

CREATE YOUR SANCTUARY

וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁחַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם:

V'asu li mikdash v'shachanti b'tocham.

"Make for Me a sanctuary and I will dwell among you."

In the wake of the destruction of the Beit haMikdash, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, our sages envisioned a new way of being Jewish that roots us in our own homes. Without access to the physical space of their Temple, these spiritual leaders re-envisioned the concept of mikdash, holiness in sacred space. They invited Jewish people to see their own home as a *mikdash me'at* – a small sanctuary. Over 2000 years later, we are being called to do the same. How might you create a *mikdash me'at*, your own “small sanctuary,” in your home?

HERE ARE SOME ASPECTS TO CONSIDER:

Pick your prayer space

A sanctuary is holy, “set apart” and special. Make a decision in advance about where in your home you want to be for services.

Set an intention

Say a blessing or *kavannah* (intention) over your space to mark it as your *mikdash me'at*. A few options are listed at the end of this list, or you can offer your own words.

Choose your chair

You want comfort but not so much comfort that you snooze - the High Holy Days invite us into an elevated experience - how might you elevate your seating?

Decorate

Buy flowers, tape up images and meaningful messages and photos of friends and family.

Grace your space

Gather ritual and other objects that will help you get into the mood - candlesticks and a kiddish cup, apples and honey, a shofar if you own one.

Invite your friends

Print out photos of friends (or Jewish celebs!) that you would love to invite to join in the holiday with you. Consider a text chain with the people you always sit next to during services.

Dress for the occasion

Decide what that means for you this year. Perhaps you wear your *tallit* or *kippah*. Perhaps you wear your “dress sweatsuit.” Whatever you choose, wear something that helps you get into the mood. People often wear white on Yom Kippur.

Embrace this moment and have some fun with it

Take High Holy Day front porch photos. Turn down your thermostat to simulate our sanctuary temperature and designate a blanket to serve as your “worship warmer.” Block off your kitchen with caution tape during Yom Kippur.

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CONTINUED...

Set an intention

Inscribed above the doors of Temple Beth El's ark, these words remind us that God is present if only we remember to look:

אַכֵּן יֵשׁ יְיָ בַּמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי:

When Jacob awoke from his sleep he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.'
Genesis 28:16

These instructions spoken by God to the Israelites in the wilderness, teach us that we are capable of creating sanctuary in which God might abide. Check out the September edition of the Charlotte Jewish News for a poster containing these words which you can use to help decorate your prayer space:

וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשֹׁכְנֹתִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם:

Make for Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell among you.
Exodus 25:8

We offer this blessing at the beginning of many of our services, metaphorically creating the prayer tent in which we join together for worship.

מֵה־טֹבוֹ אֵהְלִיךְ יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

How good are your tents, O Jacob, Your sacred places, O Israel!
Numbers 24:5

Finally, this prayer hangs on the walls of Jewish homes throughout the world:

*Let no sorrow come through this gate.
Let no trouble come in this dwelling.
Let no fright come through this door.
Let no conflict come to this section.
Let there be blessing and peace in this place.
-Birkat Habayit*

