

Camp Shanah Tovah in the Zoom and No-Tech Setting

What is Camp Shanah Tovah?

Camp Shanah Tovah is a model of how to run youth programming on the High Holidays. In short, it's 45-minute rotations with things like a service, a beekeeper, improv games, and a Rosh Hashanah Seder. I paid my high schoolers to run each of these sessions, employing as many of my teens as I could. Each of them received a write-up of their station in advance, and then a folder and bin in their room with everything they needed.

Here's how my schedule went in 2019:

	Rosh Hashanah Day 1 - Sept. 30					
	10:00-10:45	10:45-11:30	11:30-12:15	12:15-1:00		
Tots (ages 1-4)	Open Exploration (starting at 9:30) Preschool Wing	Tot Rosh Hashanah (10:30-11:00) Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing	Open Exploration (until 1:30) Preschool Wing		
Grades K-3	Tefillah (with Shofar) Chapel	Board Games / Snack Room 5	Rosh Hashanah Seder Children's Library	Beekeeper / Light Lunch Room 4		
Grades 4-6	Rosh Hashanah Seder / Snack Children's Library	Tefillah / Shofar in Sanctuary Chapel	Beekeeper Room 4	Board Games / Light Lunch Room 5		
Grades 7-8	Beekeeper / Snack Room 4	Tefillah / Shofar in Sanctuary Chapel	Board Games / Light Lunch Room 5	Rosh Hashanah Seder Children's Library		

Rosh Hashanah Day 2 - Oct. 1						
	10:00-10:45	10:45-11:30	11:30-12:15	12:15-1:00		
Tots (Ages 1-4)	Open Exploration (starting at 9:30) Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing	Open Exploration (until 1:30) Preschool Wing		
Grades K-3	Trivia / Snack Children's Library	Holiday Fun / Shofar in Sanctuary Room 4	Tefillah (with Shofar) Chapel	Board Games / Light Lunch Room 5		
Grades 4-8	Abraham's Trial / Snack Room 4	Tefillah / Shofar in Sanctuary Chapel	Board Games Room 5	Trivia / Light Lunch Children's Library		
Yom Kippur - Oct. 9						
	10:00-10:45	10:45-11:30	11:30-12:15	12:15-1:00	1:00-2:00	2:00-3:00
Tots (ages 1-4)	Open Exploration (starting at 9:30) Preschool Wing	Tot Yom Kippur (10:30-11:00) Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing	Open Exploration Preschool Wing
Grades K-3	Circle-time / Stories / Snack Room 5	Board Games Room 5	Jonah Improv / Light Lunch Room 4	Tefillah Chapel	Movement Fun Children's Library	Supervised Play Room 5
Grades 4-6	Movement Fun / Snack Children's Library	Tefillah Chapel	Tefillah Chapel	Board Games / Light Lunch Room 5	Jonah Improv Room 4	Supervised Play Room 5
Grades 7-8	Jonah Improv Room 4	Tefillah Chapel	Tefillah Chapel	Movement Fun Children's Library	Board Games Room 5	Supervised Play Room 5

How do I run Camp Shanah Tovah via Zoom?

In general, I'm thinking of trying to replicate this via Zoom breakout rooms, using teens to run the programs and moving them every 45 minutes instead of moving the kids around the building. I'm also not sure that I need 3 hours of programming, because that's a lot for sitting in front of a screen, so I might make the sessions 30 minutes instead of 45 minutes and/or only do 2 of them each day. Here's how each session would go if I were choosing it:

Tefillah

I believe that Park Avenue Synagogue's new children's machzor will be available this year for digital sharing. I will make sure that my tefillah leaders have this available so they can display it on the screen as they do their service. I'll strongly encourage them to practice in advance, perhaps with me if they'd like. Otherwise, they'll do their thing that they would have done in person.

Board Games

I would probably play a Kahoot game. Here are directions for how to play this over Zoom: <https://www.theandroidsoul.com/how-to-play-kahoot-on-zoom-and-google-meet/> (there's also Jewpardy: <https://www.theandroidsoul.com/how-to-play-jeopardy-on-zoom/>). This definitely needs a test run to make sure that players know what the questions are. Try to make sure that this is doable without anybody having to download the Kahoot app.

Beekeeper

This is mostly a presentation anyway (normally without the bees, but if it's over the screen, why not?). The beekeeper would talk about how honey is made and how apples grow, and discuss with the kids what it looks like to have a sweet new year. Instead of doing a taste test with different types of honey and different types of apples, I would ask parents to have some apple slices and honey available for everybody to eat at the end of this. Normally, this would involve a local beekeeper who could come in, but if you are doing this virtually you could get any beekeeper in the country.

Rosh Hashanah Seder

The gist of a Rosh Hashanah Seder is that just like "apples and honey" is a symbolic food for Rosh Hashanah, there are other symbolic foods that can be eaten going into the new year. Traditionally, at the start of dinner, one would say the blessing, eat the food, and then say the Hebrew phrase that demonstrates the symbolism (usually with a pun). The way that this activity works is to sing the first line of Kiddush together and drink grape juice, then tell a story associated with each food, say the blessing, and eat the food. The seder that I ran was based off of Apples and Pomegranates, by Rahel Musleah (https://smile.amazon.com/Apples-Pomegranates-Holidays-Rahel-Musleah/dp/1580131239/ref=sr_1_1_twi_pap_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1470942050&sr=1-

[1&keywords=apples+and+pomegranates](#)). I strongly encourage you to get this book - it will make the seder much easier.

The stories I chose were: “The Story of Deborah” (goes with dates since Deborah sat under a palm date tree) (Judges 4); “The Magic Pomegranate” (goes with pomegranates) (<http://www.learningtogive.org/resources/magic-pomegranate>); “The Apple Tree’s Discovery” (goes with apples and honey - cut open an apple equator-style and hold it together while you tell this story) (http://my_tapestry.tripod.com/apple_tree.html); “Jacob and the Beanstalk” (goes with Twizzlers) (<http://www.authorama.com/english-fairy-tales-15.html> - starts like this, but when Jacob goes to sleep he sees angels climbing down and up the beanstalk and when he wakes up it’s full of vegetables and his family never goes hungry); and “Tuli’s Treasure” (goes with M&Ms) (http://www.parents-choice.org/article.cfm?CFID=3d3d93a8-afeb-4654-a6f7-5a9467a1847f&CFTOKEN=0&art_id=120&the_page=consider_this - similar to this, but the younger brother’s pumpkin is full of rubies/sapphires/emeralds, older brother’s vine grows pumpkins that are full of snakes and scorpions, and the bird is called “Tulli”).

To do this via Zoom, you would need to send a shopping list to each participating family, ideally 2-3 weeks ahead of time so they can get the foods (grape juice, dates, something pomegranate-y, apples and honey, Twizzlers, and M&Ms). Alternatively, you can make packages and bring them to each home based on the number of kids participating from that house.

