



# RESHET

The Network for  
Jewish Youth Provision

Welcome to the Rosh HaShanna & Yom Kippur Choveret resource pack. It has been designed specifically for informal educators. There are many practical ideas in it along with some information about the prayer and ritual relating to both festivals.

## Games & Activities for Rosh HaShanna

### **Rosh HaShanna Card Games**

Make up bingo cards with copies of Rosh HaShanna symbols on them, at least one per young person. (Symbols could be apples, honey, shofar, torah etc)

The leader calls out the symbols and group members cover them with small pieces of card as they are called out. When someone has a covered line or card, they check them with the leader and say a short sentence about each symbol. For example: 'tashlich - the custom which involves us throwing our bread into running water on Rosh HaShanna; signifying the throwing away of our sins.'

Depending on the age group, ask questions such as 'why do we eat apples at Rosh HaShanna?'

Variations:

One or two symbols can be explained instead of a whole line or card, depending on the knowledge of the group, these symbols can also be used for playing 'snap', 'the memory game' and other card games.

### **Tasting Game**

Group members split into pairs; one member of each pair is blindfolded, the other has to 'feed' their pair with foods relevant to specific Jewish festivals.

Examples of foods you could use

Rosh HaShanna - apple & honey/honey cake

Shavuot - milky foods/cheesecake  
Pesach- matza/almond macaroons  
Chanukah – doughnuts

### **Fruit Basket (that old favourite...)**

It is very easy to make this game relevant to the various festivals. Each group member is given a symbol or name to do with a specific festival.

For example: Notes of the shofar:

tekiah  
shevarim  
teruah

The group should be large enough for three or four people to be given each word. A group member stands in the middle of the circle and calls out the words. Participants have to swap seats with people who have the same words as them, and the person in the middle has to try and sit down. The person left standing then calls out another word and the game continues until s/he calls out 'tekiah gedola', when everyone in the circle has to swop seats.

('Tekiah Gedolah' is the longest shofar note, blown at the end of each shofar blowing throughout Rosh HaShanna and to mark the end of Yom Kippur.)



### **Call My Bluff**

Preparation:

Choose a theme relevant to either Israel or a Jewish festival

Theme:      General knowledge about Israel

There are two ways of playing this game.

The first way is...

Write the individual words and their meanings on pieces of paper. Divide the group into two teams and organise them so that they are sitting opposite each other. Only one member of the team is given the correct meaning of the word, the others have to make up meanings which sound correct. Each person takes their turn to give an

explanation and the other team has to guess who is telling the truth.

The two teams take alternate turns in making up meanings and guessing.

Another way of playing is...

If you have three leaders, have each one stand in a different area of a large room or hall. Each of you takes a turn to call out a word and give a believable meaning; only one of you gives the correct definition. The group has to run to the leader they think is telling the truth. Once everyone is standing by a leader, shout 'RUNAROUND NOW' - giving them the chance to change their minds. Then you can reveal who is telling the truth.

### **Just Rosh HaShanna**

This is a fun talking game, suitable for any age group. Choose a chanich/a who needs to talk for a minute without hesitation, repetition & without deviating from their given subject. Make your subjects topical, choose something to do with Rosh HaShanna or Yom Kippur.

The price of honey this year  
That person I haven't seen since last year  
My new Machzor  
Breaking your fast on chopped herring  
The biggest Shofar I ever saw  
The number of seeds in my pomegranate  
The last time I repented

### **Shulanory – Tell Us A Story**

Sit the group in a circle. One person starts a story with the words "Last Rosh HaShannah I was sitting in Shul when this man suddenly got up and ... The person to his or her left has to carry the story on until you say stop and point to the person that you want to continue. Keep going until everybody has had a turn.

You could make a rule that every word that begins with a P has to be replaced by the word 'Pomegranate'. So you might get something like "got up and shouted at the pomegranate sitting next to him"



### **Intelligent Discussion Game**

Two or more people from the group have to hold an intelligent discussion on a subject of your choice. Each person is also given a sentence that they have to get into the conversation in a way that makes sense.

The sentences should all be based on Rosh HaShannah & Yom Kippur. So the subject might be 'Is pop music better than rock and roll?' And the sentences they need to include could be something like...

"That was the longest Tekiah Godolah I ever heard ",

"The softest pomegranates are the sweetest ",

"I was hungry by the end of Kol Nidrei ",

You can either play two people at a time and the first person to get their sentence in wins or you can play as a group.

### **Apple. Apple. Honey**

A variation on the well known game "Duck, duck, goose". Sit the group in a circle on the floor. One member of the group is chosen to start as "it". "It", walks around the outside of the group touching each person's shoulder. At each person, he or she says the word "apple". If "It", shouts "honey", the person whose shoulder is being touched leaps up and chases "It", around the circle back to their place (the person who was sitting down will have run around one complete circle). The person who loses the race is "it" for the next go.



### **Messy Apple & Honey Fun**

You may have thought that the simple idea of dipping apples into honey for a sweet new year was a delicious and lovely Jewish custom. Here are some ideas to give a twist to the apple & honey theme.

