

Young Family High Holiday Services: Music, Methods, and More!

Eliana Light

SESSION SUMMARY

After leading High Holiday family services for young children and their families, Eliana Lights shares what she's learned with you. The session offered information about services featuring songs old and new, discussed opportunities and challenges, and shared best practices. It offered both new music and inspiration!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eliana Light empowers people to make Judaism their own through song, experiential education, and prayer. She has put out two albums of original Jewish music and teaches all over the country. Eliana holds a Masters in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary and is the Director of Music Education at Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan.

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Services can be beautiful opportunities for families to spend meaningful, Jewish time with each other. How can the service leader create and facilitate that holy space? In this session, we sang through *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* services, geared towards families with kids from two to five

Before the singing, however, we ran through a list of factors that are important to research before planning, such as:

- Space -- Rugs, set up of chairs, orientation, Ark, etc.
- Books vs. visual *tefillah* vs. handouts
- Leaders involved
- Length of service

And many others. But the main one, the very first thing you should think about, is what are our goals for this service? Is it for families to engage with each other? To learn about the High Holidays? For the kids to feel ownership? For parents to meet each other?

The goals should always drive the service. Think of the goals (multiple!) you have for the service, and let the logistics and content reflect those goals.

Another question we discussed that drives content is in what direction is the energy flowing. Each song has an energy. When you do "*Avinu Malkeinu*," for example, the energy comes from the parents. They know the song and sing it, and that energizes the children. If you choose a song the children know from school, they will sing it, which will energize the parents. The energy in call-and-response songs begins with the leader. Services should have a mix of energies, but the energy should always be coming from somewhere.

Below are the examples of outlines I've used for *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, as well as chords and lyrics to original songs of mine that you are more than welcome to use. Videos of these songs can be found at <https://goo.gl/rQ9Mex>.

Wishing you a musical, meaningful High Holiday season!

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ROSH HASHANAH OUTLINE

Time	Song	Key	Notes	Mins.
9:30	Head of the Year (Jonas)	C (c1)	start drum, introduce, teach 3t's	2
	L'shanah Niggun	G	intro weave throughout service	1
	Halalalaleluyah/shananana tova	G		2
	barchu (L'shanah niggun)	G	Coming together	0.5
	Shema (traditional)	no key	shh mmm ahh?	0.5
	Amidah silent time noodleing	l'shanah noodle G	Think about what you want to do in the coming year, be better. Share!	2
9:38	Oseh Shalom	G	pray for peace	1
	Hakafa song (allard)		Torah story time! hakafah	3
	Story!!			4
9:46	Hallelu (sufi traditional)	Am (c2)		2
	L'shanah Tovah (allard)	C	It's Rosh Hashanah! What is special?	3
	Avinu Malkeinu	?	ask God for help, gets us ready for YK	2
	extra time song: Zochreinu	Am	remembering the past, the future	
	Happy Birthday World! (Light)	C	what can we do for the world on the world's birthday?	4
9:57	Building a better world (Allard)	C (c1)	World's birthday: do good things for everyone, everywhere	4
	Family blessing (Teck)	G c2	starts at home- do good things for family	3
	Shofar blast (Allard)	Am (c2)		2
10:06	Blow shofar			5
	Tiku (Light?)	C		2
	extra time song: Hayom (taubman)	Am	We end by asking for blessings to start the year	
10:15	Closing: Head of the year	C (c1)		2

YOM KIPPUR OUTLINE

Time	Song	Key	Notes	Mins.
9:30	Hayom niggun and song	Am	Today, hayom, is very special...	2
	Bim Bam		It's Shabbat Shabbaton!	1
	Shabbat wishes	Am	What do we wish today?	2
	L'shanah Niggun	G	intro weave throughout service	1
	barchu (L'shanah niggun)	G	Coming together	0.5
	Shema (traditional)	no key	shh mmm ahh?	0.5
	Amidah silent time noodling	l'shanah G	Think about what you want to do in the coming year, be better. Share!	2
	Oseh Shalom	G	pray for peace	2
9:41	Hakafa song		Torah story time! hakafah	3
	Story!!			4
	Hallelu (sufi traditional)	Am (c2)		2
9:50	Sorry day song	Am		
	Avinu Malkeinu	?	ask God for help, gets us ready for YK	2
	Zochreinu	Am	remembering the past, the future	2
	Ashamnu (tap your heart)	C		3
	V'al kulam		have them talk to each other, do the chorus in between, Hebrew and english	2
	Keter melucha		we celebrate getting another year!	3
	Building a better world (Allard)	C (c1)	World's birthday: do good things for everyone, everywhere	4
	Family blessings (Teck)	G c2	starts at home- do good things for family	3
10:11	Hayom niggun and song	Am	We close by asking for blessings today	2

NEW HIGH HOLIDAY SONGS BY ELIANA LIGHT**HAPPY BIRTHDAY WORLD!**

So today is the first day of the new year because today the world was created! It's the world's birthday! Can everyone show me with your fingers how old you are? You are all so grown up! Well, the world is a little bit older than you. In fact, it's 5,775 years old! Wow! Let's sing the world a birthday song!

Hand motions:

Hayom (put up right arm round above head)

Hayom (left arm up, connect to the right above head. Round, like a globe)

Harat Olam (bounce from side to side above head)

Happy birthday world (spin around with arms up!)

Chorus:

C F C

Hayom Hayom harat olam

G C

Happy birthday world! (happy birthday!)

C F C

Hayom Hayom harat olam

G C

Happy birthday world!

Verses, call and response:

G C

If you were a kid

G C

I'd bake you a cake

G C

but you couldn't eat it

G

so instead I'll say

Chorus

If you were a kid

I'd buy you a gift

but you couldn't use it

So I'll just say this!

Chorus

I know you don't need

presents or cake

but I want to do something

to make your birthday great!

[What can we do for the world on the world's birthday? Take suggestions]

So I'll pick up my trash

I'll help out a friend

I'll say nice words

and I'll say it again!

Chorus

ZOCHREINU L'CHAYIM

Am
Zochreinu l'chayim (Zochreinu L'chayim)
 G
Zochreinu l'chayim (Zochreinu L'chayim)
 Am G
 remember us
 G Am
 remember us
 F Em Am
 remember us for life

[Grownups, I want you to tell your kids a favorite memory from this past year.]

Am
V'chotveinu (V'chotveinu)
 G
B'sefer hachayim (B'sefer Hachayim)
 Am G
 And write us in
 G Am
 write us in
 F Em Am
 in the book of life

[
 [Kids, I want you to tell your parents what you are looking forward to in the coming year. What memories do you want to make?]

bridge
 G Am
Zochreinu l'chayim
 oh remember us
 G Dm
Zochreinu l'chayim
 E7
 remember us

TAP YOUR HEART (*ASHAMNU*)

Chords are C and G the whole way through

Everybody make a fist. We're not going to hit ourselves, we're going to lightly tap our hearts. It's like we're knocking on the door saying, "Heart! Open up! It's time to change!"

Chorus:

tap, tap, tap your heart (x3)

on *Yom Kippur* it's time to restart

ai ai yai yai...

Can do the Hebrew call and response, as many verses as you like

Ashamnu, Bagadnu, Gazalnu, Dibarnu Dofi....

Ai ai yai yai...

We've made mistakes
 We've done bad things
 but this is what
 the new year brings
 a chance to change
 a chance to grow
 with one first step
 nice and slow

Chorus

We've used bad words
 and hurt our friends
 but these mistakes
 are not the end
 we do *teshuvah*
 We learn to do good
 so we tap our heart
 to remind us we should

Chorus