

## **Week 1: Teshuvah (5.1.1) Havurah or Online Class**

Being a part of any group requires awareness about our interactions and relationships with others in the group. The High Holiday season offers rituals and symbols to help us consider how we can improve these relationships.

Teachers: The links to the resources in ShalomLearning will work from this document when you are concurrently logged in. Otherwise, the name of the resource is given.

### **Suggested Setting**

The *Havurah*<sup>1</sup> session is your opportunity to introduce the topic of the month to both students and parents. Since family engagement is a critical component to the success of all Shalom Learning's goals, careful planning of the *Havurah* sessions is critical. The choice of venue can enhance the activities. For *teshuvah* in the fall, we suggest a site where families can do apple picking (Rosh Hashanah), vegetable gleanings (Sukkot), a group *tashlich*<sup>2</sup> near a stream, and/or where you can hold a party celebrating the Jewish and academic new years. Another option is helping to build a sukkah for a local group home or a senior living residence. Use this experience as a prompt for discussions about being sensitive to the needs of others and to group dynamics – harnessing the courage and energy to be ourselves amidst a group and to have positive impact on the group.

### **Learning Goals**

- Students will get to know a little bit about their classmates and get used to the ShalomLearning interface.
- Students will associate Rosh Hashana with a new beginning and a chance to learn from past mistakes.
- Students will learn about some of the Rosh Hashana rituals including blowing the shofar, eating symbolic foods, tashlich. Students will understand the symbolism of actions and see them as a catalyst for personal change.
- Students will reflect on the potential that a new beginning has to offer.

### **Mistakes Happen!**

#### **Time Allotment 10 minutes**

---

<sup>1</sup> A *chavurah* or *havurah* (חבורה Hebrew: "fellowship", plural *chavurot*) is a small group of like-minded Jews who assemble for the purposes of facilitating Shabbat and holiday prayer services, sharing communal experiences such as lifecycle events, or Jewish learning

<sup>2</sup> *Tashlich* is a Jewish ritual, performed on the afternoon usually of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, in which the participants symbolically cast off their sins by gathering along the banks of a river or stream and reciting prayer of repentance. See [http://www.chabad.org/holidays/jewishnewyear/template\\_cdo/aid/564247/jewish/What-is-Tashlich.htm](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/jewishnewyear/template_cdo/aid/564247/jewish/What-is-Tashlich.htm)

Teacher begins a discussion of fixing mistakes by relating the following scenario. There are only two minutes left in the big soccer game and Abigail's team is down by one. Abigail gets the ball and makes a perfect pass to her teammate Sherry who is standing right in front of the goal. Sherry kicks the ball but it bounces off of the goal post and doesn't go in. Game over. After the game, Abigail tells Brenda that Sherry is a terrible player. Brenda tells Sherry that Abigail said that about her. Next day in school Sherry refuses to speak to Abigail.

Discussion questions:

- What mistake did Abigail make?
- How can she try to fix her mistake?
- Did anyone else in the story make a mistake?
- Were all mistakes made equal?
- Do they all have the same solution?

Students should be encouraged to come up with their own scenario and other students can offer suggestions of what mistakes were made and how to fix it.

In Havurah setting, students can be broken up into groups of four. Two members of the group can come up with and act out a scenario and the other two members can discuss the mistake. Alternatively, the class can brainstorm scenarios and the teacher can assign each one to a group to discuss.

### Learning from Mistakes

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Video: **Former Apple CEO John Sculley: You Learn From Your Mistakes, Not Your Successes**

John Sculley discusses that to run a successful business, it is crucial to learn from your mistakes. He explains that everyone makes mistakes, the key to success is to learn from them for next time. This is an important idea in understanding teshuva as a positive step towards growth. Everyone will make mistakes but Rosh Hashana and teshuva remind us to learn from our mistakes.

Discussions:

- Why do some people not want to admit that they have made a mistake?
- How can recognizing that you made a mistake help you become a better person?
- In the video, John Sculley says that the mark of a good entrepreneur is "never give up." How does this apply to teshuva?
- Can you think of a time that you made a mistake?
- Was it hard for you to recognize the mistake and learn from it?

### Connection to Enduring Understanding:

Recognize teshuva as a growth process that can strengthen a person inside and in interactions with friends.

### Teshuva – Roots of the Word

**Havurah and Online**

**Time allotment 10 minutes**

A. Write the word תשובה/teshuva block letters in Hebrew on a white board or on butcher paper.

The translation of the word teshuva is repentance and introspection. These are difficult words for a fifth grader so The teacher will have to explain that it means thinking about what you have done and try to fix it. Students can discuss why repentance is a valuable exercise for a person to do.

B. Highlight the letters שׁוּב in the middle of תשובה. Explain that the root of the word in Hebrew often shows an essential quality of the word. The root of word teshuva is שׁוּב—return. In Havurah, have the students trace the letters within the word teshuva.

Discuss with the students what the significance of this root is. What are we returning to when we do teshuva? Students may give answers like “returning to God,” “returning to our good selves,” “returning to our community,” etc. Each answer can be discussed to deepen our appreciation of what teshuva means.

**Connection to enduring understanding:**

Students will recognize the goodness they have within and how teshuva helps them uncover it.

***Brain Break: Hokey Pokey***

**Time Allotment: 3 minutes**

**Class: Havurah and Online**

***Rosh Hashana Rituals***

**Time Allotment: 5 minutes**

**Class: Havurah and Online**

Discuss various Rosh Hashana rituals such as dipping apple in Honey, eating pomegranate, eating a fish’s head. Explain how each ritual prepares a person to start fresh and anew. In Havurah, these items can be brought to the classroom.

