

Read the PJ Library Book

The Littlest Levine (4s)

Written by Sandy Lanton

Illustrated by Claire Keay

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Synopsis

Why is this Levine different from all other Levines? It's not easy for Hannah Levine to be the youngest in the family, but when Passover comes she gets a chance to shine. With her grandfather's help, she learns the *Mah Nishtanah* (Four Questions). When Hannah asks and then answers the Four Questions, she becomes an important teacher for the others at the table. For Hannah, being little enables her to perform a very big role—one she could not have done had she not been the littlest Levine!

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Family - *Mish-pa-chah* - משפחה

Each person is unique - *A-dam ya-chid* - אדם יחיד

Introducing the value of family *Mishpacha*

Introducing the value of family <i>Mishpacha</i>		
<p>From Jewish teachings</p> <p>One of the first commands that God gives to Adam and Eve in the Torah is to be “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28) – in other words, to raise a family. The entire first book of the Torah focuses on stories about family relationships. Before he dies, the patriarch Jacob bestows a special and unique blessing upon each of his children (Genesis 49:1-27), emphasizing that all family members are different and need to be cherished for what is special within them.</p>	<p>For the teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the role you played in your family as you were growing up? Has your role changed over time? • How do you help children appreciate and cherish their family? • How do you help children recognize that all families are different and special? 	<p>Questions for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the people in your family? • Every family member has certain jobs and responsibilities to carry out. What are some of your special jobs at home? Think of some of the grown-ups in your family. What are some of the special jobs that they do for the family? • In our book, Hannah learns something special from her grandfather. Can you think of something you learned from a relative?

Introducing the value of uniqueness *Adam yachid*

From Jewish teachings	For the teacher	Questions for children
<p>Judaism teaches that we must learn to value and appreciate the diversity of human beings. <i>Pirkei Avot</i>, a compilation of ethical teachings often translated as Ethics of our Ancestors, reminds us that every person “has his/her hour” (<i>Pirkei Avot</i> 4:3). In his writings on Hasidic sayings, Martin Buber explains that within every person there is something precious that cannot be found in any other person. Our task is to admire and honor every person’s individual uniqueness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you consider your most unique attributes? Which aspects of your individuality are reflected in your classroom? • How have your students’ unique needs and interests caused you to alter your classroom’s policies, customs, and physical environment? • How is each child’s uniqueness celebrated and reflected in your classroom? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s talk about some of the things that make you special. We can start by thinking about the things you like to do and the places you like to go. • What is something that makes you different from the other students in our class? • Can you turn to a classmate and describe one thing that makes this classmate special in the most positive way? An example would be having a nice smile or being good at puzzles.

Imagine your community living these Jewish values

How would your classroom change?

How will the books and values come to life?

In the Classroom / Centers

☆ **Mishpacha/family:** Stock your **library** with storybooks about the children’s families. Create the books by asking the children to **dictate and illustrate** a short story about a family member, such as “My brother Sam likes to feed our dog his chicken nuggets.”



☆ **Mishpacha/family:** Turn a traditional **game** into something that your students can play with their families during Passover – or any time. Hot/cold is fun for finding the *afikoman*, the piece of matzah eaten after dessert. Change up charades so family members act out Passover characters and the steps of the seder. Challenge your students to remake Candyland for Passover.

☆ **Adam yachid/uniqueness:** Even our feet are unique – ask Cinderella. This is about **math**, not trying on shoes. How many footsteps, end-to-end, does it take for each child to walk from point A to point B? Alternatively, have each child trace their hand and measure the length of each finger or the width of their hands.

☆ **Adam yachid/uniqueness:** Challenge your students to create a seder plate from loose parts. What unique designs will they come up with from the same set of loose parts?



Engage the families in your community

How can you involve families and deepen home-school relationships?

Smile!

Celebrate the uniqueness of your school families by setting up a photo booth in your school lobby. Encourage families to pose with a few props and/or write up their family's slogan and snap a picture. Print the photos and create a family photo collage that will adorn your school lobby.

Family traditions

Ask families to jot down a note about one special way that their family celebrates Passover or celebrates the beginning of spring. Staple the notes together to form a long chain, or ask families to paste their note onto a large banner. Position the notes in a way that spells out Happy Passover. Additional notes can be displayed in the shape of flowers.

At Home

See below for a mini-newsletter about this book. Cut on the dotted line to send directly to parents or copy any part for your website or electronic communication with families.



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Poor Hannah. She's always being told she's too little. But when Passover comes she gets a chance to shine. With her grandfather's help, she learns the *Mah Nishtanah* (Four Questions) and takes on an important job that only the littlest can do!



DISCUSS Jewish values

Family/mishpacha

Modern Jewish families celebrate each family member and the roles they play within the family structure.

- Try to name each family member and describe one special role that person plays in your family, such as math genius or the person who makes us laugh.

Each person is unique/Adam yachid

Judaism teaches us to admire and respect every person's individual uniqueness.

- Why do you think no two people in the world are ever exactly the same? What would happen if all people were exactly alike?

DO fun stuff at home

Pass it on

Play a movement version of "whisper down the lane" or "telephone." Sit around the Passover table or stand in a circle. One person makes a



motion, such as building with bricks or making a funny face. Each person tries to imitate exactly what she sees and passes the "motion" to the next person in the circle. No matter how hard we try we cannot imitate another person exactly.

MORE resources

PJ Library Passover books:

<http://bit.ly/PJ-Passover-books>

Mah Nishtanah:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsWh4YaD3HE>