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Rosh Hashanah

Primary Assembly Presentation

Aim: To learn about the Jewish festival of Rosh Hashanah and think about how different sounds make us feel different things.

Preparation and materials:

- Auld Lang Syne (only a clip is needed).
- Picture cards (fireworks, Big Ben, people hugging).
- To be seen: apples and a jar of honey. You may also be able to locate a shofar from the local RE centre.
- To be heard: a couple of contrasting sounds, for example, lively /still music, or a triangle, a siren or alarm type noise and a drum and some calming music to end the assembly. iPods or phones may have applications with evocative sounds or noises.
- Music: you could show the children one of the fun music videos about Rosh Hashana made by aish.com such as:
 - [Rosh Hashanah music video](#)
 - Bob Dylan – “New Morning”
 - The Zombies – “This Will Be Our Year”
 - Van Morrison – “Brand New Day”

| Slide | Image | Text and Instructions |
|-------|--|---|
| 1 |  A graphic with a blue background featuring a white Star of David. In the foreground, there are several red apples and a bowl of honey with a wooden spoon. | Play 'Auld lang syne' and ask 3 children to come to the front of the assembly and hold up the picture cards. Ask the children what celebration would we see these things happening? Discuss the New Year traditions of the pupils – family traditions or traditions that are part of their culture. Do they, for example, have New Year's resolutions? Do they or their families have New Year parties? |
| 2 |  A presentation slide with a blue header. It contains text about the aim of the assembly and questions for discussion. An illustration of a person playing a shofar is on the left. | Explain that during this assembly, the children will learn about the festival which celebrates the Jewish New Year and traditionally the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve. It is also a day of judgement. This means saying sorry for things you have done. Explain that the Jewish festival of New Year happens usually in September, not January, and is the start of the ten days leading on to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. This is a special time for Jews. Watch the video about Rosh Hashanah. |
| 3 |  A presentation slide with a blue header. It contains text about what Rosh Hashanah is, including its date and significance. An illustration of a shofar is on the left. | Jews believe that on Rosh Hashanah, God looks at each of them to see what they have done, good and bad, in the previous year. They have ten days to 'repent' (literally, turn around) and be good. On the Day of Atonement /Yom Kippur, if they have tried hard to be good, and made friends with people they've argued with, they will be forgiven. |

5&6



As well as special stories, there are also special practices.

Show the children the apples and honey and explain that they are eaten on Rosh Hashanah and are given to family and friends. These sweet things are given and eaten because the people want sweetness and happiness in their lives in the coming year and wish this for others. The shofar – a special horn (a ram's horn) – is blown in services at Rosh Hashanah. Its sound is supposed to call everyone back to God. Listen to the sound. They also need to get ready for God, who will judge their behaviour – that is, he will decide if they have been good or bad. Jewish people who are used to the sound of the shofar will associate it with New Year, and with this judgement.

All of us have special sounds that remind us of different things. Play the sounds to the children and discuss with the children how different sounds make them feel (this will depend on what you have brought to the assembly). For example:

- a drum beat makes us want to dance
- dreamy music or sounds make us want to sleep
- a siren makes us feel worried in case someone's been hurt.

(Any evocative sounds will do – the idea is to discuss how sounds make us feel different things.)

Conclusion

Remind everyone again that the shofar sound reminds Jewish people of the need to turn to God and be sorry for the wrong things they have done.

Ask the children to take some time to reflect on anything they might have done wrong this year. How would they do things differently next time?

Possible Follow-on Work

- Pupils can make a Rosh Hashanah card.
- Write a diary entry as a Jewish person celebrating Rosh Hashana.