

Creating a MULTISENSORY Book Experience

By Samara Q. Klein

DIRECTOR OF PJ PUBLISHING

THE FIRST TIME I PLACED A BOARD BOOK IN MY DAUGHTER'S HANDS, SHE ATE IT ... at least she tried to.

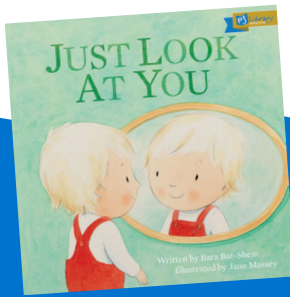
After my daughter had put every board book we owned into her mouth several times over, she began to turn the pages by snatching them in her fists then slamming them down, often tossing the book aside when she was done.

Ah, that's why we give babies board books, I thought.

As much as our first experiences with books are about hearing words read aloud and seeing illustrations on pages, those first experiences are also about engaging with books as physical objects – feeling, sniffing, and tasting them too.

We know from research that reading books with children has tremendous benefits for their cognitive growth, from honing conceptual development to increasing vocabulary. The more we engage children with books, the better off they are for it. But engaging babies and toddlers is a multisensory experience, and books that go beyond the standard structure of text and illustrations – books with formats that reinforce their topics and content – can enhance the connection between the young child and the book, as well as the connection between the young child and the caregiver reading the book. At PJ Publishing we strive to make these connections, with Judaism at the heart of each.





Just Look At You
Written by Bara Bat-Shem
Illustrated by Jane Massey

In *Just Look at You*, a child smells with their nose (*af*), feels with their fingers (*etz-ba-ot*), tastes with their mouth (*peh*), hears with their ears (*oz-nay-im*), and sees with their eyes (*ay-nay-im*). The final page holds a mirror for children to look into and find and identify those same sensory body parts on themselves.



Purim Masquerade
Written and Illustrated by
Samara Q. Klein (*me!*)

With two simple holes, a board book is also a mask! In *Purim Masquerade*, children and caregivers become a part of the board book as they hold it up to their faces, peer through the eye holes, and transform into characters from the Book of Esther.



LET'S PLAY A GAME

I'm going to tell you about two forthcoming PJ Publishing books, and you decide what formats you would use to reinforce the topics and content and to enhance the connections between the books and their readers. Then check the answers to the right to see what we came up with.

About the Book

Harvest Blessings

Written by Amy Meltzer
Illustrated by Amy Schimler-Safford

Harvest Blessings is comprised of two lyrical poems: one an ode to the fruits and vegetables that are gifts from the earth, ending with the *Ha'adamah* blessing; the other an ode to the fruits and vegetables that are gifts from the trees, ending with the *Ha'etz* blessing.

Dónde está Shmata? (Where is Blankie?)

Written by Tana Ross
Illustrated by Elisa Kleven

When a little girl loses her beloved Shmata, she becomes increasingly desperate as she searches for it throughout her animal-filled home and tropical yard ... until Bubbe arrives with Shmata in hand.

Making it Multisensory

We decided on a flip-book format. One side, *Gifts from the Earth*, shows vibrant cross sections of fruits and vegetables growing in the ground. Flip to the other side, *Gifts from the Trees*, where colorful trees and bushes abound with fruits. The two books meet in the middle with the blessings.



We decided on a lift-the-flap format, so that readers get to search for Shmata too!

Children explore the world in many ways, through sight, sound, and tactile experiences and with the guidance of loving adults. PJ Publishing takes all of these factors into consideration to craft books that are just right for our youngest readers. After all, my daughter wasn't the first baby to eat a book. And she won't be the last!