

Dear Or Shalom Families,

The days between **Rosh Hashanah** and **Yom Kippur** are called Yemey Teshuva, translated as Days of Repentance. **Teshuva** also means returning, making this 10-day stretch our **Days of Returning**. Many families voice their yearning for a **pause** in the midst of hectic days, to take a step back and return to the **basics** of the spirit, to **questions** like: What are we all about as a family? What are the ways in which we can live **Jewishly**, in between holidays, in between Shabbats? What are some ways in which I, as a parent, can create a meaningful container to foster **spiritual curiosity** and exploration in my child/ren? Pausing at this time of year to return to these and other questions is a wonderful way to bring **Kavanah**, intention, into the year. Here we share with you some starting points to engage with these questions and hope that they, along with the vibrancy of **community** and **children's programming** at Or Shalom, will support you in having a beautiful 5780!

Family Values Like fingerprints, each family has its own unique set of values – things we consider to be important in life and that help guide our actions and figure out how to be the best we can be. It is helpful to turn abstract values such as honesty, cooperation, gratitude, and open-mindedness into more concretely visualized goals by asking, 'what does (value) look like?' Brainstorm maps are a great way to do this! What values do you want to embody this year as a family? Go to orshalom.ca/family to start making your own map.

Acts of Loving Kindness In Pirkei Avot it is said that the world is sustained by three things: Torah, Avodah, and Gemilut Chasadim – by learning about our traditions, keeping our traditions, and doing acts of kindness. As a way of fostering a kindness practice (and being kind can take practice!), you may consider creating a family kindness growth chart. Instead of inches, you could mark weeks along the chart. At the end of each week, each family member shares an act of kindness they either offered and/or were at the receiving end of. You can then ask/share about how doing/receiving the act of kindness felt, why it was important, etc.

Wonder & Gratitude Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the world, and is the perfect time to foster a sense of awe and gratitude for the wonders that are part of our planet Earth. Over time we can lose the sense of awe and joy that comes from taking the time to notice the beauty and richness of this world: the way a flower

grows in a crack in the sidewalk; the sweetness of a summer peach; the sounds ocean waves make; the way our heart beats all on its own, all the time; how the sun feels on our skin after a rainy week... It's a neverending list of wonders. Judaism has a plethora of blessings for the wonders of this Earth and of our bodies (we even have a blessing for peeing and pooping, because it means our bodies are working well!). If your family wants to learn some of these blessings, go to orshalom.ca/family for a taste. Your family can also make up a blessing to express how you feel about something. Or you can do an awe/gratitude/wonder dance! Or draw a picture of what you saw. Sometimes, you can simply say, "Wow Yah!" (Yah is the shortest name for God) to express a moment of amazement and gratitude. Rosh Hashanah is a great time to pay extra attention to how much 'Wow Yah!' there is in this world!

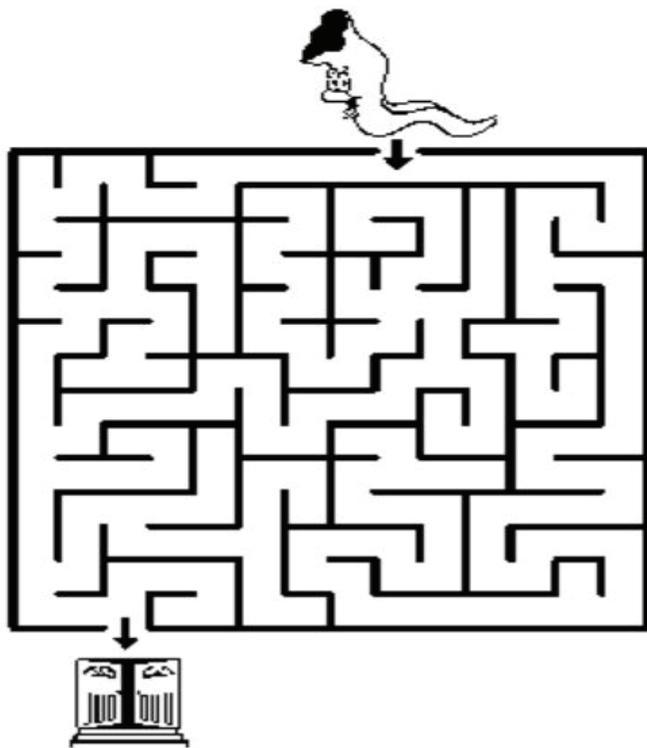
Mistakes & Forgiveness Yom Kippur and the days leading up to it offer an opportunity to return by looking back, and into ourselves, to see how we may have acted in a hurtful way toward someone. We are taught that mistakes are bad, but how would we learn without mistakes? What if this year, instead of feeling ashamed or putting someone down for mistakes made, we see it as an opportunity to grow and learn? How can we model this attitude for our children? We could cultivate a habit of saying out loud, "Oops, I made a mistake today... I did/said..., but I don't think it was the right thing to do/say because.... I wonder what I could have done differently/how I could do this differently/how I could make things better?". We could also congratulate kids for making a mistake when they do their homework and say, "Good on you! That's a sign you're trying. Let's try again."

When we think about forgiveness in the context of younger children, it is helpful to remember that requiring them to say 'I'm sorry' may not always be the best course of action, especially if saying it feels like a punishment and is not connected to a sense of remorse. For some kids the ability to feel remorse or regret develops later than for others. What may be valuable here is to make a general statement such as, "When we push someone/exclude someone/make fun of someone it makes them feel crummy," and offer an opening for restitution: "I wonder what we could try to do to make it better." This leaves the child an opening to repair, grow, and learn while also preserving their dignity. Mistakes tend to be learned from when we feel safe. May we see mistakes this year as a pathway to growth and learning!

Rosh Hashanah Activities

• The World is almost 5780 years old! Draw a cake (or bake a real one with the help of an adult!) to celebrate the birthday of the World. Write down all the things that you and your family members would like to wish the World. Can you help make some of these come true?...

• What do you think the world looked like in the beginning, when it was very, very young? Draw a picture, write a song/poem/story or create a dance that shows what it looked like back then.



Did you know?...

• We eat apples and honey on Rosh HaShana so that we have a sweet year. We also wish friends and family a good year by saying 'Shana Tova!' and 'Gmar Hatima Tova!'.

• We blow the shofar on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur to open up our hearts and wake up our minds. It is like a special alarm clock that reminds us to be the best person we can be.



Unscramble These High Holiday Words

LAPEPS _____

HASROF _____

AHNAS VATO _____

OMY PUKIRP _____

ANGUYSEGO _____

OHRAT _____

ANSWER KEY: Apples, Shofar, Shana Tova, Yom Kippur, Synagogue, Torah