Trivia

Because Rosh Hashanah is the head of the year, this is a great time to ask questions about the holidays throughout the year. To do this on Zoom, put the kids on teams and they can use the private chat feature to try to give the right answer to whomever is “up”. Pose questions to each kid, alternating teams, and leave time for their teammates to give them their thoughts. Sample questions are in Appendix A.

Holiday Fun

This is good for the K-3 crowd. First read a holiday story. Then explain about “Aleph-Bet Yoga” and have the kids spell out the name of the holiday with their bodies, one letter at a time (you may need to hold up the letter so they know what they are aiming for - you can also buy the book Aleph Bet Yoga, by Bill Goldeen: <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/076134506X>). Then review the shofar calls and have the kids practice making them (take them off mute for this). Finally, review the “what” and “why” for each of the following, and then have them play Charades: Eating apple and honey, blowing shofar, Tashlich, saying sorry.

Abraham on Trial

For older kids (grades 4-8), the idea here is to put Abraham on trial for criminal negligence in defending the strangers of Sodom but not his own son. Each participant gets their own role:

Judge, prosecuting attorney, defense attorney, bailiff, Abraham, Isaac, Knife, Ram, and Beit Din (which is everybody else). This is better to do on the second day of Rosh Hashanah because that's the Torah reading and there are fewer kids present. To do this on Zoom, you would give each participant their role's details via private chat. See Appendix B for sheets/details to give each participant.

Jonah Improv

There are many improv games that can be played around the story of Jonah, and most of them can be done in a Zoom breakout room. Start by telling the story of Jonah. Then you can play improv games. For example, pretend to be the host of CNN ("Canaanite News Network") and interview Jonah. Then invite other participants to be Jonah or the interviewer. You can also do "bus stop", where two characters find themselves at the same bus stop; choose from any pairing of the following: Jonah, the whale, sailor, King of Nineveh. Another thing to do is have everybody act out each of the following: a whale, a boat in a storm, and Jonah sleeping in the ship. One more activity would be to have the kids each come up with their own prayer as if they were Jonah trying to get G-d to release him from the whale.

How do I run Camp Shanah Tovah via Livestream?

It is difficult to do much of Camp Shanah Tovah via livestream. Logistically, any synagogue livestream would be probably allocated for the adult services. You might be able to time things so your family service happens before the adult services (or possibly after, in the mid-afternoon). You could possibly bring in a beekeeper via livestream (no bees), though this would require very open thinking on the part of the powers that be at the synagogue (no pun intended). If your synagogue is comfortable with livestream but not Zoom on holidays, then you'll want to combine a livestreamed family service with options presented here for a "no-tech" Camp Shanah Tovah.

How do I run Camp Shanah Tovah without using technology on the holidays?

Many of the Camp Shanah Tovah pieces can be implemented without using technology on the holiday. For instance, you could declare the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah to be "Camp Shanah Tovah", and just run everything via Zoom that day (perhaps in the afternoon to avoid conflicts with Hebrew School). You could also space things out over the month of Elul, making sure to put your highest priority things before regular school starts in your area. However, because you can't provide a real-time holiday experience during the holiday, you will want to send home things that your families can do on (or before/after) the holiday, and most of Camp Shanah Tovah is adaptable to that.

Tefillah

You can send home a family service as a pre-recorded video. You could also send home a link to the Park Avenue Youth Machzor, or something that you put together, along with recordings

for the prayers that families could listen to ahead of the holidays. This way, they could learn the tunes, print out the pages, and do their own service if they so choose.

Board Games

In the material that you send home to families, you can mention that they can play board games on the holidays. You can also say that traditionally, people avoid writing and electronics on the holidays. You can't coerce families, but you can give information.

Beekeeper

You can send home a video for families to watch not on the holiday. For example, this one has great information, though it has younger kids: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zl-YujjzyGA>. You can also encourage families to eat apples and honey and discuss what it looks like to have a sweet new year. Another option is to send home bee coloring sheets; this one might be printable:

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/257338566184287997/?nic_v1=1b5WEV%2BYExGQIXk%2F8ic6gaqCFV2PYVmNX6XsWydqnxMYnkyYcJpXv9KvVZ69diloqT

Rosh Hashanah Seder

A Rosh Hashanah Seder is doable at home; just send home the Haggadah in Appendix C. You might want to go through it and pull out a Materials list to send home also.

Trivia

Since Rosh Hashanah begins a year's worth of holidays, families can do holiday trivia on their own, either printing things out to do on the holiday or viewing things on their screens before the holiday. Just send home the Holiday Facts in Appendix D, and the questions from Appendix A.

Holiday Fun

For kids in grades K-3, the same things apply, whether you are doing this via Zoom or sending it home to parents. You just have to send home the instructions: First read a holiday story. Then explain about "Aleph-Bet Yoga" and have the kids spell out the name of the holiday with their bodies, one letter at a time (you may need to hold up the letter so they know what they are aiming for - you can also buy the book [Aleph Bet Yoga](#), by Bill Goldeen:

<https://smile.amazon.com/gp/product/076134506X>). Then review the shofar calls and have the kids practice making them (take them off mute for this). Finally, review the "what" and "why" for each of the following, and then have them play Charades: Eating apple and honey, blowing shofar, Tashlich, saying sorry.

Abraham on Trial

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Jonah Improv

This is a set of activities that can be sent home for families to do on their own, particularly during the day of Yom Kippur. Just send home the activities in Appendix E.

Appendix

- A: Sample Trivia Questions
- B: Roles for Abraham's Trial
- C: Rosh Hashanah Seder
- D: Holiday Fast Facts
- E: Jonah Improv

Appendix A: Sample Trivia Questions

Questions for the Holiday Bowl:

1. What does Rosh Hashanah mean? (Head of the Year)
2. What do we eat on Rosh Hashanah? (Apples and honey and/or round challah)
3. What do we commemorate on Rosh Hashanah? (The birthday of the world – not as important)
4. What is Tashlich? (Throwing bread crumbs in water to symbolize throwing away our sins)
5. What do we blow on Rosh Hashanah? (A shofar)
6. Name two things we do on Rosh Hashanah. (Tashlich, blow the shofar, think about what we did wrong, ask forgiveness from those we have wronged, pray to G-d to forgive us, ask to be sealed in the Book of Life for a good year, eat apples and honey – accept any two)
7. What does Yom Kippur mean? (Day of Atonement)
8. What do we eat on Yom Kippur? (Nothing, we fast)

9. What does Sukkot mean? (Booths) – not as important
10. Name two things we do on Sukkot. (Build booths called “Sukkot” (Sukkah is singular), wave the lulav and etrog, sit and eat in the sukkah, pray for rain on Sh’mini Atzeret, finish and restart the Torah on Simchat Torah – accept any two)
11. What American holiday comes from Sukkot? (Thanksgiving)