#### **Apple Bobbing**

Fill a large bucket with water, float some apples in it and let everyone have a go at taking them out – no hands – mouths only.



### **Honey Bobbing**

Put some sweets or raisins into a bowl full of honey. Same idea as apple bobbing but much, much gooier, messier and sweeter...

### **Apple on a String**

Thread some apples on strings. Tie up high, or have someone hold the strung up apples. Chanichim need to eat the apples from the strings, again, no hands.

## ART & CRAFT IDEAS



### **Apple Printing**

Cut apples in half, so that the core makes an interesting star shape. Dip the halved apples into a tray of paint and print away. The apples prints can be made into New Year cards or used as decorations.

### **Pomegranate Printing**

The pomegranate, or RIMON in Hebrew, is often eaten at Rosh HaShanna. It is a symbolic fruit (see Rosh HaShanna Seder). It is also a fabulous fruit for art work.

Cut it in half, dip in a tray of paint and make pomegranate prints. Also, for older chanichim, cut in half and make a pen and ink still life drawing of the inside of the fruit. Then squeeze the juice out and use the pomegranate juice as a colour wash. Paint over the dried picture for a touch of real pomegranate colour.

### **Greetings Cards**

Rosh HaShanna is the time for Jewish people to send each other cards. Greetings cards can be made in many creative ways. Here are a few ideas to try.

### **Marbled Cards**

Take a tray and fill with water. Drop some acrylic paints on top of the water. Swirl the paint around using a brush. Lay paper on top of the water. The paint will make groovy patterns on

the paper. Leave to dry on a stand.

### **Copper Sheet Cards**

Buy some thin copper sheeting from a specialist art shop. Using the 'wrong' end of a paintbrush, push a design into the copper. Cut out your design and mount it onto a card.



### **Straw Blowing Cards**

Put a big blob of water based paint in the middle of your card. Take straws and blow the paint out into a design you're happy with.

### **Melted Wax Cards**

This art form is a useful way to use up crayons which are too small to colour with. Melt some old crayons into an old saucepan (you won't be able to use the saucepan again!) melt them on a low light. When the wax is melted and quite liquid, using a teaspoon, drip it carefully onto your card. You might also want to use a straw to blow the wax across the paper. Supervise children very carefully since the wax is VERY HOT! Not really suitable for under 9 year olds.

### **3-D Cards**

Take a design, say, an apple. Cut out 20 – 30 apple shapes, using the same shape but making them different sizes. Paste the largest one onto the paper and then paste the design in size order onto the card, so the smallest apple is on the top. A 3-D card!

### **Wishing Wall**

Find a large wall space in your building which you can decorate. Make a large paper or card wall, to symbolise the Western Wall in Jerusalem. You can draw bricks or use a sponge dipped in red/brown paint to make large brick shapes. Paint that onto your card and attach it to your wall or large notice board. Have the chanichim write, or draw notes with their wishes for New Year on them. Blue tack or stick them to your own Western Wall for a stunning wall display.

## Book of Life

During the period between Rosh HaShanna and Yom Kippur it is said that God writes an account of each person and their deeds and then inscribes us with our fate.

Have children create their own book of life. It can be illustrated or written with illustrations. It can be a book about their life over the past year. Sit and talk about things they have done over the past year. Discuss things they have done which have been kind and helpful and maybe some things which have been the opposite. Have them really think about the experiences they have had over the past year and then draw pictures on separate pieces of A4 paper showing those experiences. It could be styled like a comic or just a simple picture of the event. Then take all the pictures and bind them together into a Book of Life. You can bind the book with ribbon or staple the pictures together.



## Dried Apple Face People – MUST BE PREPARED IN ADVANCE

Materials : Large apples, potato peeler, small scissors, glue, wire, pipe cleaners, lemons.

Directions (it really is easy!!)

Peel the apple, leaving a little skin at the top & bottom. Scoop out two eye hollows with the peeler (this will leave a bump for the nose). Rub apple well with halves of lemons.

Push wire through apple core. Hang out of direct sunlight. Leave for 2 – 3 weeks.

When apples are dry, cut slits for eyes and mouth with scissors.

Decorate with paint for sooty cheeks and push in buttons for eyes.

Spray with shellac or paint with varnish for a shiny finish.

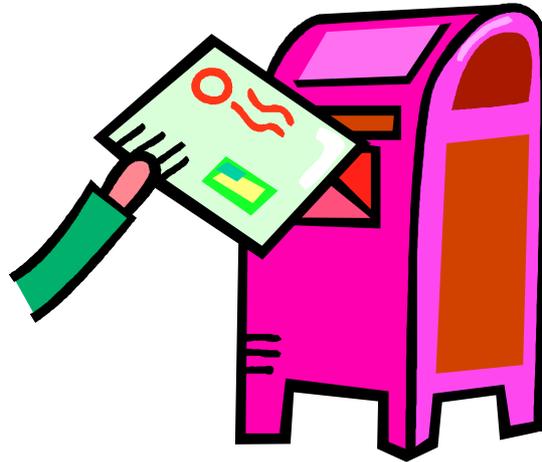
Make bodies out of washing-up liquid bottles, or kitchen roll cardboards. Decorate bodies with material scraps.

