

Jewish Gateways

High Holidays

*Resources to Help You Celebrate
with Kids*



What are the High Holidays ?

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, often referred to as the High Holidays, are the two most significant days in the Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, marks the beginning of these High Holidays, which encompass the ten days that culminate in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

Besides celebrating the New Year, the High Holidays are a time to focus on teshuvah. This Hebrew word has several meanings: turning, returning, responding, repenting. The process of teshuvah is one of empowerment and choice. While there is much in life that we cannot control, we are free to envision the kind of people we want to be, and to take steps in that direction. We do teshuvah by reflecting on the year now ending, reconnecting with our deepest values, repairing relationships, and seeking ways to become our best selves in the New Year, for ourselves, our communities, and the world.

Rosh Hashanah may seem to come "early" or "late," depending on the year. That's because it is celebrated on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishrei. The Jewish calendar, which is both lunar and solar, is calculated differently from the secular calendar.

Rosh Hashanah customs include blowing and listening to the shofar, an ancient instrument made of a ram's horn, eating sweet, round challah (bread), and dipping apples in honey to symbolize our wishes for a sweet New Year.

Yom Kippur, which follows Rosh Hashanah, is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. It is a day of reflection dedicated to seeking forgiveness and making amends.

Included in this guide are resources to help your family explore and celebrate both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Celebrate Rosh Hashanah with Children



Videos



Rosh Hashanah Special



What is Rosh Hashanah?



Rosh Hashanah Blessing Over Apples

Music

Get into the Rosh Hashanah groove with this playlist



Blessings for a Festive Meal

1. Lighting the Candles

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתַי וַיְצַוֵנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל [שַׁבָּת וְשֶׁל] יוֹם טוֹב.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitz'votav vitzivanu l'hadlik ner shel [Shabbat v' shel] yom tov.

Blessed are You, Eternal, whose presence fills creation, who makes us holy through the mitzvah of lighting the [Shabbat and] festival candles.

3. Kiddush (Blessing over Wine or Juice)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Eternal, whose presence fills creation, who creates the fruit of the vine.

5. Blessing for Dipping Apples in Honey

Before dipping an apple slice into honey:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, borei p'ri ha'eitz.

Blessed are You, Eternal, whose presence fills creation, who creates the fruit of the tree.

6. After the blessing, dip the apple slice in honey and have a bite. It's a tradition to then say: "May it be Your will to renew for us a good and sweet year."

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עִלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וְמֵתוּקָה.

Y'hi ratzon mil'fanecha, Adonai Eloheinu, she'tichadesh aleinu shanah tova u'metukah.

May it be Your will, Eternal our God, that the new year will be good and sweet.

2. Shehechyanu

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higiyanu la'zman ha'zeh.

Blessed are You, Eternal, whose presence fills creation, who gave us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

We say the "Shehechyanu" blessing to express our gratitude for reaching new or unique experiences or milestones.

4. Ha'motzi (Blessing over Bread/Challah)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, ha'motzi lechem min ha'arets.

Blessed are You, Eternal, whose presence fills creation, who brings forth bread from the earth.



Help Kids Prepare



Apple and Honey Tasting: Let kids dip apples into different varieties of honey and decide which they like best. Discuss the symbolism of a sweet new year.

Story time: Read children's books related to Rosh Hashanah. **Check out some of the books at PJ Library.**



Baking Round Challah: Let children help in baking the traditional round challah bread and explain its significance. **Explore recipes and other Rosh Hashanah foods here.**



Make Rosh Hashanah Cards. Get ready by making cards with your wishes for the New Year to send to friends and family.

Take a nature walk to a nearby stream or pond and perform the Tashlich ceremony. Children can throw pebbles or small twigs into the water, symbolizing the casting away of mistakes.

Learn more about Tashlich with kids.



Crafts



Apple-Print
Blessings
Placemat



The Bee's
Knees Honey
Pot



DIY Honey Bee
Cards



"Wash" Mistakes
Away Craft

And so many more...



