

## Read the PJ Library Book

### The Very Crowded Sukkah (3's)

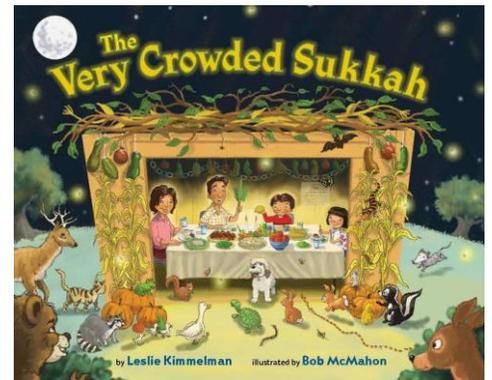
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#### Synopsis

Sam and his sister Ava are busy decorating their family sukkah, when suddenly a storm approaches. Sam's dad quickly covers the sukkah with plastic, as Sam and Ava watch through the living room window. "Poor little sukkah," says Ava. "All alone in the rain." But the sukkah is not alone – it becomes filled with animals grateful for a shelter from the storm. Soon the sun comes out, the plastic cover comes off, and the family celebrates Sukkot in style. Who do you think comes back when the family goes in for the night?



## DISCUSS the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) - *Su-kot* - סוכות

Family - *Mish-pa-chah* - משפחה

Kindness to animals - *Tza-ar ba-a-lei cha-yim* - צער בעלי חיים

**Sukkot.** Having both agricultural and historical significance, Sukkot is a jubilant seven-day festival. The Torah literally tells us to “rejoice in your holiday” (Deuteronomy 16:14). Many Jewish families build a *sukkah*, a hut reminiscent of the temporary booths in which the Hebrews lived as they wandered forty years through the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. There are many rules about the placement and structure of a sukkah, including that its covering (in Hebrew - *s'chakh*) provides shade from the sun, yet allows the light of the stars to shine through at night. The mitzvah is to “dwell” in the sukkah, which is fulfilled by eating ones meals in the sukkah. Hearty enthusiasts even sleep in the sukkah, though it is not required to suffer through very bad weather.

[For more about Sukkot please read *A Watermelon in the Sukkah* Resource Guide.]

**Family – Mishpacha.** Family is a cornerstone of Jewish life. It is so important in shaping identity and assuring the continuity of tradition, that the entire first book of the Torah focuses on family. The Book of Genesis is filled with families who experience love and jealousy along with sibling rivalry and forgiveness. As in many cultures, Judaism sees the family as essential to children’s education. The *Shema*, considered by many Jews as the central prayer in Judaism, states: “You shall teach them [words of Torah] diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:7). In other words, families provide the living exemplars of Jewish values.



**Kindness to Animals – Tza-ar ba-alei chayim.** Jewish law teaches us to be respectful of all animals. After all, they were here first. According to the Torah animals were created on the fifth day of Creation, while humankind was born the following day. There is a consistent theme of considering animals’ needs before our own in rabbinic literature. God tells the Israelites, “I will give grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied (Deuteronomy 11:15). Rabbinic sages see the significance in the order of the words in this sentence – cattle receive their food before people. The Talmud, the root of Jewish law and custom, warns, “A person should not acquire domestic animals, wild beasts, or birds before buying food for those animals to eat (*Ketubot* 4:8).

## Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

**How would your classroom change?  
How will families be involved?**

### In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ **Sukkot:** What are the sounds of Sukkot? Ask your children to imagine what sounds they hear when they are outside in a sukkah, such as sirens, tweeting birds or the rustling of trees. What sounds do they hear when they are inside their home? Make recordings or buy inexpensive sound effects CDs to play in your **listening center**.
- ✧ **Sukkot:** Turn your **dramatic play area** into a sukkah. What will you and your students add to the space to entice (stuffed) animals to join you inside the sukkah?
- ✧ **Family:** Decorating the sukkah is all part of the fun of the holiday. Include the idea of celebrating families into your décor by creating family photo mobiles in your **art center**.
- ✧ **Family:** Ask each family to send a framed family photo to school. Keep these pictures on an **accessible shelf** to show children their family is always with them. Display your (teacher) family photos, too.
- ✧ **Kindness to animals:** Study animal habitats in your **science center**. Look for animals and creatures whenever you and your students go for a **walk or play outdoors**.
- ✧ **Kindness to animals:** Take care of a **class pet**, allowing the children to participate in the chores of feeding and cleaning the cage. Fish or hermit crabs are easy options if you are not particularly pet-inclined.



## Bridging Home and School

### Sukkah Entranceway

Work with another class and/or some creative parents to build a simple sukkah near the entrance to your school, so you effectively have to walk into the sukkah to enter the school. (For a very simple sukkah, visit [http://www.neohasid.org/sukkot/simple\\_sukkah\\_howto/](http://www.neohasid.org/sukkot/simple_sukkah_howto/)) Invite school and organization leadership to greet families as they arrive in the morning, and engage them in an experience with a *lulav* and *etrog*. The *lulav* (palm, myrtle and willow leaves) and *etrog* (citron) are the Sukkot symbols described at the end of this book. Have some mini-donuts on hand, so everyone can have an opportunity to eat a snack in the sukkah.

### Pet Gallery

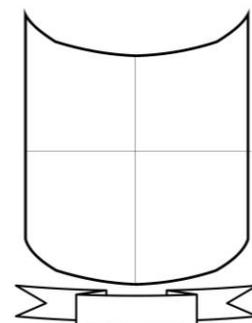
Invite your families to contribute photos to your picture gallery of animals. The photographs can be of pets – real and stuffed, animals you encounter at the zoo, or creatures you find in your back yard. Collect the photos and write a book with your students entitled *The Animals We Meet*.

## Family Engagement at Home

### Family Crest

Invite families to think about how their values might be represented by a family crest. Send home a simple template, with instructions to fill each of the four quadrants with pictures that symbolize important values, such as the dining room table, a heart, a mezuzah, and PJ Library books! The family name goes in the ribbon at the bottom of the shield. Proudly display the family crests in school.

For more ideas visit <http://tinyurl.com/jewish-family-crest-ideas>



# Share

 your stories and experiences with everyone.

**What happened?**

**How can the learning go deeper?**

### Tell us a story... about life in the sukkah

Building a classroom sukkah is like building a fort – and what child doesn't like that?! Take note of the relationships that blossom in your classroom under the roof of your sukkah. For example: *Michele and Justin like to sit quietly and read in our sukkah. Today they sat together and shared the books they enjoyed.*

Submit an article for our eNews by emailing [PJGtS@hgf.org](mailto:PJGtS@hgf.org)

# More

 resources and websites for inspiration

Growing family traditions <http://tinyurl.com/shalomesame-growing-family>

Sukkah World <http://www.sukkahworld.com/rules-of-the-sukkah.asp>

Can Animals be Nice? <http://tinyurl.com/nationalgeo-nice-animals>

