



Read the PJ Library Book

Hanna's Sabbath Dress

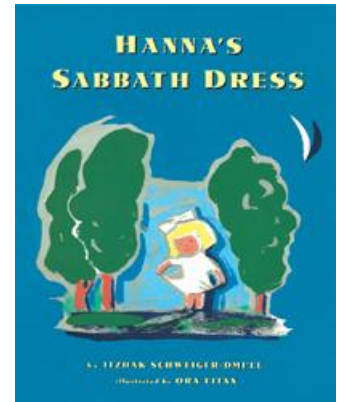
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Synopsis

Hanna is delighted when her mother makes her a beautiful new Shabbat dress. Hanna tries to keep her new dress spotless, but when she sees an old man struggling with a heavy bag of charcoal, she rushes to help him, soiling her dress in the process. Just when Hanna fears that her dress is permanently ruined, the moon comes to her aid, rewarding Hanna's kindness with a special moonlit kindness of its own.



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Acts of loving kindness - *ge-mi-lut cha-sa-dim* - גְּמִלוֹת חֶסֶדִים

Welcoming Shabbat - *Ka-ba-lat Sha-bat* - קַבֵּלַת שַׁבָּת

Beautifying the commandment - *hi-dur mitz-vah* - הַדוֹר מִצְוָה

Acts of loving kindness / *gemilut chasidim*. Pirkei Avot (*Ethics of Our Ancestors*), a collection of rabbinic sayings, notes, "The world rests upon three things: Torah, *avodah* (work or prayer), and *gemilut chasidim* (acts of loving kindness)" [Chapter 1:2]. Our ancient sages felt that the world depended not only on our learning the right things to do, but putting our reflections into action through kind deeds. Attempting to clarify the definition of *gemilut chasidim* or *chesed* (kindness), the Talmud, a book of Jewish law and custom, explains that *chesed* is an all-encompassing term. It involves helping others by offering kind words, a helping hand, a listening ear, and/or financial and material assistance [Sukkot 49b].

Welcoming Shabbat / *Kabalat Shabbat*. Jewish poems, prayers, and songs often describe Shabbat as a queen or bride, as a way of showing how much the coming holiday is revered and anticipated. During the 1500's, Kabbalistic (mystical) Jews usually dressed in white and went out into the fields to dance, sing, and joyously welcome Shabbat into their midst. It is still common to wear white on Shabbat, just as Hanna does in this book. The well-known song *Lecha Dodi Likrat Kallah* ("Come my beloved, to meet the Shabbat bride") was composed during this time period as a way to usher in the



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Shabbat queen. The song is sung in many homes and synagogues today, with hundreds of variations on the melody. As the last line, *bo-i kallah* (“enter bride”), is sung, it is customary to turn toward the door and bow to greet and joyously welcome the arrival of Shabbat.

Beautifying the commandment / *hiddur mitzvah*. The Jewish concept of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautifying the mitzvah) means that when people set out to do a mitzvah (a commandment or good deed), they should try to perform the action enthusiastically, using the most beautiful materials available. For example, the Talmud states that when a person builds a sukkah (a temporary structure for the holiday of Sukkot), he should try to decorate it as beautifully as possible, and a Torah scribe should use the finest ink and the finest pen [Shabbat 133b]. Many families engage in *hiddur mitzvah* as they get ready for Shabbat by cleaning their homes, cooking their tastiest dishes, and beautifully preparing the table with cloth, china, and artistically designed ritual objects.

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

How would your classroom change?

How will families be involved?

In the Classroom / Centers

- ☆ **Loving kindness:** Create a kindness/*chesed* book for your **classroom library**. Snap photos of children acting kindly towards one another, and ask the children to help you describe kindness for the caption on each page. Parents can add to the book as they notice kindnesses at home.
- ☆ **Loving kindness:** At **morning meeting** create a list of school helpers, such the truck driver who delivers juice and snacks, the custodian, or the school secretary. Brainstorm ways in which you could thank those people, such as **baking** cookies, **writing** thank-you notes, or making a kindness medal to wear. Try to carry out one act of kindness for one school helper each week.
- ☆ **Welcoming Shabbat:** Increase children’s anticipation for Shabbat by having them begin to prepare early in the week. For example, **bake** special treats at the beginning of the week, but save them for your Friday Shabbat celebration. Creating room and table decorations such as “Shabbat Shalom” cards or napkin rings might always be an **art choice**. Ask the children to help you display the decorations on Fridays. Perhaps after school they can then decorate their own homes.
- ☆ **Welcoming Shabbat:** Choreograph a Kabbalat Shabbat dance during **large motor skills** time. Pick a lively piece of Shabbat music, and elicit children’s suggestions for gestures and movement that symbolize welcoming a friend, bride, or queen into the house.
- ☆ **Hiddur mitzvah:** Invite your class to work together to create a beautiful “Shabbat Shalom” banner for the room. Consider using silk or other beautiful fabrics to make this banner extra special. Create a **classroom ritual** of singing a song and hanging the banner in the room every Friday morning. You might choose to recite *havdallah* (separation ritual) before removing the banner on Mondays.
- ☆ **Hiddur mitzvah:** Your Friday **job chart** might reflect Shabbat preparation tasks, such as straightening blocks, washing placemats, organizing the bookshelf, and setting the Shabbat table. Set a timer and ask the class to engage in a ten-minute pre-Shabbat cleaning blitz.



Bridging Home and School

Kindness Snacks To-Go

Have a snack bag assembly line ready at pick-up or drop-off times. Provide brown paper bags and markers or crayons to decorate them. Families can choose a combination of healthy pre-packaged snacks to put into their bags, such as juice packs or applesauce containers. Perhaps one or several families would volunteer to deliver the completed snack bags to a local food pantry, homeless shelter, or afterschool program for disadvantaged families.

Kabalat Shabbat Picnic

Organize a Kabalat Shabbat picnic for your classroom. Choose a park, select a meeting time, and invite families to bring a picnic dinner to the park. After everyone has eaten and the children have had ample time to explore the playground equipment, ask the children to teach their parents some of their favorite Shabbat songs.



Family Engagement at Home

Kindness Challenge

Ask families to make a list of people who might benefit from a friendly phone call. Challenge families to Skype or call at least one person on their list each week.

Share

 your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... about eagerly awaiting Shabbat

Share how the children in your class joyously prepare for Shabbat. For example: *On Fridays, our children adore singing Shabbat songs as they march down the hall to the lobby of our school. We help the director light Shabbat candles. It feels almost magical. We then invite all of the adults who are in the lobby to join us as we hold hands and perform a Shabbat dance. We love Shabbat!*

Then share with all of us on our private Facebook group page! <http://pjfor.me/pjgts-facebook>

More

 resources and websites for inspiration

Easy acts of kindness for children: <http://pjfor.me/kindness>

Simple silk banners/scarves-sponge painting: <http://pjfor.me/silk-painting>

PJGTS Shabbat pinterest page: <https://www.pinterest.com/pjgts/shabbat-books-and-activities/>