Reflecting on Rosh Hashanah with Kids

Reflection and resolutions are a core aspect of the High Holidays, and guiding children through this process can be a valuable experience. Here are some prompts to help kids reflect during Rosh Hashanah:

4-6 Year Olds:

- Feelings and Friends: How did you feel when you played with a new friend this year?
- Favorite Moments: Can you tell me a happy story from this past year?
- Being Kind: What's a nice thing you did for someone else?

7-10 Year Olds:

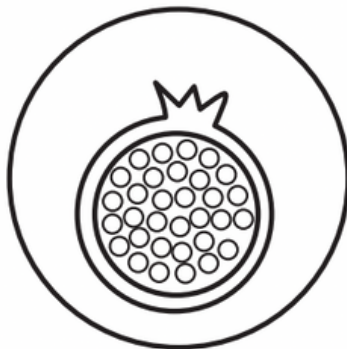
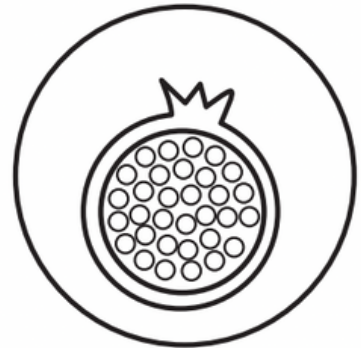
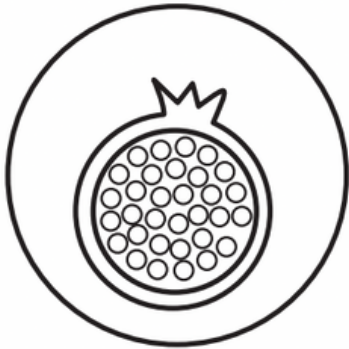
- New Beginnings: Is there something new you tried or learned this year? How did it make you feel?
- Gratitude: Can you name three things or moments you're thankful for from this past year?
- Goals for the Year: What's something you'd like to get better at next year?

10-13 Year Olds:

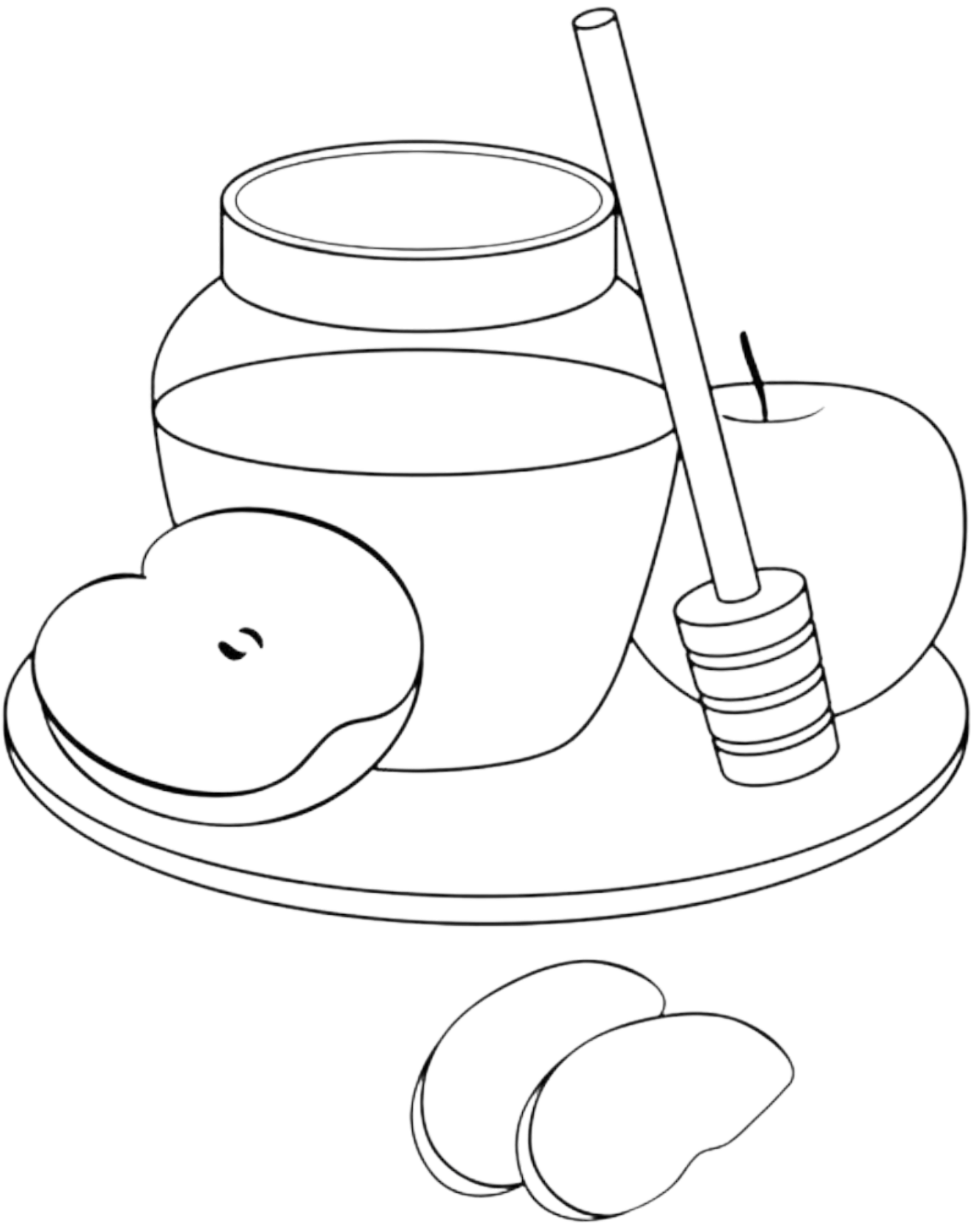
- Reflection on Growth: How do you think you've grown or changed over the past year?
- Challenges and Triumphs: What was a challenge you faced this year and how did you overcome it?
- Friendships and Relationships: How have your relationships with friends or family changed this year?



