

**IDEAS—SUGGESTIONS—ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR HIGH HOLY DAYS**  
**CHILDREN’S SERVICE**  
September 2009

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**Tips:**

*Italics are to encourage individual thinking and are for discussions in dyads or triads.*

Transliteration:

h as in Bach

ei as in state

Apostrophe between vowels indicates that each vowel is pronounced separately.



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**PREFACE**  
**High Holy Days**  
**September 2009**

**Rosh ha'Shanah** begins at sun down on Friday evening, September 18<sup>th</sup> and continues on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup> .

**Yom Kippur**—begins a bit before sunset on Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup> and continues Monday, September 28<sup>th</sup> .

However you handle the beginning of school, obviously *tefillah*, prayer, on an age appropriate level will be a major component of the children's High Holy Day experience.

Labor Day is late this year, so it is hard to know when synagogue schools will begin their classes. Depending on the school's program, many classes will begin during the week of the 6<sup>th</sup> or on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup> . These classes before *Rosh ha'Shanah* can best be used to get the children ready for *Rosh ha'Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*. The goal for these first classes is for the children to anticipate the coming of the High Holy Days, to refresh their memories as to what to expect, and to introduce or reintroduce some of the prayers.

Time spent introducing basic prayers, their meaning and melodies can greatly enhance the *Rosh ha'Shanah* and *Yom Kippur* experience. Consider providing CD's of the words and melodies to the students and also putting it up on your congregation's web site.

**Mahzor—High Holy Day Children's Prayer Book**

We recommend the Children's *Mahzor*, *Tiku Shofar*, published by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism for children ages nine and older. Minimally, you will want the teacher-leader of each age group to have a copy of *Tiku Shofar*. Single orders and multiple copies are available at [Bookservice@USCJ.org](mailto:Bookservice@USCJ.org).

**Space**

The rooms should be set up before *Rosh ha'Shanah* and should contain an area set up for prayer, a different place to gather in a circle or groups for discussions, an area where children can have their snack, and a place to dance and to have active movement activities.

**Staffing for Each Room**

- Prayer Leader—Someone who knows the melodies and can lead the children in prayer songs (see below)
- Parent assistant(s)
- High School aide(s)—An important component for safety, and to free up the service leader
- *Shofar* blower (remember the *shofar* is not blown on *Shabbat*)
- Ba'al kri'ah—someone ready to read a short Torah reading

## **Recommended Breakdown by Grades of *Rosh ha'Shanah* and *Yom Kippur* Services**

Third grade of synagogue school (8 year olds)

Fourth and fifth grade of synagogue school (9 and 10 year olds)

Sixth and seventh grade of synagogue school (11 and 12 years olds)

The children's morning program should be multi-faceted. It should consist of:

- Prayer time
- Stories, thinking time and discussion
- Activities
- Shabbat/Holiday appropriate activities

**Ideas for Children’s Service  
Eight Year Olds (Third Grade)  
First Day of Rosh ha’Shanah  
(falls on Shabbat)**

Third grade of synagogue school (8 year olds)  
Services take place for 1 – 1.5 hours

**Tefillah--Prayer**

- You will want to configure the room so as to create a *pinat tefillah*—a prayer area with seats.

Prayer is a time to talk to God

**Short list of prayers:**

*Ma Tovu*

*L’shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

*Shema*

*Barukh Shem Kavod*

Maybe add:

*Amidah*—the opening paragraph

*Zokhreinu le’hayim*—recited beginning on *Rosh ha’Shana* and through *Yom Kippur*

**Stories**

Stories are from *Tiku Shofar* by Shoshana Silberman. It is published by The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

**The Lesson**

*One year on Rosh ha’Shanah, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak  
of Berditchev told the following story:*

Once he came to an inn where many Jews were lodging because it was a market day. The famous rabbi joined these businessmen for an early *minyan*. However, he was shocked at how fast they rushed through their prayers and how badly they mispronounced so many of the words.

At the end of the service, he marched up to them and began uttering nonsense syllables such as “ba...sha...boo....” The merchants were so astonished they could not speak. Finally, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak explained to them: “The way I spoke to you is the way you just spoke to God!”

At first, they all stood there very ashamed. Then one of the men answered the rabbi: “When a baby utters syllables that have no meaning to anyone else, the mother and father seem to know what the infant needs. Even if you, Rabbi, didn’t understand our prayers, we feel confident that

God knows our true thoughts and feelings. “This merchant was right,” Rabbi Levi Yitzhak declared. “He showed more faith in God than I did. He taught me something that I now want to

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teach you: On this holy day, even the prayers of those who are unable to say them properly will be heard if they come from the heart....”

