

Class Update - Juniors Class Sept.

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The juniors class spent the September session getting reacquainted, welcoming some new classmates, and learning about the High Holidays. After a few icebreakers, the class played a High Holidays trivia game and learned about teshuvah, tefillah, and tzedakah, three concepts that are central to the observance of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Students had the opportunity to guess the Hebrew spelling of each word using phonetic Hebrew alphabets, and then to guess the meaning of each word. This led into a discussion of how Humanistic Jews can approach teshuvah, tefillah, and tzedakah at the new year, thinking about their important values and rededicating themselves to these values, spending time reflecting on their behavior in the past year, and working to act as righteous people—giving of their time, money, et cetera to help others. Students brainstormed a list of their important values, thought about techniques they could use to self-reflect, and came up with a list of different ways that they could help others.

After our break, students gathered outside to learn about tashlich and create a tashlich art project. Because we were far away from a real body of water, the class made a watercolor-resist mural of a river with fish swimming in it, and performed tashlich by throwing crumbs onto our symbolic 'body of water.'

Back inside, the class rounded out the lesson with some rapping and reading. Students listened to a Rosh Hashana rap written by a yeshiva student that focused on the Jewish New Year as a time for self-reflection and self-improvement, and then wrote their own Rosh Hashana raps—both individually and as a group—and took turns performing them to a beat. Class wrapped up with a discussion about plans for the Or Emet school year, and students agreed to participate in a book-club type class format. **Three weeks before each month's class, reading will be posted for students on the Or Emet wordpress site; they should do this reading before the upcoming class. (Reminder emails will also be sent out to parents.)** Getting into the spirit of this focus on Jewish writing and storytelling, the class read the Yiddish short-story "If Not Still Higher" (by I. L. Peretz) aloud, learning about a mysterious rabbi and the ways that he performs tzedakah in the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

["Kaporos," by Sholom Aleichem](#)

["The Simchas Torah Flag," by Sholom Aleichem](#)