

ROSH HASHANA LESSONS FOR GRADES 3-4

No.	Title	Main Objective
1	The custom of Tashlich, correction and forgiveness	To get acquainted with the ideas of correction and the custom of Tashlich.
2	Rosh Hashana as time for renewal	To perceive of Rosh Hashana as an opportunity for new beginnings.
3	The Hebrew calendar	To get to know the Hebrew calendar and to create a class calendar.

LESSON ONE – THE CUSTOM OF TASHLICH, CORRECTION AND FORGIVENESS

Objectives

- General acquaintance with the holiday, with emphasis on the idea of correction and forgiveness.
- Getting to know the custom of Tashlich, reflecting awareness and confrontation with deeds we are sorry about.
- Conducting a classroom activity geared at changing common bad habits

Procedure

Part 1: General Rosh Hashana Quiz

Divide the class into two groups. The teacher asks a question turning to one of the groups. If that group does not know the answer, the other groups takes the turn. Write the number of points on the board.

1. "A year has gone a year arrives and I shall ----- my hands"
 - raise
 - bring
 - stretch out
2. In the Jewish tradition Rosh Hashana is considered the Day of Judgement. What does this mean?
 - It's a day in which charity is given to the poor.

- it's a day in which it's obligatory to rejoice and whoever does not rejoice is punished.
 - **It's a day in which we must admit to the mistakes we have done all year long and we have an opportunity to ask for forgiveness until Yom Kippur.**
3. Why are apples dipped in honey eaten on Rosh Hashana?
- It's a blessing to bees so they could produce lots of honey for us.
 - **It's a symbol for a good and sweet year.**
 - It's a symbol of combining the sour and sweet (just as an apple is both sour and sweet, so is our year - it has both good and bad things).
4. Why are the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur called 'The Ten Days of Repentance'?
- Since at this time of the year we must not ignore our friends and we must give them answers.
 - **Since this is the time for me to change my bad habits and to ask for forgiveness for bad things I had done to my friends.**
 - Since this is a time parents must give answers to their children to questions, they had asked all year long.
5. Why are the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur also called 'Between 'Keseh' and 'Asor'?
- Since on these days you must give as charity to the poor – 1 to ten shekels.
 - Since you must sit on a chair and ask for forgiveness from at least ten people and refrain from 'covering up' these sins.
 - Since Rosh Hashana turns out in the beginning of the month, when the moon is covered (called 'keseh' meaning covered) and not seen at all. Yom Kippur falls on the 10th of the month (Asor – in Hebrew)
6. Which of the following customs is not connected to Rosh Hashana?
- **fasting**
 - eating fish
 - blowing shofar
7. What are the names of the various types of sounds made by the shofar on Rosh Hashana?



- tekiah, shevarim, teruah
- tekiah, shelamim, teruah
- teruah, shevarim, shelamim

8. What is the custom of Tashlich?

- The custom to throw out last year's clothes that no longer fit us.
- **The custom to symbolically, cast out our sins – bad deeds to a source of water.**
- The custom to send out our younger siblings to give charity to the poor.

Part 1: Explanation on the Custom of Tashlich (10 min.)

Today we'll focus on the idea of Tashlich. From the quiz, we have learned that Rosh Hashana is a holiday marking the beginning of the year.

What actually is a new beginning? It could mean to do things we had not yet done, such as to study, to write, to ride a bike for the first time. Yet the beginning of the year could also mean to try again, and to do things I had already done in the past – in a better way. In order to accomplish this, I must check what was not so good in my deeds and in my behavior in the past and to fix those. For example, if there is a classmate with whom I had quarreled recently, Rosh Hashana and The Ten Days of Repentance give me an opportunity to correct and to improve my behavior and to restore our friendship. We call the bad, harmful, insulting things we did to our friends and family members – sins. We wish to try and change those bad deeds in light of the new year so that it actually become a better and sweeter year, so that we improve and grow in it.

