

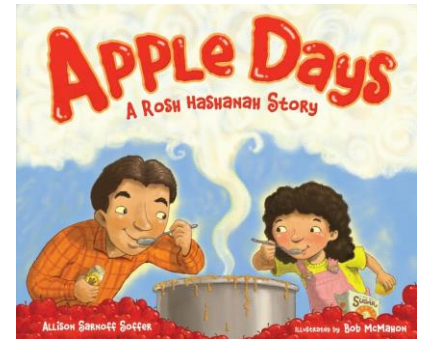
Read the PJ Library Book

Apple Days, A Rosh Hashanah Story (4's)

By Allison Sarnoff Soffer

Illustrated by Bob McMahon

Published by Kar-Ben Publishing



Synopsis

Katy has two important things to look forward to as Rosh Hashanah approaches – making applesauce, and the birth of a new cousin. Katy tells the entire town about her plans to make applesauce with her mom, from the apple picking to the seasoning with cinnamon and sugar. Katy is counting down to “Apple Day.” But when the new baby arrives early, Katy’s plans are dashed. Everyone understands Katy’s disappointment. The community rallies to provide Katy with the necessary ingredients, while Katy and her dad figure out how to make that applesauce!

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Tradition (symbolic foods) - *Me-so-rah* - מסורה

Community - *Ke-hi-la* - קהילה

Dealing with disappointment/optimism - *Op-ti-mi-yut* - אופטימיות

Tradition/symbolic foods – Mesorah. Every Jewish holiday has unique foods associated with it. Symbolic foods reinforce and elevate the meaning of the holiday, helping us create long lasting family memories and traditions. Rosh Hashanah is associated with sweetness. One custom on Rosh Hashanah is dipping apple slices into honey as we recite a blessing for a sweet new year. But why apples? Did ancient rabbis know the phrase, “An apple a day...”? Maybe. After all, the traditional New Year greeting is for a happy and healthy year. *The Second Jewish Book of Why* explains that King Herod ate an apple whenever he felt faint, and apples were the gift of choice to people in poor health (Kolatch). Another reason among many that apples are chosen is because King Solomon compares the Jewish people to apple in *Song of Songs*: “Like the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved [Israel] among [other nations]” (2:3). Any why honey? The Torah describes Israel as a land of milk and honey, so we include Israel in our prayers for a sweet year.

Community – Kehillah. Jewish sages teach that it is important to be a part of a community; this membership comes with a responsibility to help others in the community. The Talmud, the central authority on Jewish laws and customs, cautions: “When the community is in trouble, a person should not say, ‘I will go into my house and eat and drink and be at peace with myself’” (Ta’anit 11a). When someone in the community is in trouble, it is everyone’s responsibility to help that person. Similarly, we gather together to celebrate the accomplishments and positive milestones of our community.



Dealing with disappointment/optimism – Optimiyut. Disappointment can give rise to a wide variety of emotions from anger and sadness to frustration and hopelessness. Jewish sages throughout history teach that we need to remain calm, centered, and hopeful in the face of disappointment. Accentuate the positive. There is a popular Hebrew expression “*Gam zu l’tovah*” – “This is also for the good.” Several

Talmud stories use this phrase, as a series of seemingly terrible incidents turn out for the best. We would certainly not use this concept with children in the face of a cataclysmic event, but if your class picnic is rained out: “*Gam zu l’tovah!* Now we can play this fun game or invent a new cookie recipe.”

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

**How would your classroom change?
How will families be involved?**

In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ **Tradition/symbolic foods:** Why is an apple a symbol of Rosh Hashanah? It’s sweet taste? Globe-like shape? According to psychologist Alison Gopnik, children are intuitive theorists, so allow them to theorize. Gather your students together at **morning meeting**, discuss what they know about Rosh Hashanah, and ask them “Why an apple?”
- ✧ **Tradition/symbolic foods:** Rosh Hashanah is called the birthday of the world, so turn **snack time** into a birthday party one day. Ask the families of your students to send in their favorite apple-based recipes and get your class cooking! Invite parents or grandparents to join in the fun.
- ✧ **Community:** This book provides the perfect jump-off point for a **social studies** project about community. Encourage the children to draw a map of the neighborhood or school, and talk about the people you are likely to meet. What does each person contribute to the community?
- ✧ **Community:** Invite family members and your organization’s staff to visit the classroom and talk about their jobs and neighborhood clubs of which they are members. Start a journal in your **writing center** where children can collect thoughts and pictures about their community.
- ✧ **Dealing with disappointment/optimism:** The ability to label emotions is an important first step for children learning self-regulation. Place an “Emotions Bingo” set in your **games center**. Buy it pre-packaged, or make your own by using photos of your students and a build-your-own-bingo site like this one: <http://www.eslactivities.com/picturebingo.php>
- ✧ **Dealing with disappointment/optimism:** Turn a corner of your room into a **calming station**, where students can first let off steam, then unwind. Provide an outline of feet for stomping. Get pillows for hugging and play fun music. (Try this “[Count to Ten](#)” song.) Create a feather course. Moving a feather with only your breath is very soothing – and it might make you laugh!



Photo courtesy of Keri at TheHomeTeacher.org



Bridging Home and School

An Apple a Day

Set up an apple-tasting table in your entrance area for one or two mornings, so families can sample different apples and classroom-baked apple goodies on their way into school. Which treats or apples were more popular? Chart the results. Give your organization's leadership the opportunity to staff these tables and meet your school families.



Suggestion Box

Host a get-to-know-you and crafts night. Each family decorates a box. Provide slips of paper for writing suggestions to soothe an upset/disappointed child, such as “ask for a hug,” “drink a glass of water,” “read a PJ Library book,” or “give yourself a pep talk.”

Family Engagement at Home

Once Around the Block

Recommend that families go for a walk in their neighborhood and take photographs of stores, playgrounds, or special friends that represent their community. Perhaps families will make a photo collage of their community to share with the class, or send photos to class so you can make a mural-sized collage of the community.

Share

your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... of children developing a learning community

The New Year is the perfect time to teach children about working with peers and developing a sense of community. Research proves what we know intuitively, children learn better in groups – when the learning is relevant to them. Watch children as they play, and note when the children are helping one another learn. For example: “Jamie’s apple kept slipping off the cutting board. ‘How can I slice this?’ complained Jamie. ‘I think I know,’ said Roger, ‘Put the flat side on the table so it can’t slide.’”

Then share with all of us on our private Facebook group page! <http://pjfor.me/pjgts-facebook>

More

resources and websites for inspiration

Colorful apple chips <http://www.ourbestbites.com/2012/07/oven-dried-apple-chips-two-ways/>

Optimism and children <http://stress.about.com/od/parentingskills/ht/raiseoptimists.htm>

Kids learning about community <https://www.planning.org/kidsandcommunity/>

