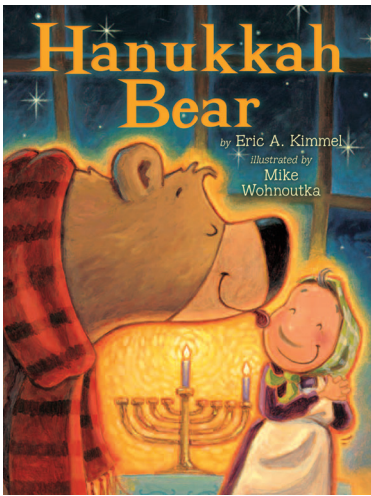


BIG QUESTION

What makes you feel comfortable in a new place?



Hanukkah Bear

Written by Eric A. Kimmel
Illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka
Published by Holiday House



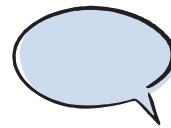
Welcoming Guests – *Hach-na-sat or-chim*

הַכְּנֶסֶת אֹרְחִים



Read

the book for Jewish values



Discuss

Jewish values with one another

The Torah, also called the Five Books of Moses, contains laws and practical lessons for Jewish life. Early in the first book, biblical patriarch Abraham and matriarch Sarah set the standard for welcoming guests (Genesis 18:1-8). When Abraham notices three weary travelers at their always-open tent, he brings water to wash their hot and dusty feet while Sarah prepares a meal. Rabbinic scholars developed hospitality guidelines based on Abraham and Sarah's behavior: Greet your guests at the door, offer food and drink, be cheerful during their visit, ask about your guests' interests, and walk them to the door when they leave. How does this translate to the way we greet guests in the classroom?

Optional storytelling technique

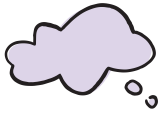
This is a fun story, but it may be a little long for some children. Try telling the story with a bear puppet or stuffed bear. Children can take turns growling like the bear. You might wear a babushka-style head scarf as Bubba Brayna (pronounced **brine**-a) does.

For the teacher's consideration

- How do you feel about welcoming guests to your home? What are the steps you need to take in order to prepare for the experience?
- In what ways do you model/encourage hospitality in the classroom?
- What are the rewards and challenges to visitors coming into your classroom? How do you remain positive?
- What changes could you make to your classroom's routines or environment to help make the room feel more welcoming to guests of different ages and abilities?

Questions for children

- How do you feel when guests visit your home?
- What do you do to get ready for guests at home?
- Who are some of the guests that come to our classroom? What can we do to help our guests feel welcome? What does Bubba Brayna do?



Imagine

how values will come to life

Dramatic play

Let the children host small parties in your dramatic play area. Guide them in thinking through how to prepare for guests at home or at school. What toys do they like to share? What toys are hard to share with others?

Make welcoming tangible

What objects would your students like to make that create a welcoming atmosphere? Examples include welcome mats, comfy chairs, a welcome door sign, or snacks.

Classroom guest record

Ask children to create a system for remembering guests that visit your classroom, such as a guestbook or sign-in wall. Consider adding the position of class greeter(s) to your job chart. Not only can greeters welcome visitors to the classroom; they can ask the guest to sign the guestbook or wall before departing. A classroom photographer can add pictures, too.



Engage

families in conversations about values

How can you deepen home-school relationships?

Guest poetry

This is often a busy time for parties and travel. What are your families' customs and traditions around welcoming guests - or being guests? Put up some easel paper in your lobby and invite parents to write a couplet or haiku about welcoming guests.

Hanukkah party.

Have I made enough latkes?

When can I panic?

Welcome surprise

Model welcoming guests at drop-off and pick-up times. Prepare some surprise snacks or games for your families as they come to school. Perhaps you can set up a mini-latkes station, coffee bar, or dreidel spin-off. Ask your students what they think would make their families feel welcome.

How does your environment support the value of welcoming guests?

More on this topic

PJ Library books

Once Upon a Shabbos
by Jacqueline Jules

Bubbe Isabella and the Sukkot Cake
by Kelly Terwilliger

Web article

Is your classroom a welcoming place?

bit.ly/welcoming-classroom