12. How long is Chanukah? (8 days) – not as important
13. What do we eat on Chanukah? (Latkes and/or sufganiyot)
14. What does Chanukah commemorate? (The Maccabees beating the Syrian Greeks and/or the oil lasting for 8 days)
15. Name two things we do on Hanukah. (Light Chanukiah for 8 days, sing “Maoz Tzur”, eat latkes and sufganiyot, play with dreidels, eat gelt, and exchange gifts – accept any two)

16. What does Tu B’Shevat mean? (The fifteenth day of Shevat) – not as important
17. What does Tu B’Shevat commemorate? (The new year for the trees)

18. What do we eat on Purim? (Hamantaschen)
19. What do we read on Purim? (Megillat Esther and/or “The Megillah”)
20. What does Purim commemorate? (The story of Queen Esther saving the Jews of Persia from Haman).
21. Name two things we do on Purim. (Dress up, eat hamantaschen, read the Megillah, drown out Haman’s name with groggers, give mishloach manot/shlach manos (gifts of food) to friends and to those who are poor – accept any two)

22. What do we eat on Pesach? (Matzah and/or foods without leaven)
23. What does Pesach commemorate? (The Exodus from Egypt and/or another harvest being finished)
24. What’s the special meal we have at the beginning of Pesach called? (A seder)

25. Name two foods we eat at a seder. (Matzah, carpas, maror, charoset – accept any two) – not as important
26. For what prophet do we open the door at the seder? (Elijah)
27. What is the piece of matzah for which we search called? (The afikomen)
28. What is the special book we use during a seder called? (The Haggadah)
29. What does Yom HaShoah commemorate? (The Holocaust)
30. What does Yom HaAtzmaut commemorate? (The birth of the State of Israel)
31. When did Israel become a state? (In 1948 and/or May 14, 1948)
32. What does Yom Yerushalayim commemorate? (The reunification of Jerusalem in 1967)
33. What does Shavuot mean? (Weeks) – not as important
34. What do we eat on Shavuot? (Blintzes and/or dairy foods)
35. What does Shavuot commemorate? (The Giving of the Torah and/or the wheat harvest)
36. What does Tisha B'Av mean? (The Ninth of Av) – not as important
37. What do we eat on Tisha B'Av? (Nothing)
38. What do we read on Tisha B'Av? (Eicha and/or Lamentations)
39. What do we commemorate on Tisha B'Av? (The destruction of the First and/or Second Temple and/or the Expulsion from Spain).

Appendix B: Abraham's Trial

Judge

Your job is to run the trial according to the following flow:

1. Judge's Opening Statement: *According to the Torah, G-d tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac. Abraham proceeded to do that until he was stopped at the last minute by an angel. Previously, G-d told Abraham that G-d was going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Abraham spoke up on behalf of the innocent people in those cities. Members of the Beit Din, you are deciding whether Abraham is guilty of criminal negligence in trying to defend strangers in Sodom but not his own son.*

2. Prosecuting Attorney's Opening Statement
3. Defending Attorney's Opening Statement
4. Prosecuting Attorney's First Witness (Isaac OR The Knife)
 - a. Sworn in by bailiff
 - b. Examination by Prosecuting Attorney
 - c. Cross-Examination by Defending Attorney
5. Prosecuting Attorney's Second Witness (Isaac OR The Knife)
 - a. Sworn in by bailiff
 - b. Examination by Prosecuting Attorney
 - c. Cross-Examination by Defending Attorney
6. Defending Attorney's First Witness (Abraham OR The Ram)
 - a. Sworn in by bailiff
 - b. Examination by Defending Attorney
 - c. Cross-Examination by Prosecuting Attorney
7. Defending Attorney's Second Witness (Abraham OR The Ram)
 - a. Sworn in by bailiff
 - b. Examination by Defending Attorney
 - c. Cross-Examination by Prosecuting Attorney
8. Prosecuting Attorney's Closing Statement
9. Defending Attorney's Closing Statement
10. Beit Din deliberates if Abraham is guilty of criminal negligence in trying to defend strangers in Sodom but not his own son (tell them that's what they are figuring out)
11. Beit Din announces their verdict.

Prosecuting Attorney

You are trying to prove that Abraham is guilty of criminal negligence because he defended strangers in Sodom but not his own son.

Points to consider:

- The "test" that G-d gave Abraham is not specified. The test might have been if Abraham cared about his own family, and if so, Abraham failed.

- After this incident, Isaac never talked to his father, G-d never talked to Abraham, and Sarah immediately died.

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.
- The next morning, Abraham takes Isaac, the knife, the wood, and rope, and they go up a mountain.
- Isaac asks Abraham, "Where's the animal for the sacrifice?"
- Abraham responds, "G-d will provide".
- Abraham builds an alter to G-d.
- Abraham ties up Isaac and puts him on top of the alter.
- Abraham raises the knife above Isaac's neck.
- An angel calls out, "Abraham - don't do that. G-d just wanted to see if you actually would do it."
- Abraham looks around and sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns.
- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Defending Attorney

You are trying to prove that Abraham is not guilty of criminal negligence, even though he defended strangers in Sodom but not his own child.

Points to consider:

- Abraham was following orders from G-d
- We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah to remind G-d of how Abraham was so faithful to G-d in this situation and therefore G-d should forgive our mistakes today

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.
- The next morning, Abraham takes Isaac, the knife, the wood, and rope, and they go up a mountain.
- Isaac asks Abraham, "Where's the animal for the sacrifice?"
- Abraham responds, "G-d will provide".
- Abraham builds an alter to G-d.
- Abraham ties up Isaac and puts him on top of the alter.
- Abraham raises the knife above Isaac's neck.
- An angel calls out, "Abraham - don't do that. G-d just wanted to see if you actually would do it."
- Abraham looks around and sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns.
- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Bailiff

Your job is to bring each witness to the place where witnesses sit, and have them stand and raise their right hand while asking them "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you G-d?" Once they answer "Yes", have them sit in the witness seat. If you have a Bible or Siddur, have them put their left on that while you ask them the question and they answer.

Points to Consider:

- You can also ask them this, "Do you swear to tell the Emet, the whole Emet, and nothing but the Emet, so help you Hashem?"

Abraham

You are being accused of not caring about your son because you defended strangers in Sodom but not Isaac. Your job is to answer questions about what you did.

Points to Consider:

- How did you feel as this was happening?
- Why did you do what you did?

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.

