



In response to rising anti-Semitism in the United States and around the world, the Association of Jewish Libraries offers this series of book lists for young readers. Books read in youth impact future outlooks, and it is our hope that meeting Jews on the page will inspire friendship when readers meet Jews in real life. This is the eighth in a series of book lists intended to provide children and their families with a greater understanding of the Jewish religion and its people. You can find these titles set in modern Israel in libraries, bookstores, and online.

## Book List #8: Israel

### PICTURE BOOKS

#### **Engineer Arielle and the Israel Independence Day**

**Surprise** by Deborah Bodin Cohen, ages 3-8

There's a series of picture books about Engineer Ari who drives a train in pre-state Israel in the 1890s. This story is about his granddaughter Arielle, driving a modern train and celebrating the country's national holiday with friends and family.

#### **Snow In Jerusalem** by Deborah da Costa, ages 4-10

Avi lives in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem; Hamudi lives in the Muslim Quarter, and a beautiful white stray cat lives in both, traveling back and forth between its beloved boys. On a rare snowy day, the boys find each other and learn to cooperate to care for their joint pet. Lush paintings bring the city to life.

#### **Chicken Man** by Michelle Edwards, ages 3-10

Rody cheerfully performs a variety of jobs on a kibbutz, an Israeli communal farm, but he's happiest taking care of the chickens. While many kibbutzim are now private industrial enterprises, this story pays tribute to the institution's agricultural roots.

#### **Yaffa and Fatima, Shalom, Salaam** by Fawzia Gilani-Williams, ages 3-8

A Muslim author retells a folktale with roots in both Jewish and Arab traditions, a story of caring that emphasizes the commonalities between the Jewish and Muslim friends.

#### **Alone Together on Dan Street** by Erica Cohen Lyons, ages 3-8

During the COVID-19 quarantine, Jews across the world could not welcome guests to their Passover seders. In this Jerusalem-based story, young Mira finds a way to bring her community together to celebrate the holiday, in a safely socially distanced way.

#### **My Israel and Me** by Alice B. McGinty, ages 5-10

An introduction in verse to the diverse populations, cultures, and traditions of Israel's people, this warmly illustrated picture book provides a glimpse into Israel's history, scenery, and industry.

#### **Jerusalem Sky: Stars, Crosses, and Crescents** by Mark Podwal, ages 5 to adult

Spare, poetic text and evocative paintings capture the importance of the ancient city of Jerusalem to the three major Abrahamic world religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

#### **The Language of Angels, A Story About the Reinvention of Hebrew** by Richard Michelson, ages 4-10

The ancient language of Hebrew was all but lost by 1855, mostly used in prayers. This is the fascinating story of how Eliezer Ben Yehuda brought the language back to life, raising his son Ben Zion to be the first native speaker of modern Hebrew.

**Tisha B'Av: A Jerusalem Journey** by Allison Ofanansky, ages 4-10

Tisha B'Av is a day of mourning on the Jewish calendar, commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 BCE and 70 CE. This stunning photo essay takes us on a tour through modern Jerusalem, led by children who explore the city from all angles - even underground.

**Yosef's Dream** by Sylvia Rouss, ages 4-10

In 1991, Operation Solomon brought thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Young Ethiopian Yosef has a strange dream that doesn't make sense until his family "makes aliyah" (moves to Israel), where they can at last live freely as Jews.

## NOVELS

**Real Time** by Pnina Moed Kass, ages 13-adult

Multiple points of view chronicle the minutes leading up to and following a suicide bombing in modern Israel. We hear sympathetically told stories of immigrants, kibbutzniks, a Holocaust survivor, a German visitor, and even a Palestinian would-be bomber.

**Freefall** by Anna Levine, ages 12-18

This coming of age story depicts the universals of teens' lives, like friendship, disagreements with parents, and falling in love, against the unique backdrop of Israel's mandatory military service.

**Pickled Watermelon** by Esty Schachter, ages 8-12

Molly, an American, connects with her mom's heritage for the first time when the family spends the summer in Israel in this sweet historical novel set in the 1980s. Light on politics and strong on familial love, with some interesting history in the mix.

**The Six Day Hero** and **Beni's War**, both by Tamar Stein, ages 9-13

These fast-paced novels evoke the anxieties and hopes of Israelis during the 1967 Six Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War, by personalizing the events through the eyes of brothers Motti and Beni.

**A Bottle in the Gaza Sea** (republished as **Message in a Bottle**) by Valérie Zenatti, ages 12-adult

A Jewish Israeli girl and a Muslim Palestinian boy share their hopes and fears over email in the early 2000s, slowly bonding as they earn each other's trust despite their differences. Translated from French, and made into a French-language motion picture in 2010.



### THE "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" SERIES

The Love Your Neighbor series of book lists was created by the Association of Jewish Libraries to grow readers' understanding of the Jewish religion and its people.

The Association of Jewish Libraries, the leading authority on Judaic librarianship, was established in 1966. It promotes Jewish literacy through enhancement of libraries and library resources and through leadership for the profession and practitioners of Judaic librarianship. The Association fosters access to information, learning, teaching and research relating to Jews, Judaism, the Jewish experience and Israel. AJL is an affiliate of the American Theological Library Association, the Association for Jewish Studies, and the American Library Association.

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