

# **What Do We Celebrate When We Celebrate the Festival of Sukkot?**

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*When we celebrate Sukkot, what do we celebrate above all? We celebrate the truth that true shelter is God's guidance, nature's goodness, and each other's love.*

What do we celebrate when we celebrate the festival of Sukkot?

As a Festival of Thanksgiving, on Sukkot God wants us to grow in our capacity for appreciation and gratitude. God wants us to count our blessings and learn not to take so much for granted. God also wants us to share those blessings, to share our good fortune with those who are less fortunate. God wants us to experience how helping others is one of life's greatest joys.

The Festival of Sukkot is all about doing acts of caring, generosity, hospitality, and compassion for the homeless, the poor, the sick, the elderly. I hope you will figure out something special that you can do during the seven days of Sukkot.

In a few moments, we will all go into the sukkah. Here's what I want you to think about when you spend a moment inside the sukkah. The sukkah provides shelter from the hot sun. We must be a shelter to the poor and the hungry. At the same time, the sukkah is fragile and exposed to the weather – so are the homeless. Inside the sukkah, when you look up, you must be able to see the stars through the roof. Just like a star, we must provide a glimmer of hope to those who have lost all hope for the future.

Now the sukkah is supposed to be our temporary home during the festival. It is customary to eat in the sukkah as often as possible. You can even sleep in the sukkah! It's just like camping out. Of course, the sukkah is much less comfy than our homes. But that's okay because spending time in the sukkah reminds us that possessions, owning stuff, is not what makes us happy. Spending time in the sukkah reminds us that the most important things in life – love and friendship – money can never buy.

This festival of Sukkot is meant to teach us what true shelter really is. True shelter is found in loving relationships and belonging to a caring community like Temple Sinai.

When we celebrate Sukkot, what do we celebrate above all? We celebrate the truth that true shelter is God's guidance, nature's goodness, and each other's love.