(*Tiku Shofar*, p. 3)

*If prayer is a time to talk with God what did the people who were praying know that Rabbi Yitzhak did not know?*

*What is it that you want to say to God during Rosh ha'Shanah?*

### **Torah Reading**

The reading of the Torah should take place while the children are still in the *pinat tefillah*, prayer area.

The leader should explain to the children the holiness of the Torah and the special way that we show our respect by the way we hold it and kiss it when it passes by. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

To the extent possible, make a big deal out of taking the Torah out of the ark and walking around with it. Have the children kiss it.

The prayer leader should have the children stand as he/she recites the lines *Shema Yisrael*, *Ehad Elokeinu*, and *Gadlu* before the blessings for reading the Torah are chanted. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

Do at least one *aliyyah* and return the Torah to its place in the ark after you sing *Etz Hayyim*.

### **Dance and Sing**

The children can now go into the empty area and dance and sing some Hebrew songs.

### **Kol Shofar**

*Rosh ha'Shanah* is called *Yom T'ruah* — the day of the sounding of the *shofar*. But THIS YEAR the *shofar* is not sounded on the first day because it is SHABBAT. You will have to wait until tomorrow.

### **Snack**

Apples and honey are often eaten as part of the *Rosh ha'Shanah* snack.

**Ideas for Children's Service  
Eight Year Olds (Third Grade)  
Second Day of Rosh ha'Shanah**

Third grade of synagogue school (8 year olds)  
Services take place for 1-1.5 hours

**Tefillah--Prayer**

- You will want to configure the room so as to create a *pinat tefillah*—a prayer area with seats.

Prayer is a time to talk to God

Short list of prayers:

*Ma Tovu*  
*L'shanah tova tikateivu*  
*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*  
*Shema*  
*Barukh Shem Kavod*

Maybe add:

*Ve'ahafta*  
*Amidah—the opening paragraph*  
*Zokhreinu le'hayim — recited beginning on Rosh ha'Shanah and through Yom Kippur*

**In His Own Way**

There was once a farmer who had a son who could not tell a *resh* from a *lamed*. Since he could not recite a single prayer, his father did not even take him to the synagogue. “Why bother,” he would say. “It is a waste of time for such a child to pray.”

One *Yom Kippur*, when the son had turned thirteen, the farmer became concerned that if the boy were left at home, he might eat by mistake, so he brought him along to the synagogue. In his pocket, the boy carried the little silver flute that he played when he tended his father's sheep.

As the boy listened to the sad, soulful melodies during the service, he longed to play a tune on his flute. However, when he asked his father's permission, the farmer scolded him and told him it was forbidden to do such a thing on *Yom Kippur*.

All day long, the young boy tried to restrain himself, but as the service was drawing to a close, he could not resist the urge to take out his flute and blow one long powerful note. The congregation became still as the horrified father tried to grab the flute from the boy.

The rabbi, the great *Baal Shem Tov*, broke the silence with these words, “Don't be angry or embarrassed. The lad spoke to God in his own way. So strong was his desire to pray that his prayer on the flute not only went straight to the Holy One but also carried our prayers up to the gates of heaven.”

*(Tiku Shofar, p. 3)*

*How can we put our own feelings into the prayers “set out” in our prayer books?*

*Talk to the person next to you about what it is that during this Rosh ha’Shanah you want to appreciate and for what you want to thank God, family, friends, teachers, and others.*

*It is okay to close your eyes and speak to God using words from your heart that may be different than the words on the written page?*

### **Kol T’ruah**

*Rosh ha’Shanah is called Yom T’ruah – the Day of Sounding the shofar. This year we blow the shofar on Sunday and not the first day of Rosh ha’Shanah because it is Shabbat.*

### **The Drum**

The Magid of Dubna told the following story to teach people the importance of understanding and not just hearing the *shofar’s* blasts:

Once a peasant came to town just when a fire had broken out. He was surprised to see a number of people blowing trumpets and beating drums and then others running out with axes, shovels and pails.

He asked a small child why a musical band was playing in the town square. The child replied, “The trumpeting and drum-beating is to put out the fire.” The peasant quickly went to a nearby shop to purchase a drum to take back to his village.

A year later, a fire broke out in his village. The peasant announced that no one needed to fight the fire, for his drum would quench the flames.

As he beat his drum, the fire quickly spread. Seeing that their village would soon be destroyed, the townspeople started shouting: “You idiot! The drum is only meant as an alarm to alert us to danger. We then need to do something about the fire if we are to save ourselves and our village.”

