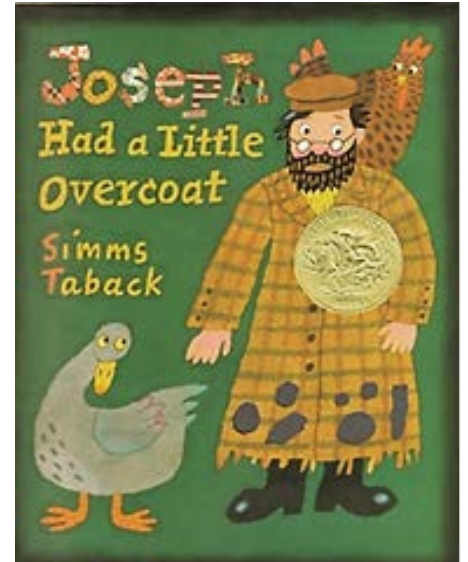


## Joseph Had a Little Overcoat

By Simms Taback

### Program Focus

Age group: Ages 2-4  
Time frame: 45 minutes  
Central value: Not wasting (*bal tashchit*), recycling, cherishing objects (there is “no one thing in the world without its place”)



### Synopsis

Joseph owned a special coat that he loved very much. Joseph loved his coat so much that he never wanted to throw it away- Not even when it became old and full of holes. Instead of throwing his coat away, Joseph tried to recycle it. First he patched it – he covered every hole with a small square of material. When the coat became full of patches, Joseph cut with his scissors and sewed with his needle and turned that coat into something else. This book is a highly relevant and developmentally appropriate topic for young children who love/need to possess favorite transitional objects- blankets, teddy bears, cloth diapers, etc - that they cling to before bed or during the day for comfort.

### Goals

1. Highlight and connect the major themes of this book to daily life.
2. Involve families in a fun recycling project.
3. Encourage families to think about ways to incorporate recycling and mitzvah of “bal tashchit” into their daily family life.

### Submitted by

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# Plan in advance

## Prepare Overcoat Activity

### Materials Needed

- Poster board
- Scraps of material cut into small squares
- Stapler
- Clear contact paper
- 5-6 round tables
- Plastic or paper bowls

### Advanced Preparations

- Using large size poster board, cut out a large coat, jacket, vest, tie, and scarf
- Cut numerous holes in each item of clothing.
- Using a stapler, attach contact paper (adhesive side facing up) to each clothing item
- Remove backing from contact paper so that a sticky surface now covers each piece of clothing.
- Make large drawing of Joseph wearing pants and suspenders



### Adaptations for Group Size and Age

#### Larger Groups

Give each child, his/her own clothing item to decorate. These clothing items will be smaller than the poster board clothing items described above, about the size of an 8.5 x 11 in. piece of paper. Cut out each item in advance as most young children will glue over any drawn lines, making it difficult to identify the completed clothing item. Glue sticks can be used to attach patches.

#### Older Children

Clothing items can be cut out of cloth or felt. The child's task will be to sew patches onto the clothes. Some children and parents may require a brief "how-to-sew" lesson.

## Prepare Recycled Shape Sorters

### Materials needed

- Empty coffee cans, cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc.
- Construction paper for covering cans and boxes
- Baby food or yogurt lids, cardboard circles- made from boxes, and other found items (empty film canisters, pieces of Styrofoam packing, etc.)
- Stickers
- Markers, crayons, etc.
- Scissors

### Advance Preparations

Cover can or box with construction paper.

# Introduce with an activity

## Decorate Overcoat

### Introductory Words

You can look around at all the tables in the room and see some of the different things that Joseph made from his coat. Right now, we want you to try to be like Joseph. Pick a table and start working on the piece of clothing that's on that table. Cover the clothes with patches and help Joseph recycle and reuse it. In a few minutes, when we read our book, we're going to use all of these patched and fixed items of clothing to help us tell our story.

### Directions

1. Place each clothing item at a different table.  
For the youngest children, one clothing item can be placed on the floor.
2. Fill small bowls with squares of materials- 2-3 children can share a bowl, although the activity usually works best, if no sharing is required.
3. Arrange several bowls of material squares around each item of poster board clothing.
4. Encourage children to work in small groups, covering both the holes and the entire surface of the piece of clothing with patches (cloth squares).



