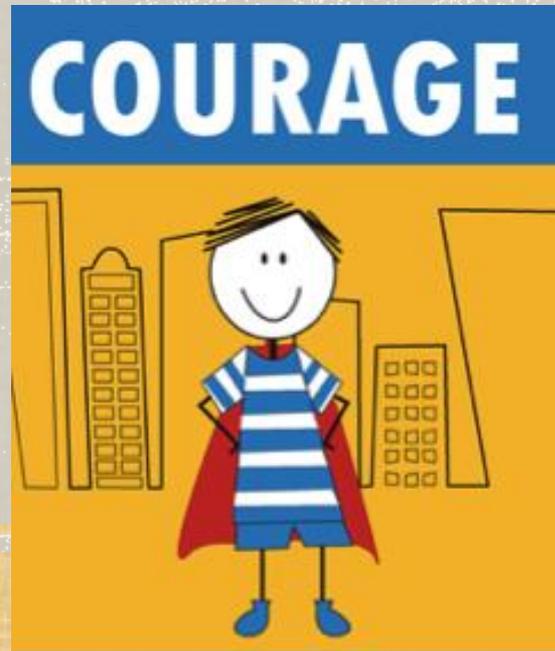


BUILDING COURAGE



**Exploring the Jewish Value of
*Ometz Lev***



2014 GLOBAL DAY

Heroes, Villains, Saints And Fools: The People Of The Book

WHEN: Sunday, November 16, 2014

WHERE: 420 Jewish communities in 40 Countries

PJ FOCUS: *Building Courage*

- Help children expand their strategies for coping with fear.
- Help families gain an understanding of the Jewish concept of *Ometz Lev*



THE MANY FACES AND INTERPRETATIONS OF COURAGE

Children

Ages 3-7
Not feeling afraid

Ages 8-11

- Overcoming fears
- Risking your life to save another
- Standing up for a friend
- Trying a new activity
- Refusing to go along with what you think is wrong



Adults

- Feeling fear yet choosing to act
- Following your heart
- Persevering in the face of adversity
- Standing up for what is right
- Expanding your horizons
- Facing suffering with dignity and faith



THE BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING COURAGE



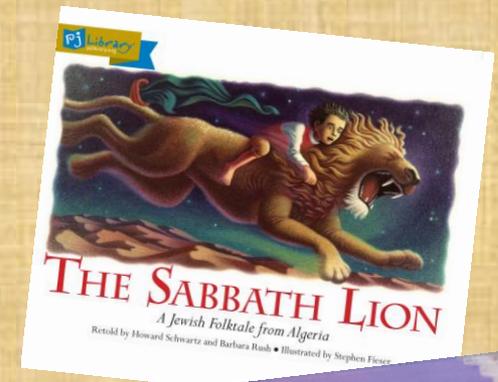
JEWISH “PRIME TIMES” FOR EXPLORING COURAGE

Occasion

Suggested PJ Book Title

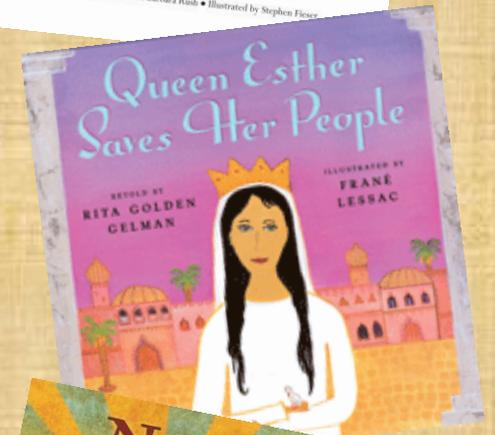
**Global Day
2014**

Noah’s Bed (ages 3-6)
The Sabbath Lion (ages 5+)



Hanukkah

When Mindy Saved Hanukkah (ages 4-8)
The Story of Hanukkah (ages 7-10)

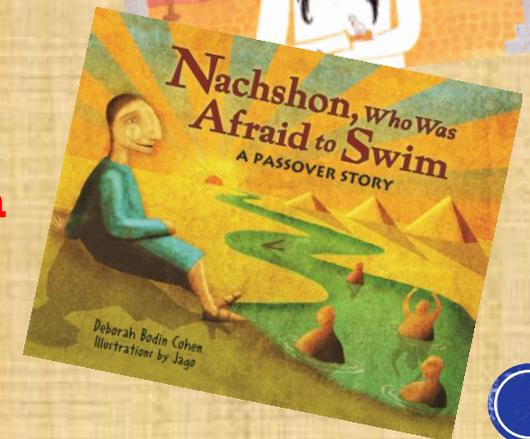


Purim

The Story of Esther (ages 7+)
Queen Esther Saves Her People
(ages 7+)

Passover

Nachshon, Who Was Afraid to Swim
(ages 5+)