L'Shanah Tovah!



Celebrate Rosh Hashanah





ROSH HASHANAH





THE SOUND OF THE SHOFAR

What does the sound of the shofar sound like to you?
Does it sound like a siren? A crying voice? A trumpet announcing the king?

The shofar speaks to everyone differently.
Close your eyes, think about the sound of the shofar,
and draw what comes to mind for you. (There are no wrong answers!)

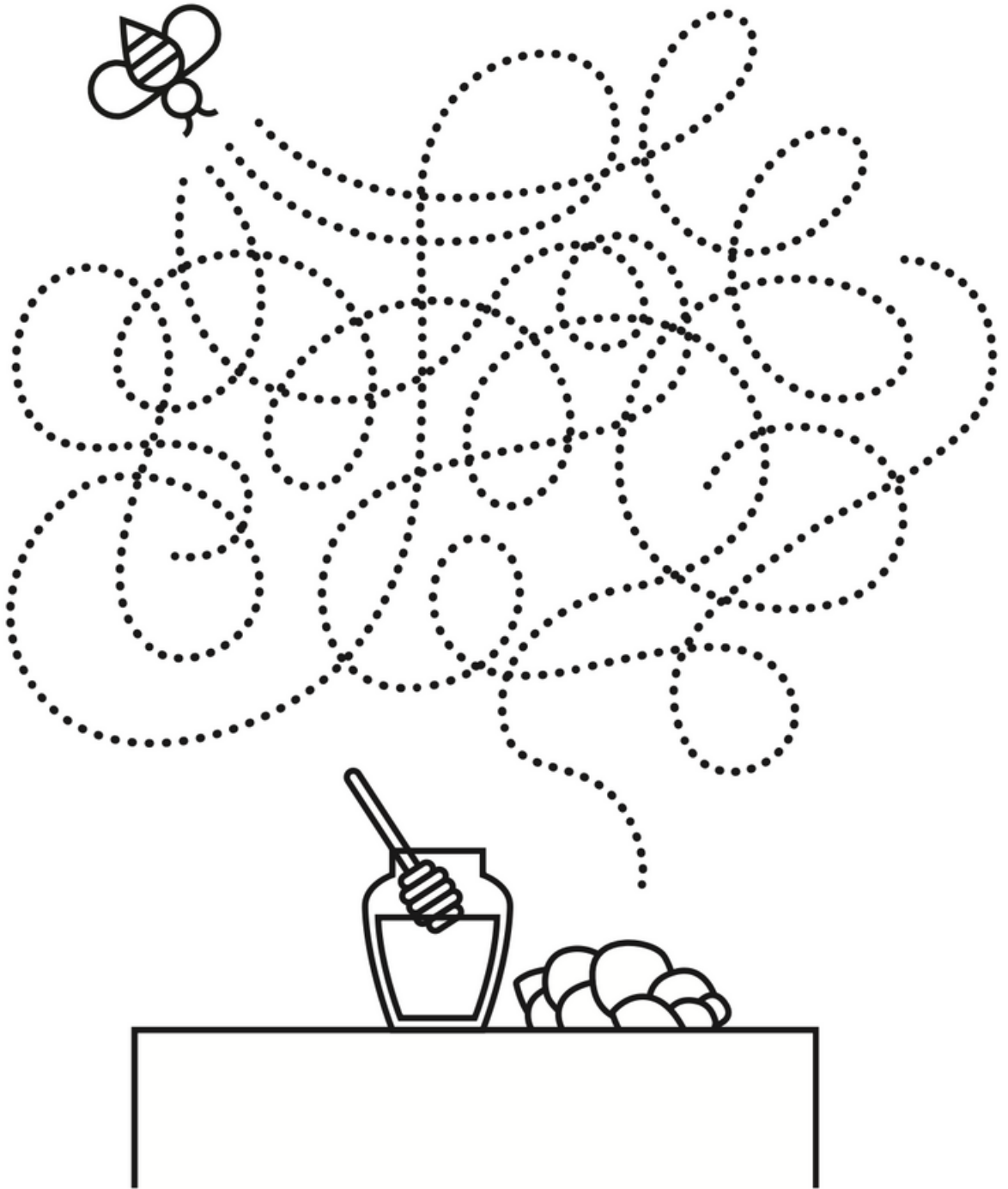


[Listen to the shofar here](#)



HELP THE BUZZY BEE

Help! The bee needs to get to the Rosh Hashanah table!
Which path will get him there?



Celebrate Yom Kippur with Children



What is Yom Kippur?



Really, Really Sorry:
Learning Slicha



The Book of Jonah

On Yom Kippur it is traditional to read the story of Jonah because it teaches us that when we make mistakes, it's important to say "sorry" and try to do better next time.



Helping Kids Prepare

Discussing Apologies: Talk to children about the concept of saying sorry. Encourage them to think of times they might have hurt someone's feelings and guide them in offering genuine apologies.

