

Get Together

PJ Library's Tips for Hosting a Family-Friendly Get Together

Welcoming guests, also known as *hachnassat orchim*, is a core Jewish value that's all about helping our guests to feel comfortable, relaxed, and at home when they visit. Here are some tips to being a great host while fulfilling this Jewish *mitzvah* (an instruction about doing what's right).

- 1 Pick your location with guests' ease and comfort in mind.** You could invite everyone to your backyard, plan to meet up at a local park, or anywhere else convenient for you and your guests. Wherever you host your Get Together, make sure parking is easy.
- 2 Invite your friends in a fun way!** Consider a handwritten note or a phone call from your child(ren) inviting friends to your Get Together. Make sure to include (or follow up soon with) details like the address, time, and best places to park. Make sure to mention how excited you are to get together with them!
- 3 Greet people at your door.** Abraham and Sarah are said to have been extremely welcoming – their tent was open on all sides so they could be sure to greet guests right away. Just like Sarah and Abraham, we want to be welcoming to our guests from the moment they arrive.
- 4 Start with an icebreaker activity or introductions to help make everyone feel comfortable.** Your child(ren) could lead a tour of your house or yard. You might prepare some conversation starters like having everyone share a recent favorite book, show, or song.
- 5 Share the love (and the work).** Think about sharing your host duties by giving each participant a role. Maybe one parent/family wants to lead a game or a craft activity. Another could create a scavenger hunt, and another brings dessert. Working together takes pressure off the host, can be its own icebreaker, and helps everyone have a great time.
- 6 Most of all, don't sweat the small stuff. Have fun!** There will be weather glitches, kids who stay glued to their parents, and maybe you don't get through all that you planned. Take a deep breath and enjoy... the important part is that you are TOGETHER celebrating something special!
- 7 Make sure to say thank you when it's over.** Encourage your child(ren) to walk their friends to the door or out to the front yard, and thank them for coming! Solidify the great memories with a followup "thanks for coming" email that includes pictures from the gathering. (We'll email you about your post-event host report where you can send us some pictures too!)

More Hosting Info & Inspiration:

Bimbam made this great [video for parents](#) about welcoming guests. (At the end, it links to a fun [kids' video](#) we like too.)

Here's a great article from Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer, Chief Program Officer at Jewish Learning Venture in Philadelphia, PA: [Helping Our Children To Welcome Guests](#)

Find more tips: [PJ Library's Helping Kids Welcome Guests](#)

Enjoy your Get Together! Email gettogether@pjlibrary.org with any questions.

