

- 1) How do you think Avraham had the strength to agree to sacrifice Yitzchak – the child who he had been waiting for, for so many years?
- 2) How would Rosh HaShannah be different, had there not been a ram stuck in the bushes?
- 3) How does the word, child, link to the Parasha?

Torah Reading for Day 2

Summary

Hashem (G-d) commanded Avraham (Abraham) to sacrifice his son, Yitzchak (Isaac) on Har (Mt) Moriah in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). He took Yishmael (Ishmael), who was his son from his second wife, Hagar, along with him and he also took his trusted servant, Eliezer. When they reached the base of the mountain, Avraham asked Yishmael and Eliezer to wait and he carried on with Yitzchak. Yitzchak asked where the animal was for the sacrifice and Avraham told Yitzchak that he was the sacrifice. Yitzchak asked for his hands and feet to be tied (bound together) so that he doesn't squirm and ruin the sacrifice. Yitzchak was bound and placed on the altar. As Avraham was about to slaughter his son, a voice of a malach (angel) from heaven called to stop him, saying that it was a test and Avraham had passed it. Avraham still wanted to give a gift to Hashem and spotted a ram, whose horns were caught in the bushes. Avraham offered the ram in Yitzchak's place.

Discovery

Did you know that one of the reasons we blow the shofar on Rosh HaShannah is because Avraham passed the test of listening to Hashem and the horn of the ram reminds us of the good deed of Avraham?

Did you know that this story is known as Akedat Yitzchak - the *binding* of Isaac, not the *sacrificing* of Yitzchak?

Did you know that Har HaMoriya is also the place where Ya'akov had his dream with the ladder starting on Earth and reaching the heavens and was also the spot where the Beit HaMikdash was built?

Rosh HaShannah Information (this box also appears in yesterday's Children's service guide)

Rosh HaShannah means "Head of the Year" and lasts for two days. It is the anniversary of the day when Hashem created Adam and Chava (Eve).

On Rosh HaShannah Hashem decides what blessings will come our way throughout the coming year.

A very important mitzvah is the blowing of the shofar (the ram's horn). We do this to Coronate Hashem as King and to do teshuva (repentance). We also remember the story of the Binding of Yitzchak in which a ram took his place as an offering to G-d. We hope that Avraham's good deed will put us in good stead. We listen to one hundred shofar blasts on Rosh HaShannah.

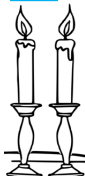
On Rosh Hashanah we have some customs; 1) We eat a piece of apple dipped in honey, symbolising a sweet new year 2) we eat foods that have special significance, such as, a pomegranate has lots of seeds and we want to fill our year with lots of mitzvot. 3) we wish each other a happy new year. 4) Tashlich, a special prayer said near the sea, a river, a pond, etc.), where we think about any wrong things we have done during the year and we symbolically throw away the desire to do them again.

Aseret Y'mei Teshuva

The ten days from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur are known as the Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah – the Ten Days of Repentance but a better translation is the Ten Days of Returning (to Hashem).

The Rabbis tell us that Hashem is especially close to us at this time and "the gates of heaven are open, and I will listen to your prayers." It's a custom for us to give tzedaka (charity) and perform many mitzvot (good deeds / biblical commandments) during these days.

The coming year is decided on Rosh Hashanah but not sealed until Yom Kippur so we use this time to really improve ourselves, so we are deserving of a good year.





Gratitude

Who has done something special for you this week and what did they do? (If they are present, go up to them and say thank you!)

THANK
YOU!

Games



1) Apple, Honey, Shofar!

Link: Apples dipped in honey are a traditional Rosh HaShannah food, and the shofar is an important part of Rosh HaShannah.

Children sit in a circle. The children's service leader chooses three actions: Apple – pretend to pick an apple from a tree. Honey – pretend to dip an apple into honey. Shofar – pretend to blow a shofar.

The leader calls out one of the three words and everyone has to do the correct action as quickly as possible. Once everyone knows the actions, the leader starts calling them out faster and faster. To make it harder, the leader can sometimes do the wrong action while saying the correct word. The children must listen carefully and do the correct action, not copy the leader. Anyone who does the wrong action is out. The last child remaining wins.