Easy Fasting: While fasting is for older children and adults, younger kids can participate by giving up a favorite treat or activity for the day.

Dress in White: On Yom Kippur, wearing white clothes is symbolic of wanting to make things right and start with a clean heart and fresh intentions. Let children wear white clothing on Yom Kippur, explaining the symbolism behind the color.

Story time: Just like for Rosh Hashanah, read age-appropriate books that explain the themes of Yom Kippur. Find books at [PJ Library](#).



Celebrate Yom Kippur

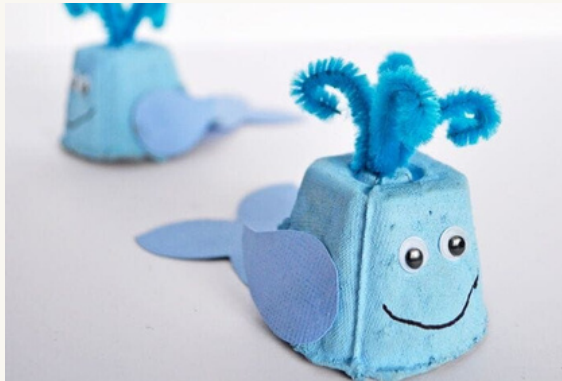
Crafts



Make a Shofar



Apology Cards



Egg Carton Whale: A craft inspired by the Jonah story it's traditional to read on Yom Kippur.



Create a Kindness Wheel



Reflecting on Yom Kippur with Kids

Here are some prompts to help kids reflect during Yom Kippur:

4-6 Year Olds:

- Can you remember a time you said "sorry" to someone? Why did you say it?
- Was there a toy or game you shared with a friend this year?

