

# **Rosh Hashanah Experience**

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## **A YOUTH PROGRAM**

**Goals:**

1. To introduce and/or reinforce the concepts of the High Holy Days and what this time of year means to the Jewish people.
2. To teach specific themes such as Tashlich and creation.
3. To provide both a fun and a spiritual holiday experience for the children while their parents are in services.

**Objectives:**

1. The children will be able to make a ritual holiday art object to take home.
2. The children will be able to identify and explain certain Rosh Hashanah themes.
3. The children will have a fun and come away with a new and positive understanding of the Holidays.

**Length:** The program will run approximately two and a half hours and will be repeated for both services.

**Program Flow:** The students will sign in at the registration table ( 8:15 – 8:30 a.m. ) and receive nametags color coded for groups. The groups will be determined according to grade. There will be 6 stations lasting 20 minutes per station with a 3-minute rotation time. There will be age appropriate activities at each station. At the conclusion of each activity each child will receive a piece of “creation.”

**Station One:** Art  
Polaroid pictures and decorated frames?

**Station Two:** Music – The children will learn age appropriate songs.

**Station Three:** Torah Study

Primary – The story of creation. There will be a short explanation of Rosh Hashana being on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of creation rather than the first. Why did the Birthday of the World have to wait for the creation of man and woman? Man and G-d are partners in creation and creation is continuous. A demonstration of lemons, water and sugar will underscore the point. Though G-d created the lemons, water, and sugar, it is up to us to create lemonade. We also have a choice in how the lemonade will taste – how sweet or bitter.

Secondary – The Binding of Isaac. After a short introduction containing salient points of the story ( Genesis 22: 1-19 ) we cut to the Jerry Springer show featuring Abraham, Isaac and Sarah. ( Should G-d be a guest also?) The station leader ( Jay Cohen) will play the Jerry Springer role. He will guide the audience into a discussion using some of the following questions and bringing up some of the following points:

Traditionally, Abraham is pictured as the hero because his trust in G-d was so great that he was willing to sacrifice Isaac. What was heroic about Abraham's act? Who was more heroic, Abraham or Isaac? How does this story seem from the viewpoint of Isaac? He trusted his father just as his father trusted G-d. Did Isaac have the right to expect that his Dad would intercede on his behalf? What could/should Abraham have said to G-d to save Isaac?

Did G-d really intend to kill Isaac or to just test the faith of Abraham? Could Abraham have misinterpreted G-d's request?

Was Abraham guilty of child abuse? Is blind faith important? Would G-d really ask you to do something you find morally repulsive? Did Abraham have a choice? How would you have felt if you were Isaac? What did Isaac feel about G-d?

**Station Four:** Snack – The children will have the opportunity to frost and then eat a piece of the World's Birthday cake. There will also be drinks and fruit.

**Station Five:** Tashlich – After a short explanation of the concept of Tashlich, the students will be given watercolor markers and paper. They will be asked to write or draw the things they are sorry for on a piece of paper. As they throw the paper face down into the water, they will watch their bad behavior disappear.

Tashlich is a wonderful Jewish custom for Rosh Hashana. This makes us feel that we are throwing our sins away and starting clean and fresh for the New Year. Some Jews do Tashlich by going to the ocean or the sea, and throwing crumbs into the water, which symbolizes the casting away of their sins. Today, we have joined Jews from all over the world by casting off our sins from last year and getting ready for the New Year. Shana Tova U'Metukah – have a good and sweet year.

### PRAYER FOR TASHLICH

Who is a G-d like You that pardons iniquity...

Because He delights in mercy...

And you will cast (v'tashlich) all their sins into the depth of the sea

**Station Six:** Shofar Blowing – As the children walk into the room and begin to sit down, the Shofar blower will ring out on the Shofar. The sound will get the attention of the children, leading into a short, interesting and spirited discussion about why we blow the Shofar. **WAKE UP! GET UP! SEARCH! REMEMBER!** Each child will have the chance to try and blow the Shofar and will become familiar with the sounds and names of each sound. There will be a short “guess the sound” game.

TEKIAH – The first sound – loud and strong. It says: Listen! Listen to the voice of G-d on this Rosh Hashana

SHEVARIM – The second sound. A low note and a high note which tell us that whether we are big or small, all our voices are heard by G-d.

TERUAH – The third sound. The notes are little and broken. They tell us to pay attention to the little things in life.

TEKIAH GEDOLAH – The last sound and the greatest of them all. It tells us to listen to the voice of G-d now and forever.

**Conclusion:** At the final station, each child will redeem his/her six pieces of “creation” for a Rosh Hashana family holiday kit. This kit will consist of honey, apples, holiday recipes, information pamphlet, and t-shirt?