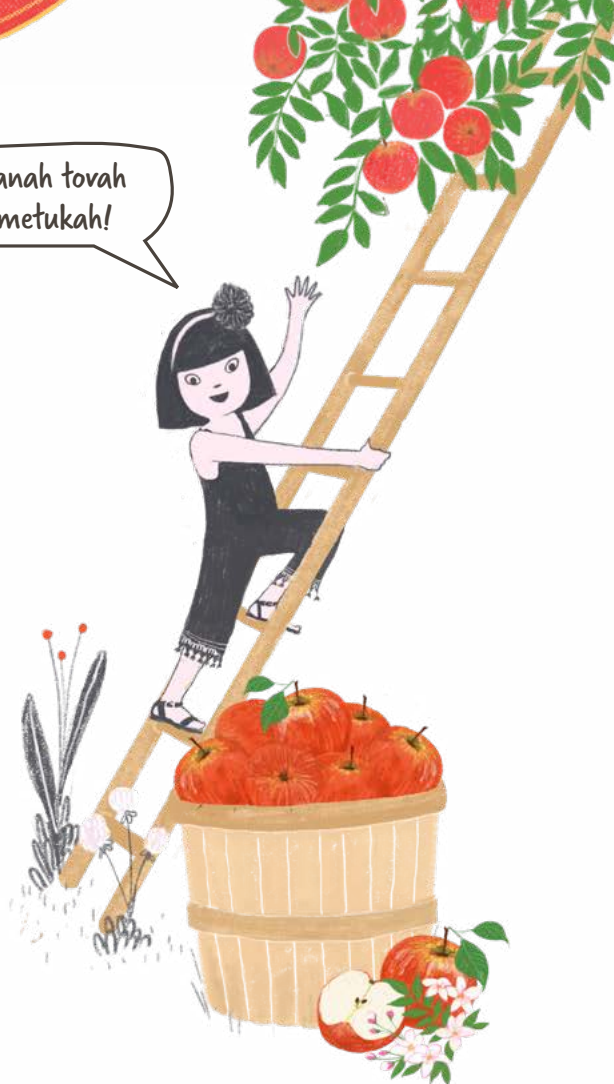


How do we greet one another on the Jewish New Year? We call out “*Shanah tovah!*” (shah-NAH toe-VAH), – Have a good year! or “*Shanah tovah umetukah!*” (shah-NAH toe-VAH oo-meh-too-KAH) – Have a good and sweet year!

A key Rosh Hashanah custom for making things sweet is dipping apples in honey. (See **Symbolic New Year Foods**, page 18).

With a supply of apples — store-bought or hand-picked — you can try the following activities:

Shanah tovah
umetukah!





HANDS ON!



Easy Baked Apple Dessert

Make your family a sweet treat for a sweet new year.

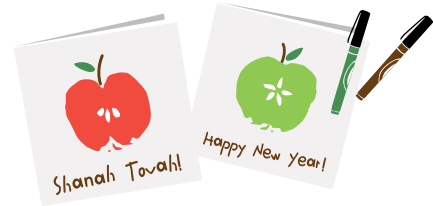
INGREDIENTS

- 4 APPLES
- 3 TBSP MELTED BUTTER
- 2 TBSP HONEY (PLUS MORE FOR DRIZZLING)
- ½ CUP ROLLED OATS
- ½ CUP RAISINS



Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Carefully core the apples with a paring knife (a grown-up's job). Mix 2 Tbsp of the butter and the honey, oats, and raisins together in a small bowl, then scoop the mixture into the cored apples. Brush apples with the remaining tablespoon of butter. Arrange apples in a baking dish or on a cookie sheet and bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until apple pierces easily with a sharp knife. Cool for a few minutes, drizzle with a little more honey, and enjoy!

HANDS ON!



Make Apple Cards

Many people send cards to their friends and families around Rosh Hashanah to wish them a happy new year. You can create apple stamps to make your own homemade cards.

SUPPLIES

- APPLES
- ACRYLIC PAINT
- FORKS
- FINE-TIPPED MARKER
- PAPER PLATES
- HEAVY CARD STOCK

- 1 Cut apples in half. Any shape works, but if you cut them across the middle, you'll have a star.
- 2 Stick a fork in the back of the apple for a handle.
- 3 Spread paint out on a paper plate. Dip the apple in the paint, then stamp it on your card stock.
- 4 Let paint dry, then embellish with a little stem or leaf. Add a new year's message such as "Shanah tovah — Happy New Year!"





HAVE A BLAST!

Hear the shofar and make your own

In the Bible, Rosh Hashanah is not called Rosh Hashanah. It's called *Yom Teruah*, the day of blasting the *shofar* (ram's horn).

On Rosh Hashanah, the voice of the shofar is like a wake-up call: Pay attention to yourself and ways you can improve! Pay attention to the world and how you can help make it better!

The shofar is sounded 100 times during a traditional Rosh Hashanah service. And a long and loud shofar blast marks the end of the fast day of Yom Kippur.

While the blower must first take a big breath, the shofar only sounds when the air blows out. This is a symbol for Rosh Hashanah: we turn inward to fix ourselves so we can then burst out and contribute to the world.

Here are the four shofar sounds we blow on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

- 1 **TEKIAH** (THE SINGLE BLOW)
- 2 **SHEVARIM** (THREE "BROKEN" BLOWS)
- 3 **TRUAH** (NINE OR MORE RAPID BLOWS)
- 4 **TEKIAH GEDOLAH** (THE GREAT BLAST)

HANDS ON!

Make Your Own Shofar

A real shofar is made from a ram's horn, and it takes some skill to blow it. You can make a pretend shofar at home that's easy to "blow," since the sound is your own voice.

SUPPLIES

- LARGE PAPER PLATE
- STAPLER
- MASKING TAPE

- 1 **Roll the paper plate** into a cone and staple it in place. (You may need an adult's help with this.)



- 2 **Bend the paper plate** to look like a horn. Use masking tape to help hold the shape. Then wrap the whole shofar in masking tape to give it a horn-like look.



- 3 **Hold the shofar up** to your mouth and make loud shofar noises, letting everyone around you know it's time to pay attention and make the world better!



Can you make each of the four sounds on this page?



CHALLAH IN THE ROUND

Bake In the New Year



Rosh Hashanah is called the “birthday of the world.” Celebrating the creation of the world is a time when we can *re-create* our own lives – remembering mistakes we made last year and turning things around for next year.

Or in the words of PJ Library author Linda Heller: “When each of us is the **best we can be**, then the world is the best place that *it* can be.” (And that’s a real birthday present to the world!)

On Rosh Hashanah a symbol of making ourselves and the world more whole is eating a round challah. A circle has no beginning or end, so a round challah expresses our hope for a year of infinite – lots and lots of! – blessings.

INGREDIENTS

To make two round challah breads you’ll need:

1½ Tbsp yeast

2½ cups warm water

1 tsp plus ½ cup sugar

½ cup vegetable oil

1 Tbsp salt

8 cups flour

1 cup raisins (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Dissolve the yeast in the water with 1 teaspoon of sugar. Whisk the mixture together, then add the oil, salt, and remaining sugar. Add the flour gradually, mixing well and then working it in with your hands. Take turns kneading as a family for about 10-15 minutes, until the dough is smooth and elastic. Work in the raisins (optional). Cover the bowl with a towel and leave it in the refrigerator overnight. The next morning, let the dough warm to room temperature, then punch it down and separate into two portions.



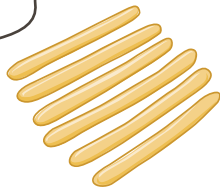
HANDS ON!

Braid a Round Challah

Challah is usually shaped in a simple long braid, but you can turn any challah recipe into a Rosh Hashanah recipe by braiding it in the round.

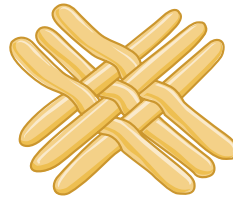
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- 1 When you reach the braiding stage, shape the dough into six strands of equal length.

