



SAMMY SPIDER'S FIRST ROSH HASHANAH

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As the New Year begins, Sammy happily finds himself covered in honey and eager to celebrate Rosh Hashanah.

Spiders may not celebrate holidays, but Sammy is in for a *Rosh Hashanah* education as he watches the Shapiro family observe the Jewish New Year.

The season surrounding *Rosh Hashanah* is one of contemplation. Think with your children about things that have happened over the past year. What are the happy and sad moments that stand out? While focusing on the many wonderful things that have taken place, encourage your children to think of how they can make next year even better than the last. Together, you might want to look through pictures to show your children how they have grown and changed during the year.

CELEBRATING ROSH HASHANA

The holiday of *Rosh Hashanah*, literally “head of the year,” is celebrated for the first two days (or day for some Jews) of the month of *Tishrei*. The Jewish New Year, *Rosh Hashanah* offers us a chance at a new beginning with all the anticipation and evaluation that it entails.

Many Jews celebrate *Rosh Hashanah* by sharing festive meals with family and friends, and going to synagogue. *Rosh Hashanah* dinner is often characterized by the presence of symbolic foods: apples and honey to give wishes for a sweet New Year; a round *Challah* for the cycle of the year; and the presence of a new fruit or food.

One of the most powerful moments during the *Rosh Hashanah* service is the blowing of the *shofar*—the ram’s horn. According to many Jewish thinkers, the striking and unique sound of the *shofar* is meant to shake us from the ruts we’ve fallen into and awaken in us the desire to renew ourselves. This process of renewal and repentance culminates in *Yom Kippur* (the Day of Atonement) ten days later.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Look for new foods you can try together during *Rosh Hashanah*. Pomegranates, figs and dates are all traditional choices, though any new fruit can be used. Make *Rosh Hashanah challah* together like the Shapiros. To make the *challah* round, roll the dough into a snake and then wrap it into the shape of a circle. Use raisins to make it extra sweet or even chocolate chips!

Help your child make *Rosh Hashanah* cards like the kinds the Shapiros received: wishing friends and relative a “Happy and Healthy New Year!” or *Shanah Tova*. An attractive decoration for these cards might be apple halves dipped in paint and used as stamps. *Shofars* and apples are easy to make with finger paints. You can also use the paint to create handprints so that every year, you child can see how much they have grown and how far their reach has extended. Pj