And so it is with the hearing of the *shofar*. The *shofar* can only alert us to the need for change. *Only we can change and improve ourselves.*

*(Tiku Shofar, p. 88)*

*Think about how you could change and improve yourself. Is anyone ready to share this with the rest of us?*

### **Yom T’ruah**

*Rosh ha’Shanah is called Yom T’ruah – the Day of Sounding the Shofar:*

- The *shofar* was sounded at Mt. Sinai when the Israelites were given the Ten Commandments.

- It was blown in ancient times to announce the coming of the king or appearance of the new moon.
- The *shofar* even called people together for special meetings and signaled armies to go to war.
- Today the *shofar* calls us to review our deeds and to turn to God. The *shofar* also calls us to stand together as Jews and to work hard to make a better world for all peoples.
- The *mitzvah* is to **hear** the *shofar* not to blow it. This is fortunate because blowing the *shofar* is very difficult. Have you ever tried?
- When we hear the *shofar*, it is easy to say, “I’ll be better next year.” But it is harder to work at just being a little better in day-to-day living. How can we keep the memory of the sound of the *shofar* with us?

(Tiku Shofar p. 89)

*How can we keep the memory of the sound of the shofar with us?*

*How can you do something with your synagogue school class that will keep you and your classmates involved in mending the world which the blowing of the shofar calls us to do?*

### **Torah Reading**

The reading of the Torah should take place while the children are still in the *pinat tefillah*, prayer area.

The leader should explain to the children the holiness of the Torah and the special way that we show our respect by the way we hold it and kiss it when it passes by. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

To the extent possible, make a big deal out of taking the Torah out of the ark and walking around with it. Have the children kiss it.

The prayer leader should have the children stand as he/she recites the lines *Shema Yisrael*, *Ehad Elokeinu*, and *Gadlu* before the blessings for reading the Torah are chanted. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

Do at least one *aliyyah* and return the Torah to its place in the ark after you sing *Etz Hayyim*.

### **Snack**

Apples and honey are often eaten as part of the *Rosh ha'Shanah* snack.

**Ideas for Children’s Service  
Nine and Ten Year Olds (Fourth and Fifth Grade)  
First Day of Rosh ha’Shanah**

Fourth and fifth grade of synagogue school (9 and 10 year olds)  
Services take place for 1.5-2 hours

Short list of prayers:

*Ma Tovu*

*L’shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

*Shema*

*Barukh Shem Kavod*

*Amidah* — the opening paragraph

*Zokhreinu le’hayim* — recited beginning on *Rosh ha’Shana* and through *Yom Kippur*

Maybe add:

*Sim Shalom*

*Ein Keloheinu*

*Aleinu*

*Adon Olam*

**Story**

**The Field of Sisterly Love**

King Solomon was considered the wisest man on earth. Yet, he was baffled by one problem – where to build the holy Temple? This question troubled him so much that he could not sleep. One night, as he tossed and turned on his royal bed, he heard a voice deep inside telling him to go to Mount Moriah in Jerusalem.

There Solomon found a field owned by two sisters. They each lived in a house at opposite ends of the field. One sister lived alone while the other lived with her husband and four children. Together they tilled and tended this field and divided its harvest equally.

That night, King Solomon was not the only one who could not sleep. These two sisters both stayed awake worrying. The first sister thought to herself, “I’m a lucky woman. I have a family who will take care of me in my old age. My sister is alone. I must bring her extra wheat so she can store it for the future.” The second sister said to herself, “I live alone and don’t really need so much wheat. My sister should have a larger share for her big family.”

And so, the two sisters rushed to their granaries, filled their arms with bundles of wheat and dashed across the field to the other’s storage bin. In the dim light of the moon, with their wheat piled high in their arms, they did not notice each other or Solomon. But the king quietly observed them.

The next morning, the sisters were each astonished to find that when they looked in their granary they had the same amount of wheat as before. “This is indeed a puzzle for King Solomon, the Wise!” they both thought to themselves.

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For several nights, the sisters continued to exchange the wheat. Each morning, they would find that their own supply was not any less. Finally they bumped into each other in the middle of the field. Realizing what had been happening, the two sisters laughed and laughed as they hugged each other.

The puzzle about the wheat sheaves was solved and so was Solomon's problem about where to build the holy Temple. He now knew that he would build it on this "field of sisterly love." And so he did.