- The next morning, Abraham takes Isaac, the knife, the wood, and rope, and they go up a mountain.
- Isaac asks Abraham, "Where's the animal for the sacrifice?"
- Abraham responds, "G-d will provide".
- Abraham builds an alter to G-d.
- Abraham ties up Isaac and puts him on top of the alter.
- Abraham raises the knife above Isaac's neck.
- An angel calls out, "Abraham - don't do that. G-d just wanted to see if you actually would do it."
- Abraham looks around and sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns.
- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Isaac

You are a witness for the prosecution. You are trying to prove that your father should have protected you just like he argued on behalf of strangers in Sodom. Your job is to answer questions about what you experienced.

Points to Consider:

- How did you feel as this was happening?
- Why did you do what you did?

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.

- The next morning, Abraham takes Isaac, the knife, the wood, and rope, and they go up a mountain.
- Isaac asks Abraham, "Where's the animal for the sacrifice?"
- Abraham responds, "G-d will provide".
- Abraham builds an alter to G-d.
- Abraham ties up Isaac and puts him on top of the alter.
- Abraham raises the knife above Isaac's neck.
- An angel calls out, "Abraham - don't do that. G-d just wanted to see if you actually would do it."
- Abraham looks around and sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns.
- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Knife

You are a witness for the Prosecution. You are trying to prove that Abraham should have protected Isaac like he stood up for strangers in Sodom.

Points to Consider:

- How did you feel as this was happening?
- How did Isaac seem to feel?

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.
- The next morning, Abraham takes Isaac, the knife, the wood, and rope, and they go up a mountain.

- Isaac asks Abraham, "Where's the animal for the sacrifice?"
- Abraham responds, "G-d will provide".
- Abraham builds an alter to G-d.
- Abraham ties up Isaac and puts him on top of the alter.
- Abraham raises the knife above Isaac's neck.
- An angel calls out, "Abraham - don't do that. G-d just wanted to see if you actually would do it."
- Abraham looks around and sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns.
- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Ram

You are a witness for the Defense. You are trying to prove that Abraham did the right thing by being willing to sacrifice Isaac even though he stood up for strangers in Sodom.

Points to Consider:

- How did you feel as this was happening?
- How did Abraham seem to feel about what was happening?

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.
- The next morning, Abraham takes Isaac, the knife, the wood, and rope, and they go up a mountain.

- Isaac asks Abraham, "Where's the animal for the sacrifice?"
- Abraham responds, "G-d will provide".
- Abraham builds an alter to G-d.
- Abraham ties up Isaac and puts him on top of the alter.
- Abraham raises the knife above Isaac's neck.
- An angel calls out, "Abraham - don't do that. G-d just wanted to see if you actually would do it."
- Abraham looks around and sees a ram caught in a bush by its horns.
- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Beit Din

You are the jury. Your job is to figure out if Abraham is guilty of criminal negligence in not protecting his son even though he tried to protect strangers in the city of Sodom.

Points to Consider:

- What is the Prosecution's arguments, including what they get the witnesses to say?
- What is the Defense's arguments, including what they get the witnesses to say?
- They might both make a good case, but which one proves better whether or not Abraham is guilty?

The Story (as a reminder):

- G-d tells Abraham to take his son and offer him as a sacrifice. Abraham says nothing.
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- Abraham sacrifices the ram.

Appendix C: Rosh Hashanah Seder

There are many symbolic foods that we eat on Rosh Hashanah, and these foods make up the Rosh Hashanah Seder. Let's explore some of them.

The First Step: Grape Juice

We pour a cup of grape juice, to symbolize the holiness of the holiday.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Borei P'ri HaGafen.

Praised are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

We also say the Shehechyanu blessing for bringing us to this time:

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Shehechyanu, V'kiyamanu, V'higi'anu Lazman Hazeh.

Praised are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who has kept us alive, and sustained us, and brought us to this time.

The Second Step: Dates

We begin this step with a story:

Deborah was a leader in the Land of Israel. Each day, she would sit under a date palm tree, and people would come to her to judge their disputes. At that time, the Israelites were ruled over by King Yavin of Canaan, whose general Sisera had 900 iron chariots.

One day, Deborah summoned Barak. "It's time to drive away King Yavin. Gather an army and go to Mount Tavor." "Deborah, I'll do it, but only if you come with me." "Very well."

So Barak, Deborah, and the army went up to Mount Tavor. The night before the battle, there was a huge storm. The next morning, Sisera went to attack the Israelites, but his 900 iron chariots got stuck in the mud. The Israelites were victorious, and Sisera ran away.

Sisera ran until he came to the tent of a woman named Yael. "Please hide me!" "Sure. You look thirsty - would you like some milk?" "That would be great - thank you."

Sisera drank and then decided to take a nap. "If somebody is looking for me, just say that I'm not here." "No problem." Once Sisera was really asleep, Yael took a tent peg and hammered it into his head, killing him.

Meanwhile, Barak had been following Sisera's footsteps through the mud. When he reached Yael's tent, he asked "Did you see Sisera?" "Who, him?", asked Yael, showing Barak Sisera's dead body. And everybody was happy except for King Yavin and Sisera.

Story from Judges 4 (<https://www.sefaria.org/Judges.4?lang=en>)

Let us say the blessing for dates and then eat one:

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Borei P'ri HaGafen.

Praised are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Dates are a symbolic food for the new year, because you can make a pun with the Hebrew word for "date", *tamar*, and the Hebrew word for "make an end to", *yitamu*. After eating the date, we say this wish for the new year:

Y'hi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai Eloheinu vaylohei avoteinu, sheyitamu son-einu v'oyveinu.

May it be Your will, our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that you make an end to our enemies.

The Second Step: Pomegranate

We begin this step with a story:

Once there were three brothers who loved adventure. One day they decided to go on a journey, each one to a different country, and to meet again on a certain day ten years later. Each brother was to bring back with him an unusual gift.

The oldest brother decided to go to the East. When he arrived in a certain Eastern town, he was fascinated by what he saw there: magicians, dancing girls, jugglers, and acrobats were everywhere. As the brother was watching the entertainments, he saw one magician hold up a magic glass through which he could see to the distant corners of the kingdom.

“Ah!” thought the oldest brother, “I would like to have that glass, for that would certainly be an unusual object to share with my brothers.” He asked the magician, “Tell me, how much is that glass? I should like to buy it from you.” At first, the magician would not part with his magic glass, but after much pleading by the older brother, and some bargaining, they agreed upon a price and the magician sold the glass to the oldest brother.

The second brother traveled to a country in the West. Wherever he went, he kept his eyes open, and his mind as well. He was always on the lookout for the most unusual gift he could bring back to his brothers.

One day, he was attracted by the cries of an old carpet seller, who called out, “Carpets for sale! Beautiful! Wonderful! Carpets here!” The brother approached the carpet seller and began to examine his carpets, when suddenly he saw the carpet at the bottom of the pile begin to move. It seemed to be moving by itself! “What kind of carpet is this one?” he asked, pointing to the bottom one, which was quite visible by then.