2) Shofar Simon Says

Link: The shofar is blown on Rosh HaShannah and makes three main types of sounds: Tekiah, Shevarim and Teruah.

Children stand in a large circle. The children's service leader becomes the "shofar blower" and calls out instructions. If they say "Tekiah", everyone must stand tall and make one long shofar-blowing action. If they say "Shevarim", everyone must make three short shofar-blowing actions. If they say "Teruah", everyone must make lots of quick shofar-blowing actions. The leader can call the sounds faster and faster, but the children must listen carefully. To make it harder, the leader sometimes makes the wrong action while calling out a sound. The children must do the correct action, not copy the leader. For an extra challenge, the leader can call "No shofar!" and everyone must stand completely still and silent.

3) Shofar Sound Relay

Link: The shofar is blown in a special sequence on Rosh HaShannah: Tekiah, Shevarim and Teruah.

Divide the children into two or three teams. Each team stands in a line. The children's service leader stands at the front of the room and secretly shows the first child in each team one of the three shofar sounds: Tekiah, Shevarim or Teruah. The first child runs back to their team and acts out the sound without speaking. They then tag the next person in their team, who must copy the sound and pass it on to the next person. The sound continues down the line until it reaches the final child. The final child must run to the children's service leader and say which shofar sound they think was passed along. The team gets a point if they get the correct answer.

Start with one sound, then make it harder by showing the first child a sequence of two or three sounds, which they have to remember and pass along in the correct order. The team with the most points wins.

Story (One of the children can read this out loud – encourage them to use expression.)



It was the week before Rosh HaShannah and Ari was very excited. His class had been practising for the school's Rosh HaShannah assembly and tomorrow was the big day. Ari had been given a special job. He was going to blow the shofar at the end of the assembly. He had been practising every evening and his tekiah gedolah was getting longer and louder. He was so proud of himself.

On the morning of the assembly, Ari arrived at school early. He took the shofar out of its case and carefully checked it. Then he noticed something. There was a crack near the mouthpiece. Ari panicked. He showed his teacher, who looked carefully at it. "I'm not sure it's safe to use, that could give you a serious cut on your lip," she said. "We might need to find another shofar." "But I've practised so much!" said Ari. "I know," replied his teacher. "Let's see what we can do."

Just then, another boy in the class, Ben, came over. "I have a shofar in my bag that I can use," he said. "My grandpa gave it to me." Ari's heart sank. Ben's shofar was smaller, and Ari knew that Ben had hardly practised at all. The teacher looked at Ari. "What do you think?" Ari really wanted to say no. He had worked so hard. He wanted everyone to hear his shofar. He wanted his friends to be impressed. Then he remembered something his dad had said the night before. "Sometimes life gives us tests," Dad had told him. "Not tests where you get a mark. Tests where you have to choose what kind of person you want to be."

Ari looked at Ben. "Go for it – thanks for stepping in, everyone deserves to hear the shofar." Ben's face lit up. "Really?" Ari nodded. "Really." The assembly began. When it was time for the shofar, Ben stood at the front. He took a deep breath and tried to blow. Nothing happened. He tried again. This time there was a tiny squeak. Some of the children giggled. Ari felt embarrassed for Ben. Then Ari remembered the test. "Try again!" he whispered. Ben took another deep breath. This time the shofar made a proper sound. The children gasped and were very impressed.

After the assembly, Ben ran over to Ari. "Thank you," he said. "I was so nervous." Ari smiled. "You did really well." On the way home, Ari told his dad what had happened. "I still really wanted to blow the shofar," he admitted. "I know," Dad replied. "Does that mean I failed the test because I wanted it?" Dad smiled. "No. Having the wrong feeling isn't the test. The test is what you choose to do with that feeling."

Ari thought about this carefully. Maybe life tests weren't always obvious. Maybe sometimes nobody even knew you were being tested. And perhaps Rosh HaShannah was a good time to think about all those little moments when we have a choice: to be selfish or generous, jealous or supportive, honest or dishonest, kind or unkind. Ari smiled. He had not got the moment he had been hoping for. But perhaps he had got something more important. He had passed a test that nobody had put on a piece of paper.

1) What can we learn from this story and how does it connect to the Parasha?

2) Was Ari right to let Ben take over, even though he wasn't well-prepared?

3) Have you every had a test like this and done the right thing? (please don't use names when you share your answer)