“COOKING UP COMPASSION” LESSON PLAN
by Miriam T. Spitzer

LESSON AT A GLANCE
On Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur we ask God to forgive us our transgressions and to give us another chance. This is an article about a program, Liliyot Restaurant, that gives youth in Israel another chance at a renewed, successful life. In this lesson, students will use kitchen implements to talk about the challenges of starting over and the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe) as a time to ask God to give us another chance.

OBJECTIVES
 Students will consider the idea of renewing our lives by asking God for another chance.
 Students will learn about a program that gives troubled teens in Israel a chance to transform their lives, another chance at success.
 Students will think about how to give others around us another chance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
 http://elem.org/about/ About ELEM
 http://www.liliyot.co.il/eng/liliyot/ Liliyot Restaurant and Bakery

ACTIVITY
1. Warm-up
Bring in a variety of kitchen implements (spatula, egg beater, wooden spoon, etc.) and distribute one tool to each student. Give 2-3 students a chance to explain what their tool is used for. Build on the students’ examples and ask:

What happens if you are cooking and you make a mistake? [Sometimes you have to start over. Is that always easy or even possible? What if you dropped your last egg?]

How does it feel to need to start over? (Good to have another chance; Embarrassing)

How does it feel to start over? (Encouraging–I am going to do it this time!; Frustrating–I did this already; Discouraging–if I could not do it the first time, why do I think I can do it the second time?; Relief that I can try again, etc.)

2. Preliminary discussion
Tell students that the month of Elul and the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe, including Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, and the days of repentance between them) is a time for us to ask God for another chance in our lives, a time for hithadshut, renewal and new beginnings. Have students consider what in their lives they want to start over. You might have students write this down privately or just think about it. Ask:

How does it feel to ask God for the chance to start over?
3. **Show the video** about the Liliyot project that appears at the end of the article at [http://babaganewz.com/articles/cooking-up-compassion](http://babaganewz.com/articles/cooking-up-compassion). This might be done before reading the text as preparation, after reading the text as reinforcement, or as a homework assignment.

4. **Read the article “Cooking up Compassion.”** Give students copies of the article and have them read it in pairs. Hand out the optional guided-reading question sheet, available to print at [http://babaganewz.com/articles/cooking-up-compassion](http://babaganewz.com/articles/cooking-up-compassion).

These were teenagers in trouble. Some had dropped out of school. Some were involved with crime or drugs. Some fought with their parents. Students discuss in pairs:

- **Do you think it was easy for the people around them (parents, teachers, siblings, friends, maybe even the police) to give them another chance and let them try again in their lives?**

Next, as a group, discuss:

- **Do you think it is easier to ask God for a chance to start over or easier to ask a person (parent, sibling, teacher, friend) for a chance to start over?**
- **What are ways we might give people around us a chance to start over?**

5. **Text Study**
Discuss the following text and the questions that follow it.

**Avinu Malkeinu, Rosh Hashanah Mahzor**

Our Parent, Our Ruler, be gracious with us and answer us, though we have no worthy deeds; treat us with charity and kindness, and save us.

Why do we call God both a Parent and a Ruler in this Rosh Hashanah prayer? How would a parent deal with a child differently than a ruler with a subject? Why should God answer us if we say we have no worthy deeds? How could God’s charity and kindness save us? How does the charity and kindness of Liliyot save troubled teens?

6. **Conclusion**
Distribute the kitchen implements again. This time ask students how their tool might be used for helping someone start over.

**FOLLOW-UP AND ENRICHMENT**

- Look for an opportunity to give someone another chance. Maybe it is your little brother or sister who keeps saying sorry but never seems to change. Maybe it is a friend who wants to try something new. How can you help them start over?
- Look through the Rosh Hashanah mahzor. Can you find another tefillah (prayer) in the mahzor in which we ask God for another chance?