



JFS Jewish Journal
Engaging Your Jewish Residents



Shavuot

Shavuot:

Giving of the Torah



Shavuot

Seven weeks after Passover, we celebrate the festival of Shavuot (pronounced Shah-voo-OAT & sometimes pronounced as Shah-VOO-us). On Shavuot we celebrate the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. Historically, Shavuot also marked the spring harvest, so it is a time of both abundance and joy in the Jewish calendar. **Shavuot will begin at sundown on Thursday, May 21 and end at sundown on Saturday, May 23.**

Meet Our New Community Chaplain: Rabbi Adam Lautman

Originally from Livingston, New Jersey, Rabbi Adam has served in congregational, educational, hospital, and recovery center settings, and is passionate about helping people connect with inclusive Judaism, spirituality, and community. You can learn more about how Rabbi Adam can support you and your residents on *page 2*.

JFS is Here & This is How We Help

Jewish Family Services (JFS) enriches lives and strengthens the community by providing compassionate support and resources to individuals and families from all backgrounds. Guided by Jewish values, JFS specializes in supporting older adults' safety and independence, assisting families with resources and guidance, providing private transportation to appointments, offering expert counseling and care management, and more. You can learn more about JFS and our chaplaincy program on *page 5*.



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How to Celebrate Shavuot with Your Residents

Starting on the second night of Passover, Jews count 49 nights until Shavuot—this is called the *Omer*. Once tied to the grain harvest, it now marks a time of spiritual preparation for receiving the Torah. Shavuot was also one of the three pilgrimage festivals to the Temple in Jerusalem, and traditional/observant Jews refrain from labor on it, just as on Shabbat.

While Shavuot is a very meaningful holiday, it is not as widely celebrated as some other Jewish holidays. Given the themes of spring and harvest, decorating with florals and bright colors is a great way to get in the holiday spirit. Typical celebration involves studying biblical texts, especially the [Book of Ruth, summarized here](#). We also read about the Ten Commandments and celebrate Moses receiving the tablets from G-d at Mount Sinai.

Serve Dairy



One explanation for serving dairy on Shavuot is that after receiving the Torah, the Israelites did not yet have kosher meat prepared according to the newly given laws, so they ate dairy foods instead. Traditional Shavuot favorites include *kugel* (a sweet noodle casserole made with eggs, sour cream, and cottage cheese), *blintzes*, cheese *bourekas*, and cheesecake.

Offer Shavuot Crafts



To prepare for Shavuot celebrations, try some easy, fun crafts that will bring spring into any space! DIY projects like these [popsicle stick flowers](#) or these [cupcake liner bouquets](#) can be made with common household objects and are sure to brighten rooms and moods alike.

Hebrew ...	It is pronounced ...	It means ...
<i>Shavuot</i>	Shah-voo-OAT / Shah-VOO-us	Weeks/the Harvest Festival
<i>Chag Sameach</i>	Hahg sah-may-ach	Happy holiday!
<i>Gut Yuntif</i> (Yiddish)	Good YUHN-tif	Happy holiday!
<i>Har Sinai</i>	Har Sea-nye	Mount Sinai
<i>Sefirat HaOmer</i>	Se-Fear-aht Ha Oh-mare	<i>Counting of the Omer</i>

JFS Chaplaincy Support

Contact Rabbi Adam to schedule a visit:
alautman@jfsneny.org | 518-246-6362

The Jewish Family Services Chaplaincy Program partners with Capital Region long-term care facilities to support the spiritual well-being of Jewish residents and promote cultural inclusivity.

We provide:

- **Religious Services:** Clergy led holiday and religious services to provide a sense of community.
- **Enrichment Programming:** Engaging educational discussions on Jewish history and traditions.
- **Pastoral Care:** One-on-one visits for residents, providing support during transitions or illness.
- **Staff Cultural Competency:** Guidance on Jewish traditions, holidays, and kosher practices.

Bubbe's Corner

You can always count on Bubbe (Yiddish for “grandmother”) for her wisdom, stories and traditions. Be sure to ask your residents about how they celebrated Shavuot. Did they make *blintzes*, eat cheesecake, make paper flowers?



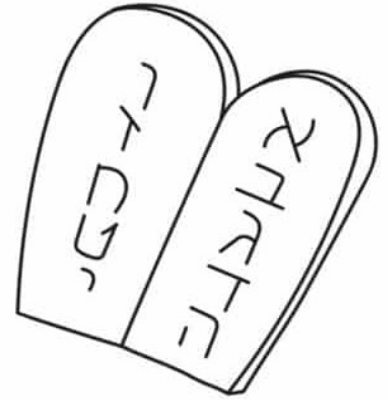
Shavuot has five recognized names! Shavuot, Day of First Fruits, the Harvest Festival, *Atzeret*, and the Time of the Giving of the Torah.

In some sects of Judaism, teenagers in religious schools have confirmation ceremonies around Shavuot because it's near the end of the school year.

Shavuot literally translates to “weeks” since it marks the seven weeks that have elapsed during the *Omer*.

In Israel, many *kibbutz* (commune) communities throw colorful harvest festival celebrations called *Bikkurim*.

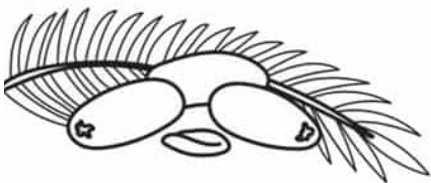
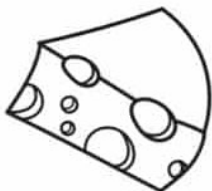
During the *Omer*, Jewish weddings are prohibited. Therefore, Shavuot is often a very popular time to get married.



Happy



Shavuot



Jewish Holidays Calendar 2025*

Holiday	Date
Shavuot (2 days)	Thursday, May 21* – Saturday, May 23, 2026
Rosh Hashanah (2 days)	Friday, Sept. 11* – Sunday, Sept. 13, 2026
Yom Kippur (1 day)	Sunday, Sept. 20* – Monday, Sept. 21, 2026
Sukkot (7 days)	Friday, Sept. 25* – Friday, Oct. 2, 2026
Shmini Atzeret (1 day) & Simchat Torah (1 day)	Friday, Oct. 2* – Sunday, Oct. 4, 2026
Hanukkah (8 days)	Friday, Dec. 4* – Saturday, Dec. 12, 2026
Tu B'Shvat	Friday, Jan. 22* – Saturday, Jan. 23, 2027
Purim	Monday, March 22* - Tuesday, March 23, 2027
Passover (8 days)	Wednesday, April 21* - Thursday, April 29, 2027

* All holidays begin at sundown

About JFS

Jewish Family Services of Northeastern NY provides counseling, promotes independence, aging well, and access to basic needs, mitigates food insecurity and social isolation.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of individuals and families from all backgrounds and strengthen the community by providing compassionate, collaborative human services, guided by Jewish values. This is amplified by volunteers and sustained by donors to ensure support for our community is within reach.

Our staff has expertise in:

- Helping older adults maintain their safety and independence
- Providing resources and guidance to older adults and their families
- Offering private transportation to medical appointments and synagogue services
- Counseling and care management (JFS is part of major insurance networks, including Medicare)

Support Our Chaplaincy Program

JFS provides spiritual connection and support for Jewish residents in long-term and elder care in the Capital Region.

Online: jfsneny.org/donations

Call: (518) 516-1102

Thank you!



Connect with Us!



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