The old merchant motioned for him to bend down and whispered in his ear, “This is a magic carpet. Buy it, and it will take you anywhere you want to go—and quickly too!” The second brother and the carpet seller finally settled upon a price, and the brother took the magic carpet with him, satisfied that he had a most unusual gift.

The youngest brother went South, and when he arrived in a certain country, he traveled far and wide to see what he could find to bring back to his brothers.

Now, this was a country noted for its many forests. One day the youngest brother was walking in a grove of trees when he noticed something strange—a tree that was of a different shape from the hundreds of other trees around it. It was covered with orange-red blossoms, and it was so beautiful!

As the younger brother came closer, he saw that there was only one red pomegranate on the tree.

“This is strange indeed,” thought the young man. “A pomegranate tree with only one pomegranate.” He approached the tree slowly, laughing to himself and thinking of the story he would tell his brothers about the pomegranate tree full of blossoms with only one fruit on it. As he reached for the pomegranate, it fell into his hand even before he could pluck it from the branch. As soon as that happened, another pomegranate burst from one of the blossoms. When the brother saw this, he looked at the pomegranate in his hand and said to himself, “This must be a magic pomegranate. It was the only one on the tree, and yet as soon as it fell into my

hands when I was about to reach for it, a new pomegranate appeared suddenly. But what kind of magic does it perform, I wonder?"

The youngest brother examined the pomegranate, marveling at its beauty. "The shape is so perfect," he thought, "crowned with the crown of King Solomon." He walked away from the tree looking at his mysterious new treasure. When he looked back to see the pomegranate tree once more, it was no longer there. It had disappeared. "Now I know this is a magic pomegranate, and so this is what I will bring to my brothers."

Ten years passed, and when the three brothers met as they had planned, they embraced with delight. They eagerly showed each other the unusual objects they had brought back from their journeys.

The oldest brother said, "Let me look through my glass and see what I can see." When he held up the glass, he saw, in a far-off kingdom, a young princess lying ill in bed, near death.

"Quickly, dear brothers, get on my magic carpet and we'll fly there!" said the second brother. In what seemed like seconds, the three brothers arrived at the far-off kingdom.

In the royal palace of this kingdom, the King, whose daughter lay ill, was grief-stricken. He had sent for every doctor in the country to cure the princess; but they had all failed and there was no hope left for the princess. Finally, the King had sent a messenger throughout the country saying, "Whoever can save my daughter, the princess, will have her hand in marriage, and half the kingdom!"

As if in a dream, the youngest brother heard a voice whisper inside him, "The pomegranate!" The youngest brother approached the King and asked, "May I try to cure the princess?" The King agreed and led the young man to the princess' chambers.

When the young man saw the princess, he approached quietly and sat by her side. Then he took the pomegranate from his pocket, cut it open with gentle care, carefully cut each kernel from its place, and then fed the juicy red kernels to the princess. In a few moments, the princess felt stronger, and the color returned to her cheeks. Soon, she sat up in her bed, fully restored to health.

The King was overjoyed. He hugged his daughter and, turning to the three young men, he announced, "The man who saved my daughter will marry her."

The three brothers began to quarrel, each one claiming to be the one who should marry the princess.

The oldest brother said, "If it were not for my magic glass, we would never have known the princess was ill in the first place. So, since I discovered this first, I deserve to marry the princess."

“But, brothers, it was because of my magic carpet that we could arrive so quickly,” argued the second brother. “Otherwise, the princess would have died. I deserve to marry the princess.”

Then the youngest brother said, “It was my magic pomegranate that actually healed the princess. I deserve to marry her.”

Since the three brothers could not decide which one should marry the princess, the King tried to decide. He looked at the three clever young men, but he could not decide who deserved to marry his daughter.

The King finally turned to the princess and asked, “Who do you think deserves to marry you, my daughter?”

The princess answered simply, “I will ask each of them a question.” She turned to the oldest brother and asked, “Has your magic glass changed in any way since you arrived in this Kingdom?”

“No,” replied the oldest brother. “My glass is the same as always, and I can look through it and see to every corner of this kingdom.”

The princess then asked the second brother, “Has your magic carpet changed in any way since you arrived in this kingdom?” And the second brother answered, “No, my carpet is the same, and I can fly anywhere on it, as always.”

Turning to the youngest brother, the princess asked, “Has your magic pomegranate changed in any way since you arrived in this Kingdom?” And the youngest brother answered, “Yes, princess, my pomegranate is no longer whole, for I gave you a portion of it”

The princess turned to the three young men and said, “I will marry the youngest brother because he performed the greatest good deed—because he gave up something of his own.

The brothers and the King all understood the wisdom of the Princess. A lavish wedding was arranged for the princess and the youngest brother.

And the King appointed the princess and all three brothers to become his royal advisers.

*“The Magic Pomegranate.” Schram, Peninnah. *Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., ©1987. p. 180-181.*

<https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/magic-pomegranate>

The blessing for pomegranates is the same as for dates, so we can go ahead and eat them.

Pomegranates are a symbolic food for the new year, because they are harvested in September and October, and because their seeds are said to be as numerous as the 613 commandments in the Torah. After eating the pomegranate, we say this wish for the new year:

Y'hi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai Eloheinu vaylohei avoteinu, shenarbeh z'chuyot karimon.

May it be Your will, our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our merits increase like (the seeds of) a pomegranate.

Step Four:

We begin this step with a story:

In a great oak forest where the trees grew tall and majestic, there was a little apple tree. It was the only apple tree in that forest and so it stood alone.

Winter came. As the snow fell to the forest floor, it covered the branches of the little apple tree. The forest was quiet and peaceful.

One night the little apple tree looked up at the sky and saw a wonderful sight. Between the branches of all the trees, the little apple tree saw the stars in the sky, which appeared to be hanging on the branches of the oak trees.

"Oh God, Oh God," whispered the little apple tree, "how lucky those oak trees are to have such beautiful stars hanging on their branches. I want more than anything in the world to have stars on my branches, just like the oak trees have! Then I would feel truly special."

God looked down at the little apple tree and said gently, "Have patience! Have patience, little apple tree!"

Time passed. The snows melted and spring came to the land. Tiny white and pink apple blossoms appeared on the branches of the little apple tree. Birds came to rest on its branches. People walked by the little apple tree and admired its beautiful blossoms.

All summer long, the apple tree continued to grow. The branches of the tree formed a canopy overhead as they filled with leaves and blossoms.

But night after night the little apple tree looked up at the sky with the millions, and millions, and millions -and millions of stars and cried out, "Oh God, I want more than anything in

the world to have stars in my tree and on my branches and in my leaves -just like those oak trees."

And God looked down at the little apple tree and said, "You already have gifts. Isn't it enough to have shade to offer people, and fragrant blossoms, and branches for birds to rest on so they can sing you their songs?"