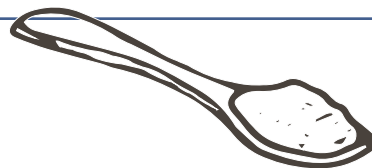
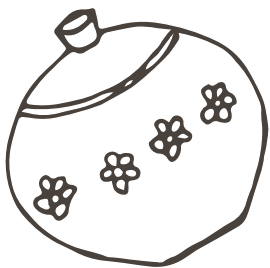
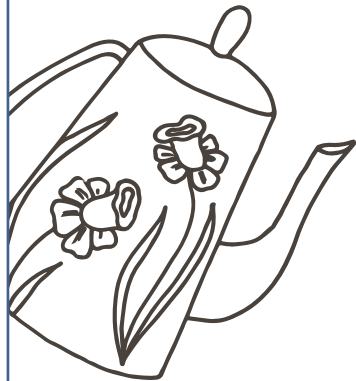
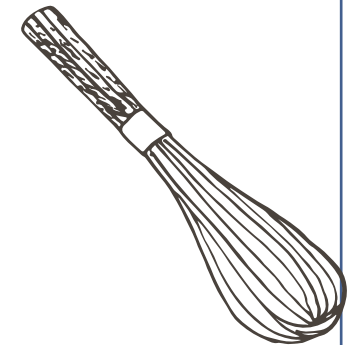
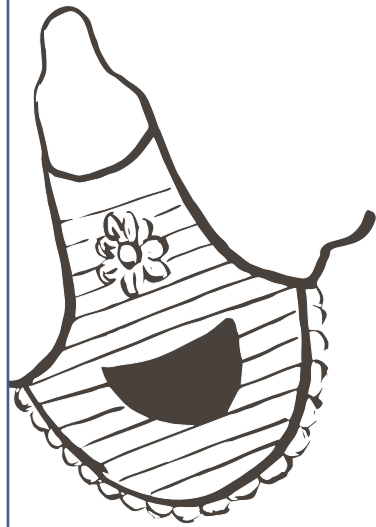
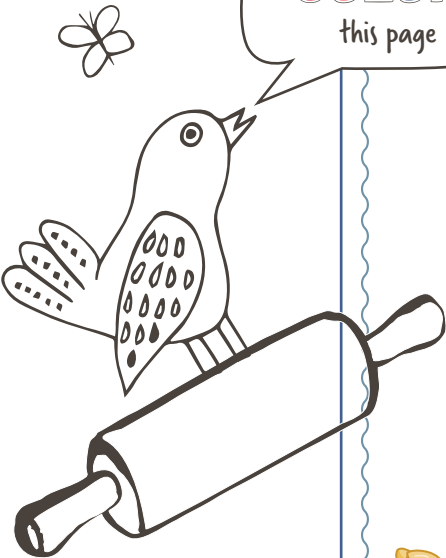
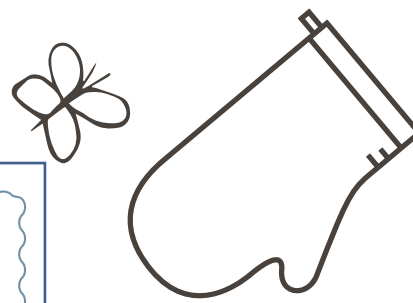
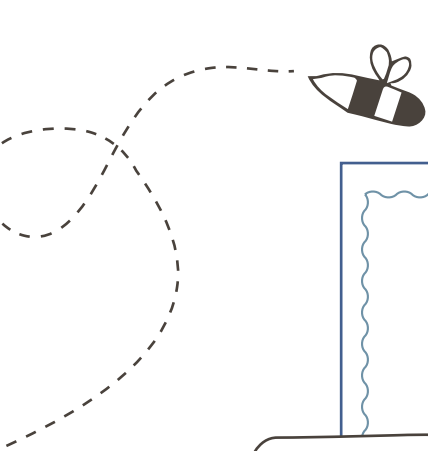
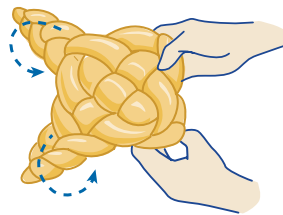
- 2 Lay three strands horizontally on a floured surface, then weave the other three strands into them vertically. Lift the bottom strands as needed to weave the top strands in. The ends of the strands will stick out.



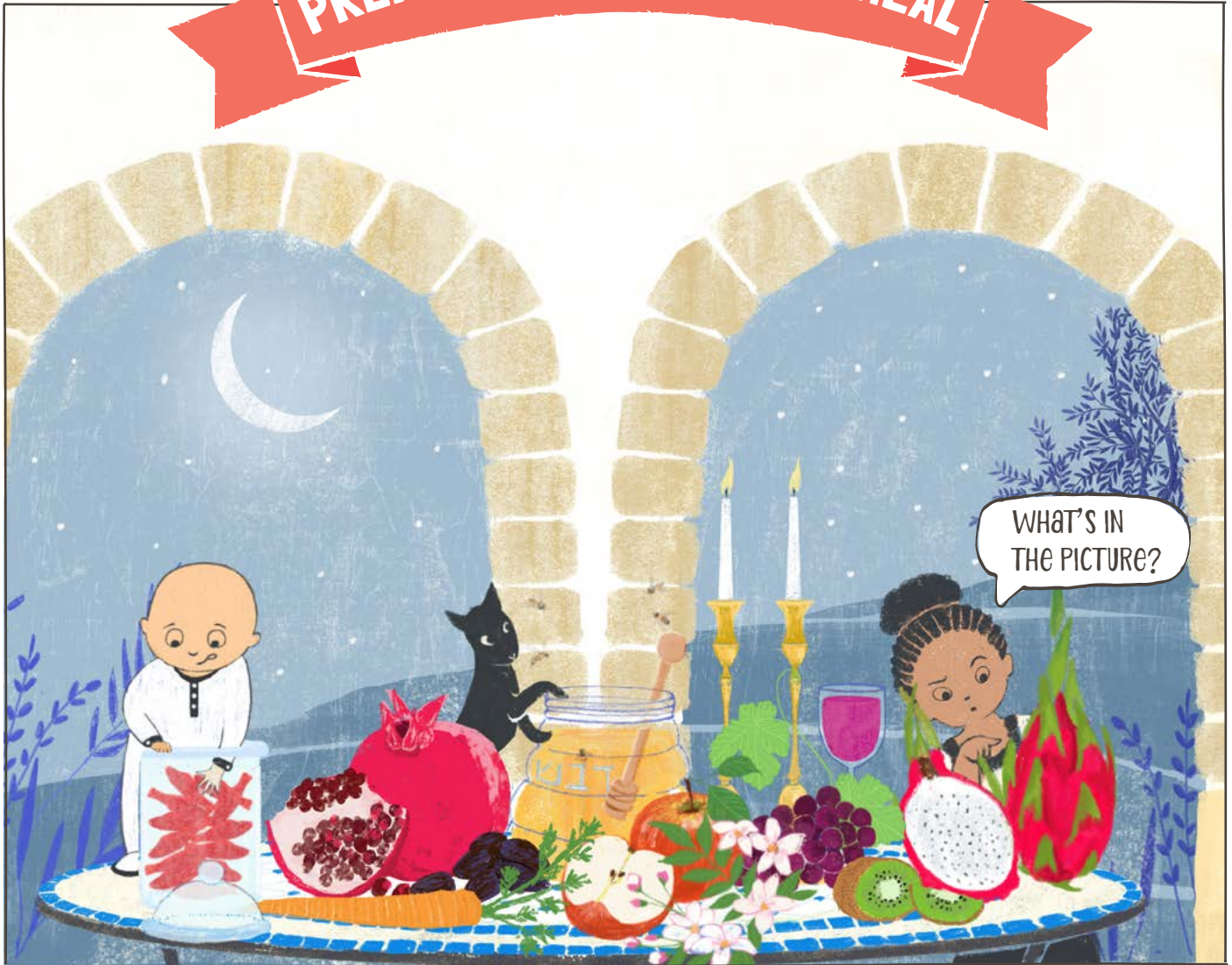
- 3 Now braid the ends together on all four sides. Gently tuck the braided edges underneath the middle section. Repeat steps 1 through 3 to create your second loaf.



Grease two round baking tins and transfer your loaves into them. Let the dough rise for another hour, then bake at 350 degrees for 20–25 minutes or until golden brown. If desired, glaze with a mixture of warm honey and a drop of water.



PREPARING THE EVENING MEAL



The first night of Rosh Hashanah begins with a meal that features traditional foods and blessings. The custom of a special Rosh Hashanah meal goes back more than 1,500 years to a Jewish book of commentary and laws called the Talmud, which describes certain foods to eat on Rosh Hashanah.

Over time, blessings were added to these foods to help inspire people to act better in the new year. The tradition grew over time to include more symbolic foods, with various dishes becoming popular in different Jewish communities around the world. And – good news for kids! – the Rosh Hashanah meal highlights sweet foods, symbolizing our desire to have a sweet new year.

Take a few minutes to look at this scene. What special things do you see at this Rosh Hashanah meal?

PREPARING THE EVENING MEAL

BLESS ME TOO! The Rosh Hashanah meal starts with a blessing over candles, like we do on Friday night. And then parents can bless their children with a special wish for the new year.



IS THAT A KIWI?

We say a blessing over wine or grape juice, and then *Shehecheyanu* – the blessing for reaching a special occasion. Since Rosh Hashanah is about “bringing in the new,” it’s customary to say a blessing over a fruit you haven’t eaten in a long time (or have never eaten!). What special fruit can you bring to the holiday meal?



“HEAD OF THE YEAR.” The last symbolic food is a “head” – in some traditional circles, the head of a fish. You can also use fish-shaped crackers or gummy fish instead. Or even lettuce or cabbage or another “head.” Get creative—what other symbolic foods can your family bring to the meal?