(*Tiku Shofar*, p. 40)

### **Torah Reading**

The reading of the Torah should take place while the children are still in the *pinat tefillah*, prayer area.

The leader should explain to the children the holiness of the Torah and the special way that we show our respect by the way we hold it and kiss it when it passes by. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

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Do at least one *aliyyah* and return the Torah to its place in the ark after you sing *Etz Hayyim*.

*How do you know that God hears our prayers?*

*How can we know that we are doing what God expects from us?*

### **Kol Shofar**

On the first day of *Rosh ha'Shanah*, because it falls on *Shabbat*, we did not blow the *shofar*. We blow the *shofar* on Sunday, the second day of *Rosh ha'Shanah*.

### **Teshuvah**

When people say that they want to do *teshuvah*, they mean that they want to turn themselves around. It is not that they want to do a physical exercise of turning around. Rather they want to go in a new, different direction. They want to change for the better. They want to be a better person.

This can take place in a lot of different ways. You can:

Change yourself

Work to help someone else change

You can work to change something in the world

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Get into groups of three and discuss different ways that you might do teshuvah.

## **Dance and Sing**

### **Snack**

Apples and honey are often eaten as part of the *Rosh ha'Shanah* snack.

### **Ideas for Children's Service Nine and Ten Year Olds (Fourth and Fifth Grade) Second Day of Rosh ha'Shanah**

Fourth and fifth grade of synagogue school (9 and 10 year olds)  
Services take place for 1.5-2 hours

### **Tefillah—Prayer**

Short list of prayers:

*Ma Tovu*

*L'shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

*Shema*

*Barukh Shem Kavod*

*Amidah*—the opening paragraph and *Zokhreinu le'hayim* which we recite beginning on *Rosh ha'Shanah* and through *Yom Kippur*

Maybe add:

*Sim Shalom*

*Ein Keloheinu*

*Aleinu*

*Adon Olam*

### **Story**

#### **An Angel's Teshuvah**

An angel once disobeyed God. When she was brought before the throne of judgment, she begged for forgiveness. "Give me a chance to do *teshuvah*," she pleaded. "Your *teshuvah*," the Holy One announced, "will be to return to earth to find the most precious thing in the world and then bring it back to Me."

For three years, the angel patiently roamed the earth. Finally, on a battlefield, she heard a dying soldier call out for water. Then she saw his wounded friend crawl to him to give him a drink from his canteen. When the last drop of water touched his parched lips, the angel seized the canteen and brought it to the Holy One.

God said to the angel, "This is very precious but it is not the most precious thing in the world." The angel returned to earth and roamed the world for another three years until she came to a hospital where a doctor lay dying of a disease she had gotten caring for a patient. The angel caught her last breath and brought it to the Holy One.

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Again God said to the angel, “This is very precious but it is not the most precious thing in the world.”

The angel returned to earth to continue the search. Suddenly, she saw a mean-looking man holding a sword. He was walking to the house of his enemy to kill him. A light was on in the house so the man peered inside. He saw his enemy’s wife putting her little son to sleep. She was teaching him to say the bedtime prayers. As he watched them, the man’s heart melted. He remembered how his own mother had cared for him and taught him these same prayers. When a tear fell from his eyes, the angel caught it and flew directly to the Holy One. God smiled and spoke. “Indeed, this is the most precious thing in the world. *Teshuvah* opens the gates of heaven.”

The Rabbis teach: “Who is truly mighty? The one who makes an enemy a friend.”

### **Teshuvah**

Avrum was interviewed between the ages of 9 – 13 by Robert Coles, a professor at Harvard University. Avrum grew up in Brookline, Mass., where he attended a synagogue school at a Conservative congregation. These are his words:

“When I pray, I ask God to help me. I think I am trying to find out what is the ‘best,’ by asking God ... I hear God: I hear God saying that we should obey the Commandments and live good lives. I hear God saying that one day God will bring all of us back together. He made a pact with us, and He will help us — but we have to show God we are deserving; that we are ready... God’s voice is in you when you are making choices — it turns you towards the right direction. It is not only our decisions that count; it’s God’s decision — to teach us the right way to be.”

[Avrum’s words. Robert Cole. *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Houghton Mifflin (New York). P. 75]

(*Tiku Shofar*, p. 21)

*How can our awareness of God influence the choices we make?*

*What could you say to a younger child to explain about what God expects from us?*

*Would any of you like to share your idea.?*

### **Torah Reading**

The reading of the Torah should take place while the children are still in the *pinat tefillah*, prayer area.

