

THE NATIONAL
JEWISH
COMMITTEE
ON SCOUTING

ראש השנה
יום הכפורים

*Program Help:
Rosh HaShanah
and Yom Kippur*



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The National Jewish Committee on Scouting is pleased to present to all interested parties a series of basic religious services and resource guides. These resources are intended for use on campouts, in a Pack, Troop or Crew setting or as a Scout observance at a religious institution. They can be freely adapted to any specific situation.

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This booklet has been created by the National Jewish Committee on Scouting. It is designed to assist units and individual Scouts in fulfilling their religious obligations by providing them with a services and programs that they can conduct at home or during a campout. Each Scout is free to adapt this material in keeping with his family and community tradition.

***Comments, Questions,
Edits***

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The High Holidays **Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur**

The Holidays in Brief

The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah ushers in a solemn 10-day period of repentance. Of particular appeal to young people are sounding the *shofar* during services, eating challah and apple dipped in honey, and sending and receiving greeting cards. This holiday represents new beginnings, a theme with which youth can readily identify.

Yom Kippur, a 26-hour fast day, climaxes the ten days of Atonement. Referred to in the Bible as the Sabbath of Sabbaths, Yom Kippur is highlighted by synagogue services whose central themes are self-examination, forgiveness and new beginnings.

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah is observed at the beginning of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, which may fall either in September or October. It is one of the two important Jewish religious holidays called the High Holidays, or the Days of Awe. The other holiday is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, which comes on the tenth day of this Hebrew month.

Rosh Hashanah has four different names, each of which teaches something about the holiday:

Rosh Hashanah. The head or beginning of the year, or New Year

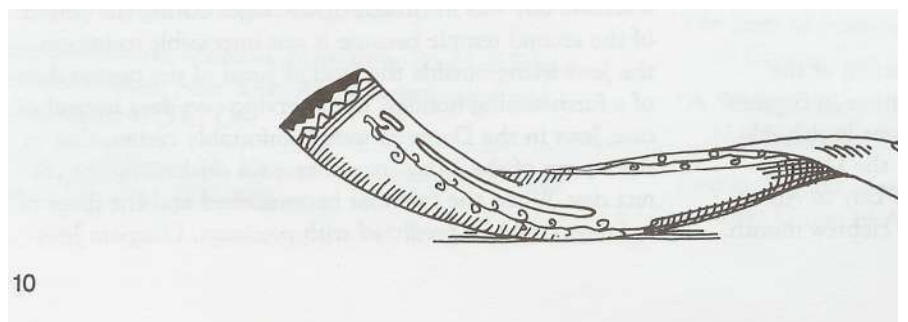
Yom Te-ru-ah. The day of blowing the Shofar

Yom Zikaron. The day of remembrance, when God recalls all our deeds of the past year.

Yom Ha-din. The day of Judgment, when God judges all human beings.

Conservative, Orthodox and Israeli Jews observe Rosh Hashanah for two days. Most Reform Jews celebrate it for 1 day. Jewish communities sometimes differ in the number of days the major festivals are observed. Except in the case of Yom Kippur, which is a day of fasting, the observance of a second day was instituted by the sages during the period of the second temple because it was impossible to inform the Jews living outside the land of Israel of the precise date of a forthcoming holiday. By observing two days instead of one, Jews in the Diaspora were comfortably certain that in the course of the 2-day span they were celebrating the correct day. When the calendar became fixed and the dates of holidays could be predicted with precision, Diaspora Jews preferred to retain the 2-day observance as a reminder that they were living outside the land of their ancestors. Reform communities, however, decided to keep 1-day celebrations.

While Jews, with their fellow Americans, mark January 1 as the national,



legal New Year, in autumn Jews observe Rosh Hashanah, which in Hebrew means "head of the year," as their religious New Year. Unlike the secular New Year celebration, Rosh Hashanah is a time of seriousness. It is greeted with solemn prayers and not with parties and merrymaking. One custom shared in common, however, is the review of one's behavior and a commitment to new resolves.

