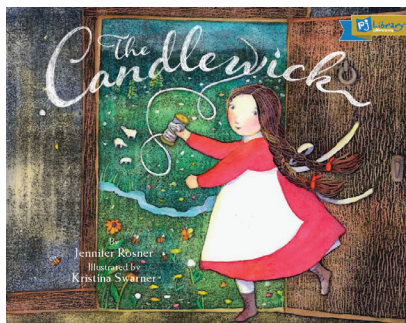


BIG QUESTION

What do we do with what we learn?



The Candlewick

Written by Jennifer Rosner
Illustrated by Kristina Swarner
Published by PJ Publishing



Learning from everyone – *Lo-med mi-kol a-dam*

לומד מכל אדם



Read

the book for Jewish values

How does this book reflect the theme of pursuing peace?

Children are learning every day. They are surrounded by family members, friends, and others in their environment who, intentionally and unintentionally, model and teach behaviors and skills. In *The Candlewick*, two friends solve a problem together, with an awareness that no one person has all the answers. Recognizing that **everyone has something to teach and everyone has something to learn** leads to a peaceful and open sharing of ideas.

Three aspects of this value to consider:

- Learning requires open-mindedness in understanding what others can teach you.
- Learning is a lifelong pursuit.
- Everyone has special abilities and skills from which others can learn.

Judaism values wisdom. It is a great honor to be called a *talmid chacham*, a wise student. We usually think of a wise person as someone who has acquired a great deal of knowledge. The Jewish sage Ben Zoma challenges the definition of wisdom. Ben Zoma asks and answers: “Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone” (*Pirkei Avot 4:1*). According to Ben Zoma, wisdom is an openness to learning. Sometimes wisdom is acknowledging what we don’t know.

Storytelling techniques

1. Light plays an important role in *The Candlewick*. The Lichten family sells candles; *licht* is the Yiddish word for light or candle. The illustrations feature many types of light sources. As you read, look at the illustrations together and find all the lights.

2. One way that deaf people communicate is by using sign language. As a class, learn the signs for important words in the book, such as candle, Shabbat, Hanukkah, window, sun, and family. Sign these words together as you read the book. (Learn the song “Thanks a Lot” with sign: bit.ly/signing-thanks-a-lot.)

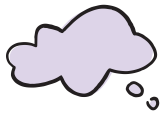


Discuss

Jewish values with one another

After you read

- The title page of the book quotes the Talmud, a source of Jewish law and custom: “One man’s candle is a light for many.” What do you think that means? How does it relate to the idea of learning from everyone?
- What problem does Ruthie help Bayla solve? Why do you think Bayla and her family didn’t solve this problem before? How does it make their lives better?
- We can learn from all of our family and friends. What is something you’ve learned from another person?
- How does learning from everyone help us to pursue peace?



Imagine

how values will come to life

Candle comparisons

Provide various types and styles of candles for students to explore, such as Shabbat, Havdalah, Hanukkah, and birthday candles. Create a chart or Venn diagram for students to complete together, noting similarities and differences. How do these represent similarities and differences among people?



Learn something new together

What Jewish skill might the children in your class want to learn how to do? Brainstorm ideas and find someone in your community to teach these skills, ideally a parent or staff member. Suggestions are tying tzitzit, writing with a quill, or making a kippah. Take pictures of each step along the way to create a display for the classroom. Add your students’ narration of the pictures and share with your community.



Engage

families in conversations about values

Ask your classroom families to make two-minute videos highlighting something they do well, such as repotting a seedling or playing “Chopsticks” on the piano. Include step-by-step instructions. Compile and share the videos with the rest of the families via an online sharing site.



More on this topic

PJ Library books

Clever Rachel by Debby Waldman

Across the Alley by Richard Michelson