The leader should explain to the children the holiness of the Torah and the special way that we show our respect by the way we hold it and kiss it when it passes by. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

To the extent possible, make a big deal out of taking the Torah out of the ark and walking around with it. Have the children kiss it.

The prayer leader should have the children stand as he/she recites the lines *Shema Yisrael*, *Ehad Elokeinu*, and *Gadlu* before the blessings for reading the Torah are chanted. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

Do at least one *aliyyah* and return the Torah to its place in the ark after you sing *Etz Hayyim*.

### **Kol Shofar**

### **Kol T'ruah**

*Rosh ha'Shanah* is called *Yom T'ruah* – the Day of Sounding the *shofar*. This year we blow the *shofar* on Sunday. We do not blow it on Saturday because it is Shabbat.

### **Yom T'ruah**

*Rosh ha'Shanah* is called *Yom T'ruah* – the Day of Sounding the *Shofar*:

- The *shofar* was sounded at Mt. Sinai when the Israelites were given the Ten Commandments.
- It was blown in ancient times to announce the coming of the king or appearance of the new moon.
- The *shofar* even called people together for special meetings and signaled armies to go to war.
- Today the *shofar* calls us to review our deeds and to turn to God. The *shofar* also calls us to stand together as Jews and to work hard to make a better world for all peoples.
- The *mitzvah* is to **hear** the *shofar* not to blow it. This is fortunate because blowing the *shofar* is very difficult. Have you ever tried?
- When we hear the *shofar*, it is easy to say, “I’ll be better next year.” But it is harder to work at just being a little better in day-to-day living. How can we keep the memory of the sound of the *shofar* with us?

*(Tiku Shofar, p. 89)*

### **Snack**

Apples and honey are often eaten as part of the *Rosh ha'Shanah* snack.

**Ideas for Children's Service  
Eleven and Twelve Year Olds  
(Sixth and Seventh Grade)  
First Day of Rosh ha'Shanah**

Sixth and seventh grade of synagogue school (11 and 12 year olds)  
Services take place for 1.5-2 hours

**Tefillah--Prayer**

*Ma Tovu*

*L'shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

(This means that God is the ruler of all)

*Shema and Barukh Shem Kavod*

(This is the most important line in the *siddur* and *mahzor*. It declares that we believe in God and there is only one God.)

*V'ahaftah*

(This is the paragraph that teaches that we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might.)

*Mi Khamokhah*

(This begins with the declaration that there is no one like God. And it continues to tell of how God saved the Jews at the Reed Sea and ends with the blessing, "Praised are You, Lord, Redeemer—the one who saves—of the people Israel.)

*Amidah*

(This comes right after the above prayer. Everyone says it standing. We begin by praising God for his love and kindness.)

*Zokhreinu le'hayim*

(This comes right after the first paragraph of the Amidah and is a special prayer said between *Rosh ha'Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*. It asks God to remember us with the gift of life and to record us in the Book of Life.)

Maybe add:

*Sim Shalom*

*Ein Keloheinu*

*Aleinu*

*Adon Olam*

**Torah Reading**

The reading of the Torah should take place while the children are still in the *pinat tefillah*, prayer area.

The leader should explain to the children the holiness of the Torah and the special way that we show our respect by the way we hold it and kiss it when it passes by. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

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To the extent possible, make a big deal out of taking the Torah out of the ark and walking around with it. Have the children kiss it.

The prayer leader should have the children stand as he/she recites the lines *Shema Yisrael, Ehad Elokeinu*, and *Gadlu* before the blessing for reading the Torah are chanted. Allow the students the opportunity to kiss the Torah as it is carried past them.

Do at least one *aliyah* and return the Torah to its place in the ark after you sing *Etz Hayyim*.

### **Talking and Thinking About God**

Avrum was interviewed between the ages of 9 – 13 by Robert Coles, a professor at Harvard University. Avrum grew up in Brookline, Mass., where he attended a synagogue school at a Conservative congregation. These are his words:

“When I pray, I ask God to help me. I think I am trying to find out what is the ‘best,’ by asking God ... I hear God: I hear God saying that we should obey the Commandments and live good lives. I hear God saying that one day God will bring all of us back together. He made a pact with us, and He will help us — but we have to show God we are deserving, we are ready... God’s voice is in you when you are making choices — it turns you towards the right direction. It is not only our decisions that count; it’s God’s decision — to teach us the right way to be.”

