

ENGAGING JEWISH LEARNING THROUGH LITERATURE

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RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

***The Legend of Freedom Hill* by Linda Jacobs Altman; illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright**

When a young Jewish girl helps an African-American girl mine for gold in order to get enough money to save her mother from the evil slavecatcher, incredible things soon happen as they find enough gold to buy the freedom of all the captured slaves.

***Terrible, Terrible!* by Robin Bernstein; illustrated by Shauna Mooney Kawaski**

In this contemporary retelling of the classic Jewish folktale, a rabbi advises a blended family how to deal with their overcrowded house.

***The Tale of Meshka the Kvetch* by Carol Chapman; illustrated by Arnold Lobel**

A woman who spends all her time complaining soon finds her complaints coming true. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

☆ ***Yussel's Prayer* by Barbara Cohen illustrated by Michael Deraney**

A cowherd's simple but sincere Yom Kippur prayer is instrumental in ending the day's fast. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

☆ ***Bagels from Benny* by Aubrey Davis; illustrated by Dusan Petricic**

After accepting the compliments for the tasty bagels made at the family bakery, Benny's grandfather explains that God is really to thank for the delicious creations, causing Benny to begin leaving a bag of bagels for God every week at the synagogue as a demonstration of his gratitude.

***Bone Button Borscht* by Aubrey Davis; illustrated by Dusan Petricic**

In this "Stone Soup" story the wanderer is a beggar, the setting is a shtetl, the soup is borscht, and the magic ingredients are bone buttons from the beggar's coat.

***Chicken Man* by Michelle Edwards**

Each time Chicken Man is moved into a new job on the kibbutz, someone else wants to take that job instead, and the chickens suffer as a consequence. REISSUE DUE OUT IN 2008

* ***The Market Wedding* by Cary Fagan; illustrated by Regolo Ricci**

Morris the fishmonger falls in love with Minnie, the milliner whose cart is across the street from his in the turn-of-the-century Kensington Market in Toronto, and even though his plan for a fine wedding backfires, all ends well.

***A Big Quiet House* by Heather Forest; illustrated by Susan Greenstein**

When a poor man just cannot get any sleep in his noisy house because his wife is snoring and children are giggling, he seeks the advice of the wise woman and receives some rather odd advice, which leads to an equally unusual solution to the problem.

***The Stonecutter Who Wanted to Be Rich* by Getzel**

A simple illustration of the Pirkei Avot: "Who is rich? One who is satisfied with what he has." OUT OF PRINT

☆ ***Something from Nothing* by Phoebe Gilman**

A modern adaptation of this favorite Jewish folktale describes how the blanket grandfather had made for young Joseph is transformed over the years into a jacket, a button, and, ultimately, a story.

***The Borrowed Hanukkah Latkes* by Linda Glaser; illustrated by Nancy Cote**

A young girl finds a way to include her elderly neighbor in her family's Hanukkah celebration. See also *Mrs. Greenberg's Messy Hanukkah*.

***Just Enough is Plenty* by Barbara Diamond Goldin; illustrated by Seymour Chwast**

With Hanukkah about to begin, Malka is worried because her family is so poor, but when a poor stranger comes to the door, her generous family cannot turn him away. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***My Jewish Home* by Andrew Goldstein**

Follow a toddler through each room of his house and find the ritual objects that make it a Jewish home.

***Grandpa and Me on Tu B'Shevat* by Marji Gold-Vukson; illustrated by Leslie Evans**

Like the tiny seed a little boy and his grandpa plant, this rhyming tale grows and blossoms into a celebration of nature and family.

***The Rabbi's Wisdom* by Erica Gordon; illustrated by Victor Ambrus**

Unable to stand his overcrowded and noisy home any longer, a poor man goes to the Rabbi for advice.

***Sister Yessa's Story* by Karen Greenfield; illustrated by Claire Ewart**

Dark clouds gather as Yessa walks to her brother's place, telling a story as she goes about the early days of the earth; and the animals follow her two by two to listen. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***The Key to My Heart* by Nira Harel; illustrated by Yossi Abulafia**

After Jonathan's dad loses his keys, they retrace all of their steps throughout the day, from the post office to the playground, and all of the places in between.