## Introduce the Story

Now it's time for us to open our book, and meet this man named Joseph who loved his coat and never wanted to throw it away. As we read, I'm going to show you some of the wonderful things that Joseph made from his old beloved coat. Many of you have already helped me by fixing and patching some of Joseph's clothes, but as we read, I'm going to need even more help from you. Can you help me name each of the pieces of clothing that Joseph makes?

Be sure to have:

- Large drawing of Joseph wearing pants and suspenders
- Patchwork clothing items made by children

# Read the story

## Encourage Participation

Hold up each of the child-made patchwork props (the patched coat, jacket, vest, etc.) as you read aloud the corresponding text. Pause and allow listeners to excitedly chime in the name of the clothing item being displayed. Here's an example:

- *“Joseph had a little overcoat. It got old and worn” (Pause in reading text and add) “But Joseph loved that coat, and he certainly didn’t want to throw it away. Joseph was very smart. He knew that everything has a purpose, and that almost anything can be recycled and turned into something else. So Joseph cut and sewed and made that coat into something a little smaller. Let’s see what he made. He made a \_\_\_\_\_.*
- Hold up poster board jacket and wait for children’s response. Turn page and continues reading: *“Yes, He made a jacket out of it and went to the fair”.*
- Continue reading text and showing corresponding props.

## Adaptations for group size and age

### Larger Groups

Ask children to hold up their individual paper item of clothing as that item of clothing is described and depicted in the book.

### Older Children

Ask several children to stand next to the storyteller, proudly displaying the clothing item that he/she has made. When the storyteller reads about a clothing item, the child holding that item will step forward and wave the item in the air, encouraging all others who have made that type of clothing to display it as well.

# Follow Up activities and resources

## Make Recycle Shape Sorters

### Sample Introduction to Activity

*“When I looked in my basement, I found many surprising things (show cans, jar lids, etc.) At first, I thought, “Hmm... Here’s a lot of trash. Maybe I should throw it all away?” Then I thought, no, I can’t do that. That would be going against something that we refer to in Hebrew as Bal Tashchit- not wasting things. When I looked at all of these things, I decided that, like Joseph, I too needed to recycle. I needed to take all of my trash and reuse it, and turn it into something else.*

*I covered these cans with colored paper. Can you decorate my cans with stickers and markers? Then maybe you can decide which of the items in front of you might fit into your can (baby food jar lids, plastic lids, plastic eggs).*

*So instead of saying that these jar lids and cans are “garbage” that needs to be thrown away, we’ll turn these objects into a very special shape sorter that you can take home with you.*



### Directions

1. Encourage children to decorate can or box with stickers and markers.
2. Have adults cut slits in plastic top of the can or on top or into the side of the box. (Slit should be large enough to allow selected items to pass through).
3. Adults demonstrate how to drop circular lids or other shapes into shape sorter, and how to open sorter in order to retrieve the shapes.

### Adaptations for Group Size and Age

#### Larger Groups

Children can use recycled cans and boxes to make a tzedekah box. Only one size slit to accommodate coins will need to be cut in the lids by adults beforehand.

#### Older Children

Children can use recycled materials to make sculptures, toys, tzedekah boxes, and/or other items of their own design. Children will have access to glue, scissors, construction paper, glitter, stickers etc., and will be encouraged to use their imagination and ingenuity to create their own project.

# Resources for parents, teachers, families

## Nurturing the Family

Thank everyone for coming. Following the program, send families an email, thanking them for coming, and providing helpful links such as the ones below to nurture the value of recycling and not destroying needlessly:

Ideas for other "Recycled Art Projects": [www.kinderart.com/recycle](http://www.kinderart.com/recycle)

Recycling Songs: [www.everythingpreschool.com/themes/recycling/index.htm](http://www.everythingpreschool.com/themes/recycling/index.htm)

Take Home Sheet: A recycling checklist that families can use at home:  
<http://www.bubhub.com.au/todo-eco-friendly-family-checklist.php>

Internet Links about Joseph and his Overcoat: including youtube of Joseph's song at end of book.  
<http://pjlibrary.org/pj-blog/index.php/archives/2436/simms-taback-joseph-had-a-little-overcoat/>