

Yom Kippur Breakout Box Instructions

What is Breakout.EDU?

You may have heard of Escape Rooms - actual (as opposed to virtual) rooms where a group, usually ranging from 6-12 participants, work together to solve a series of puzzles in order to “break out” in an allotted time, often an hour. If successful, participants pose with signs that say, “We did it!” etc.; if they fail, they pose with negative, but good-humored signs. www.breakout.edu brings the concept of breakout rooms into the classroom. Participants are given a series of puzzles, the answers to which each open a different lock on a box or bag. The puzzles, taken together, are known as a “breakout.” Instead of gaining their freedom, if successful, students open all of the locks on the box and claim the prize inside.

In public school classrooms, breakouts are frequently used for review in subjects ranging the gamut of all that is taught in that setting. You can find breakouts created by teachers in many categories at www.breakout.edu. In the Jewish supplemental classroom, breakouts are commonly used to teach material as opposed to being a vehicle for review.

There is no set number of puzzles in a breakout; the amount might be determined by the number of locks available, the amount of time allotted, or the age and/or ability of the participants. The genre of puzzle is often varied - as is the case in this breakout - to capitalize on different skills and abilities of participants. A student who excels in math reasoning for instance and one who is skilled in remembering details might both contribute to their team’s success.

Options for Using this Breakout Box

Puzzles work best when 4-6 participants work together to solve them.

In the best case, you will have one complete set of puzzles and one box for every 4-6 participants. In this scenario, participants can solve puzzles collaboratively, or split up the puzzles and work in smaller groups. If this isn’t the case, you have two options:

- A) Give each group one puzzle and have the class work to complete the puzzles as a team, each group completing one puzzle and unlocking one lock.
- B) Give each group one puzzle but, instead of opening the corresponding lock, have them write down their answer to the puzzle. Rotate puzzles. When each team has completed each puzzle, see if their answers open the lock.

The participants know that they’re solving puzzles to get a prize. You know that in the process of solving puzzles, they’re also learning. The more puzzles a team works through, the more knowledge they can unlock.



Yom Kippur Breakout Box

There are three puzzles in this box, which will be discussed in further detail below. Topics include a general review of the High Holy Day season with a specific emphasis on Yom Kippur traditions, Rambam’s 4 steps of *teshuvah* and the *Al Heit* prayer.

The breakout is set in the fictional Congregation *Ahava V’Chesed*, in which Rabbi Cohen has posted a note before *Ne’ilah* letting congregants know of disappointment in their behavior. The rabbi has locked the shofar in a box so that they cannot complete the service. If congregants can learn something and demonstrate their knowledge about Yom Kippur, they will be able to unlock the box, finish the service, and break the fast.

Yom Kippur Box Instructions – continued

Materials Needed

Gather together these general items:

- One box or bag with a hasp (one per team or one for the whole group); locks will be attached to the hasp
- One envelope with a complete set of puzzles inside (one per team)
- Three locks (one set per team or one set for the whole group)
 - Key
 - Four-digit
 - Four-letter or five-letter
- Hint cards (2 per team)
- Pens and paper
- A timer if you choose to limit the amount of time to complete the puzzles

Introduction to the Yom Kippur Challenge

Because the challenge is set in a sanctuary on Yom Kippur, you might choose to set the stage that way. You could:

- Begin in the sanctuary, with a copy of the opening letter on each chair, and then adjourn to a different room to work.
- Set up a multipurpose room with rows of chairs, a reading desk and a portable ark. The note from Rabbi Cohen could be on chairs or taped to the ark or attached to the doors to the room.
- Play High Holy Day music as participants arrive.
- Wear white clothing or a white robe.

If this won't work in your setting, place copies of the note from Rabbi Cohen on tables or staple the note to the front of the envelope with the remainder of the puzzle elements.

Explanation of the Individual Puzzles

Crossword puzzle (key lock)

Materials Needed

- A copy of the puzzle
- A copy of the letter (for reference)

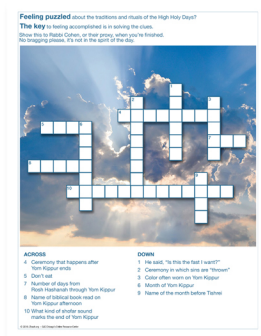
This puzzle is meant to review the High Holy Days in general and, more specifically, the traditions of Yom Kippur. The answers can be found in Rabbi Cohen's letter. They are:

Down:

- 1) Isaiah
- 2) Tashlich
- 3) White
- 6) Tishrei
- 9) Elul

Across:

- 4) Havdalah
- 5) Fast
- 7) Ten
- 8) Jonah
- 10) Tekiah Gedolah



When participants are finished, they should show the leader who will give them the key to the lock.