EXPLORING COURAGE: ANY TIME

Ages 3-5

Beautiful Yetta

Noah's Swimathon

Jodie's First Dig



Ages 6+

Brave Girl

Marven of the Great North Woods

Rabbi and the Twenty Nine Witches

Rivka Takes a Bow

Yuvi's Candy Tree

Pearl Moscowitz's Last Stand



JEWISH SOURCES ON *OMETZ LEV* - “STRENGTH OF HEART”

Jewish Source

“Be strong and of good courage ,
be not in fear or dread...For God
marches with you: God will not fail
you.” Deut 31: 6

“Who is mighty (who is a
hero)? Those who rule over
their spirit.” Pirkei Avot 4:1

“Be... mighty as a lion to
perform the will of your
Heavenly parent.” Pirkei Avot
5:22



Lesson

Courage involves
pushing away one’s
fears, remembering
that God is with you.

Courage does not
refer to might , power
or strength. Being
courageous entails
being a good person
and making good
choices.



MORE LESSONS AND SOURCES

Jewish Source

“There is no reason [for people] to be afraid. All the frightening images are only the fragmented colors of a great vision that needs to be completed.”
(Abraham Isaac Kook)



Lesson

One strategy for gaining courage involves refocusing, choosing to view a situation in a different way.

Courage involves a willingness to try something new—go to a new physical, moral, or spiritual place.

“Abraham may have been the first Jew to go from the land of his birth, to have the courage to go to a place that God would show him. But there have been many Jews who have bravely faced radical change... a new beginning.” (Susan Freeman)



BUILDING COURAGE: FAMILY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- Introductory Activity: 10-20 minutes
- Reading of Story and Discussion: 15-20 minutes
- Follow Up Activities: 15-30 minutes
 - Working further on
 - introductory activity
 - Singing courage songs
 - Preparing a snack

Total: 35-70 minutes



GOALS OF INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

- Engage children's interest
- Introduce families to terms/concepts which will be used later in program
- Encourage interactions between families
- Provide background information on book
- Spark participants' curiosity about what will happen next



NOAH'S BED: INTRO ACTIVITIES

Activities:

- **Animal/Family Pairing**
- **Animal Lotto**
- **Family Interview**



Goals:

- Introduce Story of Noah
- Encourage Family Interactions
- Introduce topic of fears and courage

Family Interview Questions

My new friend's name (s) _____

Something my friend was afraid of in the past _____

Something that helped my friend feel less afraid: _____



THE SABBATH LION

INTRO ACTIVITIES

Activities:

- **Courage Medals**
- **Courage Drums**

Goals:

- Introduce courage
- Introduce story setting (desert)



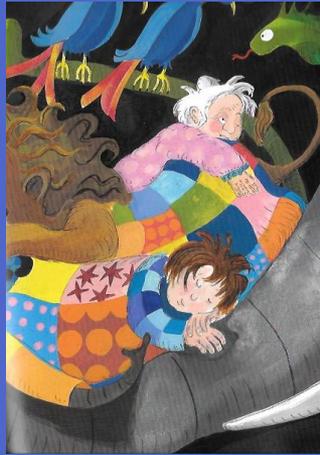
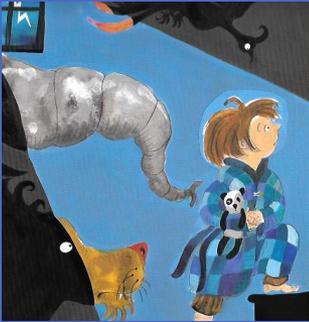
Explanatory Words:

Today we're going to read a book about a boy named Yosef who spends a night in the desert all by himself. Being alone in the desert is pretty scary. When we read our book, we'll discover how Yosef finds his courage, and we'll talk about things that each of us can do to build up our own courage. Right now, we're going to do a craft project that may help give us courage whenever we feel afraid.



SHARING COURAGE BOOKS

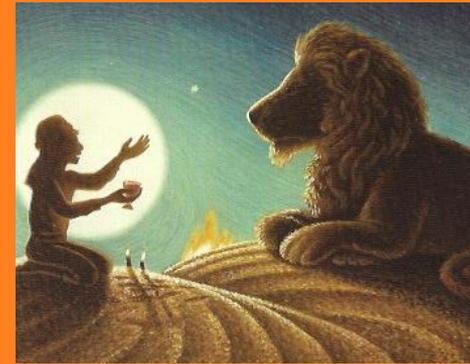
Noah's Bed : The Plot



Hints for Sharing:

- Use Storytelling Props (Stick Puppets , A Blanket)
- Ask children to assist

The Sabbath Lion: The Plot



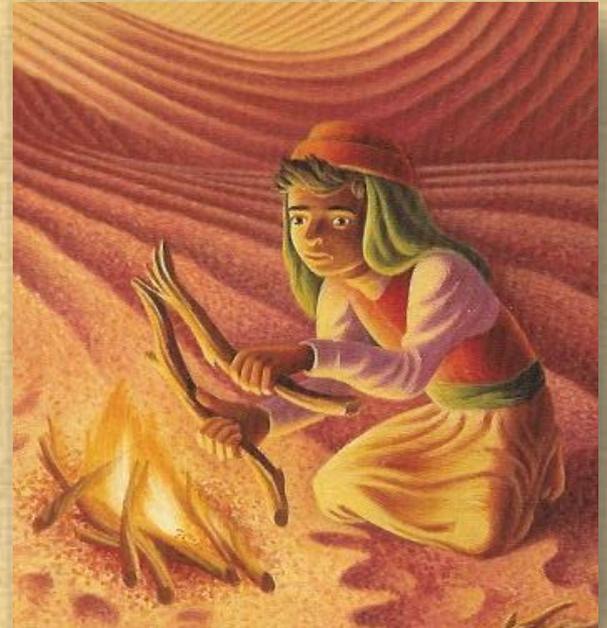
Hints for Sharing:

- Define unusual words
- Ask a few clarifying questions



CONNECTING *THE SABBATH LION* TO THE VALUE OF COURAGE

- *In Judaism we are taught that when we feel afraid we should try to strengthen our hearts. The Hebrew word for courage is ometz lev - a strong heart. One way to strengthen our heart is to try to change the way we think. Rather than thinking, "I can't do this," think about what actions we can take to strengthen our hearts and go forward. In the Bible, when people feel afraid many of them turn their thoughts and hearts towards God. They tell themselves, "I believe (I have faith) that God will help me."*
- *When Yosef is afraid, he sings songs and prays. Do you remember what he asks the Sabbath Queen? (To bring peace and blessing). Like Yosef, when we feel afraid we can sing songs, say prayers and perform rituals to help calm us.*



CONNECTING THE VALUE OF COURAGE TO A CHILD'S LIFE

- *Do you have routines or rituals that you perform in order to feel relaxed (and less frightened)? What do you do before bed?*
- *Yosef was frightened of wild animals and not being able to find his way out of the desert. What kinds of things frighten you?*
- *Adults, can you share a story with your child about a time when you needed to be brave and act courageously? What did you do to get through your scary experience?*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *NOAH'S BED*

Connecting the book to the value of courage

- Did Eber like being on the ark? What parts of the ark do you think he liked? What parts did he dislike?
- Eber felt frightened and scared at bedtime. What did he do that helped him feel better?
- Was going into his grandparents' bed a good idea? What other solutions could he have tried?



Connecting courage to the child's life

- Eber was frightened of the storm and of the dark. Can you describe some things that frighten you?
- It's not fun to feel scared. In Judaism we are told that when we feel afraid we should try to have courage. The Hebrew word for courage is *ometz lev*, which means "a strong heart."
- How can a person strengthen his/her heart and begin to feel brave? What do you do when you feel scared?
- At the beginning of our program, you asked your new friends some questions about what they do when they feel afraid. Did you hear any new ideas that you'd like to try the next time you feel afraid?



GOALS OF FOLLOW-UP CRAFT ACTIVITIES

- For children to create a physical object that will help bolster their courage
- To encourage children to continue to discuss and explore the value of courage at home
- To help strengthen families' connection to PJ Library



THE SABBATH LION AND SEPHARDIC CUSTOMS

Explanation

In our book, the lion served as Yosef's protector, watching over him and making sure that nothing bad happened to Yosef while he was in the desert. Yosef came from the country of Algeria in North Africa. For Jews from North African countries, this symbol (hold up a Hamsa) serves as a type of personal protector.

What does a Hamsa look like? A Hamsa looks like a hand. It looks like a hand that is saying "stop." Some say a Hamsa is telling bad luck and bad things to stop - to stay away. Others think the Hamsa is a stop sign for ourselves; a Hamsa can be a reminder to stop, calm down and think about what to do, instead of just being afraid.



DRUMMING ACTIVITIES BUILD COURAGE

Rationale for Drumming:

- Drumming can imitate the sound of a strong heart
- When done in a group, drumming can raise one's spirit and help one feel strong
- Drumming can calm and soothe
- Drumming can increase a child's sense of power and leadership



SONGS BUILD COURAGE

Some Possible Courage Songs:

- **Chazak v'Ematz**

Listen to Andi Josephs sing:

http://www.oysongs.com/products/albums.cfm?artist_id=153

- **Kol Haolam Kulo Gesher Tsar Me'od**

- **I Whistle a Happy Tune**



AN EXAMPLE OF HOW SONGS BUILD COURAGE

This song was composed by a local teacher and has been taught to hundreds of schoolchildren within firing range of Gaza's rockets to help them deal with the fear and trauma of having 15 seconds to run for cover when the Color Red siren sounds.

- <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10152286173158717>



RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Check out other PJ Library books that exemplify themes associated with the value of *Ometz Lev*:

- [PJ Library books on courage](#)

Check out the PJ Library Blog Post:

- [Courageous Children and the Value of Ometz Lev](#)

