



Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!

Outline of "A Taste of Rosh Hodesh"

Introductory Meeting for Girls and Parents

This informational meeting for parents and girls is a tool for recruiting before the girls have their first official gathering. It is a great way to ensure that the parents and girls understand the goals of *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!* and are excitedly anticipating a wonderful experience. In addition, girls often feel more comfortable coming to an introductory meeting than committing to participation in an unknown group. **In other words, get them to the introductory meeting, and then they will want to come back for more!**

You can present this meeting yourself, or invite your supervisor or an experienced group leader to help you facilitate.

Planning Tips

- Find a convenient, comfortable, and private space to hold your meeting. Keep in mind that you will need space for three small groups to converse.
- The meeting will take approximately one and a half hours.
- Solicit guidance from potential participants regarding optimal times for meeting.
- Familiarize yourself with the meeting plan below and with the key Rosh Hodesh facts found in the Opening Month section of the Lev Year binder.
- Plan a closing activity.
- Prepare:
 - name tags and markers*
 - cards with discussion questions*
 - pad and pen for each of three groups*
 - flyers, meeting date sheet, sign-up sheet*
 - copies, for your own reference, of the Lev Year Opening Month Essence Sheet handout and the year's "Themes at a Glance."*
 - anything needed for your Closing (e.g., song sheets)*
 - kosher snacks (include some healthful snacks) and drinks*
- Arrive early to set up, but expect others to come late. Pace yourself to ensure enough time for questions at the end of the meeting.
- Arrange seating in a circle or semicircle as numbers and space permit.
- Feel free to use your own program ideas, as long as they meet the goals outlined in the following plan.

Suggested Introductory Meeting Outline

1. Opening

Welcome participants.

Introduce yourself and share your background.

Express your enthusiasm for the project.

2. Goals

Outline four goals for the meeting:

- to get acquainted and have fun together
- to describe *Rosh Hodesh: It's a Girl Thing!*
- to discuss the tradition of Rosh Hodesh
- to address logistical issues and answer questions

3. Getting Acquainted

Select one of the following two introductory activities, based on the size of the group. The first is suitable for small groups; the second works better with larger ones.

Go around the circle, each person introducing themselves and sharing what school they attend, their favorite ice cream flavor, and the name of the most recent book they have read.

or

Read a list of statements, one at a time; instruct participants to rise if the description applies to them. "Stand up if you..."

...are a middle child.

...have a pet.

...are left-handed.

...have been in a wedding party.

...have played on a sports team.

...like craft projects.

...play an instrument.

...are the youngest child.

...have been to summer camp.

...have made potato latkes.

...have eaten potato latkes.

...love music.

...are not afraid of mice.

...have traveled to Israel.

...have been in a play.

...are the oldest child.

...have a relative named Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, or Leah."

As you go, be playful in inviting and acknowledging comments and embellishments: for example, "Oh, which instrument do you play?" Highlight diversity and commonalities. You may wish to invite people to offer other categories that apply to themselves, to see if anyone else shares in them.

In closing, thank them for their enthusiastic participation.

4. Activity

Explain that instead of doing a presentation about what the groups are like, you'll give them a taste for themselves.

Divide participants into three groups of mixed girls and parents. Give each group a "Getting Started" card (see page 18) with discussion questions, a pad, and a pen. Instruct each group to assign a recorder and a reporter. (If you do not get enough people for three groups then ask the questions in one large group.)

After the small groups have had time to discuss their topics, bring everyone back together to share their experiences. Point out that these are examples of the kinds of issues explored in the meetings. Using the Lev Year "Themes at a Glance," highlight monthly material, and offer examples of the ways issues are explored in Rosh Hodesh meetings.

VARIATION: Divide participants into two groups—one group of parents, one group of girls. Give the groups the *same* set of questions (create a compilation of your favorite six to eight questions from the cards) and then compare their responses in the large group. If you have someone to help you with this meeting, leave your co-facilitator with the parents and go with the girls in their breakout group.

5. How are Rosh Hodesh groups unique?

Highlight the following points:

- *Rosh Hodesh* offers adolescent girls the opportunity to gather on a monthly basis to learn, laugh, and grow as they explore the challenges and joys of their lives, sharing their thoughts and experiences and accessing the wisdom of their heritage.
- Point out how the themes discussed in the previous activity intersect in this project. The monthly groups draw on Jewish wisdom and practice as a resource for young women as they explore an array of topics relevant to their lives. Our approach fosters self-expression, analytical thinking, and the validation of individual experience.
- The method of facilitation is experiential. We do many different things together, including discussion, reflective writing, dramatic improvisation, craft-making, and traditional and creative rituals. The girls have the opportunity to take on leadership roles as they are ready.

6. What is Rosh Hodesh?

Ask if anyone knows what Rosh Hodesh is, or why this project for young women revolves around Rosh Hodesh. Solicit ideas and embellish, referring to the *Essence* sheet from the Lev Year Opening Month. Assure them that the girls will become "experts" on the meaning and celebration of Rosh Hodesh after the first meeting.

7. Logistics

Explain format, dates, time, location, role of parents, costs, method of monthly invitation, and confirmation. Solicit and respond to questions.

8. Close

Present a closing ritual, such as a song, one wish for the new month, one word about the moon, etc.



**Getting Started
Card 1**

Discuss the challenges
for teens today.
What are some of the
messages from media
and pop culture?
Parental expectations?
Peer pressure?
What are some of the
fun things about being
a teen today?



**Getting Started
Card 2**

How does being Jewish
affect your life?
What are the challenges
and rewards
of being Jewish?
Share a family memory or
personal experience that
involves a Jewish custom
or ritual that is
meaningful for you.



**Getting Started
Card 3**

Identify Jewish
female heroes.
What qualities do they
possess that you admire?
How would you like
to be remembered
by those who come
after you?