

Jewish Festivals:

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are important festivals in the Jewish year. Rosh Hashanah lasts for two days and celebrates the Jewish New Year. During Rosh Hashanah, many Jewish people think about God creating the world and give thanks for this. Shortly after Rosh Hashanah comes Yom Kippur. This is the holiest day of the year for Jewish people, who believe that God looks at their words, actions and deeds over whole year and judges them based on these.

In this work, we will look at the celebration of these two important festivals and think about what they mean to Jewish people.

My Life, My Religion

Watch this clip carefully. After watching, write down some of your ideas in the table below.



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02n2jc5>

Festival	What is it about?	How is it celebrated?
Rosh Hashanah		
Yom Kippur		

Below are some thoughts from Isabel, a Jewish girl, on celebrating Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Read what she has to say before trying the activities that follow.

What means most to Isabel?

Why are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur such important festivals for Jewish people?

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are the most important Jewish festivals because they give us a chance to say sorry for the bad things we've done.

We can say sorry to our friends and family for times when we have lost our temper, hurt people or lied. At this time Jewish people have a chance to pray to God so we can say that we are truly sorry and we will make things better if God forgives us.

Rosh Hashanah is a happy celebration because it is the start of a New Year.

After Yom Kippur we feel happy too, because it is like God has given us a second chance and we can have a new beginning.

What special food do you eat at this time?

On Rosh Hashanah we eat Challah bread, which is sweet and round like a crown. We eat honey cakes, which my brother loves. We have pomegranates because they have loads of seeds like the Torah has loads of laws.

The best thing of all is dipping pieces of apple into honey because the honey is sweet and we wish everyone a sweet new year. It's really yummy and sticky, I wish we could have it all the time.

We usually have a special family meal to celebrate and my Grandma always puts out serviettes with Hebrew writing on them and pictures like apples, honey, pomegranates and the shofar.



At Rosh Hashanah all Jewish people think carefully about the past year, reflecting on these questions. Can you tell us how you would answer these questions?

What is the most meaningful thing in my life?

The most meaningful thing in my life is probably my family, but my friends, my school and my dancing are also the most meaningful things.

Who in my life means most to me?

My family means most to me, and my rabbit called Sprinkles.

How often do I tell them?

I tell them that I love them every day.

What are the most significant things I have achieved . . . over the last year?

In the last year I have achieved well in my ballet and tap exams, I performed in a theatre, where I could show everyone what I had learned. I have also improved lots in my swimming and in Maths.

. . . in my life so far?

The most significant things in my life so far have been winning races, winning a competition and taking my dancing exams. I will always remember these things and the holidays that I have had with my family.

What do you think?

Write your answers to the questions in the thought bubbles:





Why do you think Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are important to Isabel?

Do you think the things Isabel and her family do at these festivals will help them to live good lives? How?

Foods for the Festivals

People sometimes eat special foods when they celebrate important occasions. Often these foods will help remind us of an important reason we are celebrating. An example might be a birthday cake, with the number of candles reminding us what age are becoming.

Here are four foods that Isobel mentioned as being important within the celebrations of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Use the internet to find out more about the importance of these foods at Rosh Hashanah. Fill in the table below:

Food	When is it eaten?	Why is it eaten?	What does it remind Jews of?
 challah bread			
 pomegranates			
 honey cakes			
 apples			

These resources have been taken from Opening Up RE Judaism



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