



## Read the PJ Library Book

### The Little, Little House (3's)

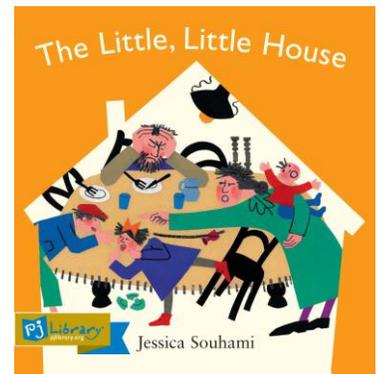
Written and illustrated by Jessica Souhami

Published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books

#### Synopsis

This retelling of a beloved folktale about a man who is dissatisfied with his too-small home. In this version, wise Aunty Bella recommends crowding the house with animals to see “what a difference that will make!”

Author/illustrator Jessica Souhami's fanciful drawings bring the disasterous and comical results to life.



## Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Be happy with what you have - *Sa-me-ach be-chel-ko* - שִׂמַח בְּחֶלְקוֹ

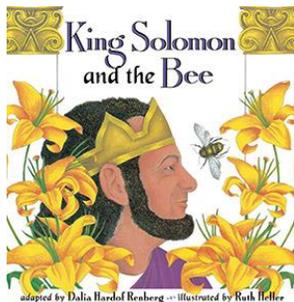
Peaceful home - *Sha-lom ba-yit* - שְׁלוֹם בַּיִת

Learn from everyone - *Lo-med mi-kol a-dam* - לֹמֵד מִכָּל אָדָם

**Be happy with what you have / sameach b'chelko.** It seems to be human nature to want what we cannot, or do not, have. We all know the story of Adam. He is living in paradise, the Garden of Eden, yet he can't resist eating the forbidden fruit. In *Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Ancestors)*, a collection of rabbinic sayings, the sage Ben Zoma says, “Who is rich? The one who is happy with what he has” [4:1]. How do we teach ourselves and our children this concept? Can we create paradise for ourselves by learning to appreciate what we have?

**Peaceful home / shalom bayit.** The home is a sanctuary, a place to share comfort with whom we spend our lives. Families come in diverse configurations. The bonds of love and respect transcend gender and age. A peaceful home affords us the strength to meet the rest of life's challenges. King Solomon declares in Proverbs, “Better a morsel of dry bread with peace, than a house full of feasting with strife” [17:1]. For more about *Shalom Bayit*, please refer to the 2012 Resource Guide, *A Horse for Hanukkah*.

**Learn from everyone / halomed mikol adam.** We often refer to King Solomon or a well-known sage as a wise person – but what is wisdom? The question is raised in *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of Our*



*Ancestors*): “Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone” [4:1]. Rabbinic sages teach us that wisdom is not merely an accumulation of knowledge, but a determination to stay open-minded and learn from any person or any situation. This is a beautiful concept for the early-childhood classroom, as we continue to learn from one another. The Talmud, a collection of ancient rabbinical writings on Jewish laws and customs, quotes Rabbi Chanina: “I have learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, and the most from my students” [Ta’anit 7a].

## Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

### In the Classroom / Centers

- ☆ **Be happy with what you have:** Build a happy home using graham crackers and sunflower butter at **snack time**. Before you make the blessing and eat your creations, encourage your students to talk about what makes them happy at home or in school.
- ☆ **Be happy with what you have:** Make a beautifully decorated gratitude journal in your **art and literacy center**. Send it home for families to write in at bedtime. You might consider sending the journal with a template or prepared question, such as “Today I was thankful for...” Perhaps your families will share some of things for which they are grateful.
- ☆ **Peaceful home:** Allow children to build **block structures** that resemble their happy homes, by creating blocks of family members. Ask families to provide small photos (that won’t be returned) of family members – including pets. Glue the pictures onto small blocks for children to incorporate into their play.
- ☆ **Peaceful home:** Your classroom is like a home. How do you keep it peaceful? Designate a **peace table** where children can resolve issues (with your assistance).
  - ☆ **Learn from everyone:** Invite members of your school community, such as maintenance staff workers, office aids, or older students to visit your classroom and teach a simple **song, dance, or skill**. Remember to take photos and send a thank you-note from the class.
  - ☆ **Learn from everyone:** Play an imitate-the-motion game during **large-motor skills** time.



### Bridging Home and School

#### Pictures of what you love

Ask families to walk around the house with their child and take pictures of special moments or objects they love. Help children focus on things other than toys. You might photograph the garden where Grandma plants flowers or vegetables. Snap a picture when dad makes a favorite breakfast. Be sure to capture siblings cuddling on the sofa. Make a collage or mobile from these pictures.



### Family *Shalom Bayit* Night

Invite the families of your students to school one evening. Take a family photo as guests arrive, and decorate a house-shaped picture frame. Print the impromptu family portraits (perhaps during dinner) to add to the frame. Make sure to share a lively reading of *The Little, Little House*.

### Family Engagement at Home

#### What I Learned from My Child

Encourage families to think about the things they learn from their child, and discuss it with them. This would be a lovely dinnertime or bedtime conversation. It would be wonderful if families shared what they learned with the class, too.



# Share

 your stories and experiences with everyone.

**What happened?**

**How can the learning go deeper?**

#### Tell us a story... about keeping the peace in your classroom.

Children understand a lot about peaceful exchange, but sometimes, as many of us do, they need a peer mediator. Following is an exchange from a three-year-old classroom:

“My doll!” shouted Lizzie.

“No, mine!” yelled Karen.

The two girls tugged on a doll. The teacher intervened.

“I see you have a problem,” said Laurel calmly. “Let’s see who today’s peace-keeper is.”

Bret stepped forward. Laurel encouraged Bret to ask each girl in turn what she felt the problem was.

“I want to play with the doll,” said Karen.

“I want to play with the doll,” echoed Lizzie.

“Well, Bret, what do you think they should do?” Bret solemnly thought for a moment. Then he turned to the girls and said, “You have to share.”

A pause.

“Okay!” they chorused. And off they went to play together.

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

# More

 resources and websites for inspiration

*Shalom bayit* and gratitude <https://www.pinterest.com/pjgts/shalom-bayit-and-gratitude/>

Kids and compromise: <http://pjforme/compromise>

Learning styles: <http://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>