BRING ON THE HONEY (PART I).

We wash our hands and say a blessing over bread (*motzi*). On Rosh Hashanah we dip round challah in honey. Pretty sweet, huh?



BRING ON THE HONEY (PART II).

Next, apples are dipped in honey. Now it’s starting to taste like Rosh Hashanah.



AND THESE SYMBOLIZE...WHAT?

We continue with foods that symbolize our hopes for the new year – dates, carrots, and pomegranates. (Who’s getting full? And we haven’t even started the meal yet...)





Two more ways to liven up your holiday meal

HANDS ON!



Make Personalized Place Cards

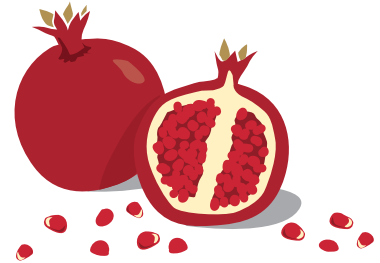
Want to make Rosh Hashanah dinner feel even more festive? Make a place card for each person, with a special surprise inside.

SUPPLIES:
INDEX CARDS
MARKERS
STICKERS



1. Fold index cards in half. On the outside write the person's name and decorate however you wish.
2. Draw a picture on the inside of the place card. (If Mom loves cats, draw a picture of a cat.) Then write a personal new year's wish.

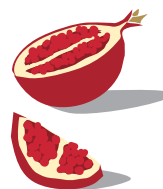
HANDS ON!



Pop Open a Pomegranate

Pomegranates go way back in Jewish history — they're mentioned in the biblical Song of Songs and the story of the Exodus, and they are a traditional food at Rosh Hashanah. Some people think that the apple in the Garden of Eden was actually a pomegranate! Pomegranate seeds are delicious — but getting at them can be tricky. Try this technique:

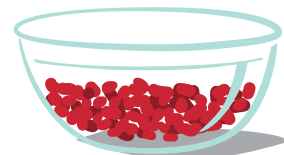
Cut the fruit in half vertically, from stem end to flower end (a grown-up's job). Then cut each half in two again.



Place the pomegranate halves in a big bowl of water.

Dig your fingers into the fruit to separate the

seeds ("arils") from the white fleshy parts ("albedo"). The seeds will sink to the bottom of the bowl. You can remove the floating parts, then drain the bowl. You'll be left with a generous pile of glistening red seeds.



Enjoy!

ROSH HASHANAH

EVENING

You can make your Rosh Hashanah meal special with opening rituals such as candle lighting, wishes for your children, grape juice or wine, a new fruit, and of course, round challah dipped in honey.



LIGHTING THE HOLIDAY CANDLES

Light the candles and say the blessing.

Like many Jewish holidays, Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown with lighting candles. As darkness fills the evening sky, glowing candles bring a warm light to the meal inside the house.

Here is how to say the Hebrew blessing.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל (שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל) יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel (Shabbat v'shel) yom tov.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for giving us rules that make our lives special and for teaching us to light these holiday candles.



BLESSING THE CHILDREN



The traditional “blessing of the children” is particularly meaningful on Rosh Hashanah, when parents and grandparents can share with their children their hopes and wishes for the New Year.

This blessing is 3,000 years old – the oldest Jewish blessing! – and is part of a never-ending chain: our parents and grandparents (and ancestors before them) blessed us with their actions and qualities, and we carry these blessings forward.

Parents (and grandparents) place their hands on a child’s head and say:

בְּרַכָּךָ יי וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ.
יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנֶּנֶךָ.
יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּשִּׂים לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

Yevarechecha Adonai veyishmerecha.
Ya’er Adonai panav eilecha viyechuneka.
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha veyasem
lecha shalom.

May God bless you and keep you safe.
May God’s light shine on you and grace your life.
May God turn toward you and give you
a world of peace.

Or an alternative version:

Always be safe
Shine light in the world
And feel truly at peace with yourself

USE YOUR
PJ LIBRARY
“NEVER-ENDER”
IF YOU HAVE ONE





KIDDUSH

BLESSING OVER WINE OR GRAPE JUICE

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
borei peri hagafen.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You
for the delicious fruit that grows on vines.

.....

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְתָתֵן לָנוּ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה אֶת יוֹם (הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה וְאֶת יוֹם) הַזִּכְרוֹן הַזֶּה
יוֹם (זִכְרוֹן) תְּרוּעָה (בְּאַהֲבָה) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ זִכָּר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרָתָ וְאוֹתָנוּ
קִדְּשָׁתָ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְדִבְרָךְ אָמֵת וְקִיָּם לְעַד. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקִדֵּשׁ
(הַשַּׁבָּת וְ) יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher bachar banu mikol am,
veromemanu mikol lashon, vekideshanu bemitzvotav. Vatiten lanu Adonai
Eloheinu b'ahava et yom (haShabbat hazeh v'et yom) haZikaron hazeh, yom
(zichron) truah (b'ahava) mikra kodesh, zecher liyetzi'at Mitzrayim. Ki vanu
vacharta v'otanu kidashta mikol ha'amim, udevarcha emet vekayam la'ad.
Baruch ata Adonai, melech al kol ha'arets, mekadesh (haShabbat v') Yisra'el
veyom haZikaron.

Dear God, Creator of our world, You have given all the people in the world different
ways of living and believing. Thank You for giving us the gift of being Jewish
and the rules and good deeds that help make us better people. On this day of
remembrance — the festival of the shofar's blast — we remember how you took
us out of slavery in the land of Egypt. Dear God, thank You for giving us this
special day of remembrance to celebrate the New Year.

The Rosh Hashanah meal begins with a blessing over wine or grape juice with special text focusing on remembrance and history.



WASHING HANDS & EATING CHALLAH

The round challah of Rosh Hashanah represents many things: wholeness, the round cycle of the year, and a full new year and its blessings. On Shabbat, challah is often dipped in salt. But on Rosh Hashanah, challah is dipped in honey for a sweet new year.

Before eating a meal, it is traditional to wash your hands and say this blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, asher kideshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al netilat yadayim.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for giving us rules that make our lives special and for teaching us to wash our hands before we eat.

Recite this blessing before you dip the challah in honey and eat it.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam,
hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz.

Dear God, Creator of our world, thank You for
bringing bread out of the earth.



SYMBOLIC NEW YEAR FOODS

Welcome to Rosh Hashanah *simanim*
 – eating foods with special symbolic value for the new year.
 Each of these appetizers is chosen because the food itself, or
 the Hebrew name of the food, connects to a wish for the
 new year. **Here goes!**



APPLES & HONEY – A SWEET NEW YEAR

In ancient Israel, the apple was often eaten as the first dish in a meal, to help spark people's appetite, while honey was a popular dessert. By dipping an apple in honey, we connect symbols for the beginning and the end of a meal – symbolizing how one year is ending and another is beginning.

Take an apple slice, dip it in honey, and say:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֵ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוֹקָה.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai
 Eloheinu v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu,
 shetechadesh aleinu shanah tovah
 umetukah.

Dear God, renew us for
 a good and sweet year.



DATES (Tamar)

HOPING FOR AN END TO HATE

The word-play here is that the Hebrew word *tam* means “end.” The wish for the new year is that hatred in our world will end. Say the blessing, then eat a date.

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שִׁיתָמוּ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׁוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְּקָשֵׁי רַעְתָּנוּ.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu v'Elohei
avoteinu v'imoteinu, sheyitamoy veveinu veson'einu vechol
mevakshei ra'ateinu.

Dear God, in this new year, please end all hatred.



