

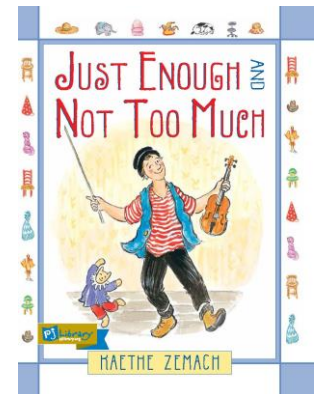
Read the PJ Library Book

Just Enough and Not Too Much (3's)

Written and illustrated by Kaethe Zemach
Published by Scholastic Press

Synopsis

Simon the Fiddler leads a simple life. He has food when he's hungry, friends when he's lonely, and a beautiful violin to play. One day, Simon decides that he needs more. Simon eagerly acquires more hats, chairs, and stuffed animals. Soon, his house is overflowing with possessions, and Simon feels overwhelmed and miserable. To solve his problem of "too much stuff," Simon throws a party and gives many of his belongings away. In the company of his friends, Simon discovers what he's been searching for: happiness and the sense of having "just enough."



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Being happy with what you have - *Sa-me-ach be-chel-ko* - שְׂמֵחַ בְּחֵלְקוֹ

Welcoming guests - *Hach-na-sat or-chim* - הַכְּנִסְתָּ אֹרְחִים

Jewish music - *Shi-ra* - שִׁירָה

Being happy with what you have / Same'ach b'chelko. For centuries, Jewish scholars have known what positive psychologists are discovering today. True happiness depends not on how much wealth or possessions one has, but on the attitude with which one approaches life. According to Ben Zoma, one of the many scholars quoted in *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of our Ancestors*), "Who is rich? The one who is happy with what he has" (*Pirkei Avot* 4:1). Recent psychological studies confirm that people who write in gratitude journals or regularly acknowledge the positive aspects of their lives, are better able to cope with stress, form richer personal relationships, and lead happier, healthier lives than those who rarely engage in daily expressions of gratitude.

Welcoming guests / *Hachnasat orchim*. Judaism emphasizes the importance of welcoming guests. The Biblical figures of Abraham and Sarah serve as Judaism’s earliest role models of hospitality. When tired and hungry travelers arrive at their tent, Abraham and Sarah eagerly try to meet their guests’ every need. After lavishly feeding, bathing, and caring for their guests, Abraham graciously walks them to the door, escorting them on their way. As a reward for their hospitality, Abraham and Sarah are granted the gift of a much-longed-for baby. Renowned Jewish educator Ron Wolfson notes that welcoming guests brings rewards to both the host and the guest.



Jewish music. Music has always played an important role in Judaism. The Torah and the later books of the Jewish bible contain many beautiful poems and songs, such as “The Song of the Sea,” a song of thanks led by Moses’ sister Miriam after the parting of the Red Sea. The Book of Psalms and *Shir Hashirim* (“The Song of Songs”) are famous for their lyrical words of praise for God. King David was known for playing the harp. Synagogue services are full of song, with different melodies for certain holidays and even the time of day. The Torah itself is sung rather than being simply read aloud. No holiday or festive occasion is complete without joyous singing and dancing.

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ **Being happy with what you have:** Create a classroom gratitude book. Stock the **art/writing center** with colorful markers, stickers, and collage materials that children can use to design their own unique “Thank You” pages. Children can take turns bringing the book home to share with their family.
- ✧ **Being happy with what you have / Jewish music:** Add a *Halleluyah* (“thank you God”) song to your **morning meeting** repertoire. Explain that the word halleluyah means praise or thanks. You might ask a song leader to begin the song by announcing something for which he or she is thankful. Instruments can add to the joyful noise.
- ✧ **Welcoming guests:** Host a party for a visiting classroom as a **social studies** project. Bake goodies and prepare snacks. Make sure your party preparations include spending time brainstorming ways of helping guests feel comfortable and welcome in the classroom.
- ✧ **Welcoming guests:** Consider adding “classroom greeter” to your weekly **job chart**. The greeter will keep an eye on the classroom door, welcoming all visitors who enter the room.
- ✧ **Jewish music:** In the **science /art corner**, display a collection of recycled items that children can use to create their own musical instruments, such as small boxes and rubber bands for guitars, containers and sticks for percussion, yogurt containers and acorns or rice for shakers. Provide a variety of background music, such as klezmer (Eastern European Jewish jazz) or Israeli pop music so children can play along.
- ✧ **Jewish music:** Use your **outdoor play** or **large motor** time to learn an Israeli folkdance, such as “*Mayim, Mayim*.” Look in the [PJ Library Educators’ Center](#) for the music, lyrics, and directions for a simplified version of this popular folkdance.



Bridging Home and School

All Guests Welcome Here

Have materials on hand at pick up or drop off time for families to create their own *Bruchim Habaim* and/or Welcome sign for their home. In honor of the shmita (sabbatical) year, you might collect recycled objects for your signs, such as wood pieces, scrap paper mosaic tiles, or buttons.



Musical Hootenanny

Host a music party at your school. Invite families to come for dinner and encourage parents, grandparents, or older siblings to bring along musical instruments. Consider inviting a musician or dance instructor to teach some music basics.

Family Engagement at Home

Reuse or Remove

Inspire your families' ingenuity with this challenge: Look for something at home you may have too much of, such as outgrown shoes, old magazines, or lone socks without mates. In what ways can families use or give-away excess items? Perhaps they will make planters out of old shoes, placemats or beads from magazines, or put on puppet shows with socks. Don't overlook the idea of donating items to a homeless shelter or clothing bank. Ask families to send in notes or photos showing how they managed to free their house of the extra items.

Share your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... about changing tastes in music

It's no secret that music helps children develop language skills – surely your students know every word to the latest popular children's movie songs. How are your students beginning to understand the sounds of various music styles? Ask children what they hear or feel as you play classical or jazz music, and music from Israel or other countries. Take pictures or videos as the children express themselves musically through dance or art.

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

More resources and websites for inspiration

Steps to satisfaction <http://www.wikihow.com/Be-Satisfied-With-What-You-Have>

Music suggestions by Kveller <http://www.kveller.com/activities/music/shirlala.shtml>

Pinterest <http://www.pinterest.com/pjgts/welcoming-guests-books-and-activities/>

