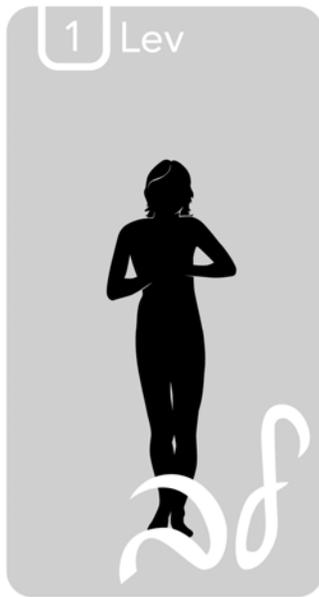


## In the Lev Year...



...girls gather 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**.

HEART

## y Opening Month

### Welcoming the Group and the Moon

The Opening Month is designed specifically for a group's initial meeting and introduces participants to the concept of **Rosh Hodesh** and of **Rosh Hodesh groups**. It creates a **comfortable and supportive environment** for future sharing and growth through personal introductions, the establishment of group expectations, and participation in a learning activity and **collaborative craft project**.

**Opening and Warm-Up:** Getting to know one another

**Viewing the Moon:** Group reflection and discussion

**Creating Safe Space:** Brainstorming and establishing group guidelines

**Why Rosh Hodesh?:** Group discussion of traditional, contemporary, and personal meanings of Rosh Hodesh

**Creating Sacred Space:** Design and creation of the Rosh Hodesh Cloth

**Closing:** Candles and blessing

## y Tishrey

### Teshuvah: Bringing Out Our Best

In Tishrey Lev, we prepare both personally and collectively for the New Year through reflective exploration of the High Holy Day themes of *teshuvah* (reflecting on negative behaviors we wish to abandon and positive ones we wish to enhance) and *lashon hara* (unethical speech). This session also builds on the process begun in the first month of **establishing an appreciative group atmosphere** through encouraging *lashon tov*, or ethical communication among participants.

**Tishrey and Teshuvah Tips:** Group discussion

**Practicing Ethical Speech:** Scripted dramatization

**The Ideal and the Real—The Challenge of Ethical Speech:** Discussion and improvisation

**A Look at Your Life:** Personal reflective writing

**Closing:** Elective sharing of individual *teshuvah* goals for the coming year and/or a selected Rosh Hashanah tradition

## y Heshvan

### The Struggles and Joys of Sisterhood

In Heshvan Lev, we explore the life of our foremother **Rachel**, in honor of her *yahrzeit*, which is observed on the 11th of Heshvan. Through the study of classical midrashim (ancient stories that provide interpretation of biblical texts) and the creation of original ones, we will highlight the importance of **interpretation** both in Jewish tradition and in forging our own relationship with Jewish texts.

**Viewing Rachel and Leah:** Group study and discussion of this relationship as depicted in the Torah and in classical and contemporary midrashim

**Midrash Explained:** Exploration of the ancient and contemporary midrashic (interpretive) process

**Midrash and Me:** Creating original midrashim through individual reflective writing OR small-group theatrical improvisation

**Closing:** Singing *Eli, Eli*, in honor of Hannah Senesh, whose *yahrzeit* is this month, and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Kislev

### **Judith and Beyond: Heroines Past and Present**

In Kislev Lev, we explore **female empowerment** in ancient and contemporary times. We discuss the stories of a woman associated with Hanukkah—**Judith**; discover the lives of twelve accomplished **modern day Jewish women**; and explore our own ideas of what it means to be a **heroine**.

**The Story of Judith:** Reading and full-group discussion

**Today’s Women of Valor:** Discussion and creating social network profile

**What Makes a Hero:** Group discussion

**Closing:** Singing and/or reading “Light and Dark” and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month” with added blessings

## y Tevet

### **Body as Temple: Rededication to Self-Appreciation**

In Tevet Lev, we commemorate the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem, using the metaphor from Jewish mystical tradition that likens the **human body** to the *mishkan*, (the portable tabernacle used before the building of the first Temple). We **rededicate ourselves** to valuing our bodies and committing to positive thoughts and actions.

