



Hakesher: The USY/Kadima Advisor Newsletter

Elul 5771/September 2011

HIGH HOLY DAY HYPE: QUICK TIPS FOR CREATING A ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR YOUTH BUZZ

Wake up and hear the shofar blast! Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur brings the largest target market of youth into the synagogue you may never see again. Don't lose this prime opportunity to create a youth buzz in your synagogue. Here are a few tried-and-tested great ideas!

**Special thank you to Shira Kaplan (Regional Youth Director, Seaboard Region) and Andrea Millman (Regional Youth Director, Pinwheel Region) for their contributions!*

- Preliminary- USYers can lead an activity for Kadima-aged congregational students such as a trivia game, a "stained-glass" apples and honey plate and bowl, a beaded honey spoon, a Shofar Blast Competition (goals: youth leadership, Kadima promotion, youth-congregational school relationship)
- Have USYers or Kadimaniks sell round challot or candy apples to pre-school parents (goals: inform younger parents of youth leadership program, promote Kadima for parents who may have older children. BONUS: USYers may benefit from babysitting jobs by making this connection and make nice connections between different populations of the synagogue!

During the Yamim Nora'im:

- We all need something to read when our minds start to wander (and wonder) during Tefillah. Create any type of handout such as a fun, light High Holy Day joke sheet, cartoon, "did you know" fast facts, or USYer- written inspiring stories of how USY has impacted their lives in a booklet of "Honey for the Soul" for every few seats. You may also wish to print a few of the selected readings in the "Supplemental readings for the Machzor" document available through the [High Holiday section](#) of the USY Advisor page. * Include USY/Kadima contact info and opening program information on the back (goals: USY Promotion and increased visibility and awareness of youth programs, provides information you know they'll read when minds wander during Services).
- GIVEAWAYS! Have USYers hand out a giveaway to any teen or pre-teen who enters a program or the sanctuary, such as a calendar magnet or imprinted hand sanitizer for sticky honey-ed hands that include the bracha for apples and honey and USY/Kadima information. (you can order something like this at: <http://www.pinnaclepromotions.com/category/Hand-Sanitizers/1493/1?!=search> or <http://www.motivators.com/Promotional-Custom-WipesCanister-45715.html>)
- If there isn't a youth program during the different services, offer one! Visit www.usy.org/advisors for the High Holiday Programming section. Set up the space as a "teen lounge" so teens feel like they have a place to "hang out" but also participate in meaningful discussion and prayer.
- Kadimanik-parent Giveaway- at the end of any Kadima-aged program, provide a give-away for Kadimaniks to share with parents, including a flyer for the opening program or the year-calendar. Youth advisor or director should stand by the door of any program room and introduce him/herself to any parent who comes to pick up their child. It is essential to make connections with parents of Kadimaniks.
- USY on the Bima- have the USY president speak about how USY has inspired him/her and speak about youth programming in the synagogue.



- Ask the rabbi if youth can include something creative in the service such as a dramatic interpretation of the Torah reading as a Dvar Torah or have USYers read a contemporary version of the *Al Cheyt* (Goal: increasing youth presence)
- Have USYers run High Holy Day activities for younger children. Again, have each child leave with a give-away with a label on it with USY/Kadima contact information. Examples of other giveaways: Have USYers or Kadimaniks hand out honey sticks with a *Shana Tova* postcard to every member as they walk in for services. Postcards should have an upcoming program on it, a website, Facebook page and contact information (goal: each potential Kadimanik receives information and notices older role models involved in synagogue activities, everyone, including parents and grandparents receive Kadima/USY contact information).
- Have USYers take shifts as ushers helping people find their seats, particularly for older members who may need assistance (Seniors Helping Seniors). When they seat people, they should hand them a book mark for their Machzor with USY information on it or a sheet describing a personal story of the impact of USY or Summer Programs memories (goal: increase awareness of the impact of a USY Summer and its impact, a possible fundraising opportunity).
- In addition to increasing awareness of USY and Kadima for adults, obviously, any teen or pre-teen who walks through the door should receive a supplemental packet with readings and reflection pieces for teens (see High Holy Day section of USY website) such as the aforementioned “Honey for the USYer’s Soul.” USY and/or Kadima information can be the “header” of each page and the last page should include a flyer for an upcoming program. Younger people especially, will want something else to read during a long service.
- If it doesn’t work to stand by the door and help usher, have USYers quietly tip-toe through the Kehilla and personally invite any teen present to join the youth program (they may not come to it on their own, we have to seek them out and extend a personal invitation).
- Have USYers add Post-It notes to each Machzor pointing out key prayers like *Al Cheyt* or the *Yizkor Service*. Each note can say “USY helps you find your way...” or something that shows that these Machzor aides are courtesy of the youth program. You can order USY post-it notes with personalized information online.
- Have USYers create a supplemental book of their own personal poems, drawings or own collections of favorite readings to distribute at services. These original, creative works will not only showcase their talents and allow them to have their say, but showcase the intelligence, Jewish knowledge and contribution of youth to the Kehilla community.
- Sponsor a pre-teen or teen Tashlich ceremony, separate from the synagogue one. Invite all teens present at Shacharit to attend. Have teens participate in creating the service.
- Have USYers hand out cookies and juice or snacks following Ne’ilah to break the fast. Each snack package can include a mailing label on it with an upcoming USY program or the youth contact information.

Have you tried another idea at your synagogue that isn’t on this list? Please help us improve this list by sharing your own successful High Holy Day youth marketing and recruitment ideas. Email Amy Dorsch at Dorsch@uscj.org to contribute to next year’s list.

B’HATZLACHA!