

MAY MY HOME BE A SANCTUARY

Our tradition teaches us that we can pray just about anywhere. In the Talmud (Megillah 29a), we read that God will dwell in holy places. Our homes can be holy places. We refer to our homes as a *mikdash me'at*, a small sanctuary. Now more than ever our homes have become our sanctuaries. While we would love to be gathering in sanctuary these High Holy Days, instead our holy community will be doing so mostly from the comfort and safety of our own homes. This is an opportunity to think of our homes as sacred spaces, as our own sanctuaries. With a little planning, we can create a space in our own homes to experience these Days of Awe.

Getting Ready

When you sit down for services, do so with intention. Consider saying a blessing to mark the entry into sacred time. The *Shehecheyanu* expresses our thankfulness for having reached this moment. The *Birkat Habayit*, the blessing for the home, gives voice to our wish for a home filled with peace. Or, create your own special blessing for this unique experience.

Birkat Habayit

May this home be a place of happiness and health,
Of contentment, generosity, and hope.
A home of creativity and kindness.
May those who visit and those who live here
Know only blessing and peace.

The Five Senses of the High Holy Days

The holy days can be a delight for our senses. Consider how each of our senses can help us create our own *mikdash me'at*.

Sight

Instead of participating in our service on a small screen think about connecting your computer to a TV with HDMI cord or another way. Aside from your screen, iPad, or TV what will you be looking at? If possible, orient yourself so that you have a view that enhances your sense of the sacred. A piece of Jewish art, photos of family, or a lovely view from a window can all create that mood. Will you be at your dining table, coffee table, or a desk? Try to remove extraneous objects. Place some ritual objects such as candlesticks or a Kiddush cup on your table. Cover your surface with a beautiful cloth.

Touch

What will make you most comfortable? For some it is not the High Holy Days unless they are dressed in their finest clothing. For others, comfort is key. Maybe this year it is your best suit and your comfy slippers. Think about where you will sit. Try out some different locations in your home for the best location. Don't forget your kippah and tallis. Have you picked up your machzor (the prayerbook we use for the High Holy Days)? Having a physical book in your hands and turning the pages can be an important part of your home worship experience. **If you have not picked up your books, please be contact the temple office to make arrangements to do so.**

Smell

For many, nothing says Rosh Hashanah like brisket! Whether it is a savory main course or a sweet dessert, consider filling your home with aromas that not only signal the holy days, but bring back those wonderful memories of past holy days. The fragrance of fresh flowers can also

make our homes feel special. Think about getting fresh flowers as your bima flowers.

Taste

Make sure to have your favorite foods. It is a tradition to have a sweet round challah on the High Holy Days. On Rosh Hashanah, we dip apples in honey in hopes of a sweet year. Make sure to have on hand your favorite variety of apple. Consider a honey tasting with several different types of honey. This is a great time to get out the good dishes. Setting a beautiful table will make the meal even more festive.

Sound

There is no need to wait until Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur to hear your favorite High Holy Day Melodies. Search online or in your favorite music app for a High Holy Day Playlist. Visit the website of Jewish Rock Radio for their Holiday Playlist. Or, just ask Alexa. You can listen while cooking or getting your house ready for the holiday.

May these suggestions add a sense of holiness and joy to this year's holy days. And may the coming year be one filled with sweetness!