**Body Beloved:** Identification and practice of healthy and self-affirming life strategies

**Body as Temple:** Group discussion of Jewish values and practices related to the body

**Body Positive:** Guided yoga/movement session

**Rededication to Self-Appreciation:** Personal reflection of self-critical tendencies and commitment to positive thinking

**Closing:** Reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Shevat

### **Shevat Smorgasbord: Nature Meditations and Munchies**

In Shevat Lev, we explore the **nature** themes of the Tu Beshvat Seder through reflection, movement, meditation, craft, and creative ritual.

**Shevat Seder Fruit Analogies:** Discussion of personal character traits

**Shevat Charades:** Interpretive movement and dramatic expression of the four elements of nature

**Centered in Nature:** Guided nature meditation

**The Calm of Rain:** Making and demonstrating rainsticks and learning about Jewish liturgy on rain

**Closing:** Expressing gratitude for the natural world, and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Adar I

### Megilot of Our Own

In Adar I Lev, we explore the role of **beauty** in the Purim story and in our lives through a discussion about Queen Esther and the creation of two *megilot* of our own. The first, “Song of Songs” is comprised of positive **images of women** in popular magazines, and the second “Our Lamentations,” is comprised of negative images of women in popular magazines.

**Beauty in the Purim Story:** Brainstorming and discussion of images of women in the Scroll of Esther

**Making *Megilot* of Our Own:** Craft and discussion of images of girls and women in the media and our own experiences

**Social Activism:** “Girlcotting” and individual letter-writing to companies using problematic female images in their advertisements

**Closing:** Identifying personal strengths and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Adar II

### Hide and Seek: Megilat Esther, Masks and Me

In Adar II Lev, we explore issues of **Jewish identity** and **anti-Semitism** through a discussion about Queen Esther and the creation of decorative plaster masks.

**Esther in the Palace:** Group discussion of Jewish identity (hidden or declared)

**The Minority Experience:** Personal reflection and sharing

**Revealing Masks:** Mask-making craft project and discussion of identity

**Closing:** Sharing individual masks and their meaning, reading poem “Myself” and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Nisan

### Miriam: Her Life and Legacy

In Nisan Lev, we learn about the life of **Miriam** the prophet, sister to Moses and Aaron, by reading and creatively retelling stories about her. Inspired by her courage, we explore the notion of healthy and unhealthy **risk-taking**. We invite the girls to rewrite a popular song, create an interpretive dance, or perform a skit about Miriam—anything **creative** that will honor her **celebratory spirit**. In Nisan, we also decorate our own *Kosot Miriam* (Miriam’s Cups) for use at the seders we attend.

**More About Miriam:** Creative retelling of Miriam’s story through creation and performance of original songs, dances, or skits

***Kos Miriam* (Miriam’s Cup):** Creating individual cups for the seder with discussion on risk-taking

**Closing:** Conducting *Kos Miriam* ritual and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Iyar

### **Knowing What Counts: The Omer and Being True**

In Iyar Lev, we read a magazine article, “How to Be Popular,” as an inroad to a discussion about **popularity** as it relates to being true to ourselves, choosing and maintaining healthy **friendships**, and developing a sense of **self-worth**. We build on Jewish mystical traditions about the Omer through making our own Omer Bracelets. We also explore Iyar as a time for **personal growth**. A special Facilitator's Resource provides guidance for converting this gathering plan into a Closing Month.

**Counting Friends vs. Friends that Count:** Group discussion of magazine article, “How to Be Popular,” by Deirdre Dolan

**Being My Best Self:** Identifying personal character goals through crafting of Omer Bracelets

**Closing:** Sharing bracelets and their meaning, and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”

## y Sivan

### **Ruth and Naomi: Listening With Your Heart**

In Sivan Lev, we examine Megilat Rut (The Book of Ruth) as a springboard for an exploration of **successful friendship**. We identify **effective communication** as an essential component of **healthy relationships** and learn and practice **communication skills**. A special Facilitator's Resource provides guidance for converting this gathering plan into a Closing Month.

**Opening and Warm-Up:** Group discussion of Megilat Rut and its Theme of Friendship

**Active Listening Defined:** Paired role-play to identify effective listening skills

**A Good Friend is a Good Listener:** Group demonstration and practice of active-listening techniques

**Share a Treat:** Paired make-your-friend-a-sundae activity, reinforcing the use of and importance of listening skills

**Closing:** Reading of poem “Listen” and reciting the traditional “Prayer for the New Month”