



JFS Jewish Journal

Engaging Your Jewish Residents



Pre-High Holidays

The High Holidays: Getting Ready



The High Holidays

In Judaism, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are known as the High Holidays. These sacred days fall on different dates each year, following the Jewish soli-lunar calendar, in which each Hebrew month begins with the new moon. Rosh Hashanah marks the Jewish New Year—a time when Jews gather for prayer, reflection, and to celebrate with sweet foods and festive traditions. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day of the Jewish year. It is typically observed through fasting (when medically appropriate) and seeking forgiveness for the past year's transgressions or sins. As a reminder, all Jewish holidays begin and end at sunset, in keeping with the belief that God created night before day.

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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6 Ways to Prepare for the High Holidays

1) Make a Holiday Shopping List



With the High Holidays approaching, don't be the last one searching for a **round challah**! This special braided bread is shaped in a circle to symbolize the cyclical nature of the year.

Another cherished tradition is **dipping apples in honey**—a sweet way to express our hope for a joyful and prosperous year ahead. Apples are said to represent renewal, while **pomegranates**, filled with hundreds of seeds, symbolize abundance and the many good deeds we aspire to in the coming year.

To help residents celebrate, consider picking up some of these traditional items:

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------|--------------|
| ✓ Apples | ✓ Round challah | ✓ Honey cake |
| ✓ Honey | ✓ Pomegranate | ✓ Brisket |

When it's time to celebrate, feel free to greet others with "*Chag Sameach*" or "*Shanah Tovah*"—wishing them a happy and sweet New Year!

2) Schedule Services



The month preceding the High Holidays is called *Elul*. It begins with a ceremonial forgiveness service where congregations gather to recite special prayers preceding Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This long period of reflection allows Jews to say traditional prayers. This holiday season, please contact JFS for information on in-person and virtual high holiday services at (518) 482-8856 or info@jfsnyny.org.

3) Practice Meditations



The month of *Elul* is meant as a time of introspection. The goal is to have a better sense of self — shortcomings and mistakes, seeking forgiveness where possible, and giving forgiveness as well. Host reflective sessions with your residents using the following tools:

- ✓ [Yom Kippur Meditation on Forgiveness](#)
- ✓ [Meditation Music](#)
- ✓ [End of Year Reflection Worksheet](#)

In addition to these resources, the [Institute for Jewish Spirituality](#) hosts free, daily online Meditation Sits, Mondays through Fridays from 12:30 - 1pm EST. You can sign up for the Zoom link directly on their website or go to their [YouTube page](#) to watch their most recent live streams.

6 Ways to Prepare for the High Holidays (cont.)

4) Commemorate Departed Loved Ones



Around the High Holidays, it is customary for Jews to visit the gravesites of their loved ones. This practice can also be done by adding a new plant to your garden or simply taking time to celebrate the lives of those who remain in their memory. Please reach out if JFS can be of assistance.

5) Listen to the Sounds of the *Shofar* and Traditional Music



A *shofar* is a ram's horn that is played like a trumpet. The crying sounds remind listeners to be introspective and atone for any wrongdoings. Traditionally, the *shofar* is sounded every day during the month of *Elul* (except on Shabbat). Whether listening to the *shofar* or other tunes for the High Holidays, familiar melodies can bring memories and excitement for the future.

- ✓ [Sounds of the shofar](#)
- ✓ [Shofar for Rosh Hashanah](#)
- ✓ [Avinu Malkeinu](#) - recited from the beginning of *Elul* through Yom Kippur
- ✓ [Dip Your Apple](#) - a modern Rosh Hashanah song set to the tune of Shakira's *Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)*

6) Reach Out to Others



This time is often used to connect. Whether scheduling a Zoom call or exchanging letters, rekindling a relationship can bring joy and fulfillment to residents' lives. Support your Jewish residents by offering to facilitate connections if they are not able.

Expressions & Greetings			
Hebrew ...	It is pronounced ...	It means ...	When it is said ...
<i>Chag Sameach</i>	Hahg sah-may-ach	Happy holiday!	Any holiday except for Yom Kippur
<i>Shanah tovah</i>	Sha-nah toe-vah	Happy New Year!	On Rosh Hashanah and after, but not on Yom Kippur
<i>Shanah tovah u'metukah</i>	Sha-nah toe-vah ooh mehtoo-kah	Have a sweet and happy new year	On Rosh Hashanah and before Yom Kippur
<i>G'mar chatimah tovah or G'mar Tov</i>	G-mar ha-ti-mah toh-vah or G-mar tov	May you be sealed in the Book of Life or a good sealing	After Rosh Hashanah and including Yom Kippur
<i>Machzor</i>	Makh-zore	Prayer book specific to the High Holidays	A resident may say, "I want to use my <i>machzor</i> to pray."

Bubbe's Corner

You can always count on Bubbe (Yiddish for “grandmother”) for her wisdom, stories and traditions. Today Bubbe Norah shares some fun stories about preparing for the High Holidays. Whether your residents are a Bubbe or have a Bubbe figure in their life, spend time learning about holiday preparations that are both traditional and new.

Back when I lived on the Upper East Side, I remember hearing my neighbor blow his *shofar* everyday of *Elul*.

I'm so excited to teach my grandchildren to say *chag sameach*!

When I was a girl, I loved picking apples and setting them aside for the yummy recipes I made with my Bubbe.

With the new year coming up, I think I'll give my friends Maureen and Barbara a call.

Every year for the High Holidays, my family would add money to our *tzedakah* box and pick a charity we want to donate to. **Please consider JFS.** We can only provides services like chaplaincy support through the generosity of our community.

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!

For all Jewish Journals and this year's holiday dates, visit jfsneny.org/chaplaincy-support.



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Connect with Us!

 **518-482-8856**

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Jewish Federation
of Northeastern New York

**The Jewish Community
Endowment Fund**

The Theodore Strauss Endowment Fund