***Could Anything Be Worse?* by Marilyn Hirsh**

Convinced nothing could be worse than the noise and confusion of his home, a man consults his rabbi who has some very wise advice. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***The Rabbi and the Twenty-Nine Witches* by Marilyn Hirsch**

A wise old rabbi finally rids the village of witches that terrorize it every night that the moon is full. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***I Wish I Were a Butterfly* by James Howe; illustrated by Ed Young**

A wise spider helps a despondent cricket realize that he is special in his own way.

***The Matzah Man* by Naomi Howland**

An energetic retelling of “The Gingerbread Boy” follows a daring little man made up of matzah as he escapes from the baker’s oven and wreaks havoc all over the neighborhood during Passover preparations, until he meets his fate in the home of Mendel Fox. See also *The Matzo Ball Boy* by Lisa Shulman; illustrated by Rosanne Litzinger.

***Mendel’s Accordion* by Heidi Smith Hyde; illustrated by Johanna Van Der Sterre**

Mendel, an accordion player with a klezmer band in Eastern Europe, makes happy and sad music in and around his hometown of Melnitze, a practice he continues after moving to America, but with each succeeding generation the accordion becomes less popular until his great-grandson Samuel makes the decision to learn to play Mendel's music.

***‘Til the Cows Come Home* by Jodi Icenoggle; illustrated by Normand Chartier**

Adapted from a traditional Jewish folk tale, an old cowhand gives a piece of leather to a young cowboy who makes for himself a pair of chaps, and even though he wears a hole in those chaps, he knows that as long as he has that beautiful piece of leather, he has possibilities.

***Clap & Count: Action Rhymes for the Jewish Year* by Jacqueline Jules; illustrated by Sally Springer**

Presents a collection of counting and action rhymes that focus on Jewish holidays.

***The Hardest Word* by Jacqueline Jules; illustrated by Katherine Kahn**

The Ziz, a huge bird that is clumsy but good-hearted, accidentally destroys a vegetable garden, and when he asks God for advice he learns the importance of apologizing.

***Once Upon a Shabbos* by Jacqueline Jules; illustrated by Katherine Kahn**

A bear keeps taking the honey needed for the Shabbos kugel, until Grandma learns that he is lost and invites him to come to dinner. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

☆ ***The Chanukah Guest* by Eric Kimmel; illustrated by Giora Carmi**

Bubbe is honored to serve the rabbi her renowned potato latkes, but when a bear shows up on the first night of Chanukah instead of the rabbi, the nearly blind and deaf old woman does not notice the difference.

***The Runaway Latkes* by Leslie Kimmelman; illustrated by Paul Yalowitz**

When three potato latkes escape Rachel Bloom's frying pan on the first night of Hanukkah, everyone including the cantor, the rabbi, and the mayor joins in the chase.

***Ten Tzedakah Pennies* by Joni Klein-Higger; illustrated by Tova Leff**

A young boy has ten pennies and one by one the members of his family place them in a tzedakah box.

***In God’s Hands* by Lawrence Kushner & Gary Schmidt; illustrated by Matthew J. Baek**

While contemplating their problems in a synagogue, Jacob and David, one man rich, the other poor, come to realize their role in making miracles happen.

***Old Noah’s Elephants* by Warren Ludwig**

When the misbehavior of the two elephants aboard Noah's ark threatens the survival of the other animals, God tells Noah that the solution is to tickle the hyena. OUT OF PRINT

Bible Story Series by Jean Marzollo:

*** *Daniel in the Lions Den***

A simple retelling of the Biblical tale about faith, courage, and heroism while a column of ants at the bottom of each page comment on events.

David and Goliath

A retelling of the Bible story introduces the musical and poetic David who surprises everyone when he draws on his faith, determination, and skill and accepts the terrifying challenge issued by the enormous and well-armed giant named Goliath.