The apple tree sighed and answered simply, "Dear God, I don't mean to sound ungrateful, but that is not special enough! I do appreciate how much pleasure I give to others, but what I really want more than anything in the world is to have stars, not blossoms, on my branches. Then I would feel truly special!"

God smiled and answered, "Be patient, little apple tree."

The seasons changed again. Soon the apple tree was filled with many beautiful apples. People walked in the forest. Whoever saw the apple tree would reach up, pick an apple and eat it.

And still, when night came to the forest, the apple tree looked at the stars in the oak trees and called out, "Oh God, I want more than anything in the world to have stars on my branches! Then I would feel truly special."

And God asked, "But apple tree, isn't it enough that you now have such wonderful apples to offer people? Doesn't that satisfy you? Doesn't that give you enough pleasure and make you feel special?"

Without saying a word, the apple tree answered by shaking its branches from side to side.

At that moment, God caused a wind to blow. The great oak trees began to sway and the apple tree began to shake. From the top of the apple tree an apple fell. When it hit the ground, it split open.

"Look," commanded God, "look inside yourself. What do you see?"

The little apple tree looked down and saw that right in the middle of the apple, was a star. And the apple tree answered, "A star! I have a star!"

And God laughed a gentle laugh and added, "So you do have stars on your branches. They've been there all along, you just didn't know it."

[-Peninnah Schram](#) and Rachayl Eckstein Davis

http://my_tapestry.tripod.com/apple_tree.html

The blessing for apple is the same as for dates, and since the honey simply accompanies the apple, we can eat our apple and honey now.

Apples and honey are a symbolic food for the new year, because apples are harvested in September and October, and because honey is sweet. After eating apples and honey, we say this wish for the new year:

Y'hi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai Eloheinu vaylohei avoteinu, shetechadeish aleinu shana tova umetukah.

May it be Your will, our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that You renew us for a good and sweet year.

Step Six: Beans

We begin this step with a story:

There was once upon a time a poor widow who had an only son named Jacob, and a cow named Milky-white. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning Milky-white gave no milk and they didn't know what to do.

"What shall we do, what shall we do?" said the widow, wringing her hands.

"Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere," said Jacob.

"We've tried that before, and nobody would take you," said his mother; "we must sell Milky-white and with the money do something, start shop, or something."

"All right, mother," says Jacob; "it's market-day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-white, and then we'll see what we can do."

So he took the cow's halter in his hand, and off he started. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking old man who said to him: "Good morning, Jacob."

"Good morning to you," said Jacob, and wondered how he knew his name.

"Well, Jacob, and where are you off to?" said the man.

"I'm going to market to sell our cow here."

“Oh, you look the proper sort of chap to sell cows,” said the man; “I wonder if you know how many beans make five.”

“Two in each hand and one in your mouth,” says Jacob, as sharp as a needle.

“Right you are,” said the man, “and here they are the very beans themselves,” he went on pulling out of his pocket a number of strange-looking beans. “As you are so sharp,” says he, “I don’t mind doing a swop with you—your cow for these beans.”

“Walker!” says Jacob; “wouldn’t you like it?”

“Ah! you don’t know what these beans are,” said the man; “if you plant them over-night, by morning they grow right up to the sky.”

“Really?” says Jacob; “you don’t say so.”

“Yes, that is so, and if it doesn’t turn out to be true you can have your cow back.”

“Right,” says Jacob, and hands him over Milky-white’s halter and pockets the beans.

Back goes Jacob home, and as he hadn’t gone very far it wasn’t dusk by the time he got to his door.

“What back, Jacob?” said his mother; “I see you haven’t got Milky-white, so you’ve sold her. How much did you get for her?”

“You’ll never guess, mother,” says Jacob.

“No, you don’t say so. Good boy! Five pounds, ten, fifteen, no, it can’t be twenty.”

“I told you you couldn’t guess, what do you say to these beans; they’re magical, plant them over-night and—”

“What!” says Jacob’s mother, “have you been such a fool, such a dolt, such an idiot, as to give away my Milky-white, the best milker in the parish, and prime beef to boot, for a set of paltry beans. Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your precious beans here they go out of the window. And now off with you to bed. Not a sup shall you drink, and not a bit shall you swallow this very night.”

So Jacob went upstairs to his little room in the attic, and sad and sorry he was, to be sure, as much for his mother’s sake, as for the loss of his supper.

At last he dropped off to sleep.

As he slept, he dreamt of angels going up and down the beanstalk, and he heard the voice of G-d saying, "Don't worry, Jacob - you've done your best to take care of others, and I will take care of you."

When Jacob woke, he looked outside at the beanstalk. It was laden with all sorts of vegetables and other foods! Jacob and his mother were never hungry again, and they made sure to share their bounty with others who also needed food.

<http://www.authorama.com/english-fairy-tales-15.html>, minus the last 2 paragraphs.

While traditionally one eats beans here, one could also eat Twizzlers to represent the beanstalk.

The blessing for beans is:

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Borei P'ri HaAdamah.

Praised are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the ground.

The blessing for Twizzlers is:

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Shehakol Nih'ye Bidvaro.

Praised are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, at Whose word all things come into being.

Beans are a symbolic food for the new year, because the Talmudic word for "beans", *rubia*, sounds similar to the word for "increase", *yirbu*. After eating the beans or Twizzlers, we say this wish for the new year:

Y'hi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai Eloheinu vaylohei avoteinu, sheyirbu zechuyoteinu.

May it be Your will, our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our merits increase.

Step Seven: Pumpkin

We begin this step with a story:

Long ago, there were two brothers who were as different as could be. Everything came easily to the older brother. He was able to save a great fortune without a great deal of work. But despite all his wealth, he was an unhappy man who always wanted more.

His younger brother, on the other hand, had no luck when it came to making money, but managed to be happy with the little he had. The oldest brother thought him a fool and never helped out, even though he had plenty of money for both of them.

One day, the younger brother found a sparrow with a broken wing. He took the bird home and nursed it back to health. By springtime the sparrow was strong enough to fly on its own. The brother took the bird out to his garden and said, "Go on, little bird, it's time for you to fly home to your family." Much to his amazement, the sparrow replied, "You have been very kind to me. Even though you expected nothing in return, please take this pumpkin seed as a reward. Plant it in your garden and wait for it to ripen."

The younger brother planted the seed and watered it carefully. Soon a pumpkin vine sprouted out of the ground. By summer's end, the vine was filled with beautiful orange pumpkins. When he cut one open, sapphires, emeralds, and rubies poured out! Every one of the pumpkins was filled with the same riches. He was now the wealthiest man in the town.

The news of his poor brother's sudden fortune reached the older brother. He didn't want anyone – and certainly not his younger brother – to have more money than he had. Going quickly to his brother's house, he demanded to know how he had become rich so suddenly. The younger brother didn't like to lie, so he told him all about the sparrow he had nursed back to health.

