

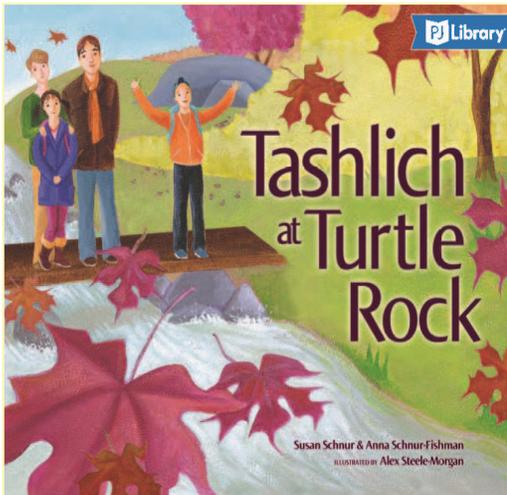
Tashlich at Turtle Rock

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{ **How can we return to a better year?** }



Two Awe-some Holidays

As Annie and her family show us, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, is a time for fresh beginnings. Ten days later comes Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The days from the beginning of Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur are known as the Days of Awe or the Ten Days of Repentance. Throughout the High Holidays, we practice teshuvah — we reflect on mistakes of the past year and set goals to do better. The word teshuvah comes from the Hebrew root shuv, “returning.” Teshuvah helps us turn back to our best self (“Oh, here I am!”). As Annie’s family might say: “Amen.”

Feeling “Crumb”-y

“My family has its own traditions,” Annie says, and they do — but when they toss bread crumbs, they’re taking part in the centuries-old Jewish custom of tashlich. During tashlich (“casting away”), people imagine that bread crumbs are their mistakes from the past year and throw them into flowing water, where they will be washed away. Some even turn their pockets inside out to make sure all their mistakes are gone. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/tashlichturtlerock.

Water World

Rosh Hashanah is sometimes called the birthday of the world. What does water have to do with a birthday? The flowing water of the tashlich ritual reminds us of the miracle of creation. In the Book of Genesis, at the very beginning of the world, God separates the sky, seas, and earth. In the story of Noah and the flood, water is also part of the world’s rebirth. Water can symbolize new beginnings — the chance to make the world, and yourself, a little better each year. However you choose to do tashlich — by a river or a kiddie pool, using bread crumbs or rocks — what’s important is that the ritual helps you think about making a fresh start in the months ahead.

HANDS ON!

Pointing in the Right Direction

Annie and her family dip their feet in the stream and make footprints on their “New Year’ rock.” You can also create footprint artwork to represent teshuvah and taking a new path in the New Year.

Supplies:

- Large piece of posterboard
- Paper plate or foil tray
- Washable nontoxic paint
- Markers or pencils

Fill the plate or tray with paint. Dip your foot into the paint, then press it firmly onto the posterboard. (When doing this activity with multiple kids, be sure they write their names at the top of the paper beforehand.) At any place around the footprint, write one goal for the coming year: something to improve on personally, a mitzvah to perform more regularly, and so on. If you like, you can dip each foot in a different color and write down two goals!

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHICH feels harder to do: looking back at mistakes you’ve made, or promising to do something new?

THE family takes a hike every year for Rosh Hashanah. What customs does your family keep for Jewish holidays? Does it feel more special when you do these things together?

WHAT would you most like to throw away from the past year?