

JOINT HOLIDAY-BASED ACTIVITIES BETWEEN YOUR SYNAGOGUE AND 2N COHORT FAMILIES

While Cohort families come from many backgrounds and are never expected to participate in Jewish learning or practice, these activities allow synagogue volunteers to draw on Jewish tradition while creating welcoming, universally meaningful experiences that everyone can enjoy together while getting to know each other better.

Rosh Hashanah

Activity Ideas

- Round-challah baking
- Apple-picking
- Tashlich-type activity
- Shofar blowing workshop (participants can use kazoos to learn the blasts) With discussion: What would you like to call out for all the world to hear? Making meaning of the blasts tekiah, truah, shevarim....Can use them as metaphors
- Place large posters around the room and provide colored markers at each. Label them: What I did well this past year (or “in the past”); What I struggled with this past year (or “in the past”); What I aim to improve in this next year; What I need to do/support I need to have to improve in this next year (or “in the past”).
- Maybe even an adult from community who has made change (Nissim Black, ie)

Songs

Circle Game

All My Life's a Circle

Possible Themes to Integrate

Tshuva: Personal change is possible

Relationships can evolve and heal

Forgiveness of self and others

Sukkot

Activity Ideas

- Making sukkah decorations/fall art
Make Ugandan Fall Harvest Fruit Salad like Ugandan Jews make at Sukkot
- Discussion on ushpizin: who would you invite to a meal if you could invite anyone?
Create a poster about them and share why you chose them
- Invite Forever Friends Kids to an event where they can draw pictures of people they want in the sukkah with them and potential mentors are present

Songs

Turn, turn, turn

Possible Themes to Integrate

Welcoming—Sukkah is an open structure; Vulnerability

Hanukkah

Activity Ideas

Playing dreidl

Modeling-clay menorahs

Cutting out paper menorahs and decorating with glitter, etc.

Painting wooden dreidls

Symbolic candle lighting on a *hanukkiyah*

Make latkes or bake butter cookies in the shapes of Hanukkah symbols

Songs

Light One Candle (Peter, Paul and Mary)

Dreidl Song (Julie Silver)

Dreidl Song (Barenaked Ladies has a fun high beat version)

Miracle - Matisyahu Hanukkah Song (If you're feeling brave)

Latke Song (Debbie Friedman)

Food

Latkes

Sufganiot (or just donuts)

Hanukkah symbol shaped butter cookies

Possible Themes to Integrate

- Light, like love, is not diminished when it is shared—it only grows. Demonstrate with lighting a full Hanukkiah.
- Maintaining sense of self in trying times
- Belief in self in overcoming great challenges
- Miracles in seemingly small ways are huge: our inner light remaining aflame when we thought it couldn't

Purim

Activity Ideas

Making *mishloach manot*

Baking Hamentashen

[Making character puppets](#)

[Ometz Lev Game](#)

[Make groggers](#) or [her](#)

[Purim mask making](#)

Face Painting

[Bingo](#)

Songs

[Wicked Wicked Man](#) (to the tune of BINGO)

Food

Hamentashen (lots of filling options)

Giant multi-braided challah (reminds us of ropes that hung Haman—might want to adapt that!)

Possible Themes to Integrate

- Esther did not have parents and was adopted/fostered by her uncle (cousin?) This can be told simply without special emphasis, to get across the idea of a foster child having the power of redemption.
- When those with power/authority have no moral compass of their own: What happens when people who don't understand right and wrong have control over our lives?
- Sorrow turned to joy. Has that happened for you? Vice versa? How much of life is beyond our control? How much can we impact our lives? Our city?

- How much do we want to remember wrongs people did to us? Can we remember but still forgive?

Passover

Activity Ideas

Decorate a “Miriam’s Cup”, but each child for themselves marking the gifts they bring to others
Decorate a seder plate and each person/child chooses seven foods: some that symbolize their history and some that symbolize their hope

Songs

Redemption Song (there’s a mi khamocha/Redemption Song mashup)

Miriam’s Song Debbie Friedman

Let My People Go

Possible Themes to Integrate

- Despair and Hope
- Min hametzer: When our world feels tiny / oppressive and we call out for a more expansive life
- Who to trust/how do we earn trust, give trust enough to link our life to theirs
- Identity
- Covenant between self and God, each other
- Second Nurture for Youth: [Passover](#)

Shavuot

Activity Ideas

Make cheesecake

Decorate tablets and write the “commandments” of your life

[Make flower crowns](#)

[Mt Sinai Muffins](#) (bake or buy and decorate)

[Make ice cream](#)

[Decorate flower pots](#) and on [foam](#) flowers write words (w/ Sharpies) on “how I want to grow”

Songs

Garden Song (Pete Seeger)

If I Had a Hammer (Pete Seeger)

God's Counting on Me, God's Counting on You (Pete Seeger)

We Shall Overcome

Possible Themes to Integrate

Naomi adopts Ruth, Ruth also joins Jewish people

The power of outsiders

Naomi teaches Ruth about the Jewish people. What might Ruth teach Naomi from *her* life experience?

Seeds, Planting and Harvest

[Kidsave](#) is one of Second Nurture's community partners. They find permanent families and lifelong connections for children who otherwise might grow up without family. Through our partnership with Kidsave, synagogue members who are interested in mentoring or fostering meet foster youth in a safe, fun and interactive environment. While we provide thematic activity ideas connected to Jewish holidays, you can use any activity that stimulates conversation and interaction.

After meeting at these events, some of the youth and families may privately identify who they would like to get to know better. Kidsave then works to make that happen, while Second Nurture helps the community support the family in their needs going forward.

There is a training, available on-line, that all adults must do before participating in a Kidsave event.

The events have two broad types: 1.) a round robin type get-to-know-you, akin to speed dating, that could be many things: arts and crafts activities, bowling, anything that is both active and provides a context for relaxed conversation. 2.) A follow-up gathering that allows particular synagogue members to get to know particular youth, such as a hike or picnic.

These events are meant for Kidsave youth and adults from the synagogue community. However, teens from the community can participate as volunteers (maybe the confirmation class or older youth group). Second Nurture works with Kidsave to coordinate the volunteers and require they are identified clearly using T-Shirts or badges. This is not an event for younger children of the synagogues.

You can be creative and have fun with the kinds of events you hold. Events should occur on a Sunday, on any Sunday of the year, and can be centered thematically around the next Jewish-holiday—even though the Kidsave youth are of all ethnicities— or secular.

We have included, below, a number of holiday event ideas that have activities, songs and teaching themes that you can draw from. The teachings may work on two levels: one, offering a new inner resource to the youth and, two, encouraging the members to consider fostering. The holidays—their stories and themes—provide texture (a tiny introduction to Judaism for the Kidsave kids, and a Jewish context for the members) and are a launching pad for a more universal discussion. This discussion will give everyone an opportunity to share something about themselves, their life experience, and maybe even a bit of their hopes and fears. This is not meant to be a therapeutic opportunity, just a safe, open, get-to-know you event.