CARROT (Gezer)

WISHING FOR A GOOD JUDGMENT

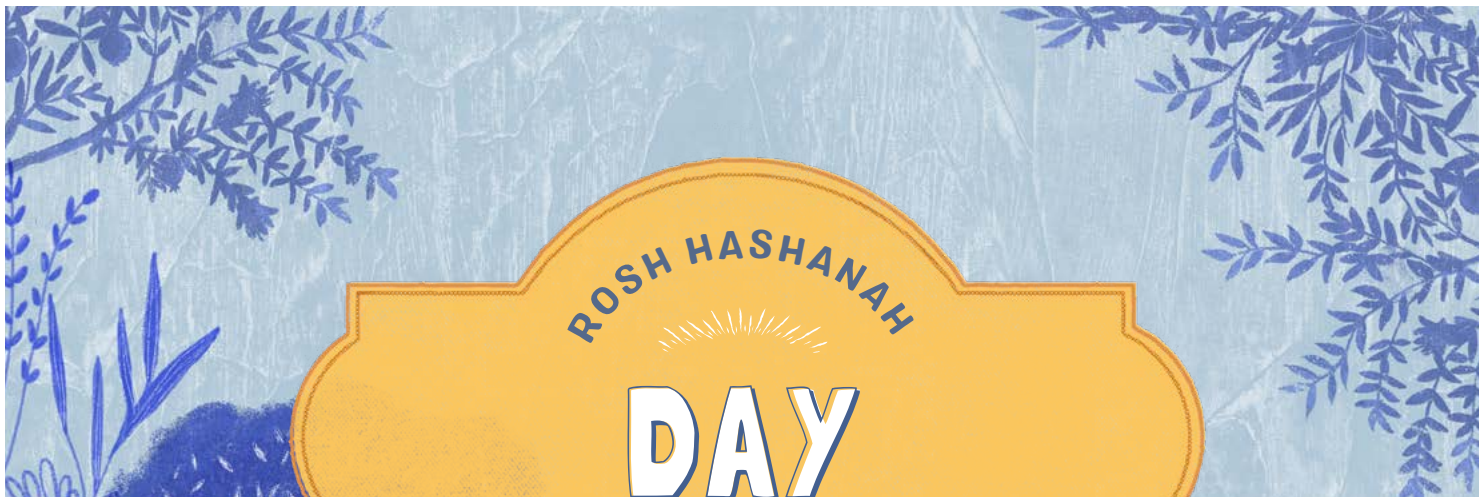
The pun here is that *gezer* also means a firm decision or judgment. The wish is that we will be judged favorably in this High Holiday season. Say the blessing, then crunch a carrot (or eat them quietly if they're cooked).

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יי אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֱ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ
שֶׁתִּגְזֹר עָלֵינוּ גְזֵרוֹת טוֹבוֹת.

Yehi ratzon milefanecha, Adonai Eloheinu
v'Elohei avoteinu v'imoteinu, shetigzor aleinu
gezerot tovo.

Dear God, in this new year, please give us
a good judgment.





WHAT'S ALL THE PRAYING ABOUT?



Jewish prayers are hundreds and even thousands of years old – chanted poems, usually addressed to God, that can inspire us to feel things and wish for things that are deep and important.

But for many people, praying isn't so simple. Who are we talking to, and is anybody listening? Why so many words, and so much Hebrew?

The key is to approach prayer with an open heart and mind. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, prayers can act as special “messengers” that carry ideas both into our hearts and out to the universe. Prayers can help us think about how we want to improve ourselves and our world.

The Hebrew word for “pray” is LEHITPALEL, which means “to judge ourselves.” on the High Holidays that is exactly what we do when we pray.



The prayers on the following pages are shortened and translated to be family-friendly. You can read the prayers out loud and discuss them as a family.



You can hear them sung in the **digital version** of this guide and at pjlibrary.org/listen. Finally, you can always follow an ancient Jewish tradition: Find your own words to express your hopes and feelings.

FOR PARENTS

TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT GOD



BY RABBI AVI KILLIP

PERSONAL STORY

My littlest brother is the youngest of four. (We are each one year apart.) Once, when he was very little and was asked about the ages in our family, he reported: "Hana is 5, Avi is 4, Aaron is 3, I am 2, and God is 1." He had absorbed the teaching from our nightly bedtime *Shema*, which said "...the Lord our God, the Lord is One." So my brother understood God as part of our family – as his 1-year-old younger sibling.

Even if we don't say a prayer every night or even talk about it at all, our children develop an understanding of God at a very young age. Without our ever raising the subject, they learn – from Jewish rituals and songs and from general society. And, profoundly, many children feel spirituality through their own experiences of the world, developing their own personal connections to the divine.

Teaching our children about God can feel scary and even impossible. How can we teach our children something we ourselves don't understand? Maybe most importantly: How can we stay open to the idea that our children's

experiences of God and spirituality might be different from ours?

I may feel no relationship with God and find myself parenting a deeply spiritual child.

There is no need to be intimidated by this. You don't have to have a robust spiritual life in order to cultivate and nourish one in your child.

So, instead of asking how we can talk to our kids about God, let's instead ask how we can encourage their curiosity and listen to their questions with open hearts.

If you do have your own connection, your own spiritual journey, you can invite your children in by modeling – let your children watch you pray, whether that prayer is a traditional Hebrew one or a few lines spoken from your heart before bed, while lighting candles on Shabbat, or in a particularly difficult moment.

Whether you are standing at a waterfall, gazing up at the stars, or holding your newborn nephew, when you feel something is holy or sacred, invite your children into those moments by telling them what you feel.

And when you have questions and doubts about God, you can share them too – invite your children into the questions.

You will have many chances to talk with your children about

God, so there's no pressure to get it all right or have all the answers. The questions they ask will evolve over time.

As parents, we sometimes find ourselves in these deep conversations at the most unexpected moments – whenever our child's mind or heart generates questions, while brushing teeth, maybe in the grocery store. There is no wrong place or time to engage.

But if you are looking for a way in, grab a PJ Library book off your shelf. Read together and start a conversation.

PROMPTS FOR KIDS AND PARENTS

One thing I have always wondered about God is...

Have you ever witnessed something miraculous or truly amazing? Share the story of how you felt.

What would you say if you knew God was listening?

See where the conversation takes you. Remember, you can always answer a child's question with a question of your own.

"WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY"

During the High Holidays, we talk openly about the things we have done in the past year and how to improve our actions in the future. A prayer called *Ashamnu* (ah-SHAHM-noo) gives a long list of mistakes we have made. It is recited in a group out loud, because everyone makes mistakes.

In the synagogue on Yom Kippur, the whole community says the prayer together, and at home the whole family can say it together. While speaking each line of the prayer, it is a tradition to tap your fist over your heart, as if to say: "Open up, heart, so in the new year we can be more kind and loving."

ASHAMNU — WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

We take responsibility (*ashamnu*) for times when...

We hid things from others – *bagadnu*

We took something that wasn't ours – *gazalnu*

We said something bad about others – *dibarnu dofi*

We got someone else into trouble – *hirshanu*

We told a lie – *tafalnu shaker*

We made fun of someone – *latznu*

We disobeyed our parents – *maradnu*

We were not always kind to our friends – *tzararnu*

We refused to admit that we were wrong – *kishinu oref*

We hit or hurt someone – *rashanu*

We did something we knew we shouldn't – *shihatnu*

We weren't thinking and just messed up – *ta'inu*

As we start a new year, forgive us for our mistakes and give us a chance to be better.

Slach lanu. Mechal lanu. Kaper lanu. Clean our slate, wipe away the bad, help us learn and grow.

FAMILY
REFLECTION

WHICH MISTAKES
FROM THE LIST DO WE
WANT TO WORK ON
MOST THIS YEAR?

DON'T FORGET According to Jewish tradition, it's fine to ask God for forgiveness – but that doesn't help fix mistakes you've made with another person. For that, you need to talk directly to that person and work things out.





A POSITIVE ASHAMNU

As we take responsibility for mistakes we have made, we can also celebrate the positive things we do. In recent years, people have begun to recite a version of *Ashamnu* that helps us remember all the healthy behavior we want to continue in the new year.

Ahavnu – We loved

Beirachnu – We blessed

Gadalnu – We grew

Diminu yofi – We made beautiful things

Hitakashnu – We pushed on

Vitarnu – We compromised

Zar'anu – We planted

Hipasnu – We explored

Tiharnu sheker – We told the truth

Yatzarnu – We created

Ka'avnu – We felt others' pain

Lamadnu – We learned

Mahalnu – We gave someone a break

Nisinu – We kept trying

Salachnu – We forgave

Azarnu – We helped out

Pirganu – We showed appreciation

Tzahaknu – We laughed

Kibalnu – We accepted

Radafnu tzedek – We demanded fairness

Samachnu – We felt joy

Taramnu – We contributed

Tamachnu – We supported

Tikanu – We fixed



“WE TUNE INTO THE POWER OF THIS DAY”

The prayer below – *Unetaneh Tokef* (oo-neh-TAH-neh TOE-kef) – is one of the most famous prayers of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It describes a scene where God is looking at each human being during the High Holidays, considering what they did in the past year and what will happen to them in the new year.

What will be decided? We cannot know. The last year has shown how uncertain the future is for all human beings. When this prayer imagines a judge in a divine courtroom, it inspires us to do our own self-reflection. The shofar calls on us to tune into the moment and ask: What have we done – and what will we do?

The original source of the prayer is unclear, but it was likely written in Israel more than 1,400 years ago – and was more recently the inspiration for Leonard Cohen’s well-known song “Who By Fire.”



UNETANEH TOKEF – WE TUNE INTO THE POWER OF THIS DAY

We tune into the sacred power of this day, a day that is both amazing and a little scary. The shofar makes a blast, and we hear a small, still voice. The angels are saying: “This is the day of taking stock, when The Holy One looks into the soul of every person.”

On Rosh Hashanah the judgment is written down, and on the fast of Yom Kippur it is sealed:

Who will live and who will die

Who will live a long life and who will not

Who will be calm and who will be restless

Who will have plenty and who will be in need

Who will reach their goals and who will fall short

By tuning into the sacred power of this day, opening our hearts, and working for a better world, we hope to be judged with kindness.