According to our tradition, Rosh Hashanah is the day on which God judges the deeds of every person. In fact, Jewish legend tells us that on this day our names are inscribed in God's book, hopefully the "book of life." Rosh Hashanah, therefore, is a time when we examine our actions and our feelings and try to correct the mistakes we have made. The Zodiac sign for Tishrei is scales. This is in keeping with the Jewish belief that on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur our deeds are weighed. It is a time for asking ourselves serious questions, such as "What did I do wrong last year? Am I sorry about the way I behaved toward other people? How can I change for the better? How can I start over?"

In this way, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur differ from all other Jewish festivals of the year. Unlike Sukkot, Passover, and Shavuot, they are not associated with agriculture or nature, and unlike Hanukkah, Purim and Passover, they do not commemorate historical events.

Rosh Hashanah meals also are different, in that it is traditional to eat a round challah and honey. On most Sabbaths and holidays, the challah is twisted into a braid. One explanation for the round challah is that its message is, "May you have a long life, just like this circular bread that has no end." Another is that it resembles a crown, to help us recognize that God is our king.

Honey is sweet, and so after the blessing over the bread, a piece of challah is dipped into some honey and a wish is made for a sweet year. Many Jews also dip a piece of apple into honey with the same wish. Indeed, the hope that the coming year will be full of sweetness is symbolized by several holiday foods: honey cake, honey cookies, tzimmes (a sweet potato dish), and *teiglach* (a baked confection made with honey, nuts and honey).

There is a special greeting which we exchange with others on Rosh Hashanah: "L'shanah *tova* *tikateivu*" (May you be written down for a good year). The answer to this greeting is "*Gam atah*" (You, too). Before the holiday, we send New Year cards to family and friends. In addition, if we should write a letter to someone we know prior to Rosh Hashanah, it is the custom to add blessings and good wishes for the coming year.

During the afternoon of the first day, if it does not occur on Saturday, some Jews carry out a ceremony known as *Tashlich*. They gather at a stream, river or other body of living water and, after reciting several prayers, announce that they are casting in their sins. As a sign of this, they empty their pockets into the water. We are told that in the city of Safed in Israel, where there is no body of living water, Jews used to observe this ritual from the roofs of their houses, from which on a clear day they could see the Sea of Galilee.

The High Holidays have their own special sound, the shofar, which is blown at services on Rosh Hashanah and at the very end of the Yom Kippur observance. Rosh Hashanah was originally called "Yom Teruah," Day of Blowing the Shofar, for the ceremony of sounding the shofar is

supposed to remind us of the need to live our lives according to God's rules. It announces that God is our ruler, that we must pray to Him for forgiveness, and that He is merciful and forgiving. There are four sounds: *tekiah* (one straight blast), *teruah* (three short sounds), shevarim (nine short, rapid sounds), and *tekiah gedolah* (one long sound).

At first, the rabbis said that the horn of any animal except the cow or the ox could be used, including sheep, goats, rams and even antelopes. Eventually, the horn of the ram became the most popular shofar.

The shofar is one of the world's oldest wind instruments. In ancient days, our people used it to sound an alarm in times of crisis, to announce the new moon and special feasts, to call people together, and to send messages from one place to another. The shofar was blown at Sinai to prepare our people for the giving of the Torah, and Joshua made use of it in conquering Jericho.

During the High Holidays, it is the practice to put a white curtain over the Ark in which the Torah Scrolls are kept and a white cover over the table on which they are read aloud. Many Jews dress in white clothing, just as many rabbis and cantors wear white robes and caps or head coverings (*Kippot*). The reason for this is that white symbolizes purity and a heart clean of sin, as the prophet Isaiah declared: "Though your sins may be like scarlet, they will become white as snow."

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the last day of the High Holidays. It is a day set aside for praying and fasting—a final call to us to correct our mistakes and wrongdoings. It is called the Day of Atonement, since "atonement" is made up of two words—"at" and "one." On that day Jews try to be "at one" (in harmony) with God and to seek forgiveness from fellow human beings. Judaism teaches that we cannot expect God's pardon for wrongs done against fellow human beings unless we ask them first for their forgiveness. So, if you visit a synagogue on Yom Kippur eve before services begin, you may possibly see Jewish men and women asking forgiveness from one another.