Complete the people with cotton wool or string hair and hands and feet made with pipe cleaners.

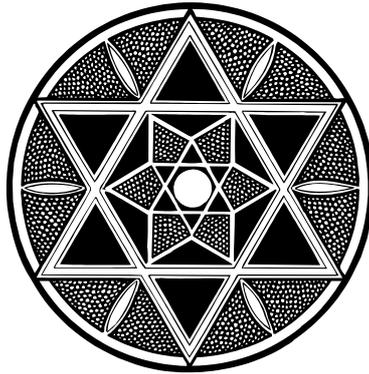
## Why do we send cards at Rosh Ha Shanna & Yom Kippur?

It's a time for being in touch with others. Some people we may want to apologise to and maybe make amends for things we have said or

done which were wrong. We also want to wish our family and friends good things for the coming year and to also wish them 'g'mar hatimah tova' literally to wish them a 'good signing' in the Book of Life. This expresses the idea that God will judge them favourably for the coming year.



# DRAMA AND DISCUSSION GAMES



## **Balloon Debate**

Run a balloon debate where the characters have to convince God that they should be inscribed in the book of life. You could provide various character descriptions for people to represent. You might want to use famous people, actors/actresses or government ministers etc.

## **Discussion with Action**

Together with the group, what they think is the worst thing which is happening in the world today. For example: capital punishment, famine in Africa, or issues relating to their more immediate environment, such as sexism, homelessness or racism. It is important that you also get them to discuss what, if anything, they could do about it. If there are social action groups already in place, find out more about those groups so that your chanichim have a clear idea that talking about making the world a better place can also lead to social change. Following on from your discussions, look at the Charity begins... idea next.

## **Charity Begins...**

This is a great opportunity to introduce the idea of tzeddakah which means charity. Maybe your club would like to go and visit an old age home, or collect food for the local homeless shelter which you could visit. Charity is intrinsic within Judaism. The beginning of the new year is a good time to start an on-going charity project

## **Dilemmas**

Divide chanichim into small groups. Decide on some modern day dilemmas facing young people. Each group chooses a dilemma and presents the dilemma to the others in the form of a short sketch. The audience, along with the performers need to then judge the best way of handling that dilemma.

Then as a whole, the group discusses the dilemmas being dealt with.



Your dilemmas might want to look at how young people treat their parents or friends. How they deal with peer pressure to have the latest mobile phone/jeans/trainers. How they handle the balance between school work and a social life.

As a conclusion to the discussions, bring in the point that we all judge each other, since we all have our own thoughts and opinions. But judging people is a hard thing to do. Link this to Rosh HaShanna and Yom Kippur, when we are being judged but also asking for others to judge us with mercy. Discuss how we can all try to be less judgmental and more compassionate with our friends and families.

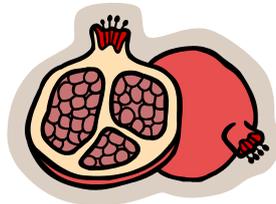


# Rosh HaShanna Seder

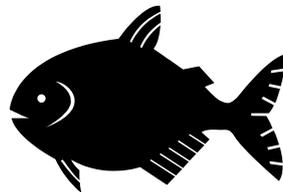
You might want to consider organising a Rosh HaShanna seder. This could be an evening for madrichim where you can talk about plans for the next year. It could also be a way of re-starting club after the summer.

In many communities, a Rosh HaShanna seder is as important as a Pesach one. It is a great way to begin the new year. There are traditional foods which are eaten at a Rosh HaShanna Seder. They are all symbolic and it makes for a very entertaining evening!

Prepare a festive meal, or have everyone bring a dish. Decorate the room so that it feels special and festive. The Seder consists of



**Pomegranate (in Hebrew RIMON).** This symbolises the hope that the Jewish people will multiply and be as numerous as the seeds in the pomegranate and will also have the sweetness of the fruit.



**Fish (or sometimes only a fish head is used) (in Hebrew DUG).** This symbolises that we should have intelligence and be the leaders (free thinkers and that we should ask questions) and not just follow blindly. We learn from this symbol that we should lead like the head of the fish and not just follow on like the tail...



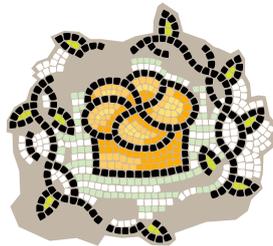
**Dates (in Hebrew TAMAR).** Dates are a sweet fruit and give us sweetness at New Year.



**Apples (in Hebrew TAPUACH).** Apples are also sweet fruit and give us the symbolism of a Jewish year cycle, continuing on and on.



**Honey (in Hebrew DVASH).** Honey is pure and obviously, sweet.



**Round Challah (often with raisins).** The round challah is traditionally used at Rosh HaShanna to symbolise the continuity of moving into another New Year.

Some people eat raisin bread or bake raisins into their challah for additional new year sweetness.

At your seder, eat a little of each of these foods and talk about your plans for the new year, and maybe look back and think of ways you can improve on the work you did at club as a team over the past year. Make sure you find the positive things to build on!

Shanna Tova!