FAMILY REFLECTION

HOW DO YOU TUNE INTO THE POWER OF THE HIGH HOLIDAYS?

HOW ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT THE YEAR THAT JUST FINISHED – AND THE YEAR AHEAD?



"WE ARE CALLED TO PRAISE"

Composed in Babylonia about 1,800 years ago, the prayer *Aleinu* (ah-LAY-noo) is said every day of the year. But on the High Holidays, we do something special when reciting it. While saying a few special words, we bend our knees to the ground and stretch our upper body forward so our forehead touches the floor.

When we go into this stretched-out pose, we are putting our whole bodies into our hope for a good new year. We are giving everything we have. We are showing that we are but one small part of a huge and interconnected world.

Bending our knees and our backs is also a reminder that we need to be flexible. If we are too stiff and stubborn, we can never improve ourselves and change as the world around us changes. Indeed, *Aleinu* is a Jewish prayer for a changing world – that one day, fear and hatred will completely disappear.

As you prepare to say the prayer as a family, find a place where each person can stretch out during the middle of the prayer.

FAMILY REFLECTION

HOW DO YOU WANT TO STRETCH YOURSELF IN THE NEW YEAR?

5

ALEINU – WE ARE CALLED TO PRAISE

With our unique story and special values
we are called as the Jewish people
to praise the Creator of all things.

Bend down to the ground and stretch your body forward

So we bend our knees, bow down to the ground,
and say out loud how grateful we are.

Stand back up

And we hope, Source of Unity, that you will
help us fix the world
and make it whole.



TASHLICH

CASTING AWAY OUR MISTAKES

We can apologize for times when we did not act nicely. But we cannot make those times disappear. They happened. We take responsibility for them and then move forward.

Rosh Hashanah has a special cleansing ceremony called *tashlich*, which means to “cast” or “throw away.” It is a chance to symbolically get rid of our bad actions.

For tashlich, typically practiced on Rosh Hashanah afternoon, people gather by a flowing body of water – a pond, river, ocean, well, or backyard fish pond. (Or if no flowing water is accessible, a bucket of water will do.) We throw bread crumbs into the water. The pieces of bread represent bad actions from last year that we want to leave behind. The water represents the life flow inside all living things, the source of cleansing.

HAVE
YOU TRIED
THIS?

**BRING SOME OLD
PIECES OF BREAD
TO A BODY OF WATER.**

Take turns throwing crumbs into the water.

If you like, read this passage from the Bible, traditionally said at tashlich:

*God does not stay angry forever,
for God prefers love and kindness.*

*God, return to us, forgive us, and
cover over our bad actions from
the past. Cast into the depths
of the sea all of our bad actions.*
(Prophet Micah 7:18-19)

If it feels right, use tashlich as an occasion to talk about your mistakes (the ones you were thinking about as you threw your crumbs) and ways to grow and improve.

HANDS ON!

A Twist on Tashlich

Bread isn't healthy for all animals, and some communities discourage throwing food into rivers and streams. While bread is customary, there are other ways to cast your mistakes away. Try these twists on tradition:

**SMALL PEBBLES.**

The trick with stones is to toss them gently, making sure no one is in the stone's path.

BITS OF LEAVES . . .

or flower petals, pine needles, or something else that already exists in your ecosystem.

No matter what you decide to toss, remember that tashlich is like "cleaning your heart's closet." Think about things you regret having said or done, then let them go.





THE TEN DAYS OF RETURNING

THE NEW YEAR HAS BEGUN

The ten days beginning with Rosh Hashanah and ending with Yom Kippur are called the Ten Days of *Teshuvah* (Ten Days of Returning) – turning away from our mistakes and returning to the “best self” we can be.

We have a special opportunity to focus on our relationships, to say we’re sorry for things we’ve done wrong, and to discuss how to make our connections to family, friends, and community stronger.

Many Jewish thinkers have asked: How do we know when we’re really sorry, that we’ve really changed? The answer is simple. When you’re in the same situation again – a situation in which you previously made a bad choice or behaved poorly – this time you get it right. *That’s* teshuvah.

Of course, no one turns completely around in ten days. The Ten Days of Returning are meant to jumpstart a process that continues year-round. It’s a chance to make a good beginning. You can have honest conversations. You can apologize and offer forgiveness. You can take important first steps – helping at home, not losing your cool, communicating with friends and family, giving *tzedakah* (charitable donations).

Here are conversation starters and other activities that can help you on your way.



..... THE 10 DAYS OF RETURNING

FAMILY CONVERSATIONS

The Ten Days (including Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) are a good time for having thoughtful one-on-one conversations or a sit-down talk as a whole family. You can use these prompts to guide you.

1

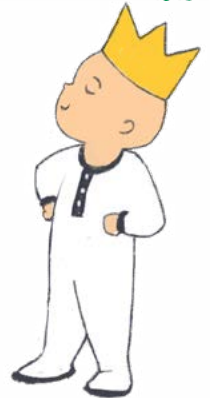
THINK ABOUT
YOUR ACTIONS.

MAKING MYSELF (EVEN) BETTER

What things have I done this past year that I'm proud of?

What can I do this new year that I'll be proud of?

How can I get started?



2

HAVE A ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATION WITH A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND.

MAKING FAMILY AND FRIENDSHIPS STRONGER

What are some kind things we've done for each other this past year?

How have we disrespected or hurt each other this past year? Now is the time to apologize for those acts and to offer each other forgiveness.

What's the best way to keep these things from happening again?



3

SIT AS A FAMILY TO DISCUSS YOUR GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR AND WAYS TO GROW EVEN KINDER TO EACH OTHER.

FAMILY GOALS

When do we feel most connected as a family? When is it harder to get along?

How can we support each other better?

What are some ideas for making family time more special in the new year?

EXAMPLES

No phones or gossip (lashon hara) at the dinner table. Sharing Friday night (Shabbat) dinner together. Eating healthier food or spending more time outdoors together. ↘



4

AS A FAMILY,
DISCUSS WAYS
TO REACH OUT TO
OTHERS IN YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD,
YOUR COMMUNITY,
AND THE WORLD.

FIXING THE WORLD (Tikkun olam in Hebrew)

Do we have a neighbor who lives alone or friends who are going through a difficult time? What can we do to help them?

Are there people in our community who need food, clothes, or shelter? Are there people who aren't treated fairly? What are some ways we can support them?

What are our *tikkun olam* goals (helping animals, helping the environment, visiting the elderly, etc.) and what project ideas can we think up?



TIP

If your family has a tzedakah box for collecting money for charitable donations, this is a good time of year to talk about where to give the money when the box gets full.

..... THE 10 DAYS OF RETURNING

WASHING AWAY & LETTING GO

The Ten Days are a time to start fresh – to “wash away” our mistakes and “let go” of bad actions. Here are activities that may help us.

HANDS ON!

Make a “Letting Go” Collage

Here’s an idea: Turn your mistakes into art!

SUPPLIES

- Piece of large poster board
- Colorful/patterned paper
- Scissors
- Pen or marker
- Glue



Anytime you need to say sorry to someone for something you’ve done wrong, do your best to make it right. Then, write or draw a picture of it on a small piece of colorful paper (for example, “I didn’t share my toy with my sister”). Cut the paper into small pieces so that you can’t read the words anymore. Glue these pieces onto the poster board in any design you like. Continue to add different colored paper each time, letting go of your mistakes as you create something new and beautiful.

HANDS ON!

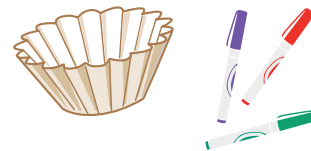


“Wash” Mistakes Away

The period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is a time to think about mistakes we’ve made in the past year. Here’s a craft that lets you “wash away” those mistakes!

SUPPLIES

- Washable markers
- Extra-large coffee filters



Use the washable markers to draw pictures on the coffee filters of things that you are sorry for and don’t want to repeat in the new year. As you draw, reflect on these mistakes and resolve to do better. Take the filters to the sink or bathtub, place them in water, and watch the mistakes wash away.

OR TRY THESE VARIATIONS:

Use bath crayons to write or draw things in the bathtub that you’re sorry about, and then wash them away.

Use sidewalk chalk to make a short list of things you’re sorry about. Then use water to “erase” the words and sentences in the list.



YOM KIPPUR

The Ten Days of Returning end with Yom Kippur, an entire day set aside for thinking about our actions of the past year and how to improve in the new year.

Yom Kippur is a community experience. Millions of Jewish people are spending the day doing the same thing. The prayers for Yom Kippur talk about mistakes WE have made, because on this day everyone stands together, even when apart. All of us, young and old, make mistakes, and we all deserve a second chance.

So while Yom Kippur can be challenging, we end the day feeling happy and relieved, knowing we're making a fresh start in a new year with a chance to be an even better person.

YOM KIPPUR

GETTING READY

A DIFFERENT DAY

WHAT'S IN THE PICTURE?