The whole purpose of this day is to repent, which means more than saying, "I'm sorry." It means promising ourselves that we will be careful not to repeat the same mistakes. In Hebrew, the word for repentance is *teshuvah* (return), implying that we sincerely wish to return to the right path.

On the eve of Yom Kippur, before going to the synagogue, candles are lit and a festive meal is eaten, after which the fast begins. Special 24-hour *yahrzeit* candles are kindled in memory of departed loved ones. And parents bless the children. In the synagogue, the evening service opens with the Kol *Nidrei* prayer, whose beautiful and inspiring melody is known and loved by our people.

Nearly the entire next day is spent in the synagogue praying and fasting. Except for those who are ill or too young, Jews are expected to fast until after sunset. No eating or drinking is permitted and even children are encouraged to fast for at least a few hours. Fasting serves many purposes. Most of all, it reminds us that our lives depend upon God and that we should be concerned about the many people in the world who often go hungry in the course of the year.

At twilight, the day of Yom Kippur ends with a long blast of the shofar.

**Prayers, Blessing, and
Ceremonies at Mealtime**

When dipping a slice of apple in honey, we express our hopes for the year ahead by saying:

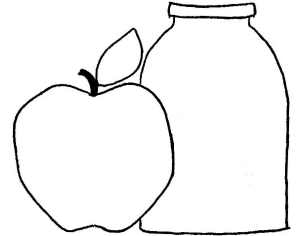
May it be the will of our Father in heaven to grant us a year as good and as sweet as honey. May it be a year of peace and happiness for our family, our friends, and the entire world.

We then recite the blessing over fruit:

*Ba-ruch a-tah a-do-nai elo-hei-nu me-lech ha-
olam borei p'ri ha-etz*

We praise you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe who creates the fruit of the tree.

We then eat the slice of apple.



In some families, it is a tradition to eat additional fruits, such as dates, pomegranates, and grapes. If these are used, the following prayers would be appropriate:

Before eating a date:

May it be the will of our Father in heaven that wickedness disappear from the earth. May goodness take its place and all righteous people flourish like a date palm.

Before eating a slice of pomegranate:

May it be the will of our Father in heaven that our lives be as rich with good deeds as this pomegranate is rich in seeds.

Before eating grapes:

May it be the will of our Father in heaven that our home be shielded from anger, harm, and sadness. May we always be a source of goodness to our family, and may the members of our family be as close to each other as grapes in a cluster.

Some people then add:

L'shanah ha-ba-ah bi-ru-sha-la-yim

Next year may we spend the High Holy Days in Jerusalem.

Games

Quiz Contest

Plan a quiz contest, based either on facts or Hebrew terms connected with the High Holidays, such as those found in this chapter.

Board Games

The Baltimore Board of Jewish Education has produced an inexpensive board game called "Shanah Tovah" (A Good Year). Send for a copy and play the game.

New Year Bingo

For each player, have one or two pieces of paper 6 inches square. With a ruler, draw 3 lines, 1-½ inches apart across and down, for a total of six lines. There will now be 16 squares. On each paper write, in any order, 16 words or terms associated with the High Holidays. On 24 smaller pieces of paper write these same 16 terms, plus 8 others. Mix up the small pieces of paper in a bowl or hat.



Recipes

Apple Compote

Wash, quarter, core, and peel several apples. Make a syrup of sugar and water, cooking it over low heat. Add a cinnamon stick or several tablespoons of cinnamon candies. Add the apples to the hot syrup, and cook them in the syrup until they are tender. Serve hot or cold with the syrup in sauce dishes.

Tzimmes

This is a sweet dish eaten by many Jews. You will need a large casserole, a knife, a spoon for stirring, two large cans of sweet potatoes, one box of dried apricots, 1-½ cups of brown sugar, and one box of pitted prunes. Preheat the oven to 325°. Drain about half the liquid from the cans of sweet potatoes. Slice. Then cut up the apricots and prunes. Put one layer of potatoes, one of prunes, and one of apricots into the casserole and cover with the sugar. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes. Carefully stir every once in a while. Add water if necessary.

