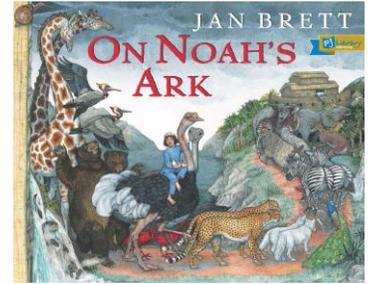


Read the PJ Library Book

On Noah's Ark (3s)

Written and Illustrated by Jan Brett

Published by G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers



Synopsis

Noah's ark is a crowded, noisy place, but Noah's granddaughter skillfully helps her grandfather establish peace aboard the ark. As the animals sleep, she tiptoes around untangling necks, tails, wings, and paws so the animals are comfortable throughout their journey. When the rain stops and the animals disembark, Noah's granddaughter once again helps him, this time planting seeds so that the world can nurture life.

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Kindness to animals - *Tza-ar ba-a-lei cha-yim* - צַעַר בְּעֵלֵי חַיִּים

Peaceful home - *Sha-lom ba-yit* - שְׁלוֹם בַּיִת

Introducing the value of Kindness to animals *Tzaar ba'alei chayim*

From Jewish teachings

The Hebrew words *tzaar ba'alei chayim* literally mean "the suffering of living beings," but the Jewish value refers to doing all that we can to **prevent** animals from suffering. According to Jewish law, animals should be cared for with kindness and sensitivity. Animal owners must feed their animals before they themselves eat (Deuteronomy 4:5). The Torah calls for animals to rest on Shabbat (Exodus 20:8), and teaches us never to purchase an animal before securing adequate supplies to care for it.

For the teacher

- What meaningful experiences with animals have you had in your own life?
- Why do you think Jewish law places such a strong emphasis on kindness to animals?
- What might caring for animals do for the children in your classroom?
- How can you help the children in your classroom learn to respect and care for animals?



Questions for children

- What did Noah and his family need to do in order to take care of the animals on the ark?
- What are some of the thoughtful things that people can do for animals? How can you be kind to animals even if you don't have pets?
- All creatures deserve their place on earth. How (and why) do we show respect to creatures both cuddly and not so cuddly?

Introducing the value of peace in the home *Shalom bayit*

From Jewish teachings

The word *shalom* has the Hebrew root sh-l-m, meaning completeness or wholeness (*shaleim*). *Bayit* means house, and the value of *shalom bayit*, therefore emphasizes the importance of family members working together to create a peaceful, loving home that radiates harmony and completeness. Peace in the home has positive repercussions in the world. Rabbi Simeon ben Gamliel, a revered first century scholar, notes that “scripture esteems the person who makes peace in his house as if he made peace for every individual in Israel” (*Avot de Rabbi Natan 28:3*).

For the teacher

- What comes to mind when you think of a peaceful home or classroom?
- Teachers and children spend a lot of time together in an ECE program. What are the essential components of shalom in your school?
- How do you encourage children to work together to create a peaceful classroom?
- How do you help children discover ways to bring their school “shalom” behaviors into their home or outside activities?

Questions for children

- On Noah’s ark, Noah’s granddaughter found ways to make sure the animals lived in peace. What kinds of things did she do? What does peace mean to you?
- If shalom/peace means no fighting, how do we avoid arguments in the classroom?
- What are the ways we can make our classroom a peaceful place to be?



Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

In the Classroom / Centers

☆ **Tza’ar ba’alei chayim/kindness to animals:** Invite children to examine the illustrations in *On Noah’s Ark*, and ask them to identify animals that they would like to learn more about. Fill your **library** (and other areas of the room) with books that feature the class’ chosen animal(s). Stock your **science center** with hands-on materials that relate to these animals, and make sure your **art center** contains “loose parts” that can be used to create representations of these animals and their habitats.

☆ **Tza’ar ba’alei chayim/kindness to animals:** Go on an animal scavenger hunt, and keep a pictorial record of all the animals that you see. Look closely at tree bark and under big rocks to catch sight of some interesting insects. Challenge children to think of specific ways that the class can help the animals they spot on their hunt.

☆ **Shalom bayit/peace in the home:** Have children create their own *birkat habayit*/blessing of the home prayer for the classroom. Explain that some blessings are hopes and wishes for happiness. Your blessing might start with “Let our classroom be filled with...” or “I hope our classroom always...”

Perhaps you will display your classroom blessing as part of a collaborative mural or weaving.
☆ **Shalom bayit/peace in the home:** Play **cooperative games** to enhance children’s ability to negotiate and work together. Examples include keeping scarves in the air, playing musical chairs where children share a decreasing number of chairs, or building a spaceship to the moon. After each game, see if children can identify some of the actions that made the game succeed.



Bridging Home and School

Fund a farm animal

Hold a school-wide fundraising event where all the money that is collected will be used to purchase farm animals, such as goats or chickens, for an impoverished community. Encourage families to search for photos and information about the animals' needs and the ways they benefit a community. Maintain an animal news board in your hallway to follow the animals' progress along with comments from your families.

Batik shalom mural

Prepare a peace-inspired work of art for your entranceway. Batik is a wax-resist dyeing method – but you don't have to use wax, or even real dye. (You can use mural paper and painter's tape with a water color wash.) Ideally you would use a piece of fabric; muslin works best. Use white glue as your resist, perhaps in the shape of a peace sign. As families arrive at school, invite them to write or draw on your cloth with fabric pens or – if you are adventurous – watered dye. Dye the fabric and then gently wash out glue.



Family Engagement at Home

Animal facts

Send every child home with the name of a different animal, particularly one of the more exotic animals that appear in *On Noah's Ark*. (This is a great opportunity to share the book with your families and remind them they can sign up for PJ Library, too!) Ask families to help their children locate information about their animal and discover some interesting facts. Perhaps families will share their findings with you to compile a classroom animal book.

Share

your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... about how your class is becoming sensitive to the needs of animals.

Remind your students about kindness to animals by the ways you tell your classroom stories. For example: *Our class decided to use our tzedakah money to adopt a polar bear at the local zoo. The zoo sent us a stuffed polar bear as a thank you gift. Each week the bear goes home with a different child. The children and their families help the bear feel comfortable in their home. Gregory told us, "We let the bear sit in the softest chair." This led the children to wonder if our class pet, Choo Choo the Guinea Pig, had a soft lining for his cage.*

More

resources and websites for inspiration

Resolving Arguments: <http://pjfor.me/resolving-arguments>

Kindness to Animals: <http://pjfor.me/kindness-to-animals>

Shalom Bayit: <http://pjfor.me/shalom-bayit>