Jonah and the Whale (and the Worm)

Jonah, the stubborn prophet, learns an important lesson about love and forgiveness after encountering a large whale and a little worm.

Miriam and Her Brother Moses

This retelling of the Bible tale of the early years of Moses focuses on his sister Miriam's helpfulness and guidance while fish at the bottom of each page comment on events.

*** *Ruth and Naomi***

A Bible story of hope, family loyalty, and courage follows widowed Ruth, as she, along with her mother-in-law Naomi, journeys to a new city where she gets a second chance at love and happiness with a farmer named Boaz.

ALL OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***The Matzah that Papa Brought Home* by Fran Manushkin; illustrated by Ned Bittinger**

A cumulative rhyme story that describes the traditions connected to a family's celebration of the Passover Seder.

***Miriam's Cup: A Passover Story* by Fran Manushkin; illustrated by Bob Dacey**

A Jewish mother preparing for Passover tells her children the story of Miriam, Moses' sister.

***Unicorns, Unicorns* by Geraldine McCaughrean; illustrated by Sophie Windham**

As the rain comes and the flood waters rise, Noah and the animals on the ark repeatedly call to the unicorns to hurry aboard. OUT OF PRINT

*** *Shlemiel Crooks* by Anna Olswanger; illustrated by Paula Goodman Koz**

Two crooks, following the inspiration of Pharaoh's ghost, fail to steal a precious shipment of kosher wine from Israel and lose their horse and wagon in the process.

***Braid the Challah: A Playful Action Rhyme* by Beily Paluch**

"Mix the sticky batter . . . Watch it rise and grow! Time to do a mitzvah and pinch off a piece of dough. Braid and braid a challah as neatly as you're able. Slide it in the oven, then on the Shabbos table. YUM!"

***Tikvah Means Hope* by Patricia Polacco**

After a devastating fire in the hills of Oakland, California, during Sukkot, a Jewish family and their neighbors find symbols of hope amidst the ashes. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***What Zeesie Saw On Delancey Street* by Elsa Rael illustrated by Marjorie Priceman**

A young Jewish girl living on Manhattan's Lower East Side attends her first “package party” where she learns about the traditions of generosity, courage, and community among Jewish immigrants in the early 1900s. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com). See also *When Zaydeh Danced on Eldridge Street*.

***Dinosaur on Shabbat* by Diane Rauchwerger; illustrated by Jason Wolff**

An excited dinosaur comes to a young boy's house to join him in celebrating Shabbat. See also: *Dinosaur on Passover* and *Dinosaur on Hanukkah*.

***Snail Started It!* by Katja Reider; illustrated by Angela von Roehl**

By calling Pig fat, Snail starts a chain of insults among the other animals that eventually catches up with him and convinces him that each animal is right in liking himself just the way he is.

***Because Brian Hugged His Mother* by David L. Rice and Kathryn Dyble Thompson**

When Brian hugs and kisses his mother one morning, the act starts a chain reaction of kindness and consideration that spreads throughout the town and eventually comes back to him.

***Bit by Bit* by Steve Sanfield; illustrated by Susan Gaber**

When Zundel the tailor wears out his beautiful coat, he continues to make smaller and smaller garments from the material that is left. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***A Prayer for the Earth* by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso; illustrated by Bethanne Andersen**

Noah's wife, Naamah, is called upon by God to gather the seeds of every type of plant on Earth and bring them safely onto the ark before the great flood. Also available in board book: *Naamah, Noah's Wife*.

***Raisel's Riddle* by Erica Silverman; illustrated by Susan Gaber**

In a Jewish version of the Cinderella story, Raisel, a poor but educated young woman who works in the home of a rabbi, captivates her “Prince Charming” -- the rabbi's son -- at a Purim ball.

***Why Noah Chose the Dove* by Isaac Bashevis Singer; illustrated by Eric Carle**

As each animal boasts of the qualities he feels make him especially worthy to go on Noah's ark, Noah takes a particular liking to the dove.