Our nation has a nice custom that helps us try to correct the bad deeds we had done when anticipating a new beginning of the year. That is the custom of Tashlich. The word (in Hebrew) means to cast away. In the afternoon of Rosh Hashana, we stand near a body of water and mention our sins. You can also add a special prayer to this ceremony. The waters 'swallow' the sins and lead them to the sea, far away from us, so that we could start the new year afresh. Naturally, this is not so simple. We cannot actually 'throw away' bad things we did, this requires hard work and asking for forgiveness, but the custom was designated to make us feel and remember the bad things we did and to empower us to ask for forgiveness

for them and to refrain from repeating them in the oncoming year. Would any of you wish to give an example of this?

Now we will do an activity, in which everyone is asked to think about and write about not-so-good things he/she had done in the past year, and that he/she wishes to change at the outset of the new year. Together, we'll throw them out and I'm sure this will also give us the power to do good deeds throughout this coming year.

Part 3: Class Tashlich Activity (20 min.)

A. Individual task – Every student receives a work page containing four questions:

- A bad behavior I wish to quit in class.
- A bad behavior I wish to quit at recess.
- A good deed I wish to do this year.

Examples for Answers to the Last Question – Tolerating someone who is different, listening to one another, obeying the teacher, cooperating in games, trying to be more creative, speaking politely to one another, getting to know other classmates better, taking school work more seriously, helping one another with

- Something, I wish we, as a class, improve in class.

B. Discussion:

- In pairs – every student is to share one item he had written with a friend.
- Discussion – ask the students what they had answered to question 4. Write all the responses given on the board and ask:
 - Does everyone agree with what was written? With what did you agree more and with what – less?
 - How can these behaviors be changed as a class in the new year?
 - How can we help each other improve?
 - How shall we remember these things throughout the year, as time goes on (This may become a foundation for a class-contract that a group of children may write on a placard).

C. 'Casting the Sins in the Water'

Prepare in advance - a box decorated like a sea (using appropriate colors, pictures of seashells, sand etc.) . You may have the students color and decorate it. Teach them how to create sailboats from folded paper and have them prepare them. Every student is invited to get to the box, insert his/her sailboat and make a gesture of emptying his/her pockets into the 'sea'.

- In conclusion you could read and play the song "Selicha" (Sorry, Forgiveness) by Leah Naor, music – Moshe Wilensky.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4VnDe6A0wo>

Additional Information for the teacher: Tashlich is recited on the first day of Rosh Hashana after the Mincha prayer, when it is customary to go to a flowing body of water – a sea, river or well. Some do it at a body of water that contains fish and recite the verse from the Book of Micha: "And throw in the depth of the sea all of our sins" along with other verses. In addition, it is customary to shake one's pockets as if to extract the sins hidden within us. The purpose of Tashlich is to arouse a person via an external physical act to arrive at introspection, to make personal commitments to correct and improve one's actions.



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ROSH HASHANA WORK PAGE

Following the custom of Tashlich – What I would like to throw away at the opening of the school year?

A. A negative behavior that I'd like to quit doing in class:

B. A bad behavior I wish to quit doing at recess:

C. A good deed I wish to do this year:

D. Something I'd wish we would improve in class:

A Bank of Ideas

– Tolerating someone who is different, listening to one another, obeying the teacher, cooperating in games, trying to be more creative, speaking politely to one another, getting to know other classmates better, taking school work more seriously, helping one another with difficulties.



LESSON TWO – ROSH HASHANA AS A TIME FOR RENEWAL

Objectives

- To perceive Rosh Hashana as an opportunity for renewal and new beginnings.
- To personally, experience the turning of a new page at the opening of the new year.

Procedure

1. Introduction (10 min.) write on the board the poem 'Festive Excitement' and ask one of the students to read it.

Festive Excitement / Yael Stav

I look forward to Tishrei Holidays:

To shofar blowing and the 'Kol Nidrei' prayer,

to an apple in honey,

to a willow and a myrtle.

There is a special feeling in the air –

The month of Tishrei arouses birthday-excitement in me.

Ask and write on the board

- Which Tishrei Holidays do you anticipate? What is the special feeling that Tishrei Holidays inspire?
 - What is the connection between the Month of Tishrei and a birthday? What happens both on a birthday and on the Tishrei holidays?
2. A Flower of the New Year (10 min.) Draw a flower on the board. Ask the students to mention significant new beginnings in their lives, and write their responses on different petals of the flower. For example: The opening of the school year, Rosh Hashana, Birthday, The opening of the civil year. Ask:
 - Which of the beginnings you have mentioned are most important to you? Why?
 - What does a new beginning allow us to do? What is required of us - in order to start anew?
 3. Discussion on Rosh Hashana in Nature as an example for renewal (10 min.)