Symbolism:

- Apple in Honey – Looking forward to a sweet new Year
- Fish Head – Hope to be a “head” and not a “tail.” This means we should be leaders, not followers, we should have goodness in our lives, not difficulties.
- Pomegranate – The pomegranate has many seeds and we hope to have many good deeds in the new year

***Teshuva on Rosh Hashana***

**Time Allotment: 10 minutes**

**Class: Havurah and Online**

The shofar is a mitzvah we do on Rosh Hashana. The sharp blast from the shofar has various symbolisms. One is to “wake us up” to do teshuva. Others are symbolizing trumpets to proclaim God’s kingship and a remembrance of the shofar blasts at the giving of the Torah on *Har Sinai*.

Ask students:

Why is Rosh Hashana a good time to do teshuva?

If you would do teshuva on Rosh Hashana, how could it change your year?

Moses Maimonides defined Teshuva as having three parts:

- A. Regretting what you did
- B. Saying it out loud
- C. Trying to never do it again

Understanding each part can help students understand the process of teshuva, as well as give them a framework to introspect that goes beyond a vague feeling of wanting to be better.

Some questions to ask students:

- Why do you think each part is important?
- How would these three steps help a person do teshuva?

### *New Beginnings*

**Time Allotment: 15 minutes**

**Class: *Havurah* and Online**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCI28OpJfOg>

Video of new beginnings explores how one action that a person does can change their and someone else's life.

Encourage students to think about what "new beginnings" they would like to start in the coming year. Teacher can give out index cards for students to write down ideas.

Alternatively, students can be encouraged to write letters to themselves with some "new beginning" goals that teacher can collect and return to the students a few months later.

Discussion questions:

- Which action from the video did you find to be most meaningful?
- What new beginnings did you notice in this video?
- What new beginnings would you want for the coming year?
- What preparations could you do to achieve it?

### *Virtual Tashlich*

**Time Allotment: 15 minutes**

**Class: *Havurah* and Online**

Tashlich is another Rosh Hashana ritual in which we say a prayer next to water and symbolically throw our sins into the water. It represents that we are starting the year fresh and without sin. It is another method of introspection.

Activity:

Give each student an index card and ask them to write down the 3 behaviors from this list that they want to work on this year. Then perform an online *tashlich* by throwing the list out in a receptacle lined with blue paper to simulate flowing water (or a blue recycling bin). For an online class, the students can do this at home.

**How this Activity Connects to the Enduring Understanding:** Rituals remind us to “wake up” and remember we have a choice in how we behave and a responsibility to be helpful to other human beings.

**Tags:** ritual, *tashlich*, online, in-person, *havurah*

### *Rosh Hashana Party with Symbolic Foods*

**Time Allotment:** 15 minutes

**Class:** *Havurah* only

Join other *Havurah* groups at a *Rosh Hashanah* party and eat the symbolic foods, using the *yehi ratzon* formulas ([5.1.1 Seven Species](#)). Which of these foods can help us think about our behaviors when in a group? Challenge parents and students to come up with their own *yehi ratzon* puns related to group behavior, using any food or object they wish.

**How this Activity Connects to the Enduring Understanding:**

Eating symbolic foods, just like hearing the shofar blast can help wake us up to the new year and how we want to live in the likeness of God.

**Tags:** Rosh Hashanah, food, ritual, *havurah*, in-person

### *Wrap Up*

**Time Allotment:** 3 minutes

- Everyone makes mistakes, but you can become a great person if you don't give up and fix your mistakes
- Rosh Hashana rituals remind us that every year we have a new beginning and can fix our mistakes
- Next week: Teshuva can help you be a better friend!

### *Table Talk*

What is a mistake you made that you wish you could go back and fix? Discuss!

### *MyShalomLearning Activity*

This week we talked about teshuva and starting fresh for the New Year. A great way to have a fresh start is with your friends. Please watch the following video clip: “You never had a friend like me” from Aladdin – in Hebrew!

Link - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ5x7t\\_23BE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ5x7t_23BE)

Discussion Questions to answer:

1. Can you describe one occasion in which you acted like a good friend?
2. What about your actions showed that you were a good friend?

---

**Suggested Parent Follow-Up Email:**

Dear Parents,

Today in our ShalomLearning lesson we completed the first week of Teshuva, with a focus on reflecting on the potential that a new beginning has to offer. Teshuva translates to repentance and introspection.

**Recap:**

- Students got to know a little bit about their classmates and practiced using the ShalomLearning interface.
- We began to associate Rosh Hashana with a new beginning and a chance to learn from past mistakes.
- We learned about some of the Rosh Hashana rituals including blowing the shofar, eating symbolic foods, and tashlich.
- One of the major goals was that students would understand the symbolism of actions and see them as a catalyst for personal change.

**Table Talk:**

Each week I will send you some suggestions of things to talk about at the dinner table (or elsewhere!) following your child's class.

- What is a mistake you made in your life that you wish you could go back and fix? Discuss!

**MyShalomLearning Activity for next week:**

A great way to have a fresh start is with your friends. Please watch the following video clip: "You never had a friend like me" from Aladdin – in Hebrew!

Link - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ5x7t\\_23BE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ5x7t_23BE)

Discussion Questions to answer:

1. Can you describe one occasion in which you acted like a good friend?
2. What about your actions showed that you were a good friend?

**Next Week:**

Teshuva can help you be a better friend!

Please contact me with any questions!

Sincerely,  
xxxxxxx