

Tikvah Means Hope

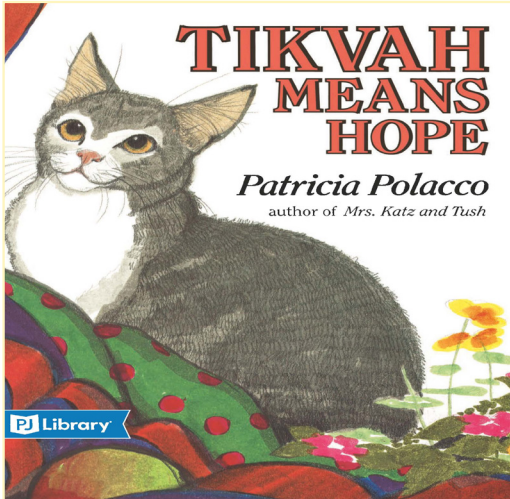
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Where do we find hope?



HANDS ON!

Hands On!

Make a Toy Like Tikvah's

You can tell how much everyone loves Tikvah -- she rolls outdoors with a ball of yarn, leaps along with Duane and Justine as they get ready to decorate, and even snuggles with Justine in a sleeping bag in the sukkah. On the dedication page of this book, Mr. Roth dangles a homemade cat toy for Tikvah to play with. You can make one like it for a beloved cat in your community.

Supplies

Yarn or ribbon (different colors are nice)
Large button
Scissors

Cut three pieces of yarn or ribbon, about two feet each. Thread each piece through the holes of the button, then braid the pieces together and knot the end. Here, kitty!

Thanks for Everything

The week-long holiday of Sukkot is all about giving thanks – for an abundant harvest, for safe shelter, and for friends and family. Justine and Duane, Mr. Roth's neighbors, think it sounds like Thanksgiving – and they're right. The biblical "Feast of Tabernacles" partly inspired the first American Thanksgiving, held in New England in 1621. But Sukkot also features a sukkah, the simple hut reminiscent of our nomadic ancestors' dwellings. During Sukkot, people eat, entertain, and sometimes even sleep in a sukkah. A sukkah reminds us that we are vulnerable – wind can blow through its walls, and rain can fall through its thatched roof. Those fragile moments are when we need tikvah, or hope, the most.

Power of the People

This story highlights how people are connected in good times (like building a sukkah with neighbors) and bad. When fire breaks out, people in this community help each other pull through. Getting involved in your community is a Jewish value. As it says in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Ancestors, an ancient collection of rabbinic writings), "Do not separate yourself from the community." We humans are at our best when we work with, and for, one another. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/tikvah.

Hope Is Not Lost

The wildfire described in this book took place several decades ago. Since then, other fires have taken place in California – and every region experiences its own environmental and weather-related disasters. Miracles are rare, so we must count on each other during challenging times. "If the ladder is rickety, don't count on miracles," said the ever-practical ancient rabbis (Tractate Kiddushin 39b). But that's not to say that miracles never happen! How else to explain a sukkah standing in the wake of a wildfire – and a kattileh meowing in the rubble? Hakarat hatov, Hebrew for "noticing the good," is a Jewish reminder that amazing things happen all the time.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

SUKKOT reminds Duane and Justine of Thanksgiving. What parts of Sukkot remind you of Thanksgiving? What parts are different?

WHEN the kids sleep outdoors in the sukkah, they hear crickets and an owl. What sounds do you hear at night where you live?

EVERYONE is overjoyed to find Tikvah at the end of the story. When have you experienced that kind of joy? What happened?