Notes on the 3 Questions Explored at the 9/23/03 God Interactive Lunch and Learn
Brought to you by the Tartak Learning Center Staff

1. Why does God allow evil?/ Why do bad things happen to good people?
   Ways of responding
   • God didn’t create evil, but created people with the abilities for good & bad/ We have the free will to choose how to act
   • Evil is like salt on a margarita-without it we would have no measure for what is good nor would we rise to the occasion to do good
   • God is in the heroism during bad times
   • Evil challenges my faith in humanity, not my faith in God
   • I can answer what I think or we can study this question together

   Other questions that came up during this discussion
   • Why do we have the need to assume that God is only good?
   • Why does God “intervene” at some times and not others (Holocaust)?
   • Is evil a “punishment”? Does my behavior affect my fate?

2. I don’t believe in God/Can I be Jewish and not believe in God?
   Ways of responding
   • Tell me more about the God you don’t believe in: process to explore
   • Give a range of answers & begin a journey to think & study about it
   • OK to struggle with the God-Idea: Keep an open mind
   • Question is not always about God-ask more questions. Before responding to...Adults: Try to figure out where the question is coming from...Children: Tailor your response to what a child can understand
   • God is about understanding others and myself

   Resources to Consider
   • Steve Leder: “God is love” sermon. Love is not irrelevant.
   • Limud (British CAJE): Love is relation to God. Great language for teenagers to use. Looks at liturgy, Bible texts, question.
   • There is a Season (ARE resource) suggested by Nancy Levin

   Other questions that came up during this discussion
   • If God is powerless at times, why have a God?
   • Is there bescheret (fate)?

3. What role does God play in death?
   Resources to Consider
   Unetane Tokef (High Holidays) Who shall live and who shall die?

   Other questions that came up during this discussion
   Does being good help us avert death?
   • We do good things just to do good things
   • We do good things for reward in the next world