The older brother was determined to get his own reward. So the next day, he went into the woods to find a wounded sparrow. He couldn't find one, so he took out his slingshot, shot a sparrow, and broke its wing. He rushed over to pick up the bird and said, "Oh, you poor thing! Come back to my house and I'll take care of your injuries. But if I nurse you back health, you must give me a reward."

The older brother was very good to the sparrow, but not because he was kind-hearted. The sooner it got better he thought, the sooner he'd get his reward. At last the bird had enough strength to fly away. The older brother said to it, "Go on, return to your family. But before you go, I expect to get my reward."

The sparrow replied, "Don't worry. I would never forget to give you something in return. Please take this pumpkin seed. Plant it in your garden and wait for it to ripen."

The older brother planted the seed right away. As he watered the plant, he thought, "It won't be long before I'm richer than my brother once again!" Finally, the pumpkin vine grew pumpkins. When the older brother cut one open, though, out poured snakes, lizards, and scorpions. Word spread quickly throughout the town, and from then on, nobody wanted to be near the greedy man.

Adapted from: http://archive.parentschoice.org/article.cfm?CFID=3d3d93a8-afeb-4654-a6f7-5a9467a1847f&CFTOKEN=0&art_id=120&the_page=consider_this

While one traditionally eats pumpkin here, one could also eat M&Ms to represent the gems in the kind brother's pumpkin. Because we have already said the blessing for both of these foods, you can eat now.

Pumpkins are a symbolic food for the new year, because the Talmudic word for “pumpkin”, *kra*, sounds similar to the Hebrew words for both “be torn up”, *tikra*, and for “be read out”, *yikaru*. After eating the pumpkin or M&Ms, we say this wish for the new year:

Y’hi ratzon milfanecha, Adonai Eloheinu vaylohei avoteinu, shetikra ro-a g’zar dineinu, v’yikaru l’fanecha z’chuyoteinu.

May it be Your will, our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our evil sentence be torn up and our merits be read before You.

Step Eight: Conclusion

As we have been fortunate enough to reach this new year, so may we be fortunate enough to be here a year from now. We conclude with a blessing thanking G-d for the food we have eaten:

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Hazan Et HaKol.

Praised are You, Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who feeds everybody.

This seder is based on the Rosh Hashanah Seder put together by Rahel Musleah in her book Apples and Pomegranates. You are highly encouraged to buy her book: <https://smile.amazon.com/Apples-Pomegranates-Family-Hashanah-Holidays/dp/1580131239>.

Appendix D: Holiday Fast Facts

Rosh Hashanah

- Meaning – “Head of the Year”
- Aliases – “Yom Hazikaron” – The Day of Remembrance; “Yom HaTeruah” – The Day of Sounding (of the shofar); and “Yom HaDin” – The Day of Judgement
- Length – 2 days if Conservative or Orthodox in the Diaspora or in Israel, 1 day if Reform in the Diaspora
- Dates – Tishrei 1 (and 2)
- Foods – Apples and honey, round challah
- Greetings – “Shana tovah” - A good year; “Shanah Tovah Umitukah” – A good and sweet year; and “L’shanah Tovah Tikatayvu” – May you be written for a good year
- What we read – the story of the Binding of Isaac
- What we commemorate – the birthday of the world
- What we do – Tashlich, blow the shofar, think about what we did wrong, ask forgiveness from those we have wronged, pray to G-d to forgive us, ask to be sealed in the Book of Life for a good year

Yom Kippur

- Meaning – “Day of Atonement”
- Aliases – “Shabbat Shabbaton” – The Sabbath of Sabbaths
- Length – 25 hours
- Dates – Tishrei 10
- Foods – fasting
- Greetings – “Shana Tovah” - a good year; “G’mar Chatimah Tovah” - May you be sealed for a good finish; “G’mar Tov” - a good finish; “Shanah Tovah Teichateimu” – May you be sealed for a good year; “Tzom Kal” - an easy fast (only if you know they are fasting)
- What we read – The story of Jonah and the Big Fish
- What we do – make a sincere effort to do t’shuvah (repentance), have services nearly all day, with a break-the-fast feast at the end

Sukkot

- Meaning – “Booths”
- Aliases – Festival of Booths; “Chag HaAsif” – The Festival of Gathering; and “Ziman Simchateinu” – Time of Our Joy
- Length – 8 days if Conservative or Orthodox in the Diaspora, 7 days Reform or in Israel
- Parts – Days 1, 2, 7, and 8 = Yom Tov (only 1 and 7 if Reform), Days 3-6 = Chol Hamoed, Day 8 = Sh’mini Atzeret, Day 9 = Simchat Torah (Sh’mini Atzeret on the same day for Reform)
- Dates – Tishrei 15-23
- What we read – Kohelet/Ecclesiastes
- What we commemorate – a harvest being completed, and wandering in the desert for 40 years
- What we do – build booths called “Sukkot” (Sukkah is the singular), wave the lulav and etrog, sit and eat in the sukkah, pray for rain on Sh’mini Atzeret, finish and restart the Torah on Simchat Torah
- Trivia – The holiday of Thanksgiving comes from Sukkot

Chanukkah

- Meaning – “Rededication”
- Aliases – Festival of Lights, “Channukah”, “Hanukkah”, “Hannukah”, “Hannukka”
– 8 ways to spell it correctly
- Length – 8 days
- Dates – Kislev 25 – Tevet 3
- Foods – Latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts)
- What we read – tell the story of the Book of Maccabees
- What we commemorate – the Maccabees (led by Judah Maccabee) defeating the Syrian Greeks (led by King Antiochus) who were the mightiest army in the world back then, the rededication of the Second Temple, and story of the oil lasting for 8 days
- What we do – light Channukiahs (not menorahs) for 8 days, sing “Maoz Tzur”, eat latkes and sufganiyot, play with dreidels, eat gelt, and exchange gifts
- Trivia – Hanukkah is 8 days long because the Maccabees missed Sukkot, and so they spent 8 days rededicating the Temple. Also, King Solomon’s dedication of the Temple took 8 days.

Tu B’Shevat

- Meaning – “15th Day of Shevat”
- Aliases – “Rosh Hashanah L’illanot” – “New Years for the Trees”
- Length – 1 day
- Dates – Shevat 15
- Foods – Israeli fruits – almonds, dates, figs, carobs, pomegranates
- What we commemorate – the New Year for the Trees
- What we do – plant trees, have a Tu B’Shevat seder
- Discuss – Why are trees so important?