New Fruit

The holiday of Rosh Hashanah includes a custom of eating a new or different fruit for the first time in the season. Visit a food store that specializes in exotic fruits. For some Scouts, a mango, avocado, persimmon, or pomegranate may be the new or different fruit they would like to taste.

Activities

Hebrew or English Word Art for Tishrei

Description

A form of “creative writing” in which students draw Hebrew or English letters conforming to a holiday shape. The activity is fun and challenging in itself, and can be used as the basis for many other projects (see variations).

Goals/Objectives

To integrate a creative art experience with relevant themes in the Jewish calendar; to create a piece of art that can be used in a variety of educational crafts.

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Paper
- Markers to decorate, including black
- Black construction paper for frame
- Cut-outs of Yom-Tov related shapes

Basic Technique Instructions

1. Students can either trace shape templates or draw their own. Browse clip art collections to obtain a variety of outlines. Look for simple shapes.
2. Use pencil to lightly sketch out spacing of letters inside shape.
3. Go over lines with marker, and color in if desired
4. Glue on black paper to create frame.

Variations

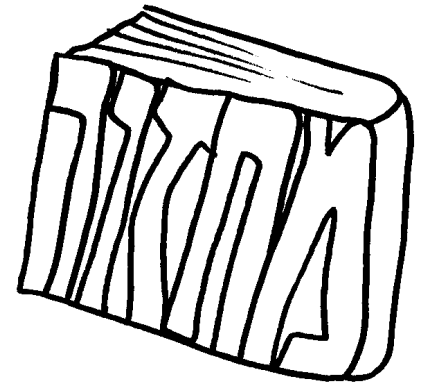
Mini-Cards:

- After letters are outlined, but before they are colored in, shrink them to $\frac{1}{2}$ size with a copy machine. This will make this design look even neater and more detailed.
- Color in with markers, then glue inside a folded piece of contrasting construction paper.
- Write yom tov wishes on front of card with paint marker or glitter glue



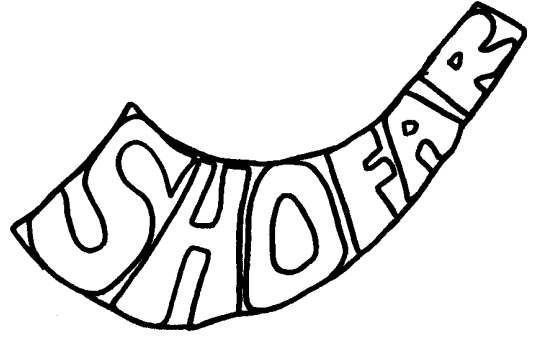
Stained Glass Window Decoration:

- After drawing is outlined but before colored in, place a transparency or clear sheet of plastic over drawing
- Trace word art carefully onto plastic with permanent black marker.
- Color in with permanent colored makers.
- Cut out exact shape from 2 pieces of black construction paper, and “sandwich” plastic so the drawing lines up with the holes. Glue into place.
- Decorate frame with glitter if designed.



Sharing:

- Before the outlined shapes are colored in, make copies of each one for each member of the class.
- These can be shrunk to use for a mobile, or to glue onto a larger poster for each student to color and take home.

