



Listen to the PJ Library Musical CD

Zeh Hayom (4's)

By Felicia Sloin

Synopsis

The songs on this CD celebrate the goodness of everyday life. Felicia Sloin's songs of blessing encourage us to see the beauty of the world around us. Many of the songs on this CD offer ways to extend the values your class has explored through the fall PJ Goes to School selections as well as values evident in books and holidays coming your way this winter. Play "Do the Tzedakah Shake" as you distribute and decorate your PJ Library tzedakah box kits.



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Righteous giving - *Tzedakah* - צְדָקָה

Blessings / Prayer - *Bra-chot* / *te-fi-lah* - בְּרָכוֹת / תְּפִילָּה

Happiness - *Simcha* - שִׂמְחָה

Righteous giving – Tzedakah. Tzedakah is often translated as charity, but the concept of tzedakah goes beyond that. Charity is seen as going over and above the call of duty, while giving tzedakah is a *mitzvah* - a commandment. The rabbis of classical Judaism say tzedakah is tied to giving thanks, and its importance makes it equal to all other mitzvot combined. For children, tzedakah might be explained as an expanded version of sharing. The world contains all of the things we need in order to live happy and healthy lives. It is our job to make sure the world's resources are distributed evenly amongst all of the people on Earth who need them, ensuring that all people can lead happy and healthy lives. Tzedakah can be giving money, giving one's time, or teaching a skill.

Please see the PJ Library blog for information on the PJ Library Tzedakah box project. [pjfor.me/boxes]



Blessings / Prayer – Brachot / tefilah. There are many types of blessings and prayers: some offer praise and thanksgiving, while others are for pleas or confession. According to many sources the primary function of prayer is to focus on our relationship with God. The formula for blessing, for example, begins with “*baruch ata*, - blessed are You” which establishes an immediate and personal connection with God. Though the *Siddur* (Jewish prayer book) is usually written in Hebrew with translation on the facing page, Jewish law says we may pray in any language we understand. Abraham Joshua Heschel, an influential 20th century theologian, adds that prayer and blessing are tools of the human’s quest for spirituality and wonder. [God in Search of Man, 1955]



(See *Lights Out Shabbat* resource guide for more on Blessings)

Happiness – Simcha. In *Pirkei Avot*, the Ethics of Our Ancestors, Ben Zoma asks “Who is rich? The one who is happy with his lot.” [4:1] Wealth is more about one’s attitude than a bank account or collection of material things. Hava Tirosh-Samuelsan, a modern Jewish scholar, writes, “The Judaic approach to happiness has to do with the kind of life one leads, rather than how one feels at a given moment.” Positive psychology has become a prominent focus and has clearly demonstrated the power of a positive attitude on healthy emotional development.

(See *The Apple Tree’s Discovery; A Horse for Hanukkah* resource guides for more about Happiness)

Imagine using music to convey Jewish values.

**How will you incorporate music into classroom routines?
How will families be involved?**

In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ Tzedakah: Use the song “Do the Tzedakah Shake” at **morning meeting** to stimulate discussion about tzedakah. Play the song during **music time** to experiment with sounds of different coins in varied boxes. **Be sure to** use the Hebrew term *tzedakah* instead of the English translation.
- ✧ Blessings, Prayer, Happiness: The songs “Halleluyah” and “Zeh Hayom” can be the basis for **yoga** or **exercise** in the classroom, or part of your **Morning Prayers**. Bring a CD player **outside** for a deeper spiritual moment.
- ✧ Music and math – pick a phrase or word for children to listen for in the song (such as the word “dreidel” in “Sevivon Rap”). Count how many times Felicia sings that word or phrase.
- ✧ Hints: Play songs one at a time instead of letting the CD play in its entirety as background music. This way you can focus on the value or activity in each song. Play one song on repeat mode (such as “The Sharing Song”) at nap time or another quiet time.



Bridging Home and School

Used Clothing and Toy Drive

Listen to “Clean It Out and Give It Away.” Act out the different parts of the song.



Discuss the idea of having a used clothing and toy drive at school. Invite parents to help plan and execute this event.

Ask families to send in photos of their children in action, cleaning and packing. Make an illustrated book of everyone’s involvement, and tell the story of how it all came together. Include the name of the facility that happily accepted your donations.



Family Engagement at Home

Shehechyanu

The *Shehechyanu* blessing is said to celebrate special occasions and to thank God for bringing us to “this time” or season. Make a habit of using this blessing to commemorate “firsts” in the classroom, such as the first time a child reads a word, tastes a new food, or acquires a new skill. Ask your families to do the same at home – and let you know what their child has accomplished.

Share

 your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... about musical inspiration

There are so many ways that music enhances the early childhood experience. Let us know how you used the music in this CD. Did one tune become your class theme song? Did you use a melody to inspire an art project? Perhaps you incorporated a song into your Morning Prayer ritual.

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

More

 resources and websites for inspiration

Felicia Sloin track samples and lyrics: <http://jewishfamilyjam.com/zeh-hayom-cd/>

Positive attitude: <http://www.thecutekid.com/parenting/positive-attitude-children.php>

Tzedakah quiz: <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/quiz/index.php?tid=PR.ET.TZ>

