

Preparing for Rosh HaShanah and the New Year: *Tashlich @ Home Activity*

This exercise encourages families to reflect on the purpose and traditions of Rosh HaShanah. It allows families to create a *Tashlich* (casting away) ritual at home.

Families may wish to complete this activity together. It is designed for family members older than Prep, although the activity could be adapted for younger children. Parents/Carers can complete this activity alongside children, and guidance for parents/carers to facilitate this activity are noted below in blue.

To complete this activity, you will need:

- water-soluble textas
- paper
- bowl filled with water
- background reflective music (optional)

Activity:

1. **Play some contemplative music to set the tone and then together, discuss Rosh HaShanah, its purpose, customs and rituals.**

Parents/Carers should help by asking questions, such as:

-What is Rosh HaShanah? (the new Jewish year)

-Why is it important in Judaism? (a chance to reset ourselves; realign values & goals; a chance to repent and ask forgiveness)

-How do we commemorate the new year? (for example synagogue prayer services, community, shofar [rams horn to awaken us]; food [apples/honey for a sweet new year; round challah for the cycles of life; fish head for the head of the year]).

-What are some of our family's favourite rituals or customs of Rosh HaShanah?

2. **Discuss Tashlich.**

"Tashlich" comes from the Hebrew word meaning "to cast". Tashlich is a Jewish tradition performed during the days of Repentance (the time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). Jewish people go visit a body of moving water and symbolically cast off their sins by throwing bread crumbs into the water. Ask: what kinds of things might we want to cast off? Participants can share some of their responses if they wish, or write these down on the paper.

Note: Some things are harder to say out loud to others. So if you are sharing as a family, make sure you also take some time for personal thinking time to identify challenging things we might wish to cast away, but don't want to say out loud.

3. **Perform Tashlich Ritual.**

Allow everyone enough time to write down the things they are sorry for, using the water-soluble textas. Then one by one, approach the bowl (or bucket) of water and dissolve away the writing. Participants can do this as many times as they would like.

Participants may like to write a few things down, or even write an acrostic (A-Z) of their wrongdoings for the year before they cast them into the water.