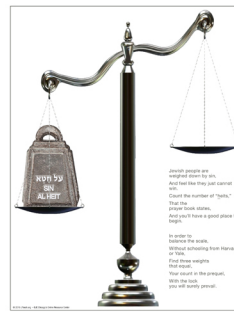
Yom Kippur Box Instructions – continued

Scale Poem (four-digit lock)

Solution: 2987

Materials Needed

- Scale Picture
- Cut and laminated copies of the individual weights
- *Al Heit* prayer



Through a poem on the scale picture, participants are asked to count the number of sins in the *Al Heit* prayer (44). Then they are to choose the three weights that will balance the scale. There are only three weights that, together, will add up to 44. Placed in the correct order of *teshuvah tefillah*, *tzedakah*, the numbers read 2987."

The words on the weights and their (randomly assigned) values are:

- Teshuvah* (repentance) – 29
- Tefillah* (prayer) – 8
- Tzedakah* (charity) – 7
- Gemilut Chasadim* (loving-kindness) – 17
- Ahavah* (love) – 26
- Tikkun Olam* (repair of the world) – 21
- Mehilah* (forgiveness) – 4
- Tzom* (fasting) – 5

Four Steps to *Teshuvah* (four-letter or five-letter lock)

Solution: PENT (If using a five-letter lock, keep the last letter blank.)

Materials Needed:

- 10 building blocks labeled with different actions that are (or are not) be part of the *teshuvah* process as outlined by Rambam.
A set of Jenga blocks can work well for this.
- Tape or glue to attach actions to blocks.
- Torn page about *teshuvah*
- Printed puzzle instructions (on index card on same sheet as torn page).

Prepare in Advance:

- Print and cut out the "steps of *teshuvah*" strips
- Attach one strip to the top and one strip to the bottom (i.e. the larger surface) of each block. Make sure that "Stop," "Regret," "Confess (to God)," and "Act" are on different blocks.

Background for Teacher:

The process of *teshuvah* is integral to the period from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur (and some say until the end of Sukkot). During this period, Jews around the world endeavor to do *teshuvah*, return to the proper path. The steps to finding one's way to that path are laid out in Rambam's Mishnah Torah (Laws of *Teshuvah* 2:2):

1. Recognize and stop the problematic behavior
2. Regret the problematic behavior
3. Confess the problematic behavior
4. Act differently in the future.

It should be noted that this process works for transgressions *bein adam lemakom* (between people and God). However, for issues *bein adam lehaveiro* (between people) there is a different process that requires acceptance of an apology in order to make peace between the parties.



Yom Kippur Box Instructions – continued

How the Puzzle Works:

Participants manipulate the blocks into a set of four steps, one for each step of *teshuvah*. The blocks should be positioned so that only the four steps of *teshuvah* are showing at the end.

One letter in each of the words on the blocks is bold-faced. When the blocks are placed correctly, with “Stop” as the bottom step and ascending to “Act” as the top step, the bolded letters in the revealed words will form the word “PENT” (which are the last four letters of the word “repent” and also represents someone having something pent up inside of them that they need to get out). This code will open the letter lock. (If using a five-letter lock, the last space on the lock will be blank.)



Debrief:

When participants have completed the puzzles in the box or time has run out, you might choose to debrief the experience. In addition to asking about what they enjoyed, what they found challenging, and what they learned, you might ask the following questions based on the material in each puzzle:

- Name one new thing you learned about the High Holy Days or Yom Kippur in particular.
- How many sins are found in the *Al Heit* prayer?
- What three things does Jewish Wisdom teach we should do in order to counteract the negative affect of sin?
 - What is one way you can act on one of these things in the coming days?

A few notes on running this program.

- When splitting students into groups, be mindful of their strengths. The groups will be more successful if each one includes an organizer and a thorough reader.
- Consider assigning a group leader for each group or assigning this role to a teenage madrich/a (teaching assistant).
- This program requires the teacher or facilitator to walk among groups checking on progress and helping students where necessary.
- We have included a number of hint cards. If a group is stumped, they can hand the teacher or classroom leader one of these cards to get a hint. The hints are at your discretion based on what they need to succeed. Remember, the goal is two-fold: that they learn and that they unlock the box.