

## Teaching Teshuva

The lessons that we teach our students now will shape their associations with Yomim Nora'im for the rest of their lives. The essence of these days is Teshuva, yet many children are often confused or overwhelmed by the Teshuva process. They may lack the invigorating feeling of starting the New Year with a clean slate and the importance of feeling close to Hashem. It is our job to teach them and re-teach them the basics of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - the purpose of Teshuva, the invigorating feeling of starting the new year with a clean slate and the importance of feeling close to Hashem.

To help with this challenging task, we have put together some important points to discuss and/or implement with your class. Not every idea will suit every teacher, but you can take what speaks to you and implement it in your classroom.

1. Explain to your students how Hashem actively seeks ways to forgive and they are already on the path of Teshuva – even if the best they can do right now is want to do Teshuva.
2. Remind them that Yiddishkeit is not all-or-nothing – that their Aveiros do not invalidate their Mitzvos or diminish Hashem's love and desire for us to beseech Him.
3. Model the virtue of personal growth by sharing your own goals to improve a particular Mitzvah or Middah, or by working to improve something together as a class. Suggest they undertake a small goal to improve their relationship with Hashem with reassurance that the most proper and effective way to grow is through small, obtainable steps of self-improvement.
4. Urge them to recall something they wish they could undo and reassure them that now is their opportunity to erase whatever they regret.
5. Share your personal stories of Hashgacha Pratis with your class to demonstrate Hashem's direct involvement in our day-to-day lives. Encourage your students to focus on two or three things they truly appreciate as constant reminders of Hashem's benevolence in their own lives.
6. Sincerely ask your students for Mechilah during the Yomim Nora'im to teach them that everyone can make mistakes and is equally worthy of being forgiven.
7. Make a special effort during the Yomim Nora'im to model Hashem's Middah of patience, compassion and forgiveness in your interactions with your students.

By imparting these lessons and embodying the principles of Teshuva, forgiveness, and closeness to Hashem, we can guide our students to embrace the Yomim Nora'im with understanding, sincerity, and a sense of profound connection.

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### Support and resources for new and veteran Mechanchim

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