[Avrum’s words. Robert Cole. *The Spiritual Life of Children*. Houghton Mifflin (New York). P. 75]

(*Tiku Shofar*, p. 21)

Another quote from Avrum:

“I think there is a God somewhere, but He’s not like we might think He is; I mean, He may be different — and that’s about all I know! Maybe it’s fun for God to keep us all guessing! It’s probably better for us, too. We’re on our toes, and we’re not falling asleep. God wouldn’t want all His people dozing half the time!”

(*Tiku Shofar*, p. 121)

*Please take a minute to think about what you would teach a younger child about God. Would any of you like to share your idea?*

### **Ways to think about the Jewish people and God:**

In one of the prayers that are repeated several times during *Rosh ha’Shnah* and *Yom Kippur*, we use different images of ourselves and God. It starts with:

We are Your people	And You are our God
It continues:	
We are your children	And You are our parent.
We are your flock	And You are our shepherd

Can you add a few of your own images by filling in the blanks:

We are your \_\_\_\_\_ And You are our \_\_\_\_\_

## **Singing and Dancing**

### **Snack**

Apples and honey are often eaten as part of the *Rosh ha'Shanah* snack.

### **Ideas for Children's Service Eleven and Twelve Year Olds (Sixth and Seventh Grade) Second Day of Rosh ha'Shanah**

Sixth and seventh grade of synagogue school (11 and 12 year olds)  
Services take place for 2 hours

### **Tefillah--Prayer**

*Ma Tovu*

*L'shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

(This means that God is the ruler of all)

*Shema and Barukh Shem Kavod*

(This is the most important line in the *siddur* and *mahzor*. It declares that we believe in God and there is only one God.)

*V'ahaftah*

(This is the paragraph that teaches that we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might.)

*Mi Khamokhah*

(This begins with the declaration that there is no one like God. And it continues to tell of how God saved the Jews at the Reed Sea and ends with the blessing, "Praised are You, Lord, Redeemer—the one who saves—of the people Israel.)

*Amidah*

(This comes right after the above prayer. Everyone says it standing. We begin by praising God for his love and kindness.)

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(This comes right after the first paragraph of the Amidah and is a special prayer said between *Rosh ha'Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*. It asks God to remember us with the gift of life and to record us in the Book of Life.)

Maybe add:

*Sim Shalom*

*Ein Keloheinu*

*Aleinu*

*Adon Olam*

### **Torah Reading**

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### **Teshuvah**

*Repentance—this is a word that is very much part of our High Holyday Vocabulary. When you do something wrong and want to change, what should you do?*

*Before you go on, talk in groups of two or three about what you would do to correct or change something which you have done that you know is wrong.*

*You will have to answer two questions.*

*What did you do that was wrong?*

*What can you do to make it right?*

Judaism tells us that there are four steps to *teshuvah*, repentance.

- Telling someone that you made a mistake
- Apologizing—saying that you are sorry
- Asking someone to forgive you
- If something similar comes up, you try hard not to do it again  
(For example, if someone is teasing someone else you do not join in. Indeed, you might even tell the person to stop.)

A long time ago, our rabbis taught us that there are two types of *mitzvot*, things that God asks us to do. There are commandments between ourselves and someone else and there are commandments between ourselves and God. (*Bayn adam l'havero and Bayn adam l'makom*).

Sometimes we do something to someone that we shouldn't do. If we harm another person, Judaism requires us to seek forgiveness from that person or those people. We can also do something wrong by acting in a way that God does not want us to act. It can be something we don't do. For instance, we don't observe *Rosh ha'Shanah*. It can also be something which we do. For instance, we eat foods that comes from an animal that the Torah teaches us we not to eat.

*What are the ways that we can hurt others people?*

*What are the ways that we can do something wrong in how we relate to God?*

*What bad things would you like to see changed?*

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## **Kol Shofar**

On the first day of Rosh ha'Shanah, because it fell on Shabbat, we did not blow the *shofar*. Today, Sunday, we do blow the *shofar*.

## **Talking About God**

Talking About God

Doing Conservative Jewish Theology

Adapted from "Willing, Learning and Striving – A Course Guide for Teaching Jewish Youth Based on *Emet Ve-Emunah*" by Steven M. Brown adapted and edited by Robert Abramson. Copyright ©1968 by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the Rabbinical Assembly, and the United Synagogue of America.

### **For the teacher-leader**

We do not know God in the way we know what a chair is, or a neighbor, or  $5 + 5 = 10$ . This is because we are human and God is totally different than us and other things which we know. We use language to describe our relationship to God, to talk about God, or to talk to God – and we must do so, if we are going to think about God, pray to God or relate to God. All God language—except maybe "You"—is metaphorical. This does not mean that God is a metaphor. It means that all we have as humans is our human ways of knowing, communicating and thinking.

