

Read the PJ Library Book

No Rules for Michael (3's)

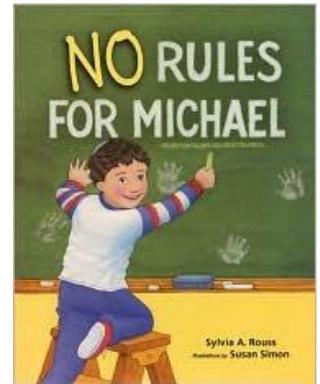
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Published by Kar-Ben Publishing

Synopsis

Michael's class is learning about the Ten Commandments in preparation for Shavuot. Rules might be all right in the Torah, but Michael is convinced school would be a better place with no rules at all. Teacher Sharon agrees to an experiment. She declares the following day will be a "No Rules Day" in school. Michael soon realizes the chaos that ensues is really no fun at all.



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

The Ten Commandments - *A-se-ret Ha-di-brot* - גְּמֻלוֹת חֻסְדִּים

Community - *Ke-hi-la* - קְהִילָה

Responsibility - *ach-ra-yut* - אַחְרָיוֹת

The Ten Commandments – *A-se-ret Ha-di-brot*. The Ten Commandments are the backbone of Jewish law. They encompass many of the core values that we teach in the classroom, such as honoring our parents and telling the truth. Shavuot is the holiday when we celebrate receiving The Ten Commandments (and the Torah) at Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments appear twice (with minor differences in wording) in the Torah – in Exodus 20: 2-14 and in Deuteronomy 5: 6-21, showing their great importance. Reading the Ten Commandments aloud became routine practice in the prayer rituals of the Second Temple and ancient synagogues, until rabbis feared they would be misinterpreted as the only important laws in Judaism. The Ten Commandments can be categorized into the positive and negative commandments, or the do's and don'ts. They are also divided into the commandments between humans and God (You shall have no other gods before Me; Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy) and commandments between humans (You shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness.)

Community – Ke-hi-Ia. Bradley Shavit Artson, American rabbi and scholar, teaches that community is the core of Jewish Identity. He believes that the laws of the Torah help us maintain the structure and strength of that community. Much of Jewish law outside of ritual practice focuses on compassionate behavior with our neighbors and friends and the avoidance of disputes. Rabbi Hillel instructs us in *Pirkei Avot*, the Ethics of our Ancestors, “Do not separate yourself from the community, and do not believe [only] in yourself until the day of your death...” (2:5) Humans are social beings, and we need a community structure within which to grow.



Responsibility – Ach-ra-yut. God gave human beings many gifts, such as speech, creativity, and free will. Along with these gifts comes the tremendous obligation to use them wisely and be accountable for the consequences of our actions. In a classroom setting, being responsible means a commitment to the well-being of the entire group, with all students and staff members taking their part. This may seem a daunting undertaking, but as Rabbi Tarfon taught, “You are not required to complete the task, yet you are not free to withdraw from it.” (*Pirkei Avot* 2:21)

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ **The Ten Commandments:** Explore the number 10 in your **art and math centers**. How long is 10 seconds? Ten minutes? Ten inches? What objects could you use to make a number 10 sculpture or painting?
- ✧ **The Ten Commandments:** Sing the 10 Commandments **song and finger play**. This is to the tune of Ten Little Indians: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Commandments (counting with fingers); 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Commandments. God gave us the 10 Commandments, so we know right from wrong. (Thumbs up, thumbs down.) Then you can have children rate behaviors with thumbs up or down, such as giving mom a hug (👉) or leaving a toy where someone might trip and fall (👎). Refer to the April ENews to listen to the song.
- ✧ **Community:** Create a large classroom community jigsaw puzzle using pictures of the children. You can use the puzzle to **take attendance** – it will be very obvious your classroom is incomplete if a child is absent on any day.
- ✧ **Community:** In this book, Michael comes to appreciate all of the things he once took for granted about his classroom. Set aside time at **morning meeting** to discuss and list all of the things the children love about your classroom community.
- ✧ **Responsibility:** Spills and clutter are part of any school day. Outfit a **clean-up center** with towels and sweepers, so children can clean up their own messes.
- ✧ **Responsibility:** Take your class on a **tour of your building**. Ask them to think about spaces that everyone is responsible for, such as the playground or library. Introduce the children to other staff members in your organization. Invite staff to describe their responsibilities.



Bridging Home and School

I Met You at Mount Sinai

Have you ever met someone for the first time, who looks so familiar you feel you've met them before? Traditional Jews believe that all souls past and present witnessed the receiving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai, so perhaps you met at Mount Sinai. This is a fun premise for a family event. Have the children create a mountain of boxes or cardboard.

Decorate the mountain with "grass" and "flowers" and tell the story of Moses at Mount Sinai. Invite families to re-introduce themselves at Sinai and stay for a dairy treat, such as cheesecake or ice cream. (One reason for eating dairy at Shavuot is that the Jewish people were on their way to a land flowing with milk and honey. Exodus 3:8-17)



Prepare for Shavuot in your PJs!

Another pre-Shavuot custom is to stay up all night before the holiday to study and prepare for the receiving of the Ten Commandments. Hang some stars from the ceiling and pretend it is nighttime at school. Kids can come to school in their PJ's and read PJ Library books all day. Invite any parent who is available to come and read a story to the class.

Family Engagement at Home

Bake Your Way to Enlightenment

Another reason we eat dairy foods on Shavuot is that avoiding meat should make us feel physically lighter as we aim for spiritual enlightenment. Send home some easy no-bake dairy recipes for families to try, such as easy blintzes: Take a slice of bread and roll it flat. Spread on creamed cheese; add cinnamon, sugar, or any ingredient you like. Roll it up and eat it! Ask for pictures of the finished product.

Share

 your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... of your evolving community

As the children in your classroom begin to appreciate one another, keep a journey of their developing awareness of one another's needs. For example: *Everyone in our class knows that Max loves hats. He likes tall hats and small hats; soft hats and hard hats. Last week one of our families donated four new hats. What shall we do with them? Let Max try them on first, of course! Here are pictures of some of us wearing those wonderful hats.*

More

 resources and websites for inspiration

Child development and responsibility <http://tinyurl.com/responsibilityinyoung-children>

Shavuot and dairy <http://judaism.about.com/od/holidays/a/whydairyonshavuot.htm>

Lots of Shalom Sesame videos <http://www.shalomsesame.org/videos#shavuotsubcat/1>

