



Jewish Holidays



Throughout the year, we celebrate the Jewish festivals and holidays in line with the Jewish calendar. Below is an overview of the main features of the festivals and what activities your child might do whilst at school. Each week we celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat on a Friday and Havdalah on a Monday morning with classes being the hosts each week. We also mark other holidays/festivals that come up for other religions.

Kabbalat Shabbat



Each Friday half an hour before the school day closes, we teach the children how to bring in Shabbat. The classes take it in turns to be the hosts for the week and lead the blessings for lighting the candles, washing hands, wine (grape juice) and hallah (bread). We invite parents to join us for this weekly event.

Havdalah



Each Monday morning we say goodbye to Shabbat and say the Havdalah blessing. We say the blessings for wine (grape juice), spices, light and dark and opposites. The children who hosted Shabbat also lead Havdalah.

Autumn Term

Rosh Hashanah



Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New year or head of the year and we celebrate the birthday of the universe. During this holiday, the school is closed. We hear the sounding of the shofar, a ram's horn, to wake us up and start the year.

Activities might include hearing or sounding the shofar, dipping apples into honey, tasting pomegranates and making or eating round hallah. The children might also take part in a Tashlich, which means that they say good-bye to the bad things they have done at a large body of running water. (This is usually in Richmond Park.)

Yom Kippur



Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year and when we are closest to God. It is the Day of Atonement. During this holiday, the school is closed and the day before we finish early in preparation as we abstain from food and drink on Yom Kippur.

Activities might include hearing or playing the different notes on the shofar, talking about things that we might be sorry about and learning about the special blessings.



Jewish Holidays

Sukkot



Sukkot celebrates the gathering of the harvest in Israel. Sukkot is a weeklong holiday where the first two days are Yom Tov where work is forbidden. School is closed for these days. During Sukkot, we build a dwelling known as a Sukkah, which is covered with foliage. Meals are had in the sukkah and it is usually decorated with fruits and vegetables.

Activities might include building the school sukkah, making decorations to hang in the sukkah, shaking the lulav, singing songs and hosting a lunch in the sukkah.

Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah



Following the seven joyous days of Sukkot, we celebrate Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. The first day we sit and dwell in the sukkah but without a blessing. The second day is Simchat Torah, where we complete and begin the annual torah reading cycle.

Activities might include singing songs, hosting a lunch in the sukkah and starting the torah stories again.

Hanukkah



Hanukkah is an eight-day festival during the winter, which is also referred to as the festival of lights. The festival is celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting, special prayer and eating of fried foods. The school stays open during this festival.

Activities might include: singing songs, learning about and making some of the foods, learning about the hanukkiah, making our own and retelling the story.



Jewish Holidays



Spring Term

Tu B'Shevat



Tu B'Shevat is the birthday of trees. This is the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat, known as Tu B'Shevat. During this holiday, we celebrate the some of the seven species of Israel, which include, wheat, barley, grape, fig, pomegranate, olives and dates.

Activities might include singing songs about trees, learning about the seven species, learning the blessings for fruit that grow on trees and for fruit that grow from the ground.

Purim



The festival of Purim commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in ancient Persia from Haman's plot to kill the all the Jews. On this day, we read the Megilat Esther and make noises each time we hear Haman's name. We also celebrate with food parcels including Hamantaschen.

Activities might include dressing up as royalty or in other costumes, making Hamantaschen, creating food parcels or giving money to charity.

Passover



Passover celebrates the exodus from Egypt and the freedom from slavery that the Israelites experienced. During this time, anything that is leavened is avoided and Seder meals are had which include the special foods and the retelling of the exodus story.

Activities might include retelling the story of exodus, learning about the Seder plate, taking part in a mock Seder, making matza and learning the blessings.



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Summer Term

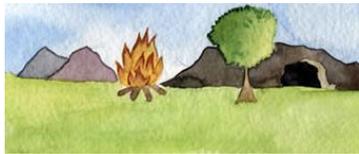
Yom Ha'Shoah



Yom Ha'Shoah is holocaust memorial day. On this day we remember the victims of the holocaust and candles are lit in observance.

Activities might include learning about what happened during the holocaust, talking about being singled out and learning about famous people.

Lag B'Omer



Lag B'Omer marks the 33rd day of the Omer. After the exodus, Moses goes up to Mount Sinai to speak to God, the Jewish people begin to count 49 days when Moses will return. Lag B'Omer is the only day in the Omer when celebrations can take place including parties, weddings and haircuts.

Activities might include learning about what we can do on Lag B'Omer, having a party, dressing up and having a bonfire.

Yom Ha'zikaron



Yom Ha'zikaron is Israel's Memorial Day. On this day, we remember the fallen soldiers who have fought for independence.

Activities might include learning about how we remember people who have died, talking about people we remember and looking at traditions.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut



Yom Ha'Atzmaut is Israel's Independence Day or Israel's birthday. It is celebrated by eating traditional Israeli food, Israeli dancing and singing songs.

Activities might include singing songs, learning Israeli dances, learning about the Israeli flag and learning about important Israeli people.

Shavuot



Shavuot is a two-day holiday and coincides with the date that God gave the Torah to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai. It comes 49 days after Passover and the preparation to receive the Torah. The school is closed on these days.

Activities might include learning the 10 commandments, listening to stories from the Torah, making and eating foods that involve dairy especially cheesecake.