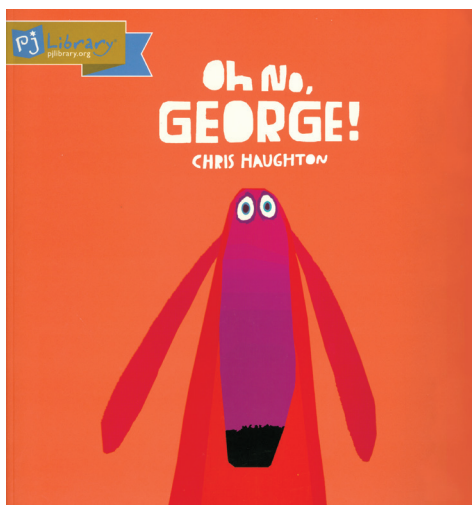# Why are second chances important?

Oh No, George!
Written and Illustrated
by Chris Haughton
Published by Candlewick Press

Fixing mistakes - *te-shu-va* - תְּשׁוּבָה

Read
the book for Jewish values

Everyone makes mistakes. Jewish sages recognized that apologizing and changing one's ways can be difficult, so they mapped out a step-by-step process for *teshuva*, repentance. The routine involves admitting your mistake, understanding the mistake from another person's perspective, and making an alternative plan if a similar circumstance arises. The word teshuva comes from the Hebrew, *shuv,* which means "return." Rav Kook, a renowned 20th century scholar, teaches that teshuva means we correct our errors and return to the best versions of ourselves. While teshuva is a big focus of the Jewish New Year, we can acknowledge our mistakes and set goals to do better all year long.

Optional storytelling technique

Ask children to take turns being the voice of George and say what he is thinking. The book ends with George deciding whether or not to dig in the trash. What would you tell George?
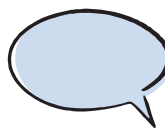
Discuss
Jewish values with one another

For the teacher's consideration

· Which do you feel is harder to do - ask for forgiveness or to forgive? Why?

· What do you think is your responsibility if you make a mistake in the classroom or accidentally hurt a child's feelings? Do you apologize publicly or privately?

· What do you hope children understand about making mistakes and fixing them?

Questions for children

· What are some of George's mistakes? Why do you think he makes these mistakes even though he says he "wants to be good"?

· How does George show that he is truly sorry for his mistakes?

· What are the mistakes we sometimes make in the classroom? How could we fix them?
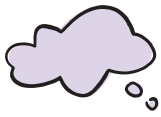
Imagine
how values will come to life

Manipulatives
One aspect of fixing mistakes is to find a new way of approaching a problem. Play with cars, trains, tracks, or footprints to find new ways around mistakes or obstacles.

Music
The song "Count to Ten" is a musical list of techniques for avoiding emotional outbursts. Listen to the song and see how much of it your students can act out. Find the song at bit.ly/count-to-ten-song and the lyrics at bit.ly/count-to-ten-lyrics.

Dramatic play
Use puppets to explore the examples of classroom mistakes your students came up with. How will children suggest fixing the mistakes?

How does your environment support the value of fixing mistakes?

Gross motor
Practice self-control techniques, such as deep breathing, blowing bubbles, doing yoga poses, or moving in slow motion.

Social-emotional learning
Help children self-regulate by using this verbal template.

I made a mistake when I…
I could tell my classmate was upset because….
I guess the other person was thinking…
Next time, I will try…

Engage
families in conversations about values

How can you deepen home-school relationships?

What should George do?
Recreate the scenarios from the book with a stuffed dog and props. Encourage your families to talk about George's choices. Perhaps families will suggest new scenarios to enact.

Alef-Bet Yoga
Yoga can serve as a wonderful first step in developing self-control and self-regulation skills. Hang a series of child-friendly yoga poses in your school lobby, perhaps featuring a pose-of-the-week. Suggest that families try out the poses together. You can find great poses based on the Hebrew alphabet yoga poster from Kar-Ben Publishing: bit.ly/alef-bet-yoga

More on this topic

PJ Library books

The Hardest Word
by Jacqueline Jules

*Red, Blue, and Yellow Yarn:
A Tale of Forgiveness*
by Miriam Kosman

Web article

Mom and teacher shares a practical approach to apologies

www.scarymommy.com/forcing-child-say-sorry/