In stories that we read in books about the cold lands, nature's life begins in the spring. In the summer everything is fresh and blooming. In autumn the fruits ripen and the world sinks in sadness and chilly weather prevails, and in the winter everything is still or dead – until the time of awakening comes in the spring.

In Israel, however the order of things are different.

Our spring, in which the blooming at its fullest, is a short season. Most plants quit their growing progress as summer sets in, except for fruit that ripen, and particularly at the end of Elul and in the beginning of Tishrei there is a significant change in the scenery of our nature.

Almost at once, we feel, that actually the days become shorter. About Rosh Hashanah, daytime and nighttime hours almost match. Then nights become longer and cooler. Towards evening we see clouds floating around and colorful sunsets.

As the great heat diminishes, the autumnal bloom awakens in trees, shrubs, and in other plants. And at this point a secret ought to be disclosed: aside of the spring blossoming, known to all, there is also a season of blooming in Tishrei, which is important for some of the plants: The summer brings the growth of trees to a halt, and if not for the blooming season in the autumn, the trees would have such a long period of stagnation that they would not be able to endure it.

Autumn as a season of renewal / Azariah Alon (adapted)

- Ask a student to read the description of Tishrei holidays by Azariah Alon:
 - Call on two students who like to draw – to the board, and ask the other students to instruct them how to draw a picture of nature in Tishrei, according to Alon.
 - Ask: What can be learned from the renewal of nature in Tishrei about the renewal of man during the holidays of Tishrei?
4. For Grade 3 – A Note for the New Year (15 min.)

Create a big tree with leaves on one of the walls of the classroom (example in appendix). Each student is given a page shaped like a leaf, on which he writes something he wishes to renew on it, a new beginning he wishes himself, a new friendship he wishes to achieve this year. The leaves are then hung on the branches. During the year you may want to have the students take a look at their leaves and check to see what they accomplished and what they have not yet achieved.

For Grade 4 – A New Page for the New Year (15 min.)

Every student is given a 'new page' (appendix 1). Ask a student to read the text of Aryeh Ben Gurion, and explain the text. Following this, ask the students to write wishes, desires, expectations for the new year (hobbies, family, interests, events, things they would like to change, new friendships they wish to make, etc.). Collect the pages and return them to students at the end of the year.

5. Conclude the Lesson with Inspirational song, sung by all (5 min.)

Beshana Haba'ah

Lyrics: Ehud Manor

Music: Nurit Hirsch

towards the radiant light.

A white heron, like a light will spread her wings
and through them, the sun will rise.

Next year we will sit on the porch
and we'll count several migrating birds
Children on vacation will play tag
between the house and the fields.
You will see, you will see
How great it will be
Next year.

Next year red grapes will ripen till the evening
and will be served chilled to the table.
And languid winds will carry to the crossroads
old newspapers and a cloud.

You will see, you will see...

Next year we will spread out our hands



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APPENDIX – WISH TREE (GRADE 3)



LESSON THREE – THE JEWISH CALENDAR

OBJECTIVES

- Acquaintance with the Hebrew calendar.
- Joining forces to produce a class calendar.

PROCEDURE

1. TRUE/ FALSE QUIZ about the calendar. (10 min.)

Divide the class into two groups. The teacher asks a question. The group that answers correctly places its symbol on the calendar. If the group errs, the other group can place the symbol. (Questions – in the appendix).

2. Getting to know the Hebrew Jewish Calendar. (10 min.)

Spread a circle – shaped months illustration on the floor. Each student is given a card with the name of a holiday and is asked to match it with the appropriate month (See the appendix for a list of the months and holidays)



3. Discussion

- Tell about your favorite holiday?
- Which in your opinion, is the most important holiday? Why?
- What makes a holiday more important than others?
- Are there holidays that are no longer important or – that have become less important?
- Were there holidays / special days missing in this calendar (secular holidays)?

4. Teacher's interim summary: In this lesson we have raised ideas and questions regarding our calendar, the Hebrew calendar. Nowadays, we are making more and more use of the Gregorian calendar, yet most of our holidays are connected to the Hebrew calendar.