You can have the children do either the Faith Interview or the I Believe Inventory below.

### **FAITH INTERVIEW**

Be as honest as possible in answering the following questions. If you do this exercise with another person, after one of you has been the "interviewer" for a few questions, switch roles.

1. If there is a God, how do you picture God?
2. Have you ever felt God talking to you or have you ever felt God's presence? If so, when?
3. Do you talk to God?
4. If you were God, what would you do differently?
5. What are some of your doubts about God?
6. Is there anything that makes you angry about God?
7. Has God ever answered any of your prayers?
8. Do you think that the Jewish people have been chosen by God for something special?
9. Do you thank God for the good things in your life?
10. When bad things happen how do you relate to God?

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Adapted from *Higher and Higher* by Steven M. Brown.

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## I BELIEVE INVENTORY

	Yes	No
1. I believe that God created the world and directs what happens in it.	___	___
2. I believe that God has no power to interfere in the affairs of people.	___	___
3. I believe that the world came into being by accident.	___	___
4. I believe that God exists only inside of people.	___	___
5. I believe that even if there were no people, God would still exist.	___	___
6. I believe that God is aware of what I do.	___	___
7. I believe that God can answer prayers.	___	___
8. I believe that God punishes evil.	___	___
9. I believe that God intended us never to understand certain things about the world.	___	___
10. I believe that my concepts about God differs from the Torah's concept of God.	___	___
11. I believe that God decided what is good and what is evil.	___	___
12. I believe that prayer is an attempt to talk to God.	___	___
13. I believe that God listens to prayer.	___	___
14. I believe that the Torah is the word of God.	___	___
15. I believe that the Torah is the Jewish people's understanding of what God wants of us.	___	___

What else do you believe about God?

### **Torah Reading**

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Do at least one *aliyyah* and return the Torah to its place in the ark after you sing *Etz Hayyim*.

### **Kol Shofar**

### **Snack**

**Ideas for Children's Services**  
**Eight Year Olds**  
**(Third grade)**  
**Yom Kippur**

Third grade of synagogue school (8 year olds)  
Services take place for 1 – 1.5 hours

**Tefillah--Prayer**

- You will want to configure the room so as to create a *pinat tefillah*—a prayer area with seats.

Prayer is a time to talk to God

Short list of prayers:

*Ma Tov*

*L'shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

*Shema*

*Barukh Shem Kavod*

*Amidah*—the opening paragraph

*Zokhreinu le'hayim*—recited beginning on *Rosh ha'Shana* and through *Yom Kippur*

Yom Kippur is a time for us to think about the ways that we ought to change. It is a time when we ask God to forgive us and when we ask family, friends and others to forgive us for any thing wrong we have done to them.

On Yom Kippur, after long prayers that speak of different ways that we might have hurt others, we say:

**“But penitence (*teshuvah*), prayer and good deeds will cause the wrongs that have been done to be eliminated.”**

*Think of ways that that you have tried or will try to correct something that you have done that is wrong.*

*Is there something you would like to discuss with God?*

*Do you have responsibility for helping your friends correct something that they have done wrong?*

*Think about something that you have done that has helped somebody else.*

**Torah Reading**

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**Ideas for Children's Services**  
**Nine and Ten Year Olds**  
**(Fourth and Fifth Grade)**  
**Yom Kippur**

Nine and ten grade of synagogue school (9 and 10 year olds)  
Services take place for 1.5 - 2 hours

**Tefillah--Prayer**

*Ma Tovu*

*L'shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

(This means that God is the ruler of all)

*Shema and Barukh Shem Kavod*

(This is the most important line in the *siddur* and *mahzor*. It declares that we believe in God and there is only one God.)

*V'ahaftah*

(This is the paragraph that teaches that we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our might.)

*Mi Khamokhah*

(This begins with the declaration that there is no one like God. And it continues to tell of how God saved the Jews at the Reed Sea and ends with the blessing, "Praised are You, Lord, Redeemer—the one who saves—of the people Israel.)

*Amidah*

(This comes right after the above prayer. Everyone says it standing. We begin by praising God for his love and kindness.

*Zokhreinu le'hayim*

(This comes aright after the first paragraph of the Amidah and is a special prayer said between *Rosh ha'Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*. It asks God to remember us with the gift of life and to record us in the Book of Life.)

