

Rituals from Afar: Preparing for Chaggim

August. 25, 2020

**Introduction: The shofar=to improve (narrow to wide)**

What traditions do you have that can continue?

What traditions do you have that can be tweaked?

What new traditions/ rituals can we create to meet new needs and contexts?

**Rosh Hashanah:**

* Simanim (symbols) of food to wish for the coming year
* Shana tova cards
* Video messages
* Shofar- the power of song
* Cooking
* Placemats
* Honey pots, ceramic plates
* Playing holiday music while working
* Goal setting
* Photo gallery
* Rosh Hashanah around the world- geography, time (who has the new year first?) and costumes and traditions
* Tashlich
* Scavenger hunt in the machzor, or on a walk or more
* Malchuyot, zichronot, shofarot- being regal, remembering and hearing with our souls- activities that engage us as a family and class
* Private letters to my future self
* Visiting the lonely or alone
* Making calendars, decorating, add holidays and birthdays and zmanim and parshiyot
* Astronomy unit on sunrise and sunset and zmanim
* Lunar calendar and solar calendar and 2 days of RH even in Israel

**Yom Kippur:**

* Untena Tokef- the focus is on WHO not the numbers
* I am sorry is the hardest phrase- book and clips
* 5 senses of appreciation
* Food bank drive- feed others
* Jonah and the whale and more- discussion guides about avoidance, sincerity and more
* Teshuva activities
* Lottery game
* Make up ABC and alef bet viduy- positive (Rav Kook) and negative
* Admitting a mistake
* How to say I am sorry
* Ethical dilemmas

**Tzom Gedalia:**

* Leadership training (WWYD)
* Checking my ego

**Sukkot:**

* Lego, minecraft, board game (masechat sukkah)
* Sukat shalom theme- creating peaceful communities
* Bracha Bee
* 4 directions games (shaking the lulav)- getting physical
* Hallel and gratitude
* Ushpizin theme activities- invite celebrities, past heroes and current heroes- art projects and baseball cards
* Decorate your Sukkah
* How to have a guest- etiquette 101
* Memes for each parsha in the Torah
* Dance steps that are socially distant
* Make your own Torah and tape it together- each person has a verse to own and express
* Stars unit

**Notes**

Rosh Hashanah

* Are we only focused on our students, or on families?
* How do we engage new families?
* How do we work with our synagogues?
* Knowing our parent body we feel we are their Jewish experience and certainly a partner in helping them bring Jewish traditions into their homes; we have holiday guides for families and for faculty that might need; we also include what happens in the classroom so parents know;
* Sending audio of shofar blowing
* Creating gift bags/baskets for families for the Chaggim; especially concerned for families who may not have a synagogue community but still wants to stay and feel connected
* How much of the responsibility for the families lie on the school
* Who is your customer and why/how are you serving?
* Should we be partnering with synagogues?
* We are going to create shofar corners and invite school members to come
* We have cake molds in the shape of honeycombs and deliver them and have a zoom baking night for honey cakes
* We are going to partner with the synagogues to offer something they may not be able to
* Video messages; daily Elul broadcast with reflections and shofar blasts; this is for families
* Especially for RH and YK, a list of which tefillot the students have learned in school in which grades so they can have their own "shul groups" at home.
* We are printing special RH cards to mail to all the members of our synagogue (we are in a synagogue) all the school families and clients of the Jewish Family & Community services. The kids will be putting a honey packet in each one and preparing them for mailing. Also creating digital RH cards for our local nursing home.

Yom Kippur

* Great story for “accepting an apology” is in the Book Kids Speak
* Tashlich great as it is outside; use water dissolvable paper
* I will be creating a Rosh Hashanah Seder to uplift family dinner. It will have conversation topics, tiered for kids and adults. It will include audio and video playlists, activities for kids, etc.
* Look for HIllel International to sponsor reverse Tashlich experiences for nature or water clean up
* We’re K to 5 - We found a big broken branch that looked like a small tree - propped it up - had kids write new year’s blessings/wishes/visions on paper leaves & tied them to the tree & watched it grow over the week
* with little kids, I usually read Martha Says No
* Also for K/1 age kids -Red Blue & Yellow Yarn: A Tale of Forgiveness