5. Create a Class Calendar for the year: (25 min.) In conclusion of what we have studied and discussed, we'll now create together a class calendar for the year, displaying our important holidays. We'll divide the class into 12 groups (according to the number of months) and each group is assigned to design a particular month. Each design should include: The Hebrew name of



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the month, its holidays, and birthdays. You may also add the zodiac sign of the month, and pictures illustrating the season.



Appendix A – Hebrew Calendar Questionnaire

What is the meaning of the month of Tishrei?

- 1) It stems from the Hebrew word, 'Lishrot', to be. It refers to the idea of being with the Lord in the first month of the year.
- 2) It's an ancient Egyptian word, which means blessings and abundance. It was chosen as the name of the first month of the year.
- 3) **It is a word that stems from the Akkadian language meaning – the beginning. It was chosen to be the name of the first month of the year.**

How many Jewish Holidays are celebrated in the 15th of the Month?

- 1) Five – Tu Bishvat, Tu B'av, Sukkot, Chanukah and Pesach
- 2) **Four – Sukkot, Tu Bishvat, Pesach and Tu B'av**
- 3) Two – Tu Bishvat and Tu B'av

What month may be doubled and why particularly – this month?

- 1) Adar, because Purim is the most important month of the year.
- 2) Elul, before Rosh Hashana.
- 3) **Adar, so that Pesach always falls in the Spring.**

What was the first month in the era of the Bible?

- 1) Tishrei. Just like nowadays, therefore Rosh Hashana is celebrated in this month.
- 2) Shevat. In which we celebrate Tu Bishvat, as the new year of trees.
- 3) **Nissan, which is called the first month in the Bible.**

What does the name of the month of Tamuz – mean?

- 1) **It's the name of a Babylonian god, Dumuzid, that appears every half a year starting with autumn.**
- 2) A distortion of the ancient Hebrew words, "Chom Az" (severe heat) that describe the weather in this season.
- 3) An ancient Egyptian word meaning "cessation of rain".

Which Holiday was most recently added to the Hebrew calendar?

- 1) Independence Day, which is celebrated only since the establishment of the state.
- 2) **The Holocaust Remembrance Day, which was established only since the fifties of the previous century.**
- 3) Memorial Day, which had been formerly celebrated together with Independence Day.

How did people know a new month begins before there were calendars?

- 1) **When the moon begins to 'grow'.**
- 2) When there is a full moon
- 3) When the moon and the sun set / rise at the same time.

Does the Jewish calendar go by the sun or by the moon?

- 1) By the moon. This is how months are determined.
- 2) By the sun, since the holidays match the seasons of the year.
- 3) **By both the sun and the moon, therefore, sometimes a month is added.**

What is the name of the days preceding Rosh Hashana?

- 1) The days of awe, in which everyone's fate is determined.
- 2) **Selichot, based on the prayers recited in the early morning.**
- 3) Hoshana Raba, based on the prayer recited in those days.
- 4)

APPENDIX 2 – LIST OF HEBREW DATES OF ISRAEL'S HOLIDAYS

Tishrei

1st of Tishrei – Rosh Hashana

3rd of Tishrei – Tzom Gedalya

10th of Tishrei – Yom Kippur

15th of Tishrei – Sukkot

Heshvan

11th of Heshvan – Yitzhak Rabin Memorial Date

29th of Heshvan – Day of Sigd

Kislev

25th of Kislev – Chanukah

Tevet

10th of Tevet – Fast Day

Shevat

Tu Bshvat

Adar

11th of Adar - Day of the Fall of Tel Hai

13th of Adar - Ta'anit Esther

14th of Adar – Purim

Nissan

15th of Nissan – Pesach

27th of Nissan – Holocaust Memorial Day

Iyar

4th of Iyar – Memorial Day of Israel's Fallen Soldiers

5th of Iyar – Independence Day

10th of Iyar – Herzl Day

18th of Iyar – Lag BaOmer

29th of Iyar – Jerusalem Day

Sivan

6th of Sivan – Shavuot

Tamuz

17th of Tamuz – The fast day commemorating the destruction of the Temple

Av

15th of Av – the holiday of love