



{ What makes you feel renewed? }

New Month, New You

Wall calendars, date books, phone apps: we have countless ways of keeping track of our days. But a certain method has been with us since the very beginning: we can simply look up at the night sky, just as the child does in this book. While the secular calendar is solar based, the Jewish calendar is lunar, with each new month starting with a new moon. Not only is this convenient – look outside your bedroom window, and you’ll often see where we are in a given month – but it is also meaningful: Each month is a chance for us to renew ourselves, just like the moon. In fact, the Hebrew word for month – chodesh – comes from the root chadash, new, and chidush, renewal. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/lailatovmoon.

HANDS ON!

Make an Edible Moon Chart

Next snack time, take a moment for a delicious lesson about the phases of the moon.

Supplies:

Chocolate sandwich cookies with white filling
Paper plate
Markers
Spoon

Label a few major phases of the moon around the perimeter of the paper plate: new moon, waxing quarter, full moon, waning quarter. Now carefully pull apart the cookies and use the spoon to scrape off some of the filling to match each label. (We won’t tell if you sneak a taste of the filling.)

Place each cookie by its appropriate label, and you’ve got a sweet representation of a moon’s month-long journey.

Ladies’ Night

Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) is a yearly holiday, and Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath) is a weekly holiday. There’s also a monthly holiday: Rosh Chodesh, the celebration of the new moon. Hebrew for “head of the month,” the arrival of Rosh Chodesh is announced each month in synagogue. Traditionally, Rosh Chodesh has been a special day for women; the Talmud (the core collection of rabbinic writings) says women should not work on Rosh Chodesh, and there are both ancient prayers and contemporary rituals that invite women to come together to celebrate.

Light a Fire

As we see in this book, a new moon actually means no moon at all. In ancient times, a new Jewish month was declared when witnesses spotted the tiniest sliver of a moon first appearing in the sky over Jerusalem. In order to make sure Jews outside Jerusalem were alerted to the beginning of the month, a torch was lit on a mountaintop. Those who saw that torch would light a fire on another mountaintop, and so it would go, until this “chain-mail” of torch signals reached beyond the borders of ancient Israel, and Jews everywhere knew that Rosh Chodesh had arrived.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHAT do some of the moon shapes in this book look like to you? Can you come up with your own names for some of these moon shapes (moon phases)?

THE Jewish holiday of Rosh Chodesh is sometimes described as a “birthday party” for the moon. How might you celebrate the moon’s birthday?

THE girl in this book notices that the moon looks different every night. Can you think of other things that seem to change from one day to the next?