

KESHER

A JEWISH NEWSLETTER FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

ROSH HASHANAH: A TIME TO REFLECT



It seems fitting that we as Jews celebrate our new year at the same time that school begins. The name *Rosh Hashanah* literally means "head of the year." And in fact, *Rosh Hashanah* is said to be the day on which the world was created. For that reason, it is seen as the Jewish New Year or the world's birthday.

As with personal birthdays, even in the midst of celebration, people often take the time to reflect on the past year. The same is true for the world's birthday: Jews engage in self-evaluation and renewal. It is said that on *Rosh Hashanah*, God opens the Book of Life in which (metaphorically) every living person's fate for the future is recorded. Ten days later, on *Yom Kippur*, this fate is sealed. For that reason, the ten days beginning on *Rosh Hashanah* and ending on *Yom Kippur* are known as the *Yamim Noraim*, Days of Awe.

HIGH HOLY DAY BOOKSHELF

For children...

Engineer Ari and the Rosh Hashanah Ride

By: Deborah Bodin Cohen

The Shofar that Lost Its Voice

By: David E. Fass

Today is the Birthday of the World

By: Linda Heller



For parents...

A Faithful Heart: Preparing for the High Holy Days

By: Benjamin Levy

RECIPE CORNER

APPLE HONEY DESSERT PIZZA

(pareve)

- 9-inch unbaked pie shell
- Flour for dusting
- 1/4 c honey
- 1 c applesauce
- 2 medium apples, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/3 c ground nuts
- 1/4 c raisins
- 1/4 c sugar
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon



- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease cookie sheet or pizza pan.
- Remove piecrust from foil pan, dust lightly with flour and roll into 12-inch circle directly on sheet or pan. Crimp edge of dough to form rim, prick with fork and brush with honey. Cover with applesauce to rim. Top with apple slice in concentric circles.
- Sprinkle with nuts and raisins. Combine sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle on top.
- Bake 20 minutes or until crust is firm and golden brown. Cut into wedges.
- Add chocolate mini-chips, nuts or finely chopped maraschino cherries to garnish.

By: Risé Routenberg
(published in NY Jewish Week)



ENGAGING YOUNG CHILDREN AT ROSH HASHANAH


- Write down each member of your family's wishes for a sweet new year. Read these at the table on *Rosh Hashanah*.
- Commit, as a family, to following the steps of *t'shuvah* (repentance):
 - Recognize or acknowledge a wrong behavior choice
 - Take some responsibility to fix the problem caused by poor behavior
Young children may need some help figuring out how to fix the problem or with the actual execution of the "fixing."
 - Say sorry for what was done wrong
 - Promise not do the wrong behavior again
As a parent, role-model the process by apologizing for the things you do wrong, as well.
- Ask family members to draw a picture of their memories from the past year. Write down a few ideas for which each is grateful. Laminate the pictures (this service is available at many photocopy stores) and turn them into placemats to be used at the holiday meals.
- As a family, go through your old clothes. Determine which have been out-grown, thus showing growth and change. Collect these and donate them as an act of *t'zedakah* (giving) in honor of *Rosh Hashanah*.
- Talk about your favorite "sweet" foods. During the week after *Rosh Hashanah*, include these foods as dessert. Discuss your wishes for a sweet new year.
- As a family, you may want to take this time to look through old family pictures, including your child's baby pictures. Talk about how much he or she has grown and changed over the past few years, not only physically, but also in acts of maturity and behavior.



CENTRAL HIGH HOLY DAY THEMES

T'FILLAH (PRAYER)

The sounding of the *shofar* is a central observance of the High Holy Days. The great Jewish

 medieval philosopher Maimonides (Rambam), viewed the *shofar* as a sort of "moral alarm clock": *Awaken, you who slumber, from your sleep ... search through your deeds and repent, and remember your Creator! (Hilhot T'shuvah 3:4)*

During *Rosh Hashanah* services, pay close attention to the sounding of the *shofar*. How does it make you feel? What images does it bring to mind? Of what does it remind you?

TZ'DAKAH (GIVING)

Tz'dakah, the giving of money and of ourselves to others, is a central theme of the High Holy Days.

Parents can help children explore the meaning of *tz'dakah* by thinking about ways the family can help others. This could mean giving actual money, volunteering, or being especially kind to friends, family and others.



T'SHUVAH (REPENTANCE)

During our life we all make mistakes. Promising to not repeat those mistakes helps us begin the New Year headed in the right direction. During the High Holy Days season, the Hebrew word we use for "mistake" is "*het*." This word often is translated as "sin." Because we're always trying to be good people, another translation is "missing the mark" of good behavior.

By acknowledging our past mistakes, we recognize how to improve our lives for the coming year.

