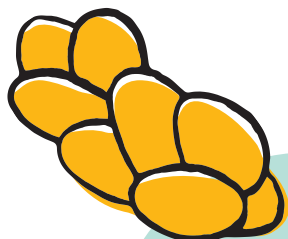


# DIGITAL CONTENT



**By Alli Thresher**

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If you're part of a parent group – online or in person – you'll frequently encounter the questions, "How do I talk to my kids about ... ?" or "Does anyone have a book for ... ?"

Last year, while juggling virtual school, working from home, and the myriad responsibilities of a working parent, I fielded an interesting request from my son's school: "Hi, Alli, we're learning about winter holidays and I think the Hanukkah books I have might be outdated. Do you have any good ideas for books we can read together as a class?"

I immediately forwarded a booklist we had curated for the PJ Library blog as well as a read-aloud video featuring Alan Silberberg and one of our family's favorite stories, *Meet the Latkes*.

When it comes to curating and creating digital content for PJ Library – blog posts, videos, social media posts, virtual field trips, webinars, author interviews, parent chats, "ask me anything" sessions, and so much more – we lean into those oft-repeated questions. And we crunch a lot of numbers using a variety of social media analytics, insights, and listening tools.

PJ Library is, for many families, more than books; it's connection, representation, and community. The goal of PJ Library's digital presence is twofold: to bring Jewish stories to families all over the world in an easy, accessible manner and to support them wherever they are in their family's Jewish journey.

**So how do we do this?**

The digital team operates from a philosophy of curate or create. When we can, we share resources from trusted and vetted sources that we use ourselves as educators and parents through posts such as the “How to Talk to Kids About ...” pieces on the PJ Library blog and weekly Sunday resource roundups on Facebook.

PJ Library is a trusted voice for children’s books that also have strong ties to Jewish values. When grownups ask us for booklists featuring different family configurations or to help kids cope with loss, we’re ready to share lists that are also easy to connect to Jewish values, holidays, and themes. Just as PJ Library selects books with a careful eye, so, too, does our team curate videos, articles, and resources to share with PJ Library subscriber families, partners, and educators.

When it comes to creating original content, there are a lot of factors to consider. First, we look for gaps in the market: What’s missing in the parenting and/or Jewish space, and how can PJ Library fill these holes by drawing on our network of educators, writers, lay leaders, and other professionals? What questions are coming up over and over in our own parenting networks and/or are trending online?

**Every week our team tracks social sentiment: How are people feeling or talking about PJ Library overall? How well do our individual posts and content pieces do in terms of reach (users on a social platform who see the content) and engagement (people interacting with the content)? What are the trends and real-time conversations happening on social media in the parenting and, more specifically, Jewish parenting spaces?**

In addition, our digital team draws on our own experiences; we’re raising kids too. As we comb through the mountains of data that social media provides, we focus on what we’d need for our families and what our friends and peers are asking for (or the gaps in the conversations – what do people need but don’t know they need?).

Some occasions call for us to change course from what we planned, like a pandemic that suddenly forces kids to learn virtually from home while grownups work tirelessly to keep their kids engaged.

Our tiny-but-mighty cross-departmental digital team maintains a vast, detailed digital calendar that’s constantly changing to meet the needs of families, especially in times of crisis and constantly shifting current events. The beauty of digital content and media is the ability for us to be agile.

Maybe most importantly, we use all of these metrics to give PJ Library subscriber families and communities more of what they enjoy. For example, we know that podcasts and audiobooks are a fabulous way to foster literacy skills and enjoyment of stories for all kids, but especially those struggling with reading. There are tons of amazing kids’ storytelling podcasts (*Circle Round*, *Story Pirates*, and *Wow in the World* are some of our staff’s favorites), and there are great Jewish podcasts (*Unorthodox*), but we couldn’t find a storytelling podcast for kids that specifically features Jewish content – so we made one! Our first podcast, *Have I Got a Story for You!*, was a great success with families, so in October 2021, we were thrilled to launch two more shows: *Beyond the Bookcase*, a Jewish story adventure for ages 5 and up, and *Afternoons with Mimi*, a relaxing, snuggly listen for grandparents and preschoolers alike.

There’s a lot to consider when putting together new resources or curating not-so-new ones, so we work hard to make sure that families have what they need to navigate through the good and the difficult times. Whether it’s putting together a list of sources for talking to kids about scary situations or creating a new podcast with silly stories to keep kids laughing and learning, we’re always prepared to provide responsive digital content when families need it most.

## **PJ Library now offers three podcasts for families to enjoy:**

*Have I Got a Story for You!*, *Beyond the Bookcase*, and *Afternoons with Mimi*. You can find all of these podcasts on the new PJ Library podcast channel ***PJ Library Presents*** by scanning this QR code.

