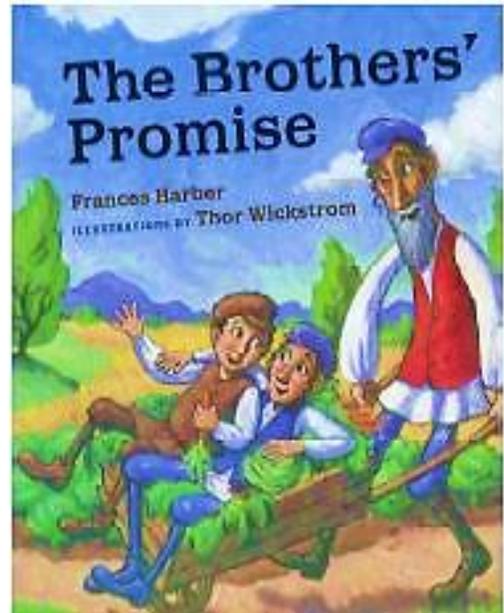


The Brother's Promise

By Francis Harber

Program Focus

Age group: Ages 4-8
 Time frame: 60-90 minutes
 Central value: Acts of Kindness (*G'milut Chasidim*)
 Family love and support
 Tzedakah



Synopsis

In this poignant retelling of a Talmudic story, siblings recall the promise each lovingly made to his father. One brother, Yankel, is married with a big family. He likes to play the fiddle and dance. The other brother, Josef, is single and prefers to be alone and quietly read the holy books at night. But they get along, and are good-natured about their differences. When hard times hit the farm, each brother sacrifices his security to make sure the other has food. The book is a wonderful tribute to family love and responsibility with lively artwork that captures the story's humor and the worry that comes with farming life.

Goals

- Give families a greater insight into the meaning of Tzedakah
- Emphasize the importance of family support and love
- Introduce families to the Talmudic story telling tradition

Submitted by

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Plan in advance

Prepare Family-Relationships Activity

Family Photos

Arrange to have families bring in individual photos of family members who will be attending the session. Photos should be small, like passport photos. Or, if you have a digital camera or a camera phone and a printer that can be easily accessed, you can take the pictures as families arrive and print them on the spot. If neither of these is possible, have paper and markers for families to draw self-portrait when they arrive.

Materials

- Markers, pencils, and crayons
- Pictures brought from home or taken as families arrived
- Family chart (see attached)
- If families did not bring photos:
 - Sheets of paper or a 3' by 4.5" pre-drawn frame. You can copy and use the attached frame. You can also have participants make and decorate their own frames.

Prepare Refrigerator Magnets

Materials

- Clear contact paper or self-sticking laminating sheets (available at office or craft stores)
- Magnet strips
- Pictures brought in or made before the story
- A prepared frame or assorted colors of construction paper and materials to make a frame
- Blank index cards (no printed lines)
- All-purpose glue
- Scissors
- Markers or pens



Prepare Tzedakah Bag / Box

Materials

- Large, reusable shopping bags or large cardboard carton for each family
- Empty plastic food containers with lids, wooden boxes, baby-food jar, icing cans, etc.
- Foam letters and decorative shapes or foam Hebrew letters
- Glue
- Markers
- Scissors



Prepare Drawing Activity

Materials

- 9x12 inch piece of drawing paper, divided diagonally, from corner to corner, into 4 triangles so the paper makes a large X
- Pencils
- Markers

Introduce with an activity

Family Relationships Activity

Introduction

The story we will be reading today is about two brothers who are very different from each other. They have different interests and talents. One brother, Yankel, is married with a big family. He likes to play the fiddle and dance. The other brother, Josef, is single and prefers to be alone and quietly read the holy books at night. But they get along, and are good-natured about their differences. When hard times hit the farm, each brother sacrifices his security to make sure the other has food.

- Invite families to introduce themselves and share something special about each person present. How are they different?

Before we read our story, we are going to fill out a family chart that tells what is special about each person and things that they bring to your family. What are each member's special qualities, interests, talents, and favorite things to do? How does each of your family members differ from the others? What special things do each of you contribute to the family?

Directions

- If they brought pictures, have them share them. If they did not, ask them to take time now to draw self- portraits.
- Give each family a copy of the family chart to fill in or tell them to write comments on the back of each picture.
- When most families have completed this activity, ask families to briefly share the pictures they have brought or drawn and tell one special thing about each person.

Introduce the Story

Intro Words

The story we are about to read has been told many times. The original story takes place in the hills near Jerusalem in Biblical times. This version of the story is more modern but still happened many years ago in the early 1900's in Eastern Europe. The story retells an old Jewish tale from the Talmud - one of our very important books for learning about Jewish law and tradition.