Sukkah

* Our outdoor spaces may be taking away from the specialness that Sukkot brings; we will already be outside so how do we reimagine the Chag with “new”
* Drive in movie nights
* We’ve struggled with how to take the indoors Makerspace experience & make it successful with our 20 tents outside, but for this year we’ll have sukkot built from a variety of materials with parameters (some using math to understand scale) using our outdoor space
* Making our Sukkah larger to be a space we can be in
* -We have off the entire week. Trying to figure out how to do special preparation with limited time after Yom Kippur
* We usually go out and build for members of the community who can’t. This year we are purchasing extra sukkah kits and letting the Middle Schoolers build them all around the property and then lower school classes will be able to decorate while maintaining social distancing. Then we can do our sukkah hops for sukkah to sukkah on the property
* Trying to have a Sukkah hop by pods if feasible
* How do we leverage the reality of Zoom to enhance our celebrations and teachings; lean into the spiritual power of Zoom; we are in each other’s homes!
* We usually have the fourth grade learn about hoshanot and write their own. The idea of hoshanot is feeling very relevant this year. They won’t be chanting it, as usual, but we can find a way to make it work. I’m thinking about hosanna rabah and distributing willow branches to each student to hold onto and connect with physically while distant from each other.
* Hailing from San Francisco, we are a k-8 and are 100% Distance Learning through October. Thinking of how to support and encourage families to build their own sukkot, also considering building our school sukkah and inviting families to come and visit and bring decorations, and shake the lulav and etrog. There are legal and health issues any time we are thinking of bringing families to campus, even one at a time.
* It would be fun to facilitate Rosh Hashanah cards between community members, and encourage them to keep them to hang in their “sukkah”, whether an actual one, or an indoor sukkah space that students make in their homes, to bring their friends to them (especially if remote).
* Join together to bring your classes together virtually; visit different campuses
* We are using rikudei ahm as a big part of our Phys ed program since it can be done without touch - and we will use it for Simchat Torah, filmed from above with a drone, with 5th graders reading abbreviated aliyot with dancing in between with cohorts/pods in different parts of our outdoor fields
* There is a great app called "jqbx". it allows you to listen to music together at the same time. If you're having a collective celebration over zoom, it would be a good way to sync the experience.
* Nice time to plan a thank you for the staff and teachers; will need to do so often this year and this may be a nice first; perhaps from the parents
* Take advantage of outdoor time now while we can and focus less on remote which we will have to do eventually; but in CA we are all on line so we have to
* Set realistic goals and expectations for yourselves and remember the why

**Resources:**

* [Elul unbound resources this month](https://www.judaismunbound.com/elul2020/stories)
* [Outdoor Games for play that follow social distancing rules](https://www.asphaltgreen.org/blog/rep-it-out-games-for-social-distancing)
* [Jewish Education Project’s awesome Rosh Hashanah And Yom Kippur](https://www.jewishedproject.org/news/16-online-resources-support-your-high-holiday-curriculum) resources (including spotify lists and more!)
* [The Lookstein center on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur](https://www.lookstein.org/holiday-resources/high-holidays-resources/)- including padlets and discussion guides
* [Olami resources on the high Holy Days](http://nleresources.com/kiruv-and-chinuch/online-resources/high-holidays-resources/rosh-hashanah/#.X0UzD8hKhPY)
* <https://www.ourjewishcommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/RoshHashanah_ResourceGuide1.pdf>Cong. Beth Am in Cincinnati Rosh Hashana activity resource book
* [Lessons for Tzom Gedalia](https://www.aish.com/h/hh/rh/guide/Fast_of_Gedalia.html)
* [Understanding the fast of Gedalia](https://www.alephbeta.org/gedaliah-fast-guide)
* [Lookstein- on Sukott](https://www.lookstein.org/professional-dev/sukkot-resources-2/)
* [JTeach on Sukkott](https://jteach.org/topic/sukkot/)- amazing padlets and ideas
* [Complete Sukkah toolkit from Jewish Interactive](https://info.jewishinteractive.org/your-complete-toolkit-for-sukkot)
* [Avoda- lessons on Sukkot and environmental learning](http://bwpjc.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Level1_Avodah_Lesson2.pdf)