Take a few minutes to look at this Yom Kippur scene. What do you notice?



EMPTY PLATE.

Many grown-ups and older children don't eat or drink on Yom Kippur. That's called *fasting*, and the full fast is from sundown (beginning of Yom Kippur) to sunset the next day (end of Yom Kippur) – 25 hours! When you fast, you enter a different “zone” and can think more deeply about your life and your actions. As a kid, you don't have to fast, but you can choose other ways to make the day feel different.



STAYING FOCUSED. Yom Kippur is a time for mindfulness, for reflection on our lives and deeds. Where is a special place outside or in your home where you can focus best? What can you do to create a calm mood for thinking and sharing?



WHITE CLOTHES. On Yom Kippur some people wear white shirts or dresses. It's a symbol of making ourselves cleaner (removing our bad actions) and making a fresh start. What special clothes will you wear on Yom Kippur?

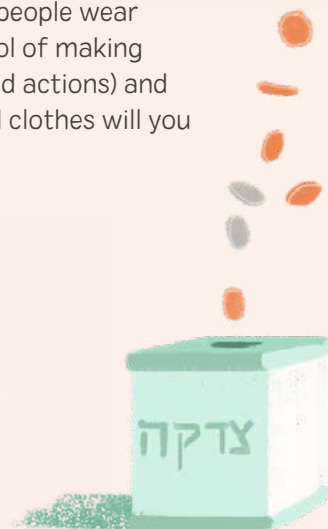
What do I say again?

YOM KIPPUR GREETING.

When we see people on Yom Kippur, we can say “*Tzom ka!*” (tzohm kahl), which means: I hope your fast isn't too hard! We can also say “*G'mar hatimah tovah*” (ge-MAHR hah-tee-MAH toe-VAH), which means: I hope a good judgment is sealed for you in the Book of Life. When Yom Kippur is over, we simply say “*Shanah tovah*” – Have a good year!



TZEDAKAH BOX. A tzedakah box is for collecting coins to use to help other people. On this day we think about people who go hungry *every day*, not just on Yom Kippur. What can the coins in your tzedakah box be used for?



GETTING
READY

FINAL PREPARATION

Tips before beginning Yom Kippur

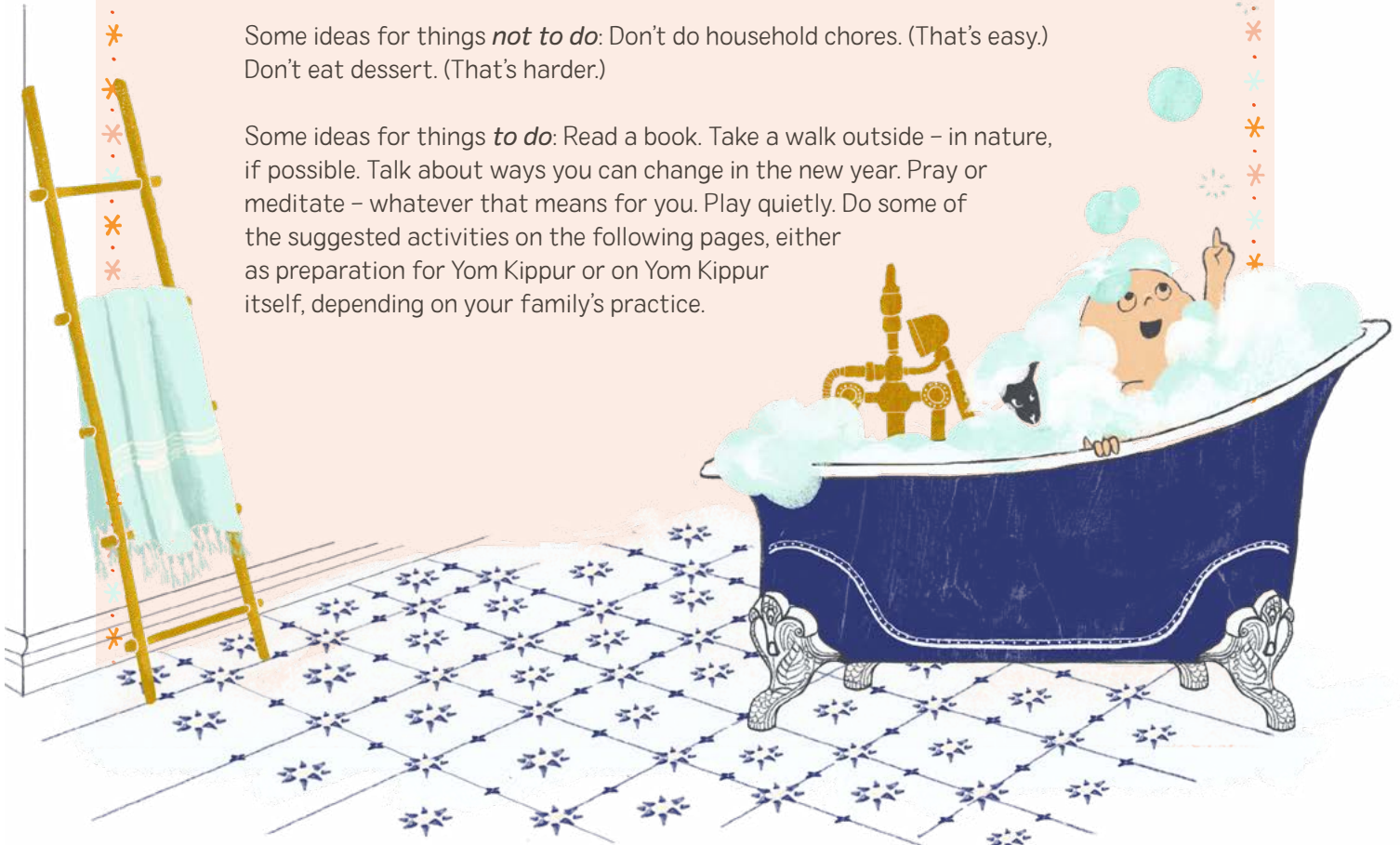
TAKE A SHOWER. Some people don't shower on a fast day, so they shower right before Yom Kippur. On a day when we're thinking about cleaning ourselves on the *inside*, it's nice to start clean on the outside.

EAT A GOOD MEAL TOGETHER. The meal eaten before the Yom Kippur fast is a festive "separation" meal, and it's traditional to eat challah dipped in honey, just like on Rosh Hashanah. Even if you're not fasting, take time at this meal to appreciate how important food is.

PLAN AHEAD. Kids aren't expected to fast, but you might want to choose something you'll do differently on Yom Kippur.

Some ideas for things *not to do*: Don't do household chores. (That's easy.) Don't eat dessert. (That's harder.)

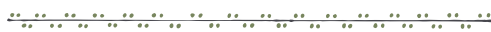
Some ideas for things *to do*: Read a book. Take a walk outside – in nature, if possible. Talk about ways you can change in the new year. Pray or meditate – whatever that means for you. Play quietly. Do some of the suggested activities on the following pages, either as preparation for Yom Kippur or on Yom Kippur itself, depending on your family's practice.





KOL NIDREI

HOW WE OPEN YOM KIPPUR



When families go to synagogue on the evening of Yom Kippur, everyone begins by standing.

We open the ark and take out the Torah scrolls. We sing a powerful melody called *Kol Nidrei* (All Our Vows) and ask to be forgiven for mistakes we've made in the past year. We sing *Avinu Malkeinu* – also sung on Rosh Hashanah – and call out for healing (*refuah*), fairness (*tzedakah*), and compassion (*chesed*).

At home, your family may want to enter the spirit of Yom Kippur with music or prayers, with stories or quiet conversation. You can pick a PJ Library or PJ Our Way book you like. (Can you find one in which a character has the courage to change?) You can read selected prayers together (pages 21-28 in this guide) and hear songs and prayers at pjlibrary.org/listen. If your family hasn't found time for Family Conversations (pages 32-35 in this guide), now is a great time to sit and talk.

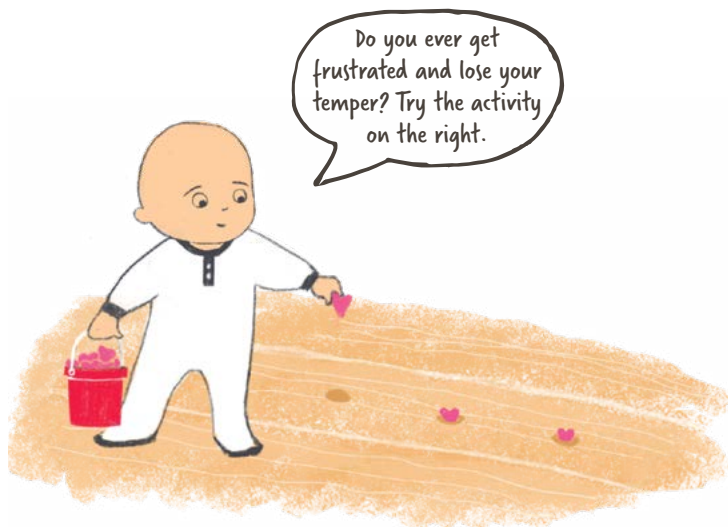




COVERING OVER & PLANTING NEW

Kippur comes from a Hebrew root meaning “covering over.” So Yom Kippur is the “day of covering over.” We can picture in our minds covering our bad actions from the previous year and planting seeds in the soil for the new year. But how do we “cover over” bad habits and make better ones?