***The Little, Little House* by Jessica Souhami**

Retells the Jewish folktale about a man who asks the village wise woman how his family can become happy, as they are miserable living in such a tiny house, and her answer involves six chickens, a cow, a goat, and a rooster.

*** *Shlemazel and the Remarkable Spoon of Pohost* by Ann Stampler; illustrated by Jacqueline M. Cohen**

A retelling of an Eastern European tale in which Shlemazel, the laziest man in town, is tricked into believing that the lucky spoon given to him by a neighbor will bring him fortune and fame, if it is used in the right way.

***The Jewish Home Detectives* by Deborah Syme; illustrated by Marlene Ruthen**

On a rainy day, Josh and Sarah pretend to be Jewish detectives and try to find every Jewish thing in their house. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

*** *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback**

An old Eastern European folk song provides the basis for a tale about a peasant who devises clever uses for his worn-out overcoat.

***Too Tired* by Ann Turnbull; illustrated by Emma Chichester Clark**

As Noah calls roll on the ark, he discovers that the sloths are missing - they were too tired to make the journey. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

***The Sukkah That I Built* by Rochel Groner Vorst; illustrated by Elizabeth Victor-Elsby**

In this cumulative rhyme story, a young boy describes the sukkah that he assembles with the help of his family.

***It Could Always Be Worse* by Margot Zemach**

An unfortunate man who lives with his mother, wife, and six children in a one-room hut finds his situation going from bad to worse when he follows a rabbi's unlikely advice

***A Mouse In Our Jewish House* by Florence Zeldin**

Introduces through the antics of a little mouse, the numbers one through twelve and the various foods and activities associated with Jewish holidays. OUT OF PRINT (available used at www.amazon.com)

☆ = Sydney Taylor Book Award Winner

* = Sydney Taylor Honor Award Winner

RESOURCES:

***Storytime Action! 2,000 Ideas for Making 500 Picture Books Interactive* by Jennifer Bromann**

Provides information on five hundred children's books along with tips on incorporating interactive activities into storytime programs.

***How to Get Your Child to Love Reading* by Esme Raji Codell**

Writing for parents, Codell (a former teacher and school librarian) presents numerous strategies and activities to encourage reading, including the use of crafts, story times, parties, science experiments, and cooking. She also lists about 3,000 recommended titles, sorted according to age, subject, and companion activity.

***Jewish Story Finder: A Guide to 363 Tales Listing Subjects and Sources* by Sharon Barcan Elswit**

A subject guide to hundreds of Jewish stories, this book's purpose is to help teachers, rabbis, librarians, folklorists, parents, and storytellers find the right story to match their need.

***Books in Bloom: Creative Patterns and Props that Bring Stories to Life* by Kimberly K. Faurot**

Provides patterns for props and examples of story scripts for teachers and librarians to use in enhancing storytimes.

***The Kids' Book Club Book* by Judy Gelman and Vicki Levy Krupp**

A guide for children and parents about creating fun and educational children's book clubs draws on the experiences of 500 clubs from across the country and identifies fifty favorite books while suggesting recipes and activities.

***Judaism Through Children's Books: A Resource for Teachers and Parents* by Ellen Musikant and Sue Grass**
Includes summaries of recommended books with discussion questions and activities covering the following topics: Bible, Ethics, Folklore, History, Holidays, Holocaust, and Life Cycle.

***The Story Performance Handbook* by R. Craig Roney**

Provides advice on developing and enhancing storytelling skills for poems and stories, including suggestions on ways to select material, prepare, and perform in front of audiences.

***Reading Raps: A Book Club Guide for Librarians, Kids, and Families* by Rita Soltan**

This guide to book clubs is organized around books in four categories of readers: family, mother-daughter, father-son, and reader's rap, a child-only program. Titles are listed along with reading level, genre, awards, plot summary, characterization, books with similar themes, and discussion questions.

***The Read Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease**

Explains the importance of reading aloud to children, offers guidance on how to set up a read-aloud atmosphere in the home or classroom, and recommends titles to select.