

In the Ruach Year...

...**participants return** to the comfortable, accepting place that they have begun to cherish. They continue to **look inward** and learn more about

themselves and then share so that they can **learn more about each other**.

The gatherings allow for more time for discussion as the girls are now capable of **deeper conversations** because of both their maturity and level of trust within the group.

The **group leader trusts her instincts** in approaching the gathering plan in a way that she knows will both challenge and excite the girls.



y Opening Month

Reconnecting—Rosh Hodesh and Us

This year, Opening Month is devoted to **re-establishing the group, its rituals and guidelines**. If new members are entering, the warm-up and small group activities help **integrate** them into the group. A creative exercise of composing “infomercials” for Rosh Hodesh helps **review the learning and experiences** of last year and **generate excitement** for this one.

Cool Rules—Take Two: Brainstorming group guidelines for the year

Girl Thing! Group Games: Ice breakers and group builders

RoHo-mercials: Small group activity creating short “infomercials” about Rosh Hodesh

Closing: Decorating Rosh Hodesh Cloth and/or using the candle ritual to look ahead

y Tishrey

Imagining God

In Tishrey Ruach, we use the **High Holy Day liturgy** as a springboard to explore and reflect upon classical and contemporary **images of God**, striving to develop personal metaphors for and ways to **connect with God**. We then turn our thoughts to our **human relationships**, drawing on the concept of *teshuvah* as an inspiration for **seeking and granting forgiveness**.

Imagining God: Small- and full-group discussions of classical, contemporary, and personal imagery

Forgiving and Being Forgiven: Contemplating reconciliation

Closing: Forgiving each other and/or letting go of misdeeds

y Heshvan

Comrades—Not Competitors

In Heshvan Ruach, we use the story of Rachel and Leah and an excerpt from a contemporary magazine article to explore the theme of **jealousy**. We make and exchange **friendship pins** as affirmations of positive connections among girls.

Comrades or Competitors: Exploring female relationships—Rachel, Leah, and us

Creating Connections: Making and exchanging friendship pins

Closing: Reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Kislev

Money: Madness or Mitzvot

In Kislev Ruach, we acknowledge the lure of **consumerism** and examine the practice of gift-giving at Hanukkah. Participants explore their personal values regarding **materialism and status** and become familiar with Jewish teachings on **money** and *tzedakah*. To encourage creativity and generosity of spirit, the girls brainstorm **meaningful acts of kindness** and create IOU coupons to give to friends and family.

Consumerism: Group discussion on the impact of advertising messages

Money Matters: Small groups read and respond to Jewish teachings on money and charity

Maimonides' Ladder: Team activity and discussion of *tzedakah*

Gifts from the Heart: Craft project, designing IOU coupons for non-material gifts

Closing: Filling out individual *Appreciation Candle* forms and lighting floating candles

y Tevet

Our Inheritance, Our Legacy

In Tevet Ruach, we use the fact that the 10th of Tevet is *Yom Hakadish Haklali*—a day to remember those whose date of death is unknown—to explore the **spiritual legacies** we have inherited from our matriarchal ancestors and those we wish to leave to future generations.

Opening and Warm-Up: Tracing our matrilineage

Family History and Legacy: Group sharing about our names and personal role models from our families

Personal Legacy and Ethical Wills: Personal reflection and writing about core values

Closing: Read and interpret “Reb Zusya’s Tale” and recite the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Shevat

Nurturing Nature and Ourselves

In Shevat Ruach, we explore participants’ roles as guardians and protectors of the earth and themselves. Participants are challenged to reflect upon and commit to behaviors that are respectful of **nature** and their own **spiritual well being**.

Shomrot Adamah (Guardians of the Earth): Creating a personalized contract

Shomrot Neshamah (Guardians of Our Souls): Discussion and commitment to caring for oneself

Measuring Myself: Reflecting on personal *midot*

Midot & Me: Making *midot* cards

Closing: Reciting poem and the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Adar I

Choosing to Stand

In Adar I Ruach, we draw on the experiences of Esther, Vashti, and Dinah to discuss a range of appropriate **empowerment strategies**. The girls also receive **self-defense instruction**.

Standing Up for Ourselves: Discussion of Esther, Vashti, and Dinah

Getting What We Want: Exercise in persuasion

Choosing to Stand: Self-defense instruction with a guest presenter

Closing: Saying “No!” and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Adar II

Purim: Courage and Community

In Adar II Ruach, we explore the Jewish obligation of *tikun olam* (repair of the world) using the customs of Purim as prototypes for our communal responsibilities to **stand up** to injustice, **share** our good fortune, and strive to **improve** the world.

Mitzvot and Meaning: Discussion of Purim’s lessons on caring and sharing

Jewish Community: Decorating Rosh Hodesh Cloth with year-round holiday *tzedakah* ideas

Purim Mitzvot: Donating *matanot le’evyonim* (gifts to the poor)

Purim Presents: Making *mishloah manot* (food for friends) and gift containers

Closing: *Tikun olam* teaching and ritual, and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Nisan

A Girls’ Seder

In Nisan Ruach, we explore ways of making seders more engaging and experience a **women’s seder** that highlights **women’s roles in the Exodus** and the need for liberating all women to live at their full potential. Participants are encouraged to replicate portions of the group experience in their families’ observance.

Hagadot of Our Own: Paired discussion and design of seder innovations

A Girls’ Seder: Conducting a seder with enhanced focus on female roles and perspectives, including participants’ innovations

y Iyar

Teen Stress? Oh, Yes!

In Iyar Ruach we acknowledge the **stress** teens experience and examine the negative impact of unmanaged stress. Participants are guided to identify **stress-reduction** strategies from their own experiences and from Jewish practice. They learn and try out several **stress-management techniques**.

Teen Stress and Its Effects: Small-group brainstorming; full-group discussion

Stress Busters: Brainstorming solutions and practicing “no stress self-talk”

Mania and Massage: Stress-reduction activities

Torah Tips for Stress Reduction: Reflection and discussion

Closing: Chanting *Elohay Neshamah* or *Shema* and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Sivan

Caring Communication

In Sivan Ruach, we explore the complexity of **daughter-parent relationships** and expectations. Participants learn and practice communication and **conflict-management techniques** that are applicable to all relationships, emphasizing **respectful sharing and problem solving**.

The Fifth Commandment: Discussion of *Kavod Av Ve'em* (Honoring One's Parents)

Saying What You Mean Without Being Mean: Effective communication techniques

Creating Shalom in the Home: Making a *Shalom Bayit* box

Closing: Sharing boxes and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

y Closing Month

Siyum: Celebrating Completion and Continuation

In this Closing Month, we participate in a *siyum*, a Jewish closing celebration held upon completion of text study or writing a Torah scroll. We draw on its traditional features of **reflection, anticipation, and celebration**, with an added component—**appreciation**.

Seeing Endings as Beginnings: Explanation of the *siyum* ritual

Repetition and Remembering: Discussion of learning this year and yet to come

Letters of Affirmation: Self-reflection and feedback from others

Grounding Ourselves: Rock-art craft project

Se'udat Mitzvah Party: Closing celebration

Closing: Collaborative Rosh Hodesh poem and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month” or singing/playing Debbie Friedman's “Kadish D'Rabanan”