We can start by looking more closely at some of the habits we want to change. Here are a few simple activities that can help.



HANDS ON!



Create a Wheel of Choices

Conflicts arise in all relationships, and feeling angry is natural. Some reactions are more helpful than others. Practice dealing with these feelings by creating a Wheel of Choices.

SUPPLIES

- Large piece of paper or poster board
- Markers or crayons
- Tape



On your large piece of paper or poster board, draw a big circle and divide it into wedges, like a pie (make sure the pieces are large enough to write and draw on).

Think of different things you can do when you're angry to help you calm down and make good choices. Options might include dancing it out, taking deep breaths, counting down slowly from 10, running to your favorite quiet place in your house or yard, calling a friend...whatever works for you.

Write each of your actions on a piece of the wheel and draw a picture to go along with it. Consult the wheel for help the next time you feel angry!



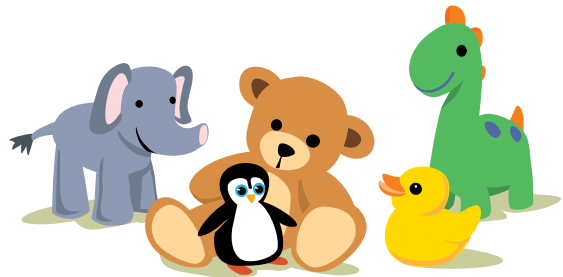
HANDS ON!



Write the Next Page

On a few pieces of paper, write and draw about a situation in which you made a mistake and hurt someone’s feelings. What did you do? How did you make the person feel? Now, take one or two sheets of paper and write a new ending to this story. What could you have done differently? Or what can you do to make things better?

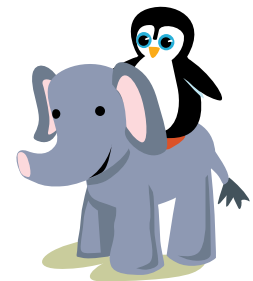
HANDS ON!



Role Play with Stuffedies

Children can learn about compassion and empathy by acting out scenarios with toys and stuffed animals.

Gather stuffed animals and introduce your child to them one by one. Explain what problem each critter has; perhaps Elephant is hungry or Penguin has a hurt wing. Allow your child to create solutions to solve the toys’ problems. Make sure each stuffie remembers to say “thank you!”



THE STORY OF JONAH

It's traditional on Yom Kippur
afternoon to read the biblical story
of Jonah. Here is a modern retelling.

What do we have in common with Jonah? When Jonah doesn't
want to do something, he feels like running away!

One day God says to Jonah that people in a far-off city
are treating each other badly. Jonah should stop what he's
doing, go there, and tell the people to change their behavior.

Jonah says to himself, "No thank you. I'm not getting involved."
He boards a boat sailing in the opposite direction.

Unfortunately for Jonah, God makes the sea stormy. The sailors
realize that Jonah has angered God by running away. When they
ask Jonah how to make the seas calm again, Jonah insists that
they throw him overboard.

Before Jonah has a chance to swim, a giant whale comes along
and swallows him. From inside the whale's belly, Jonah prays to
God. When the whale spits Jonah out onto land, Jonah knows
that he must do what God told him to do in the first place.

Jonah travels to this far-off city and speaks out. He tells the
residents that they must treat each other kindly. They take Jonah's
message to heart and begin to change, and God forgives them.

Jonah says to God: "Really? You forgive them,
just like that?"

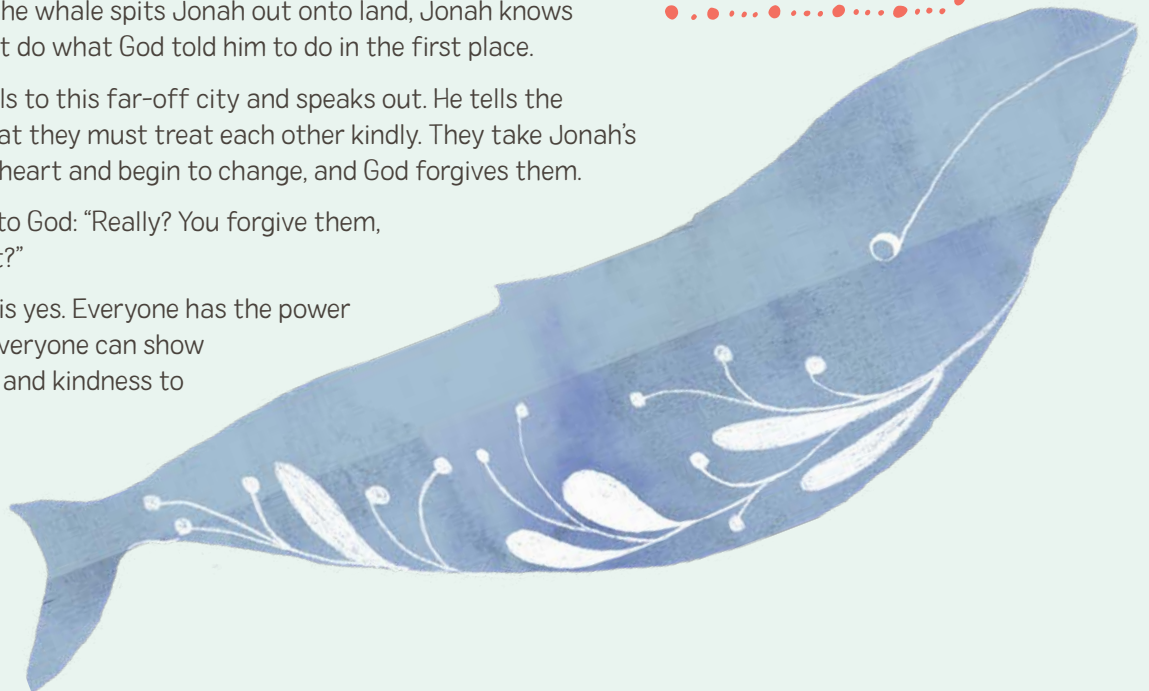
The answer is yes. Everyone has the power
to forgive. Everyone can show
compassion and kindness to
others.

FAMILY REFLECTION

WHEN HAVE YOU
RUN AWAY FROM
RESPONSIBILITY?

WHEN HAVE YOU
CALLED SOMEONE OUT
FOR ACTING BADLY?

WHEN HAVE YOU
FORGIVEN SOMEONE?



GOALS & CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW YEAR



Yom Kippur has a unique rhythm all its own. When we begin Yom Kippur, our focus is on different ways we've messed up in the past year. As the day goes on, the focus shifts – and we imagine ourselves growing into a better person. We imagine the world as a better place, with each of us playing an important role.

Here are some activities that challenge us to be our best selves – to be kind to our family, to encourage others and ourselves, and to set goals for the new year.

HANDS ON!

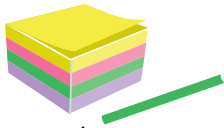
Make Your Own Sticky-Note Wall

No one likes chores, but everyone likes gift certificates. So create a sticky-note wall for your family, and help each other out with sticky-note "gift certificates."



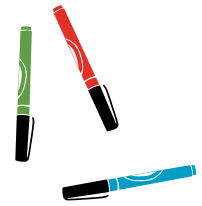
SUPPLIES

- Sticky notes
- Pen



Here's how it works. When someone in your family does something nice for you, pay it forward. Have everyone write small chores ("take out garbage" or "feed dog") on sticky notes and place them on the fridge. The next time someone can lend a hand to help out, they can choose a sticky note, and the job will get done — with a smile!

HANDS ON!

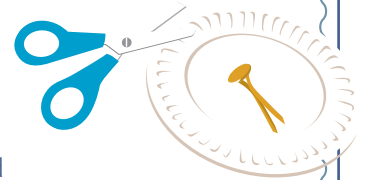


Create a Kindness Wheel

Yom Kippur is a great time to think about ways to show kindness to the people we care about. Here's a craft to help encourage the process.

SUPPLIES

- Paper plates
- Markers or crayons
- Scissors
- Brass paper fastener
- Piece of thin cardboard



Using the marker or crayon, divide the back of the paper plate into pie-shaped wedges. Write one person's name inside each wedge. Cut an arrow shape out of the thin cardboard and use the brass fastener to attach it to the center of the plate. Spin the arrow, see whose name it lands on, and then decide on an act of kindness to do for that person. Repeat often.



