

GENERAL RESOURCES

Opportunities to Speak About Mass Incarceration Reform throughout the Jewish Year

Rosh Hashanah

Judgment and mercy, and/or the world created anew

Yom Kippur

Repentance and forgiveness

Pesach

Freedom, liberation

MLK Weekend

Mass incarceration as the civil rights struggle of our day

Breshit

Creation in God's image; it is not good for human to be alone

VaYera

Sodom and Gomorrah models a society that does not care about the welfare of other people

VaYeshev

Joseph in the pit and in jail can spark conversation on prison conditions, since Joseph thrives in prison through contact with other people and meaningful work.

Mishpatim

System of criminal and civil law; public safety; prohibition on charging interest (talk about debtors' prisons)

VaYikra

4:13, "If the entire community sins..."

Metzora

The ritual of returning a person with *tzara'at* to the camp as a model for thinking about returning citizens

Kedoshim

19:15, "Do not commit corruption in justice"

Emor

24:22, "You shall have one law for the citizen and the sojourner..." opportunity to talk about race or about immigration prisons. Also 24:10-12, the story of the blasphemer, who is put under "*mishmar*," guard, while Moses asks God what to do with him. It's the closest the Torah comes to describing incarceration.

Shlach Lecha

15:32 tells the story of

the man found gathering firewood on Shabbat. This is the other instance of *mishmar*.

Masei

The Cities of Refuge create an opening for a discussion of vengeance, punishment, rehabilitation, and mercy.

Shoftim

Police and court systems. Also, Cities of Refuge redux.

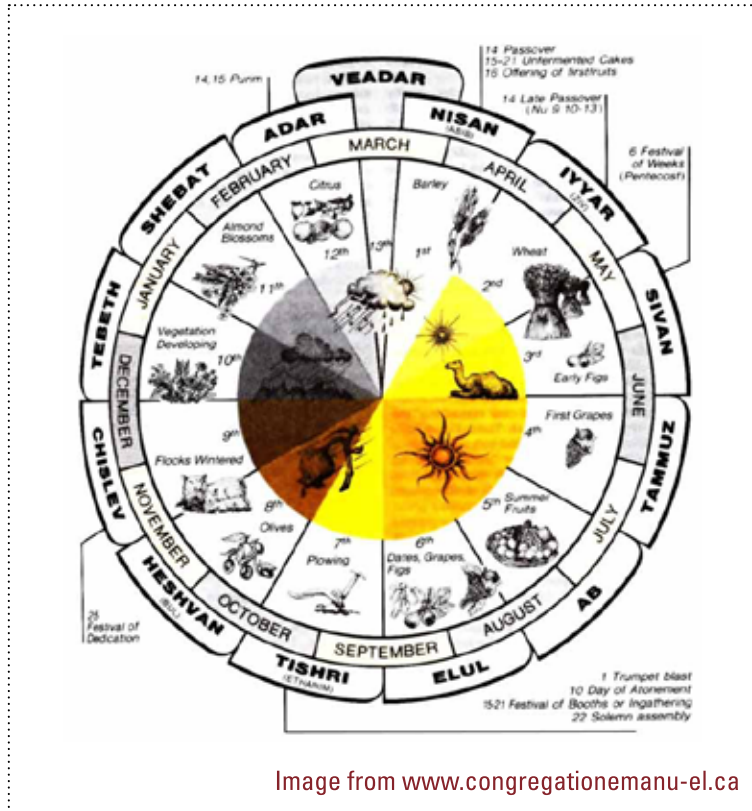


Image from www.congregationemanu-el.ca