

## **Jewish Experiences in the Nursery School: An Aid for Home Reinforcement**

### **Rosh Hashanah**

Rosh Hashanah is generally handled, with young children, as the holiday which represents the birthday of the world. It is a time of renewed hope for good things to come. The Hebrew greeting - *L'Shana Tova Tikatevu* - May you be inscribed in The Book of Life for the New Year is heard all around.

### **Symbolism of Rosh Hashanah**

**Apples and honey:** These are the foods representing our wishes for a sweet and fruitful year. At the first holiday meal of Rosh Hashanah, which begins on Monday evening, September , an apple is sliced into small sections at the beginning of the meal and each participant dips a piece in honey. The family, together, then expresses the prayer for a good and sweet year - *L'Shana Tova U'Mitukah*.

**Shofar:** This is the Hebrew word for the ram's horn whose wailing sound announces the start of the new year. It beckons all to rally to God and to self-examination so that we might be better people the coming year than we have been in the past. The shofar is blown in the synagogue in the middle of the morning service, except on Shabbat. Find out what time the shofar will be blown in your local synagogue so that you can take your children to hear it.

**Round Challah:** Challah is made round as part of the special holiday food, perhaps because its roundness gives a sense of continuity. Jewish bakeries begin selling the challahs several days before the holiday. To add to the festive mood, some are made with raisins. Any round challah you can bake with the children will reinforce this symbolism.

**Wearing white:** This is a symbol of purity and a clean new start.

### **Appeal to the Senses**

Young children must see, feel, touch and taste to understand. It is, therefore, important when trying to involve them in understanding and relating to concepts that are foreign (unknown) to them, that they have physical involvement with the symbols rather than just abstractly hearing about them. So, take them to the synagogue, bake round challahs, serve apple and honey, take them to see and hear the sound of the shofar.

Rosh Hashanah is observed by families going to the synagogue together. During the service we express gratitude to God for the many good things we have. We ask God to teach us to be good people, nice to others, helpful... We pray to God to keep us healthy, give us peace, and help us to have a Happy New Year.

All Jewish holidays begin at sundown the evening before. Rosh Hashanah will begin at sundown, \_\_\_\_\_, and continue until nightfall, \_\_\_\_\_.