HANDS ON!



Make Encouragement Stones

Everyone can shine in the new year – with a little encouragement. Show family and friends that you’re supporting them, and maybe offer yourself some encouragement, too. Here’s how.

SUPPLIES

- Stones – large, flat surfaces are ideal
- Nontoxic acrylic paint
- Newspaper
- Paintbrushes
- Oil-based paint pen (optional, but helpful)



Spread newspaper over your painting surface, then paint the stones however you like. Once dry, use a fine-tipped paintbrush or a paint pen to write encouraging messages like “Keep it up!” or “You can do it!” Then give the stones to friends and family who could use an encouraging word.



HANDS ON!



Make a Vision Board

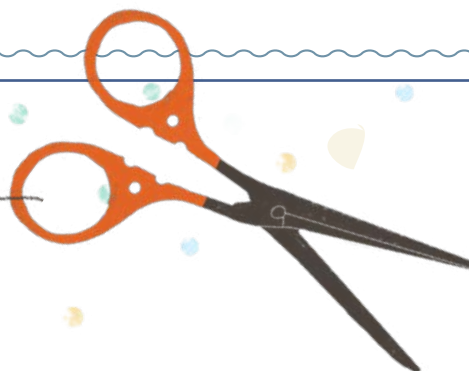
Jonah finds himself inside the belly of a whale because he is running away from challenges. A vision board can help you visualize the challenges you face and set goals to deal with them head on. What better time to do that than the start of the Jewish New Year?

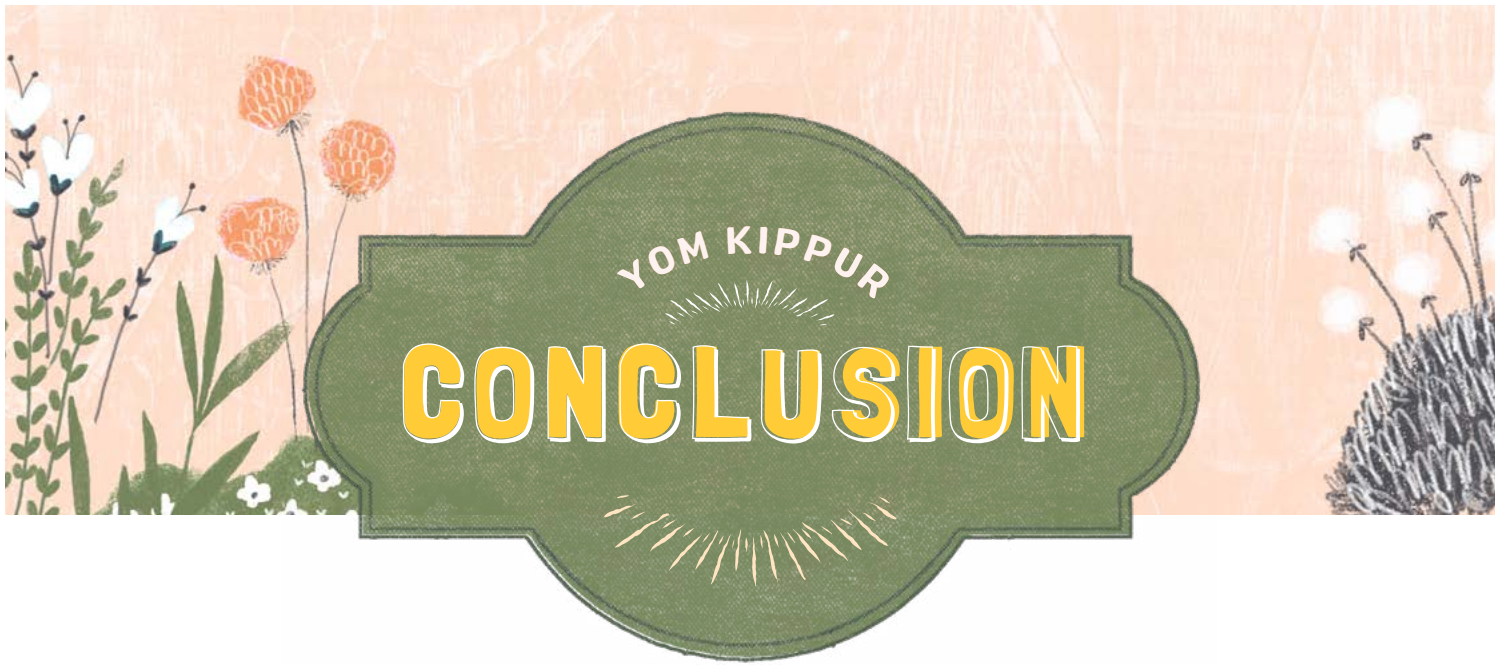
SUPPLIES

- Poster board
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue



Start with a large piece of poster board (optional: cut it into the shape of a whale!). As you flip through the magazines, cut out images of things that relate to your own personal goals and challenges. Glue the images onto the poster board.





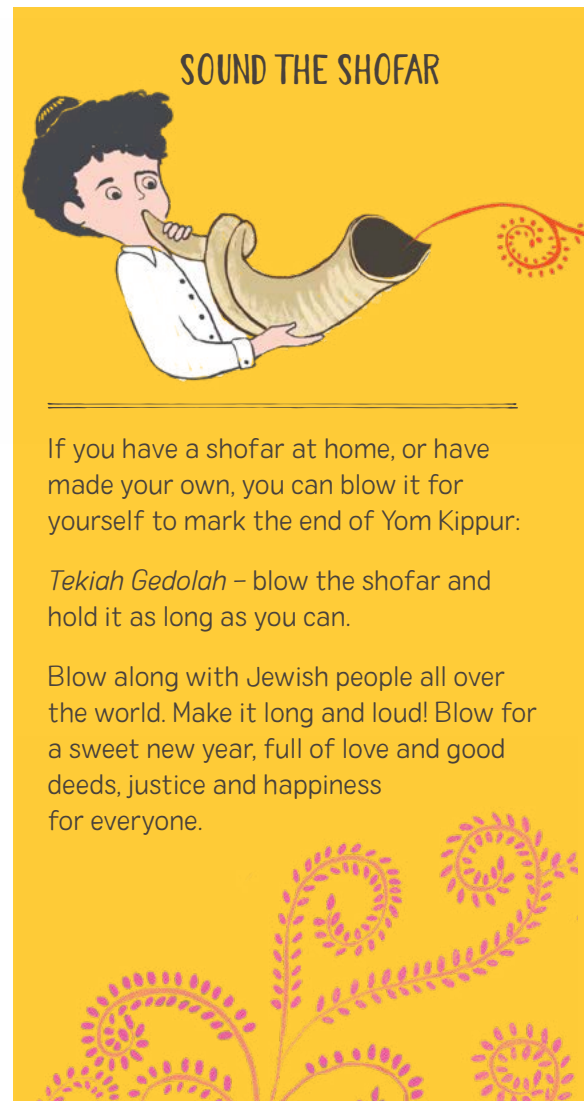
CLOSING THE GATE & ENDING THE FAST



Yom Kippur ends at nightfall, when three stars appear in the sky. Go outside together as a family and see who finds three stars first.

When we're at synagogue, and the end of Yom Kippur approaches, there's a lot of action. The ark is opened up, and sometimes people are invited to go right up to the ark and say their own private prayer. (Kids, too!) It's like our last chance to say what's in our hearts before the gates of heaven, which are open wide for Yom Kippur, close up at the end of the day.

Finally, we hear the loud blast of the shofar piercing the air, signaling the end of the holiday and the fast.



SOUND THE SHOFAR

If you have a shofar at home, or have made your own, you can blow it for yourself to mark the end of Yom Kippur:

Tekiah Gedolah – blow the shofar and hold it as long as you can.

Blow along with Jewish people all over the world. Make it long and loud! Blow for a sweet new year, full of love and good deeds, justice and happiness for everyone.



A BITE OF FOOD

And then, for anyone who has been fasting (and even if you're not), a bite of food – a first little “nosh.” How good does *that* taste?

Now that Yom Kippur has ended, you can have a festive meal as a family – a break-the-fast meal that traditionally resembles...breakfast! Many people have lighter foods, like bagels, cream cheese, and fruit, so it's not too much of a shock to their stomachs after a day of fasting. (But of course, a little ice cream never hurts.) Talk as a family about how it feels to start the year with a “clean slate.”

lee

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!

The Yom Kippur prayers traditionally end with the expression *leshanah haba'a biYerushalayim*, which means "Next year in Jerusalem!" The Passover seder ends with the very same words, imagining a world of justice and freedom for everyone.

This year we have been separated from people we love and communities we care about.

As the new year begins, we think about how we can make this a year of healing, growth, and hope.

Next year in Jerusalem! Next year may we celebrate the High Holidays together.





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Special thanks to the Foundation's Next Generation Advisory Board, members of the PJ Library staff, and the following people who contributed their energy and talent to create this guide:

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