Purim

- Meaning – “Lots”
- Length – 1 day
- Dates – Adar 15
- Foods – Hamantaschen
- What we read – Megillat Esther – The Scroll of Esther
- What we commemorate – The story of how the Jews of Persia were saved from Haman by Queen Esther
- What we do – Dress up, eat Hamantaschen, read the Megillah, drown out Haman’s name with groggers, give mishloach manot/shlach manos (gifts of food) to friends and to those who are poor
- Trivia – G-d is not mentioned once in Megillat Esther
- Discuss – How does hatred grow?

Pesach

- Meaning – “to pass over”

- Aliases – “Passover”, “Chag HaMatzah” – the holiday of matzah, “Chag HaAviv” - the holiday of spring
- Length – 8 days if Conservative or Orthodox in the Diaspora, 7 days if Reform or in Israel
- Parts – Days 1, 2, 7 and 8 = Yom Tov, Days 3-6 = Chol HaMoed
- Dates – Nisan 15 - 22
- Foods – matzah, no foods with leaven in them
- What we read – Shir Hashirim/Song of Songs
- What we commemorate – the Exodus from Egypt and another harvest being finished
- What we do – We have a seder on the first and second nights, or just on the first night. There we drink four cups of wine and tell the story of Exodus using a Haggadah. We eat special foods at the seder, such as matzah, maror, carpas, and charoset. We open the door for Elijah and see if he drinks from the Cup of Elijah. We also search for the afikomen.
- Trivia – Moses is only mentioned once in the Haggadah.
- Discuss – What does it mean to be free? What is freedom?

Yom HaShoah

- Meaning – Day of the Holocaust
- Date – Nisan 27

- What we commemorate – the Holocaust, when 6 million Jews, including 1.5 million children, were murdered between 1938 and 1945.
- What we do – services are held to remember the Holocaust. Often Yartzeit candles are lit.
- Discuss – Why did the Holocaust happen? Could it happen again?

Yom HaAtzmaut

- Meaning – Day of Independence (of Israel)
- Date – Iyar 5
- What we commemorate – the birth of the State of Israel in 1948
- What we do – celebrate Israel, eat Israeli foods like falafel, pita, hummus, Israeli salad, tabouli, and learn about Israel
- Discuss – What do we know about Israel?

Yom Yerushalayim

- Meaning – Jerusalem Day
- Date – Iyar 28
- What we commemorate – the reunification of Jerusalem
- Trivia – From 1948 to 1967, Jordan held part of Jerusalem – the Old City. In 1967, Israel regained the Old City during the 6-Day War.
- Discuss – What do we know about Jerusalem?

Lag BaOmer

- Meaning – The 33rd day of the Omer
- Date – Iyar 18
- What we commemorate – attempts by the Jews to disguise their learning Torah from the Romans

- What we do – go outdoors, have picnics, shoot bows and arrows, have bonfires, and have haircuts
- Discuss – Why is it important to continue Judaism and/or keep learning Torah (code for “keep learning about Judaism”)?

Shavuot

- Meaning – Weeks
- Aliases – Festival of Weeks; “Hag HaBikurim” – The Festival of the First Fruits; “Hag HaKatzir” – The Festival of Harvesting; “Ziman Matan Torahteinu” – The Time of the Giving of the Torah
- Length – 2 days if Conservative or Orthodox in the Diaspora, 1 if Reform or in Israel
- Dates – Sivan 6 (and 7)
- Foods – Blintzes, dairy foods
- What we read – Megillat Rut – the Book of Ruth
- What we commemorate – the Giving of the Torah and the wheat harvest
- What we do – decorate with greenery and flowers, have Confirmation ceremonies, “Tikkun Leil Shavuot” – staying up the night before Shavuot, studying Torah
- Discuss – Why is it called the Time of Giving of the Torah, not the Time of Receiving of the Torah? What are the 10 Commandments? How can we apply them?

Tisha B’Av

- Meaning – the 9th of Av
- Length – 25 hours
- Dates – Av 9
- Foods – fasting
- What we read – Eicha/Lamentations

- What we commemorate – The destruction of the First and Second Temple, and a host of other calamities, including the Expulsion from Spain
- What we do – Fast, read the Book of Lamentations, and add special prayers to the daily services

Appendix E: Jonah Improv

1. Gather the kids on the floor. Have them tell you the story of Jonah. Make sure they are clear on all the details (you can stop after G-d decides to not destroy Nineveh if you want).
2. Pull up 2 chairs and sit in one of them. Ask for a volunteer to sit in the other. Welcome the kids to “CNN - Canaanite News Network”. Announce that you have a special guest this evening, Jonah. Ask Jonah questions, like “What were you thinking when you ran away from G-d?” “What was it like in the fish’s belly?”
3. Ask for new volunteers to be Jonah and to be the interviewer. When you run out of volunteers for Jonah, invite up other guests like the whale, the King of Nineveh, etc. If nobody wants to interview the other people, you can model.
4. Divide the kids into 3 groups and assign each one a section of the story to perform (1. Jonah runs away through Jonah getting thrown overboard 2. Jonah falling into the water

through Jonah getting spit up on land 3. Jonah going to Nineveh through G-d deciding not to destroy the city).

5. Give each group 5 minutes to prepare. If they seem to be getting off task, remind them once to get on task. If they continue to be off task, end the 5 minutes early. If they are all still rehearsing after 5 minutes, end the 5 minutes late.
6. The groups should perform. Then have them do their exact same scenes in half the time.
7. Bring back the two chairs and ask for 2 volunteers.
8. Once you have them sitting in the chairs, explain that they are sitting at a bus stop. One of them is Jonah, and the other is the whale, and they need to have a conversation. Let them figure out who is who, and who is arriving at the bus stop first vs. second.
9. Repeat with new volunteers and new figures from the story in any configuration: Sailor, Jonah, King of Nineveh, Whale
10. When you run out of volunteers, have the kids get up and individually act out the following (all kids being the same thing simultaneously): A whale, a boat in a storm, Jonah sleeping in the ship
11. Explain to the kids that most of Chapter 2 of the Book of Jonah is taken up with Jonah's prayer to G-d from the belly of the fish. Have the kids think about what they would say to G-d to convince G-d to let them out of the fish. Have them share. Then read Jonah's prayer, and assure them that there's no right answer: *In my trouble I called to the Lord and G-d answered me; from the belly of Sheol I cried out and You heard my voice. You cast me into the depths, into the heart of the sea, the floods engulfed me; all Your breakers and billows swept over me. I thought I was driven away out of Your sight: would I ever gaze again upon Your holy Temple? The waters closed in over me, the deep engulfed me. Seaweed twined around my head. I sank to the base of the mountains; the bars of the earth closed upon me forever. Yet You brought my life up from the pit, O Lord my G-d! When my life was ebbing away, I called the Lord to mind, and my prayer came before You, into Your holy Temple. They who cling to empty folly forsake their own welfare, but I, with loud thanksgiving, will sacrifice to You; what I have vowed I will perform. Deliverance is the Lord's!*