

Read the PJ Library Book

Sammy Spider's First Rosh Hashanah (3s)

Written by Sylvia A. Rouss

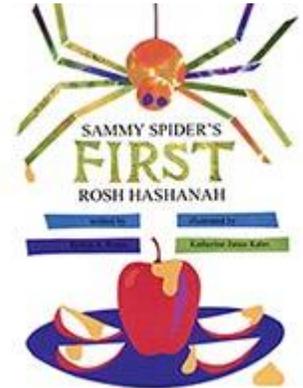
Illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn

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Synopsis

Sammy's curiosity about the Shapiros' Rosh Hashanah preparations leads him to become stuck in a drop of spilled honey. As Sammy happily sips his way free, he discovers that even spiders can enjoy a "Sweet New Year."

For more about Rosh Hashanah, click [here](#).



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

New beginnings/growth - שְׂמֵחַ

Staying calm/A-ha-vat To-rah - אֲהַבֵּת תּוֹרָה

Introducing the value of new beginnings Hatchala chadashot

From Jewish teachings

The Talmud, a book of Jewish law and wisdom, teaches that Rosh Hashanah marks the anniversary of the creation of the world (Rosh Hashanah 27a). The literal translation of Rosh Hashanah means "head of the year." The word *shana*, or year, shares its three letter root, ה-ש-נ, with the Hebrew word *shinui*, meaning change. Rosh Hashanah has therefore been celebrated as a time for contemplating new beginnings and positive changes that can be made in the new year.

For the teacher

- Can you describe one change that you might like to make in the year ahead?
- How do you help the children in your classroom recognize that they are changing and growing?
- What types of changes and milestones would you like your class to keep track of in the year ahead? How will you document these changes?



Questions for children

- In our book we learn that Sammy has grown and changed so much since last year that he and his mother now need a bigger web. How have you changed since last year? How can you tell that you've changed?
- What new skills would you like to learn and what new things you would like to do in the year ahead?

Introducing the value of staying calm *Shalvat nefesh*

<p>From Jewish teachings In Judaism, calmness is considered a virtue. Teachers of Musar, a movement focused on ethical and spiritual development, describe <i>shalvat nefesh</i>, calmness of the soul, as the ability to maintain an inner peace despite the ups and downs of daily life. <i>Pirkei Avot</i>, a book of ethical teachings, states that the strongest individuals are those who are able to control their emotions (4:1). The book of Proverbs adds that the person who is slow to anger has great wisdom (14:29).</p>	<p>For the teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies do you use to stay calm when you feel your anger or anxiety rising? • Ideally, how would you like the students in your class to express and cope with their strong emotions? <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you enlist help to transform an area in your classroom into a calming spot? 	<p>Questions for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Sammy Spider becomes stuck in the honey, he cries and panics. Then he frees himself – how does he do it? Can you think of a time when calming down helped you? • Why is it hard to find a good solution to a problem when you are upset? • When you are feeling angry or frustrated, what helps you calm down and relax?
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Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

**How would your classroom change?
How will the books come to life?**

In the Classroom / Centers

- ☆ **Hatchala chadashot/new beginnings:** Ask families to send in pictures of their children from last year. See if the class can identify who is portrayed in each photo. Compare pictures from last year with the student today. Ask children to describe how the person in the photo has changed.
- ☆ **Hatchala chadashot/new beginnings:** Work with children to choose ongoing **math and measurement** activities that track change throughout the year. For example, compare hand and foot tracings. What will the children choose as their measuring tool? You might choose to measure skills, such as how long a child can balance on one leg.
- ☆ **Shalvat nefesh/staying calm:** Listen to “[Count to Ten](#)” in your **music center**. Act out all of the suggestions of the song. You can find a copy of the lyrics, [here](#). Make a chart of calming techniques to refer to in class or at home.
- ☆ **Shalvat nefesh/staying calm:** Create a quiet, **cozy space** in your classroom in which a child can seek comfort. Perhaps this spot has pillows, a big chair for getting hugs, or plush animals for cuddling. Hang a cloth curtain for a little privacy. Teach some **calming yoga**, as shown [here](#).

Please share your PJGtS experiences with us on our private Facebook group page!
<http://pjfor.me/pjgts-facebook>



Engage the families in your community

How can you involve families and deepen home-school relationships?

Tree of positive change

Start your year with a Tree of Change instead of a mitzvah tree. Provide apple-shaped Post-Its or other die-cut apples to families as they enter the school or classroom. Ask them to write down a positive change they would like to see at home or at schools in the coming year, such as more recycling, less phone time, or healthier snacks. How can you help families accomplish their goals?



Photo courtesy of MyCrazyBlessedLife.com

Zen in a bottle

Invite families to make [calm-down jars](#) together at school. When a child is upset, a bottle of goo and glitter (or beads, small objects, etc.) helps children refocus their attention. Shaking the bottle gets excess energy out, and watching glitter settle triggers slower breathing and heart rates.

Family Engagement at Home

See below for a mini-newsletter about this book. Cut on the dotted line to send directly to families, or copy any part for your website or electronic communications.



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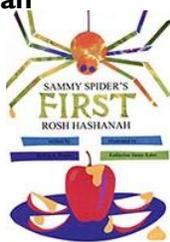
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DO fun stuff at home

New foods

Take your child to the market, and find a food you have never eaten before. Take it home and taste it together. What did you think? Maybe say the *Shehecheyanu* blessing for special occasions first:

Baruch ata adonai elohenu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higiyanu la'z'man ha'zeh.

Blessed are You Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe who has given us life, sustained us, and allowed us to reach this day.

DISCUSS Jewish values

New beginnings – *Hat-cha-la cha-da-shot*

The Jewish New Year marks a time for contemplating positive changes in the year ahead.

- What are some helpful changes or new experiences our family might try in the New Year?

Staying calm – *Shal-vat ne-fesh*

Jewish sources equate emotional self-regulation with wisdom, strength, and health.

- Use weather terms to help your child express emotions, such as, "When I'm angry I feel like thunder."

MORE resources

Make a mini Zen garden:

<http://bit.ly/mini-zen-garden>

Why kids need meditation breaks:

<http://bit.ly/just-breathe-meditation>