



Fall Holiday themed Shabbat Mishpacha

Submitted by: *Marcia Seigal*

Subject Area: Jewish Living and Identity, Holidays, Prayer, Jewish History, Culture & Art.

Target Age Group: Families with young children ranging from preschoolers to first graders.

Lesson Objective:

To teach about the fall Jewish holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippor, Sukkot and Simchat Torah) and to create a comfortable learning environment that helps families with young children integrate Jewish traditions and customs into the fabric of their lives as well as connect to the synagogue. The program attracts many families with young children who are seeking an opportunity to meet other Jews within their demographic. It also appeals to interfaith families who do not possess the skill set to create a Jewish experience and want to gain exposure to Jewish living.

Summary:

The program begins with a short Shabbat service which includes Hinei Mah Tov, The Shalom Song, Modeh Ani, Barchu, Shema, Mi Chamocha, and Miriam's Song, as well as a closing song and story connected to the upcoming fall Jewish holidays. Possible books to choose from include Dance, Sing, Remember – A Celebration of Jewish Holidays by Leslie Kimmelman, The High Holidays by Camille Kress, The Shofar Calls to Us by Katherine Janus Kahn, The World's Birthday – A Rosh Hashanah Story by Barbara Diamond Goldin, My Very Own Simchat Torah by Judyth Robbins Saypol & Madeline Wikler, and Tamar's Sukkah by Ellie Gellman. Nametags are provided for families as they arrive, as well as instruments for children to play during the service.

After the service, everyone participates in the blessings over the wine and the challah. Apples and honey are available for participants to snack on. Next, children may choose from a variety of activities and art projects. Children may concentrate on just one activity, or they can try their hand at them all.



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Possibilities include High Holiday reflection books, Simchat Torah flags, or Torah costumes (see appendix for more information). Plain paper and crayons are also available for children to illustrate their favorite part of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and/or Simchat Torah.

Finally, the program concludes with the singing of Shalom Chaverim, as well as an invitation to attend next month's program. Handouts relating to the fall Jewish holidays are distributed to parents as they leave.

*** If the timing is appropriate, the program may take place in the Sukkah. It can be decorated by the children with gourds and Indian corn hanging from strings, and the top can be covered with tree branches and/or cornstalks. The blessings may be recited over the lulav and the etrog, and a light snack can be served, as it is a mitzvah to eat in the Sukkah. The custom of ushpizin or inviting guests into the Sukkah may also be integrated into the program.

APPENDIX:

High Holiday Reflection Books

Gather a few small sheets of natural paper, punch two holes, and thread with raffia. Have the children and their parents reflect together on the events of the last year and record them in their books.

Simchat Torah Flags

What you will need:

Rectangular felt pieces (in several bright colors)
2 1/2" wooden dowels
Crafter's glue
Notions (buttons, yarn, trim, etc.)
Scissors
Permanent markers



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What you do:

Attach felt piece to a dowel with crafter's glue. Attach notions to the flag with crafter's glue, and then decorate with permanent markers.

Torah Costumes

Decorate a white t-shirt with Hebrew letters using stencils and permanent markers. Then make a necklace out of yarn with a Popsicle stick hanging from it. Next, trace a fist with a pointed index finger onto construction paper and cut it out so that it can be glued to the end of the Popsicle stick. Children can take their Torah costumes home and save them to wear on Purim.