Maybe add:

*Sim Shalom*

*Ein Keloheinu*

*Aleinu*

*Adon Olam*

**Fasting**

On Yom Kippur we spend a lot of time praying and boys and girls fast from the time they reach Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Many children, as they get close to that time, a year or two before, begin to fast for part of the day. The Yom Kippur fast begins before sunset and ends when it is dark the next day.

**Teshuvah**

On Yom Kippur we think about what we have done right during the last year and what we have done wrong. We ask God to help us do what is right. The Hebrew word for "sin" is *heit*. It means to miss the mark. We do not hit the bull's-eye.

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*Teshuvah* means that we try to follow the right path. It requires us to change what we have done.

We are told that God says: “I reach out to those who ask for forgiveness. If one comes towards Me, I will go towards that person.”

*Think for a minute about some behavior that you can work on improving.*

*Choose one or two.*

*What would you do differently?*

Remember to think about what it takes to do *teshuvah*.

Judaism tells us that there are four steps to *teshuvah*, repentance.

- Telling someone that you made a mistake
- Apologizing—saying that you are sorry
- Asking someone to forgive you
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(For example, if someone is teasing someone else you do not join in. Indeed, you might even tell the person to stop.)

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**Ideas for Children's Services  
Eleven and Twelve Year Olds  
(Sixth and Seventh grade)  
Yom Kippur**

Eleven and twelfth grade of synagogue school (11 and 12 year olds)  
Services take place for 1.5 - 2 hours

**Tefillah--Prayer**

*Ma Tovu*

*L'shanah tova tikateivu*

*Hamelekh yosheiv al kisei ...*

(This means that God is the ruler of all)

*Shema and Barukh Shem Kavod*

(This is the most important line in the *siddur* and *mahzor*. It declares that we believe in God and there is only one God.)

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### **Teshuvah on Yom Kippur**

*Yom Kippur* is a time when we should think about what we can do to make the world a better place. On *Yom Kippur* we read the *haftarah* from Isaiah. It is a time to remember the prophet Isaiah's words: "Share your bread with the hungry. Take in the homeless... clothe the naked."

The *haftarah* for Yom Kippur morning was chosen because it speaks to the true purpose of fasting.

Following is the relevant passage from the *haftarah* and some discussion questions. You might decide to photocopy the section and discuss it with friends and family at dinner after *Yom Kippur*.

### **The Scene**

The people were gathered together for a fast day, probably to avert a calamity. They hoped that their fasting would cause God to pay attention to them and forgive them. Into the crowd comes Isaiah (c. 740-700 B.C.E.). Recognized as a prophet when he speaks, the people listen. Sometimes his words make them glad; sometimes they make them angry.

### **Isaiah's Words**

- 58: 1. Yell at the top of your voice, don't hold back. Let your voice blast like a *shofar*. Tell My people what they have been doing wrong; tell the Jews how they have sinned.
2. They seek Me daily, eager to learn my ways. Like a nation that does what is right, that does not stop observing God's laws, they ask for righteous judgment, they are eager to feel the nearness of God.
3. "Why have we fasted if You do not notice it? Why have we caused ourselves pain, if You do not know it?" they ask.
4. (Isaiah in the name of God answers) Behold on your fast day you see to your business and oppress all your laborers. You fast to quarrel and fight and to hit others out of cruelty. Your fasting today is not the kind that will make your voice heard by God.

5. Is this the kind of fast I (God) have chosen? A day when people cause themselves to suffer and walk around with their heads bowed down like withering plants, looking like they are in mourning? Is that what you call a fast, a fast that God wants?
6. Is not this the fast I (God) want?
  - To free people from all which cruelly oppresses them,
  - To let the oppressed go free,
  - To break every chain,
  - To share your food with the hungry,
  - To take the homeless into your home.
  - Clothe the naked when you see him.
  - Do not ignore a needy relative.
7. Then light will break forth like the dawn, and your wounds will soon be healed.

Adapted from *The Mahzor*, The Rabbinical Assembly,  
and *The Tanakh*, Jewish Publication Society

### Some Questions

1. *Read over verses 2-3. The people seem to be very religious, but are they really doing what is right? What do you learn from the use of the word "like" in verse 2?*
2. *What do the people assume about fasting (v. 3)? Do you think this is right?*
3. *What is positive in what the people are doing?*
4. *Read over verses 4-6. From God's perspective, what is wrong with their fast and what should they do?*
5. *Why do you think the rabbis chose to have this selection to read on Yom Kippur, a fast day which they considered binding on every Jewish adult?*

*What can we do to help people who are oppressed?*

*What can we do to help people who are going hungry?*

*What can we do to help people who have no decent clothes?*

