

2 CELEBRATE AROUND THE TABLE

Rabbi Jessy Gross, named by *The Forward* as one of the most inspiring rabbis of 2016, says some of her best holiday memories are not from the synagogue but from places where people came together — like at her holiday table.

“Having meals with other people, especially if the person hosting can serve traditional Jewish foods, creates an opportunity ... to celebrate Jewish food and culture,” Gross says.

Shari Seidman Klein of Beit Shemesh in Israel, agrees. She cooks a holiday meal for her family as well as for her children, a few of whom choose not to attend traditional activities. Apples and honey, round raisin challah and other sweet things bring the kids and their friends back to her dining room each year.

3 CHANGE SOMETHING

Klein says she often instructs her Hebrew school students, many of whom are products of intermarriage, to use the High Holidays as a time to better themselves. She tells them, “Take on one thing for one day.”

For example, rather than fasting on Yom Kippur, she recommended giving up candy, soda or something else they like to eat. Older individuals might decide to give up the personal comfort of watching TV or they might make the higher commitment of refraining from talking badly about others.

“It’s the idea of *tikkun olam*, bettering the world,” Klein says. “That one thing on that one day can take you back to the basics of being — and thinking.”

4 DO TASHLICH

One of Gross’ favorite rituals is Tashlich, for which all a person needs is access to a body of natural water such as a creek, pond or river. She recommends taking some bread or crackers, and spending some time by the water meditating or journaling.

“I like to think about where I have missed the mark or haven’t reached my potential and cast this out,” she says. “It is a great opportunity to ... think about what you want as we evolve into the coming year. It’s a process of spiritual cleansing and preparedness.”

5 FIND AN ALTERNATIVE MINYAN

The Israeli organization Tzohar has been working to bring together the religious and secular Jewish communities in the Jewish state. In the central city of Lod, Tzohar’s Executive Vice President Yakov Gaon says his organization found that many secular Israelis refrain from going to synagogue not because they don’t want to pray, but because the service is too fast, politicized, costly or uncomfortable.

“They don’t know how to dress, when to stand up or sit down,” Gaon says.

About 15 years ago, Tzohar began creating alternative minyans in community centers, schools and gyms. The services bring like-minded people together. Each service is assigned a leader that announces the prayer page numbers to read and explains what’s happening in the prayers. Today, more than 56,000 people take part in these Yom Kippur services at 300 locations across Israel. An additional 1,500 people attend one of Tzohar’s 60 Rosh Hashanah services.



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WOMEN
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ABUSIVE
RELATIONSHIP
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WITH THAT?

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