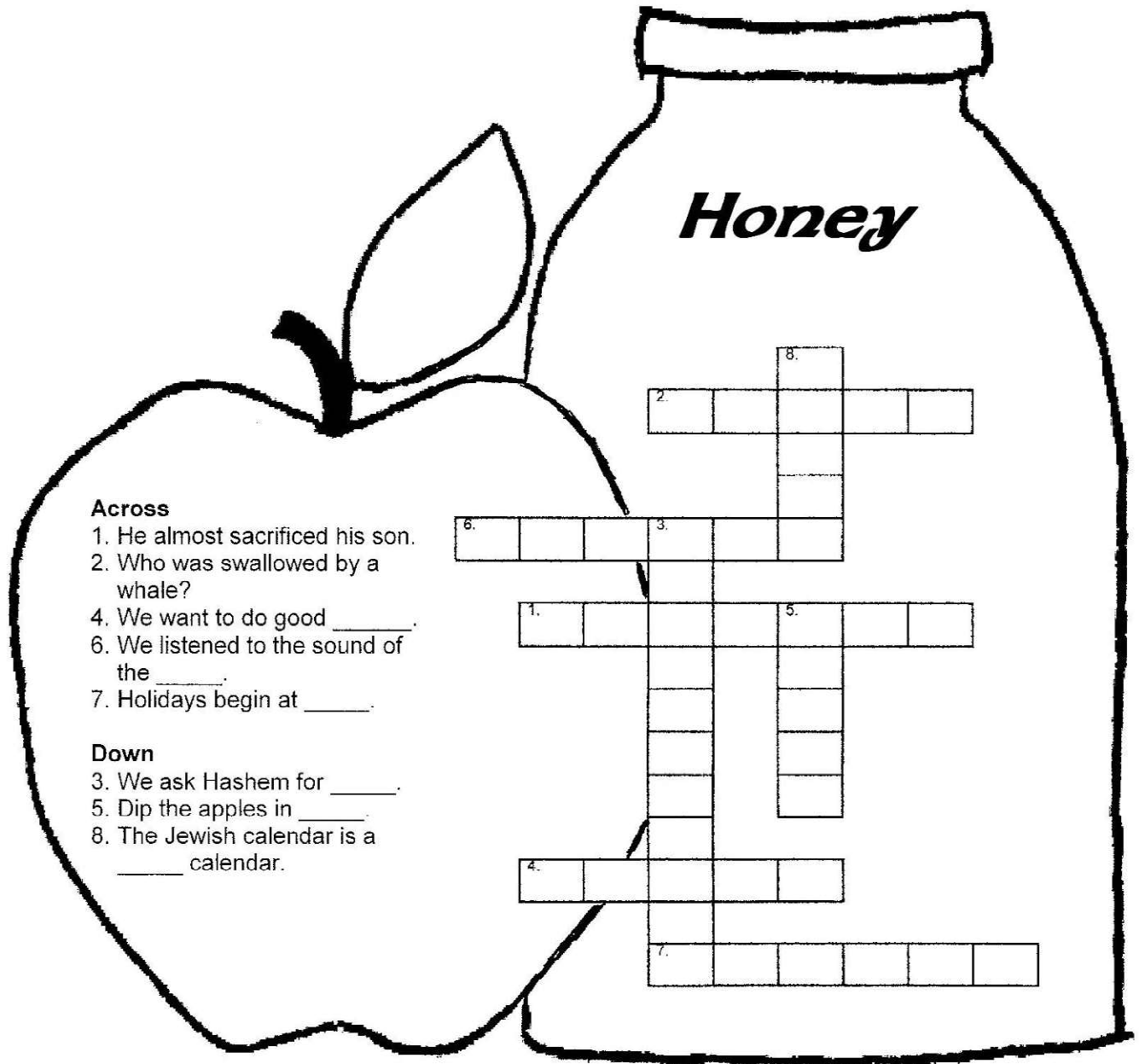


Educational Challenge:

- Have the students try to come up with words or phrases that are not as obvious choices for the shape. For example, in an apple shape they could form the words "Tova u'Mesukah."