7-10 Year Olds:

- Think of a time you wished you acted differently. How can you make it right?
- How did you feel when someone apologized to you this year?
- What's a way you helped a friend or family member this year?

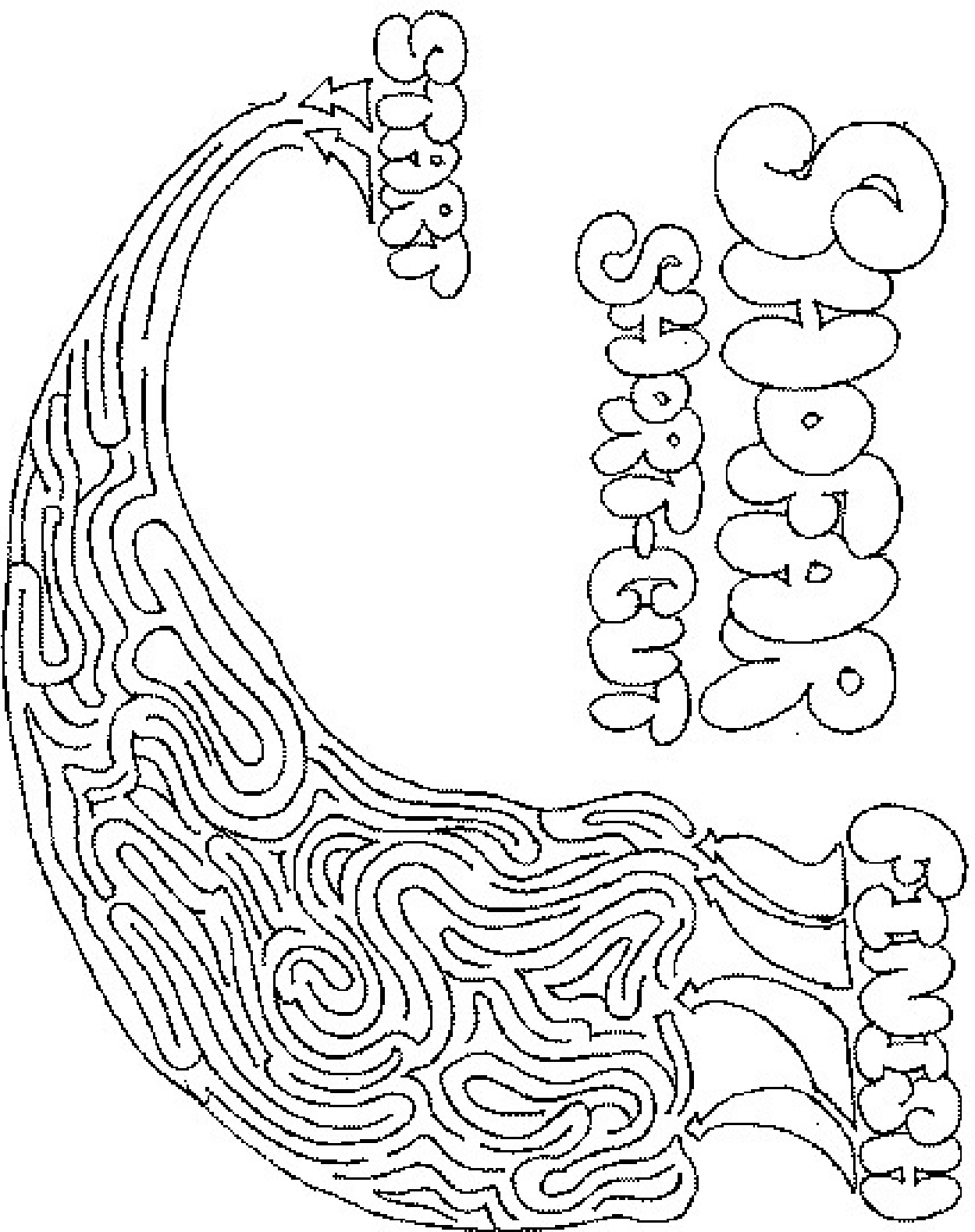
10-13 Year Olds:

- Can you think of a time you hurt someone's feelings, either on purpose or by accident? How did you handle it?
- What are some values or beliefs that are important to you? How did you uphold them this year?
- Why do you think it's important to give back to the community or help those in need? How can you contribute in the coming year?





