



Tashlich at Home

***Tashlich*, which literally translates to “cast off,” is a ceremony performed on the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah.**

During this ceremony, Jews symbolically cast off the sins of the previous year by tossing pebbles or bread crumbs into flowing water. People think of things they’ve done wrong in the past year and then “throw them away,” promising for improvement in the coming year. We are all trying harder to be better people- no matter how old we are. Tashlich gives us the opportunity to teach children about the feelings and behaviors associated with making amends.

Kids can easily grasp the ideas of wanting to do better and saying "sorry," so including them in a simple, age-appropriate *tashlich* ceremony is a great way to build understanding about the ritual while building a meaningful family tradition.

Here are some ideas for observing tashlich with your family. They are great for children of all ages and can be done as an alternative for adults and families who are unable to attend a large group tashlich ceremony.

If you have a stream, lake or the ocean nearby you can walk there as a family to perform the ritual.

While a lot of grown-ups grew up using bread crumbs for *tashlich*, we know today that “human-food” like bread isn’t great for some wild-life to eat. It’s not that the bread is poisonous to ducks or fish, it just fills them up, leaving no room for the nutritional food they would otherwise eat. Ever had to use the phrase “Don’t fill up on bread”? It’s pretty much the same for birds as it is for humans. Luckily there are lots of ways to get creative when performing *tashlich*. And if you’d like to stay closer to tradition and “cast off” into moving water, here are some environmentally-friendly options you can try:



- Bird seed
- Small pebbles
- Leaves
- Small bark chips can also be used.

As a pre-holiday activity, you could even try using an earth-friendly ink and writing sins or ways you'd like to do better in the new year on flat bark chips before throwing them.

If you're attached to using bread – maybe it's a long-time family tradition – consider changing up the water source. Instead of visiting a stream, hook up a hose and create your own running water. Afterward, you could gather up the soggy bread and compost it.

No water nearby or just want to stay at home? Here are some great alternatives:

Use a Wading Pool

You will need:

- A kiddie pool (or even just a large bowl) filled with water
- White copy paper
- Washable markers



Have a conversation with your kids about mistakes they've made over the past year. Be honest with them about your mistakes too. Have them draw or write their mistakes on the paper with the washable markers. (And you do it too! Setting an example for both positive behavior and making mistakes is an important part of parenting.) Then float the papers in the water and watch your sins disappear.

Tashlich in the Tub:

Use bath crayons to write or draw things you are sorry about in the tub and then wash them away. Again, if your kids are too young to verbalize or recognize things that they are sorry for, you can do the writing or drawing for them and then let them do the part -- washing away the writing.





Side Walk Tashlich :

Make a short list of things you are sorry for together and write it on the sidewalk using sidewalk chalk. Then, fill up some water balloons, or use the hose, to "erase" the words and sentences in the list. You'll be left with beautiful, and temporary, rainbow streaks on your driveway or sidewalk.

Tashlich with Beans in a Bowl

This activity is great for tactile kids who learn best by holding and touching things.



You will need:

- A bag of navy beans (or chickpeas, lima beans, etc.)
- A bag of black beans (or other darker beans)
- A bowl

Pour the white bag of beans into the bowl. These are all the good things you have done this year. Then give everyone a few of the darker beans. Talk about the ways in which you've each made mistakes that year. After each mistake, throw a dark bean into the bowl. At the end, point out how, though you can see your mistakes, they do get overwhelmed by the other beans-the good things you do. You can also stir up the bowl so you can't see the "mistake beans" to illustrate the point even better.

Tashlich Art Projects



1. "Wash away sins with cellophane"

You will need:

- Colored cellophane (blue, ideally)
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Markers or crayons

Begin by having a conversation with your kids about mistakes they've made over the past year, and being honest about your mistakes too. Next, have them rip a piece of paper into small pieces and write/draw their mistakes on that paper. Next, glue those pieces of paper to a large piece of construction paper. Finally, glue the blue cellophane to the whole piece of paper so that it looks like the mistakes/sins are under water. The "sins" are being washed away!

2. Make a "Letting Go" Collage

You will need:

- Piece of large poster board
- Colorful/patterned paper
- Scissors
- Pen or marker
- Glue

Anytime you need to say sorry to someone for something you've done wrong, do your best to make it right. Then, write or draw a picture of it on a small piece of colorful paper (for example, "I didn't share my toy with my sister").

- Cut the paper into small pieces so that you can't read the words anymore.
- Glue these pieces onto the poster board in any design you like.
- Continue to add different colored paper each time, letting go of your mistakes as you create something new and beautiful.

Read A Story

The following picture books offer easy to understand explanations of *tashlich* along with some extra ideas for family or community ceremonies. They are all available on Amazon as Kindle or hard copies.

Happy New Year, Beni by Jane Zalben

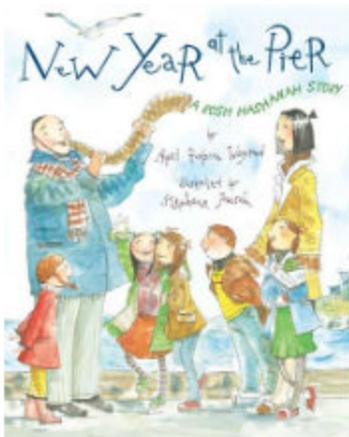
Recommended for children 3 to 5 years old

Beni loves getting together with family on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year -- if only it weren't for his mischievous cousin, Max. Max is making trouble for everyone! But Grandpa has a few words of wisdom about starting off the New Year right.

Happy New Year, Beni



STORY AND PICTURES BY
JANE BRESKIN ZALBEN



New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story by April Halprin Wayland

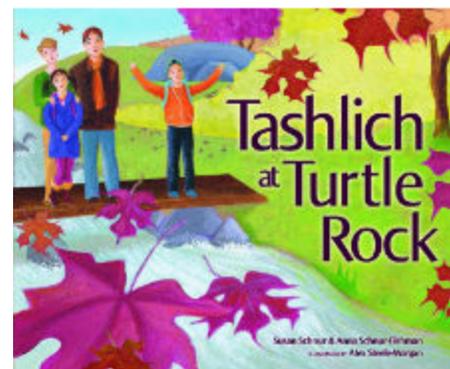
Recommended for children 5 to 7 years old

In this contemporary story, Izzy finds it difficult to apologize for a certain mistake, until the Rosh Hashanah tashlich service gives him new understanding.

Tashlich at Turtle Rock by Susan Schnur

Recommended for children 7 to 8 years old

On Rosh Hashanah, many families participate in tashlich, a tradition of throwing bread crumbs into water to wash away the mistakes of the past year. But this family has their own spin on tashlich -- and it takes place at Turtle Rock.



A Prayer for Masked *Tashlich*

With devotion to the preservation of life,
as I stand today physically masked,
let me be spiritually unmasked.
May I have the courage to see my wrongdoings,
And the will to draw nearer to holiness,
That no mask, no disguise, no veil,
separates me from my loved ones, from my own truest self,
and from You, God, Source of All.

A Prayer for *Tashlich*

Here I am again
Ready to let go of my mistakes.

Help me to release myself
From all the ways I've missed the mark.

Help me to stop carrying
The baggage of my poor choices.

As I cast this bread upon the waters
Lift my troubles off my shoulders.

Help me to know that last year is over, Washed away like crumbs in the current.

Open my heart to blessing and gratitude. Renew my soul as the dew renews
the grasses.