

JSU CLUB ACTIVITY



HAPPY BIRTHDAY! A ROSH HASHANA CELEBRATION

Time needed	45 minutes
Age range	All ages
Background of teen	No background preferred.
Set up	A space that can get a little messy

Goals:

Teach about the significance of Rosh Hashana and the responsibility that comes with a Birthday.

Relevance:

Participants should understand what the day of Rosh Hashana is commemorating and what responsibility it entails.

Active Learning:

A fun birthday celebration that can be used to give content for what we should be thinking on the birthday of mankind and on our own individual birthday milestones.

Supplies needed:

1. Birthday party supplies (Birthday hats, streamers, candles – make sure fire safety is considered)
2. Small individual cakes for each participants
3. Cake decorations (whipped cream, sprinkles, fudge, cake ornaments, and don't forget those cardboard boxes to pack up the cakes if they want to eat later!)
4. Table clothes

Step by step planning:

Time	Facilitator Activity	Teen activity
15 minutes	Ideally before teens arrive decorate the room to look like a birthday party.	NA
15 minutes	Hand out individual cakes and materials to design their own cake	Designing their own birthday cake being festive
10 minutes	Explain that Rosh Hashana is a birthday celebration, but not of the world – but for mankind.	Listening and answering questions posed
10 minutes	Teens are prompted to present their birthday wishes. What do they want to work on for the coming year	Presenting and listening to their peers birthday wishes

Facilitation Questions:

- What are we celebrating on Rosh Hashana?
- Is Rosh Hashana a somber day or a happy day?
- What should one think about on their birthday?
- What responsibilities come with a birthday celebration?

Wrap up message and Torah thought:

Man was created on Rosh Hashana
Midrash Vayikra Rabbah 29:1 (See also Ran to Talmud Rosh Hashana 11a)

It was taught in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: The world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul. The view of Rav agrees with the above teaching of Rabbi Eliezer. For we have learned in the Shofar Benediction composed by Rav: "Today is the day of the beginning of Your handiwork, a memorial of the first day; it is a decree for Israel, a law of the God of Jacob." On this day sentence is pronounced upon countries – which of them is destined for the sword and which for peace, which for famine and which for plenty; and each separate creature is scrutinized on this day and recorded for life or for death.

תני בשם ר"א בכ"ה באלול נברא העולם ואתיא דרב כההיא דתני ר"א דתנינן בתקיעתא דרב זה היום תחלת מעשיך זכרון ליום ראשון כי חוק לישראל הוא וגו' ועל המדינות בו יאמר איזו לחרב ואיזו לשלום איזו לרעב ואיזו לשובע ובריות בו יפקדו להזכירם לחיים ולמות.

The Responsibility of a Birthday – Perpetual Growth
Tzav V'Zeiruz #2, Rav Kalnymous Kalman Shapira (Trans. from "To Heal the Soul")

If your life's aim is to serve God with constant improvement and to reach age seventy beyond your *bar mitzva* level, then here is the thing to do: Each year, clarify a goal and envision the actualized "you" of next year. Visualize who this "you" will be: his attainments . . . his daily life . . . his character . . . and his inner essence. Use this envisioned "you" also as a gauge to know how far you still have to go. Is your present daily progress enough to create the reality of that envisioned future "you"?

But if next year comes and you have not actualized that "you," it is as if your life has been cut short. The new "you" was aborted, it is not alive now, you are still an old "you" of perhaps years ago.

KALNYMOUS KALMAN SHAPIRA

This is the meaning of "And Avraham was old, advanced in years" (Genesis 24:1): the Avraham of this year was the advanced Avraham of this year, not the Avraham of the past.

אם רצונך לעבוד את ד' ולהעלות את עצמך מעלה, ולא תעמוד ענה לזה בשנת השבעים לחיך כביום הפרמציה שלך, עשה זאת איפוא, בכל שנה עשה לך מטרה, צייר בעצמך, אם שמך ראובן למשל, איזה ראובן תהיה בשנה הבאה, מה יהיו השגותיו, עבודתו מדותיו וכל תכנו. והראובן הדמיוני יהיה לך למדה למדוד את עצמך בו, במה חסר לך עוד להראובן הדמיוני, האם עבודתך ותקון מעשיך של יום יום, יספיקו להשלים את הראובן של השנה הבאה. ואם היגעה שנה הבאה ומדדת את עצמך ולא הגעת אפילו לקרסולי הראובן של שנה הבאה, יהיה בעיניך שחם ושלוש חלילה וחס לא הארכת ימים. כי רק הראובן אשר לפני שנה או אשר לפני עשר שנים חי, ולא הראובן של שנה זו, ואברהם יקו בא בימים, אברהם של היום, הנה של היום, ולא האברהם של אתמול.