HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS TITLES FOR FALL 2023

These titles are the Association of Jewish Libraries' picks for the best Jewish holiday children's books of Fall 2023.

**SHABBAT**

A blind boy enjoys a leisurely Shabbat with his family. Sensory details such as the hot sun on his face and the sound of sandals clacking along the boardwalk enrich the gentle story, which ends with the family settling in for a Shabbat afternoon nap. The text is printed in both English and Braille, and the illustrations' sunny palette captures the seaside vibes.

This simple counting book highlights the delight of Shabbat as an interracial family comes to celebrate with their grandfather. Children will enjoy counting along as the family prepares their delicious dinner.

**ROSH HASHANAH**

Gorgeous watercolor and papercut illustrations show an interracial Chinese Orthodox Jewish family celebrating Rosh Hashanah and Lunar New Year. The text focuses on similarities between the holidays: time with extended family, traditional foods, and noisy traditions like blowing the shofar and lighting firecrackers. The family celebrates both holidays with excitement and love.

Tzipporah joins her farmer father on the tractor to collect root vegetables like carrots, potatoes, rutabagas, yams, and turnips to make tzimmes for Rosh Hashanah. She learns patience as she gathers, scrubs, and cooks, and takes pride in helping. Cheerful colors and textured patterns are as sweet as tzimmes.

YOM KIPPUR


The Big Bad Wolf thinks that Yom Kippur services will be full of other animals to eat, but the warm greeting from the rabbi, the beauty of the prayers, and the Rabbi's talk of change leaves the Wolf confused. On the way home, instead of eating everyone he comes across, he helps them. Breaking his unintended fast with his new friends settles his confusion as he decides to turn over a new leaf. A clever twist on an old tale.

SUUKOT


A new apartment with no back yard means no proper sukkah for a boy and his single mother. Mom explains how the Jewish people have adapted to new circumstances throughout history, and with some creativity and a pile of moving boxes, the pair build a living room sukkah in which they can “camp out” and start to feel at home.

HANUKKAH


Anthropomorphic foods celebrate the holiday with friends, dreidels, presents, and other traditional Hanukkah trappings in this goofy board book where nobody gets eaten. Alliteration helps the brief narrative flow and kids will giggle at the cartoon illustrations.

Is it better to have Hanukkah in the summer or the winter? Cousins Noah (in New York) and Nora (in New Zealand) start a competition to decide just that. In this thoroughly modern tale, the cousins discover through photos and video chat that their celebrations, while both unique, have a lot more in common than they thought.

YEAR ROUND


Beni first appeared in the 1980’s in a series of Jewish stories about an anthropomorphic bear family. A grown-up Beni and his extended family return in this collection of stories, crafts, and recipes for the whole family, adorned with Zalben’s delicately detailed watercolors.

AJL’s 2023 Holiday Highlights judges are Rebecca Levitan, Librarian at the Baltimore County Public Library - Pikesville branch in Baltimore, MD; Jennifer Rothschild, Collection Engagement Librarian at Arlington Public Library in Arlington, VA; and Danielle Winter, Reference Librarian at the Brooklyn Public Library in Brooklyn, NY.

To learn more about the Association of Jewish Libraries, please visit www.jewishlibraries.org.

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