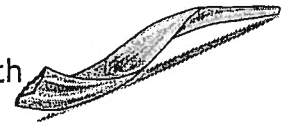


Yom Kippur

Dear Families,

We hope that *Rosh Hashanah* (the Jewish New Year) greeted you with wonderful new beginnings and an opportunity to look inward and reflect on the past year's accomplishments and growth. But now, *Yom Kippur* is right around the corner. It is said that on *Rosh Hashanah*, God metaphorically opens the Book of Life (in which every living person's fate for the future is recorded) and "pencils in" a fate. Ten days later, on *Yom Kippur*, this fate is sealed. Thus, *Yom Kippur* is a very solemn day during which people contemplate their actions from the past year, and pray to God for forgiveness for their sins.



Yom Kippur is perhaps best-known for its twenty-five hour fast (no food or drink) that commences before sunset on *erev Yom Kippur* and lasts until nightfall the next evening. Some believe that fasting prevents food from being a distraction to the day's task of prayer and atonement. Others believe fasting "afflicts the soul" and, as such, is a vehicle to repentance. Those who are pregnant, sick or very old (all whom the fast might adversely effect), are instructed not to fast. Children who are pre-*Bar/Bat Mitzvah* age are not required to fast. However grade school children can "practice fasting" by skipping one snack or meal on *Yom Kippur* or by eating only simple foods. Judaism prohibits very young children from fasting for health reasons.

Prayer is one of the main activities connected to *Yom Kippur*; synagogues are filled! Additionally, it is a holiday when families and friends gather for a festive meal both before and after the holiday. For these reasons, *Yom Kippur* binds Jews not only to God, but also to each other.

THINGS YOU CAN DO AS A FAMILY



If you fast, explain to your children why. Tell them how it feels to be hungry and how you are reminded of repentance (apologizing to others who you have wronged), all day long.



Discuss with your children how some families feel hungry all the time. As a family, visit the grocery store to buy enough food for your family for one day and donate it to a food shelter.



Because food preparation may be hard for adults who are fasting on *Yom Kippur*, have your children pack a lunch with you the night before.



Whether you can host a family for Break-the-Fast, or if your family does not yet have Break-the-Fast plans, please let your school director know; she will work to create connections. Also, if you are not yet a member of a synagogue, this is a good time to contact one for *Yom Kippur* attendance information.



A family can also be likened to a community. Have each family member create "New Year's" resolutions that focus on bettering the family (i.e. less fighting with my younger sibling!).

For additional background information, family activities, and holiday recipes, see:
<http://www.jccathisnewmonth.org> (click on *Tishrei*)
or <http://uahc.org/educate/parent/> (click on *Yom Kippur*)



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