

Marvelous Mitzvot for Winter Break

Kibud Zekaynim – Honoring the Elderly:

“Show your deference to the old” – Leviticus 19:32

- ☐ Call your local senior living center to arrange a visit – some will even allow you to bring a family pet with you.

Rosh Hodesh – New Month:



“This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months” – Exodus 12:2

Celebrate the new moon on *Rosh Hodesh Shevat* (sundown January 1, 2014)

- ☐ Make an “Oreo cookie phases of the moon” chart. Simply open the cookies and use a spoon to scrape away parts of the frosting to leave the remaining white parts in the shapes of whole, crescent, and new moons.
- ☐ Read *The Hanukkah Moon* book about a rosh hodesh celebration.

Shabbat:

“Remember Shabbat and Keep it Holy” – Exodus 20:8

- ☐ Prepare your winter Sabbath meals by adapting a challah recipe with the addition of spices like cinnamon. [This one](#) from Maggie Glezer incorporates canned pumpkin.
- ☐ Read a special Shabbat story such as *The Shabbat Princess* by Amy Meltzer to enhance your celebration.

Tza'ar Ba'alay Chayim – Being Kind to Animals

One's ox, ass, and cattle should do no work on Shabbat – Deuteronomy 5:14.

- ☐ During the winter months, animal shelters need blankets and tarps to help keep animals warm.
- ☐ Donate animal toys, pet food, and newspapers to a shelter.
- ☐ Call your local animal shelter to find out how your family can volunteer this winter.



Bal Tashchit – Not Destroying

“You must not destroy its trees... you may eat of them, but you must not cut them down” – Deuteronomy 20:19

- ☐ Protect the earth's resources by reusing and recycling as many household items as you can.
- ☐ Challenge your family to reduce their garbage output for the duration of winter break.

Kibud Av v'Aym- Honoring Your Father and Mother:

“Honor your father and mother” – Exodus 20:12

- ☐ Help your parents around the house by shoveling the walkway or doing chores inside your home.

Hachnasat Orchim – Hospitality

“Let me fetch a morsel of bread that you may refresh yourselves” – Genesis 18.5

There are many, many biblical examples of hospitality.

- ☐ You can be like our forefather and foremothers by welcoming others this winter break. Host a festive meal for friends or family.
- ☐ Even if you are not hosting guests for a meal, you can practice this *middah* (Jewish value) by being a warm and welcoming person; by greeting others with hospitality.

Talmud Torah – Jewish Study

“And you shall teach them diligently to your children” – Deuteronomy 6:6

Even though you are on vacation from school, try to make time for Jewish learning.

- ☐ Read a book with Jewish themes. A wide variety of Jewish children’s books are available at your local library including picture books, historical fiction, holiday stories, and even mysteries.
- ☐ Watch a Jewish themed movie such as *Fiddler on the Roof* or *An American Tail*.

V'ahavta L'rayacha Kamocha – Loving One's Neighbor

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself” – Leviticus 19:18

- ☐ Winter break is a good time to go through your closets and find items that you can give to those in need. With your family, collect coats, mittens, boots, hats, gloves, or other items that are especially necessary for the needy during winter months.
- ☐ Collect your gently used G and PG movies to donate to a local children’s hospital or pediatric floor.