

What Does Archery have to do with Judaism?
Rabbi Jamie Korngold

Subject Area: Eco-Judaism, High Holidays

Single/Multi-unit lesson plan single

Target Age: 8 and up

Objectives:

1. Introduce students to Concepts related to the High Holidays in an engaging manner
2. Make Jewish learning accessible, meaningful and fun
3. Connect the realms of Judaism and Sport: both take practice and intention.
4. Create a forum for families to talk about meaningful topics

Ages: Grades 3 and up

Time: 15 – 20 minutes

Materials: Archery range or an Indoor dart game that is safe for school kids to use.

Index cards and writing utensil for each participant. Each card should have pre-written
on the front

I got it right in 5769

1. **Jewish:**
2. **Family:**
3. **Earth:**

on the back

Goals for 5770

1. **Jewish:**
2. **Family:**
3. **Earth:**

Location: All participants should be comfortably seated (not in direct sun etc.) in a quiet spot so they can easily hear each other.

This lesson was originally designed to use on an archery range. The students would first learn archery, then take a break and do this exercise and then go back to archery. To do it without archery, consider using a dart board that has child safe darts.

Timing:

Background: 5 -7 minutes

1. Ask participants: “What does archery have to do with Judaism?”
- See what they come up with

2. Presentation: The High Holidays are approaching.

Ask participants: “Does anyone when Rosh Hashanah begins?”

Ask participants: “Does anyone know the name of the month that leads up to Rosh Hashanah?”

(Elul)

Ask participants: “Does anyone know when Elul starts?”

Ask participants: “Does anyone know what we are supposed to do in Elul?”

- During the month of Elul Jews are instructed to examine our behavior during the past year. Where have we been the people we most want to be? Where have we fallen short?

Ask participants: “Does anyone what are the steps for fixing something you did wrong? Of what we call repentance?”

- Admit it, apologize, make compensation, and (most importantly) create a plan for change do you don't do it again.

Ask participants: “Have you heard the word Chet ?” and “Does anyone know what it means?”

-You may remember the liturgy from Yom Kippur “*Al Chet.*” We hear the word *chet* again and again on Yom Kippur. It is often translated as “sin,” but actually Hebrew has no word for sin. *Chet* literally means “missed the mark.”

This is an important distinction. In Judaism it is assumed you *meant* to aim true, but you *missed* the bull's eye.

Why use an archery term? We know in archery you must:

- 1) Set up the target**
- 2) Learn how to aim and shoot the bow**
- 3) Practice and practice until you can get a bull's eye.**

So too in Judaism we realize that making the right choices, living “right,” depends on:

- 1) Setting up the target
- 2) Learning how to aim and shoot the bow
- 3) Practicing and practicing until you can get a bull’s eye.

During this time of year we take time to do just that. We set aside time to evaluate our behaviors and then to set goals for the year to come. Did we aim the arrows we shot? Did we even set up the targets? Do we need to set up different targets or a different practice regimen?

Exercise: 10 minutes

Before we begin (or continue) our archery session today, let’s take a few minutes to prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and set some goals for the year to come, 5770 .

Give each person an index card. On the front they will write something they did in each category (Jewish, Family, Earth) in 5769 that they feel good about. On the back they write a goal they have for each category for 5770. (Parents may have to help younger or resistant children.)

Goals should be realistic, measurable and achievable. For example, in the Jewish category a goal might be to light Shabbat candles with my family once a month, rather than something vague like “feel more Jewish.”

Have them share their cards as a family and talk about how they can reach their goals.

Closing: 1 – 2 minutes

Just as it requires *kavanah* (aim and intention) to get a bull’s eye on the archery range, so too will it take *kavanah*, (aim and intention) to reach your goals. Let’s go practice aiming, shooting and hitting some bull’s eyes!

(If you need to lengthen program, ask for reflections on how the exercise went.)