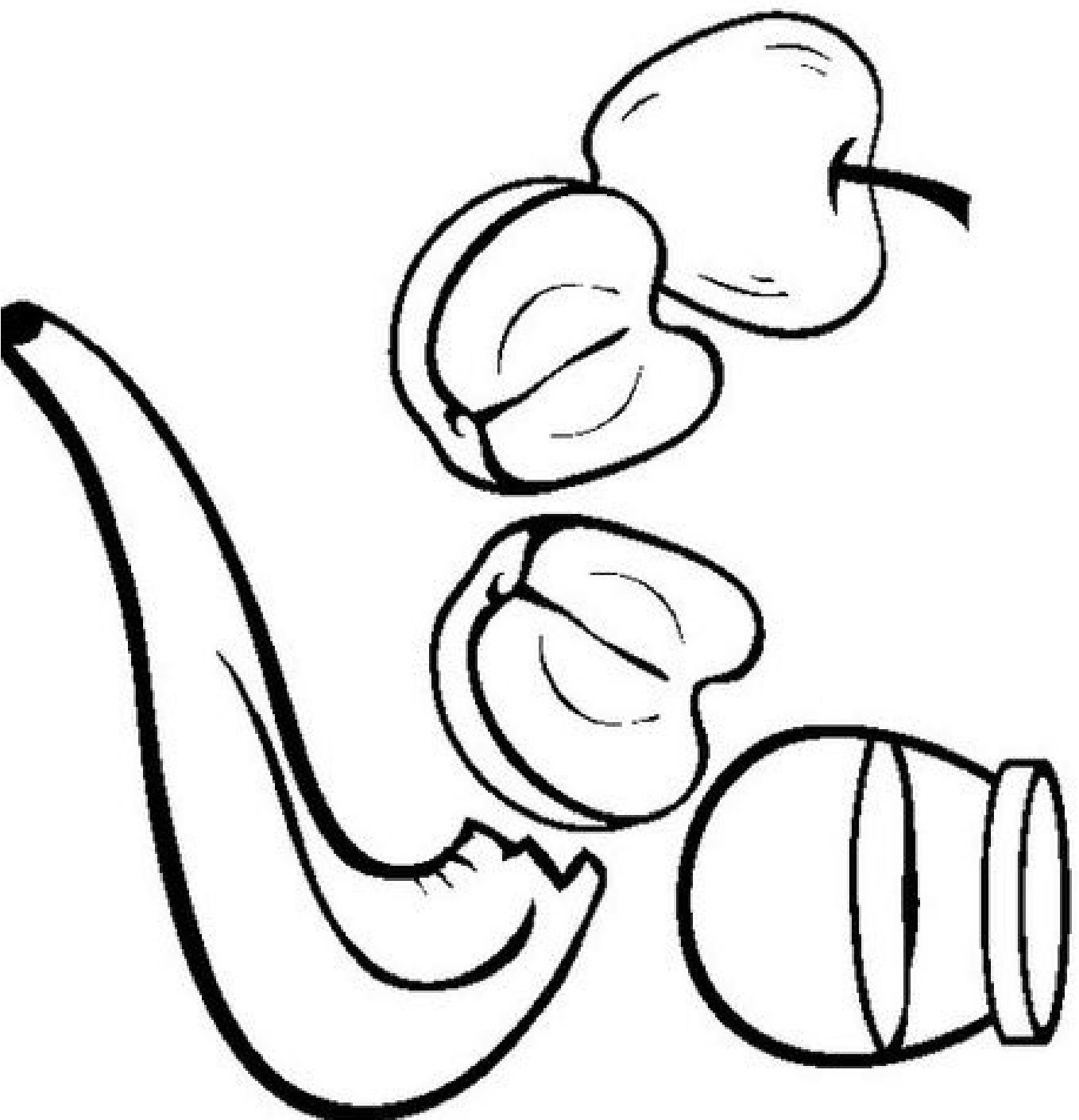
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Celebrate Yom Kippur