Fun Time

**What can you Remember
about the High Holidays**



Across

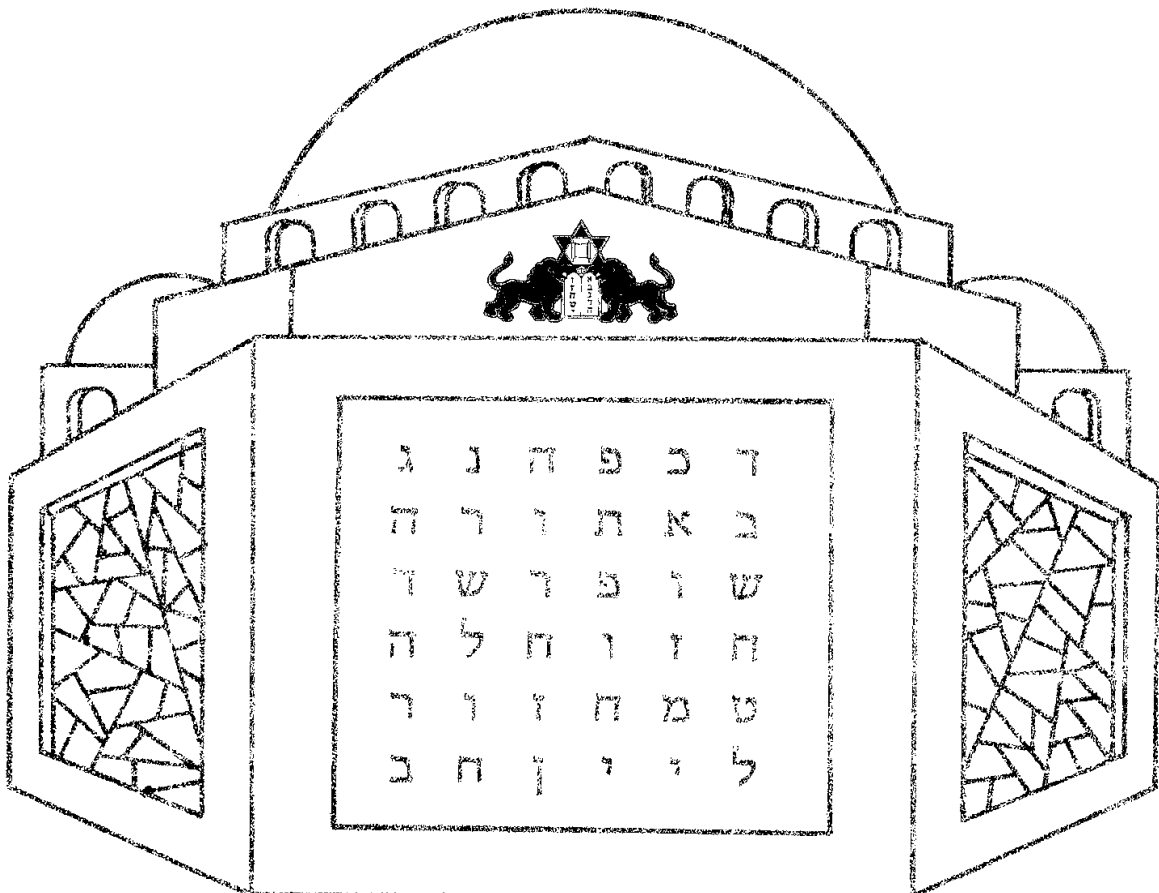
- 1. He almost sacrificed his son.
- 2. Who was swallowed by a whale?
- 4. We want to do good _____.
- 6. We listened to the sound of the _____.
- 7. Holidays begin at _____.

Down

- 3. We ask Hashem for _____.
- 5. Dip the apples in _____.
- 8. The Jewish calendar is a _____ calendar.

Hebrew Word Search

ראש השנה בבית הכנסת



Look across and down and circle the

words that you find in the בית הכנסת.

Can you find 12 Hebrew words for ראש השנה?

honey דבש
shofar שופר
apple תפוח
Torah תורה

Cantor סגן
Mahzor מנחור
hallah חלה
kippah כפה

Rabbi רב
wine יין
candle נר
calendar לוח

Hebrew Terms

Rosh Hashanah	Head of the Year, New Year
Yom Kippur	Day of Atonement
Shanah tovah	A good year!
Shofar	Ram's horn
Machzor	The name of the prayerbook used on the High Holidays
Teshuvah	Repentance (literally, returning)
Tefillah	Prayer
Tishrei	The name of the first Jewish month of the year
Chayim	Life
Sefer haChayim	Book of Life
Tekiot	Sounds of the Shofar
Tekiah	One straight Shofar blast
Teruah	Three short Shofar sounds
Shevarim	Nine very rapid Shofar sounds
Tekiah Gedolah	One long Shofar sound
Yamim No-ra-im	Days of Awe