

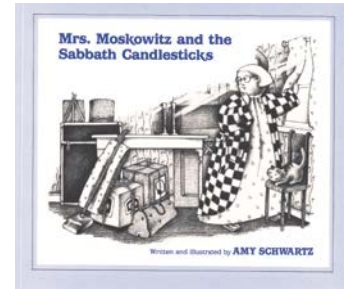
# Read the PJ Library Book

## Mrs. Moskowitz and the Sabbath Candlesticks (4s)

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### Synopsis

Mrs. Moskowitz feels lost when she first moves into her new apartment. She misses her old home so much, she cannot bring herself to unpack – until her son comes by with a pair of tarnished, yet treasured, candlesticks. The happy memories the candlesticks evoke prompt Mrs. Moskowitz to unpack and prepare for Shabbat. As Mrs. Moskowitz welcomes her family and Shabbat into her apartment, she realizes that her memories and the presence of her loved ones have helped transform her new apartment into a home.

# Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Ritual objects - *Tash-mi-shei ki-du-sha* - תַּשְׁמִישֵׁי קְדוּשָׁה

Dedicating a [Jewish] home - *Cha-nu-kat ha-ba-yit* - חֲנוּכַת הַבַּיִת

### Introducing the value of ritual objects *Tashmishei kidusha*

#### From Jewish teachings

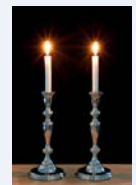
Ritual objects play an important role in Judaism. Each Jewish holiday features one or more ritual objects. Rabbinic sages encourage individuals to use the most beautiful ritual objects possible (Talmud Shabbat: 133b). Using artistically created ritual objects to carry out Jewish practice is known as *hiddur mitzvah*, beautifying the commandment. Many people find that the best way to feel emotionally and spiritually connected to a Jewish holiday or ritual is to celebrate it using objects that are rich in family history.

#### For the teacher

- Some objects have significance because they're part of a religious ritual, and some because they tie us to our family heritage. What are some of the objects that you cherish in your home and why?
- What are the objects that are used in the classrooms for rituals, such as transition chimes or a talking stick at morning meeting?
- What Jewish ritual objects does your classroom use and how do children interact with them on a daily basis?

#### Questions for children

- Mrs. Moskowitz feels more at home once she finds her candlesticks. What makes you feel more comfortable, either at home or in a new place?
- Can you think of an object that you use during a family celebration?
- What are the objects that we use in the classroom to celebrate Jewish holidays and Shabbat?



## Introducing the value of dedicating a Jewish home *Chanukat habayit*

### From Jewish teachings

Like Mrs. Moskowitz, most of us strive to turn our house into a home. According to the Torah, the key to building a loving home is to fill the home with conversation and teaching [Jewish] values (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Many Jewish families affix a mezuzah to the doorways in their home as a reminder that the home is a sacred place, and a place to teach children the ideals you hold dear. The act of affixing a mezuzah is called *chanukat habayit*, dedicating the home, and often involves inviting guests, reciting a blessing, and, of course, serving food!

### For the teacher

- Modern pedagogy suggests that we think about our classrooms as a home away from home. What do you do to make your classroom feel more home-like?
- What are the ways that you make your classroom feel more homey both physically and emotionally?
- How might you alter your job charts, the way you design activities or how you work with your families to reflect the importance of a homey environment?



### Questions for children

- What makes your home a special space?
- What do we do in our classroom that makes it a special place?
- How would we know our classroom is a Jewish classroom?
- Mrs. Moskowitz invites her family over to celebrate Shabbat to dedicate her new home: Whom could we invite into our classroom to celebrate together?

# Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

### In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ **Ritual objects:** Create a ritual objects bingo game (or puzzle) for your **manipulatives center**. Prepare cards that contain pictures of six to eight different ritual holiday objects, such as a kiddush cup, shofar, gragger, tzedakah box, etc. As children complete their cards and call out “Bingo!” ask them to describe the names and functions of the objects on their cards.
- ✧ **Ritual objects:** Walk around the school with your students, and make note of the ritual objects you find together, such as doorway *mezuzot* (plural of mezuzah) or kiddush cups. Graphing your results is an excellent **math exercise**.
- ✧ **Dedicating the home:** Decorate *birkat habayit* (blessing of the home) wall hangings in your **art center**. These wall hangings can contain traditional Hebrew and/or English blessings (see <http://pjfor.me/blessing-for-the-home> for examples), or they can display children’s creative blessings that describe wishes for their home, such as “May our home always be filled with guests and smell like cookies.”
- ✧ **Dedicating the home:** Discuss the idea of dedicating your classroom at **morning meeting**, and design a classroom mezuzah together. Invite guests and hold a *chanukat habayit* (dedication of the home) celebration during which the mezuzah is affixed to the classroom door.



## Bridging Home and School

### Our Home

Ask your families to discuss the objects and memories that make their homes special to them. It would be wonderful to collect these stories into a book, destined to become a classroom favorite.

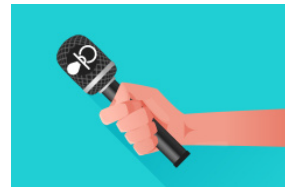
### Mezuzah Hunt

Encourage families to take pictures of all of the *mezuzot* (plural for mezuzah) that they see in their homes, neighborhood and synagogue. Ask them to send you the pictures, and put together a slide show to greet families with all these different images when they come to school.

## Family Engagement at Home

### Object of Discussion

Suggest that families elect one relative to engage in an interview (via video chat or in person). The family member can prepare for the interview by choosing an object, preferably with an interesting history, that he/she will talk about. Children should be encouraged to ask questions about both the item and the individual sharing the item.



# Share your stories and experiences with everyone.

**What happened?**

**How can the learning go deeper?**



**Tell us a story... about children's relationships to objects**

Children innately understand the importance of objects, exemplified by their attachments to special toys or blankies. Help children process and understand that family members may care deeply about special items, too. Record their thoughts about special rules that relate to these items. For example, perhaps Jonathan realizes the wisdom of a family rule: “*My daddy says not to play near the big vase because it belonged to his daddy.*”

# More resources and websites for inspiration

Routine and Ritual: <http://pjfor.me/routine-and-ritual>

Jewish Ritual Objects: <http://pjfor.me/ritualobjects>

NAEYC Resources for Families: <http://pjfor.me/naeyc-resources>