The story goes like this: A father dies and leaves his farm to his two sons, who promise to share the farm and look after each other, even though they are very different. One brother, Yankle, is a happily married family-man, while the other brother, Josef, spends his time alone reading religious books. When a drought threatens the farm, the brothers independently decide that the other needs whatever food has been saved. Let's read the story!



Read the story

Discussion after the Story

Transition to Activity Intro

According to Jewish tradition, one of the highest forms of tzedakah is when both the giver and recipient are unaware of who the other is. This way, the giver shows that he/she cares about how the other feels and the receiver is not embarrassed by his/her needs. Because Yankel and Josef are careful not to let each other know what they are doing to help, they are showing their love and respect and are being very considerate of each other's feelings. In some versions of this story, the love shown by the brothers is so important that the spot where the brothers finally meet is the spot where the Temple in Jerusalem is built.



Follow Up activities and resources

Make Refrigerator Magnets

Intro

Our brothers had a very special bond which made them think about each other and their needs. Even though they were very different, they loved each other and they knew that each was special with specific interests and talents. We can learn from this story how important our own families are. Look at the pictures and lists we made. Pick out one special thing about each person. We are going to use our pictures and this special thing to make refrigerator magnets that will remind us when we look at the refrigerator door how special each one is.

Directions

1. Color prepared frame or make a frame to fit your picture.
2. Glue the frame to the index card and the picture to the frame.
3. Write the special characteristic or talent you have chosen under the picture.
4. Seal the index card by using clear contact paper or self-stick laminating sheets. Glue a magnet piece to the backside.
5. Take the magnets home; put them on your refrigerator! They will help to remind us of how special each one is. Add to the qualities from time to time and remember--it doesn't hurt to tell each other how wonderful he or she is!



Make Tzedakah Bags / Boxes

Intro

We can be like the brothers and keep “store “of things from our own supplies ready to give to those in need. These can include nonperishable food items, toys, craft materials, and other household goods. Today, we are going to prepare a big bag/box that we can take home and put in a special place. We can fill it with things other families may need. When our bag/box is full, one member of the family can take it to a food bank, shelter, or other charity that distributes goods to needy families. They will give them out for us to those who need it most. We will not know whom it is going to and the families will not know who gave it.

Here are some ways we can fill our boxes

- *Go through toys, books, and clothes regularly and pick out items to give to a shelter or other similar charity. Clean the items and pack them attractively before sending them.*
- *Keep your special box/bag somewhere where you regularly put items from your food supply. Buy extras of favorites for this purpose at the store. When the container is full, take it to a local food bank, and then start to fill it again.*
- *When you buy school and craft supplies, buy extras to put in your box/bag.*
- *When a child has some money to buy something, encourage the child to buy 2 of the same thing (one to keep and one to give to a sibling or an anonymous child in need).*

Directions

1. Give each family a bag or box and have them stick foam letters for TZEDAKAH either in Hebrew, English, or both.
2. Have families decorate their box/bag with additional foam shapes.
3. Send the bags/boxes home with the families with some suggestions of charities in your area that would accept and distribute the goods.

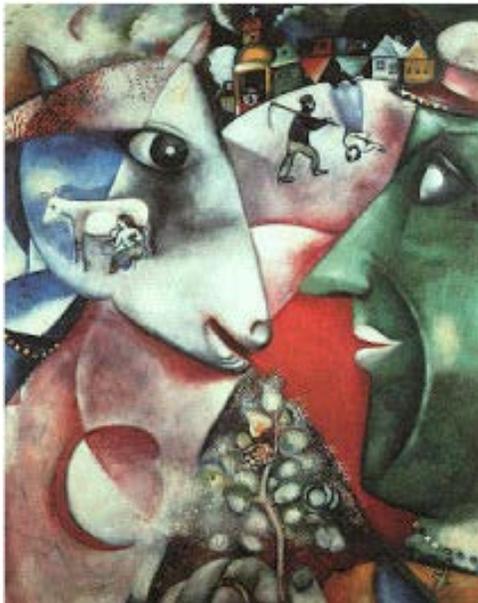
Drawing Activity

Intro

The illustrations in the story have a sort of surreal quality that we find in Marc Chagall's artwork. Chagall draws upon many of his scenes from Eastern European shetls, like the one in our story. He often drew floating figures like the ghosts that Yankle envisions.

Directions

1. In one of the triangles draw your family members. Use as much of the triangle as possible.
2. In the opposite triangle, draw any pets you have or would like to have.
3. In the 3rd triangle, draw a combination of pictures of your home and/or places you like to go together.
4. In the last triangle, draw a dream that you have of your family together.
5. Now have the families add color. Encourage them to repeat colors.
6. For an extension of this project, the kids can write stories about their pictures.



Family member	Special qualities, interests, talents	Contributions

