



The High Holy Days

*from Z(oom) to A(we)
5781*

For Families with
Younger Children

The Seven Weeks

The 7 Weeks are a period of time, including the month of Elul, that ask each of us to reflect and look inwards in preparation for the High Holy Days. We examine every aspect of our lives, looking deeply into the corners neglected and perhaps avoided. These 7 weeks begin with Tisha B'av (the 9th day of the month of Av) which marks the destruction of the First and Second Temples, as well as other acts of destruction and persecution; they end with Rosh Hashanah. From grief to growth and from loss to discovery. Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi taught that 49 days of these 7 weeks parallel the 49 days of the Counting of the Omer. During the Counting of the Omer we focus on seven qualities that we and God share: *Chesed* (Loving Kindness), *Gevurah* (Strength of Character), *Tiferet* (Glory), *Netzach* (Eternity), *Hod* (Splendor), *Yesod* (Foundation) and *Malchut* (Sovereignty). During the 7 Weeks from Tisha B'Av to Rosh Hashanah, we explore these *middot* (values) in reverse order - from *Malchut* to *Chesed*. This year, we will use these *middot* during the 7 Weeks and Elul to help us prepare for the High Holy Days ahead.

How To Use This Packet

The purpose of this journal is to stir insight and provide a forum for self-examination. Each week, a new page will be added to the packet with a new prompt. The following guidelines are suggestions, but the overall goal is most important to keep in mind: that these journal prompts prepare you for the challenge and opportunity of the Days of Awe. The weekly prompts are intended for introspection and reaction. We challenge you to find ways for introspection and reflection, perhaps making a practice of daily or weekly journaling. A daily practice during the 7 Weeks will help you to consider your life at this moment and where you want to be in the future.

Each week will have information about the *middah*, in addition to the journal prompts. These can take your mind wherever you want to go, but try to remain connected to the prompt in some way. Writing, like painting, dance, and other art forms is a way to express inner beliefs, feelings, and thoughts. The act of writing will bring subconscious and forgotten elements into your conscious mind. Use the artistic process to go deeper into the meaning of the text and its application to your life.

Yesod (Foundation)

Yesod is the foundation on which our connection to our community and to God is built. We find foundation in the texts that weave us together as a peoples, in the history and stories that we tell, and in laying the foundation for future generations. *Yesod* is in the groundwork that God laid out for us in the Torah, teaching the Israelites how to live as a free people. *Yesod* is also in the stories that our families told us about how each of our families came to be.

“First a person should put their house together, then their town, then the world.” - Rabbi Yisrael Salanter (1810-1883)

Draw a picture of your family. Describe a way in which your family is special or unique. What about your family makes you most proud? How do you contribute to your family in a positive way?



Draw a picture of something in your community. How can you contribute to making your community a better place?



