

Dear Parents,

Your child is about to begin a unit of study that focuses on the Jewish calendar. As part of this unit, students will learn that:

- The Jewish people has its own calendar that is linked with the Torah.
- The Jewish calendar is different from the civil calendar in that it is tied to the phases of the moon and to the seasons.
- During the time of the Mishnah, the Sanhedrin was very careful to make sure that everyone celebrated Rosh Hodesh— the first day of the new month—at the right time.
- Rosh Hodesh is a time for celebration and blessing.

Students will observe the moon; explore the phases of the moon through engaging activities; create a Jewish moon phase calendar; participate in a Jewish month treasure hunt; reenact how the Mishnaic Jewish court announced Rosh Hodesh; set aside time for monthly introspection; study the Rosh Hodesh blessing; and take responsibility for announcing Rosh Hodesh to their entire school.

Several aspects of this unit can be enhanced through family participation. Use class assignments to observe the moon and to look out for the new moon as opportunities for your whole family to learn more about the relationship between the Jewish calendar and the moon. In addition, the following websites may be useful as resources for family discussion of the Jewish calendar:

- Jewish calendar calculator:
<http://www.hebc.com>
- Information on the phases of the moon:
<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/time/moon/phases.html>,
http://www.moonconnection.com/moon_phases.phtml,
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ydl1aDjWLIY&feature=related> (VIDEO)
<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/education/videos/videos/moonphases/moonphases-excerpt.mov> (video)
- Moon phase images:
<http://www.die.net/moon>
<http://tycho.usno.navy.mil/vphase.html>

In order to facilitate the teaching of this unit, we ask that you please complete the form at the bottom of this page and e-mail it to me or have your child bring it to the school by <<insert date here a week before you start the unit>>. We will use this information to figure out your child's Hebrew birthday. That will be the trigger to helping your children understand the importance of the Jewish calendar.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. We hope that your family enjoys exploring Rosh Hodesh!

Sincerely,

<<insert teacher's name here>>

Student's name: _____

Student's birthday: _____

Was s/he born before or after sunset? _____