

Gamar Tov!

May you be inscribed and sealed in the **Book of Life** for a year filled with blessing, health, and peace for you and your entire family! If you are fasting, may your fast be one filled with meaning.

From all of us at

The Jewish Community Center

INSPIRING JEWISH JOURNEYS



For more information about Yom Kippur or other Jewish resources contact Rabbi Brad Horwitz, Director Helene Mirowitz Department of Jewish Community Life 314-442-3271 or bhorwitz@jccstl.org

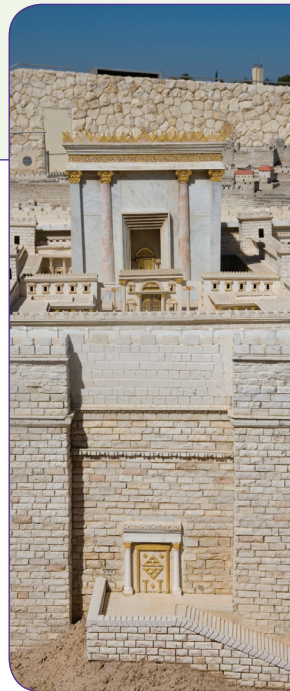
Yom Kippur: The Day of Atonement

Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, is a holiday designed to bring Jews closer to God and encourages return to God through the process of Teshuvah (repentance) and reconciliation. It is considered the holiest day of the year.

In the Book of Leviticus 16:30-31 we read that on Yom Kippur, “you shall afflict your souls and shall do no manner of work, the home born nor the stranger that resides among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins before Adonai you shall be cleansed.”

At the time when the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the Yom Kippur service focused on the High Priest who would enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement on behalf of the Jewish community. Today, each individual through his/her own prayer and reflection asks for forgiveness for mistakes made in the past year.

On Yom Kippur, there are five afflictions which Jews are traditionally not allowed to do. These are eating and drinking, bathing or washing one's body, anointing one's body, wearing leather shoes, and sexual relations. By giving up on these external physical needs and desires for one day, one is encouraged to look internally and introspectively to do the necessary soul searching and repentance.



*Model of
Second Temple
in Jerusalem*

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER





Yom Hadin: The Day of Judgment

A main theme of the High Holiday liturgy is the idea of the heavenly tribunal. God, the ultimate King, sits in judgment on the throne each year deciding our fate for the coming year.

While on Rosh Hashanah God inscribes us in the Book of Life, on Yom Kippur, God seals the book. This is our last chance to do tshuvah (repentance) for our past mistakes. Although God decrees our fate, human beings can avert the severity of the decree through Tshuvah (repentance), Tfilah (prayer), and Tzedakah, (acts of charity/justice).

Jonah and the Whale

In the Yom Kippur afternoon worship service, the Book of Jonah is read. This story is about Jonah, a prophet of God who is sent to the city of Nineveh to give them a chance to repent from their evil ways to avoid God's destruction. Jonah does not adhere to God's instruction and attempts to flee, winding up on a journey that takes him onto a boat, into the belly of a big fish, and eventually back to Nineveh. In the end both the city and Jonah repent and God forgives them for their sins.



This story is read on Yom Kippur because of the inherent theme of forgiveness and repentance. A message that Jonah understands only at the very end of the story is that God is compassionate and cares for all living things. God prefers repentance to destruction. God's compassion serves as a model to us all as does Jonah's act of t'shuvah (repentance).



Family Activities

■ Story Telling

The story of Jonah and the Whale is a great one to tell and read together as a family. This can lead to discussion about our own mistakes and how we can be better people in the future. After reading the story discuss if/how each of us acts like Jonah in some way.

■ Al Cheit Confession Cards

An activity that can be designed for all ages is to take blank cards and have family members write down or draw mistakes that they committed the past year. Different colors could represent categories such as sins against God, sins against other human beings, and sins against the universe/nature. Once everyone has created several cards they are shuffled and are read and discussed as a family.

■ Good and Bad Collages

Take several old magazines and have each member of the family go through them looking for pictures, images, or words that represent good things they did over the past year as well as bad things. Cut these things out with a scissors and create two collages, one for the good and one for the bad. Hang these on the refrigerator.