

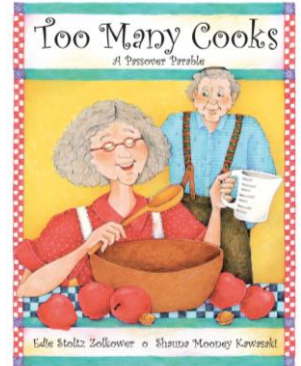
Read the PJ Library Book

Too Many Cooks (4s)

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Synopsis

As *Bubbie* (Yiddish for grandmother) is preparing the *charoses* (a fruit and nut mixture) for her family Passover Seder, she gets distracted and leaves the kitchen.

Those around her take the opportunity to add a little something to the dish while she's not looking. All of that extra flavor leads to *Bubbie* exclaiming that "the *charoses* is atrocious," proving that even when we have the best of intentions, sometimes too many cooks really do spoil the broth, or... the *charoses*.

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

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

Family - *Mish-pa-chah* - מִשְׁפָּחָה

Introducing the value of a peaceful home *Shalom bayit*

From Jewish teachings

Shalom bayit literally means "peace in the home," but we take it to mean much more. The root of the Hebrew word *shalom* means wholeness, and by working towards *shalom bayit* we build a sense of completeness and harmony within families. "Peace be within your walls, and prosperity within your palaces" (Psalms 122:7) hints at the fact that once we establish harmonious living at home, it extends out to our greater community as well.

For the teacher

- Take a moment to consider how challenges at home may impact your work in the classroom.
- In what ways do the peaceful (or not so peaceful) relationships between the children in your class inform the curriculum that you explore?
- How do you encourage *shalom bayit* in the classroom?

Questions for children

- What does "peace" mean to you?
- How can you help to create a calm and peaceful environment in our classroom?
- When you are not feeling peaceful, how does that affect the people around you at home and at school?



Introducing the value of family *Mishpacha*

From Jewish teachings



Family plays a major role in the Jewish way of life. Family relationships are the first concept in the *Amidah*, the central prayer in Jewish liturgy. The opening blessing describes

God as the “God of our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel.” This emphasizes a desire to stay connected with family near and far, past and future.

For the teacher

- What do you choose to share about your own family with the students?
- How are the students’ families visible in your classroom?
- How do you help the children try out the roles of different members of their families in the safe space of the classroom?

Questions for children

- Who are the people in your family?
- Not all families are the same: some have two parents and some just one, some have brothers and sisters living together and others live with cousins or grandparents. What are the things that make a family a family?
- What are things that you like to do with your family?

Imagine

your community living these Jewish values.

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

In the Classroom / Centers



☆ **Shalom bayit/peace in the home:** Talk about the things that make a home run smoothly and harmoniously, such as making meals, doing laundry or treating other people’s property with respect. How do you help with those? Propose scenarios where people are not helping things run smoothly, such as nobody wanting to walk the dog, shovel snow or share their toys. **Act it out!** How does that impact family harmony?

☆ **Shalom bayit/peace in the home:** Developing strong problem solving and cooperation skills builds shalom bayit in the classroom. At **gross motor** time, engage in parachute play. Throw balls on top of the parachute and have the children work together to get all the balls up in the air or to one area of the parachute.

☆ **Mishpacha/family:** Use both the children’s first and last names when you are speaking to or about them in the classroom. Start a conversation about whether or not children have the same last name as other people in their family. Provide an **art provocation** for creating illuminations of their last names.

☆ **Mishpacha/family:** Have children draw their families using different colors to represent each member. For example in all drawings moms are red, dads are yellow, siblings are green and grandparents are blue. Are there other people in the children’s families? How are they represented? Provide manipulatives like Duplos or other colored blocks to help further visualize the various makeups of their families.



Bridging Home and School

Grandparents are great

Invite grandparents and other older friends and family members to a special Shabbat at school.



Have the children share what's special about their guests and invite the guests to read stories, lead blessings, etc.

Beyond the bayit

Physical space affects how we feel. Recreate the sense memory of peaceful space at home into your school environment. Ask families to send in a photo that best represents a space of family harmony, such as a reading corner or other space where the family spends time together. At school, look at the photos to see what they have in common. Employ the children as interior decorators to incorporate aspects of home design into the classroom.

Family Engagement at Home

We are family

Recommend that families work together to write a family song. Start with everyone's names; add favorite things to do together, things to eat, places to go, etc. Now put it to music! Use the tune to a familiar song like "Old MacDonald" or write your own tune. Make a recording to share with your extended family and friends.

*Dad and Steven like to cook, and this is how it goes –
With a chop-chop here, and a chop-chop there...*

Share your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... about developing peaceful relationships

When writing to parents or creating documentation, make sure to include your reason for exploring a particular Jewish value such as *shalom bayit*. For example:

At the beginning of the year we were seeing quite a bit of struggle around sharing toys and other classroom resources. As we have been exploring the importance of creating peace in the home and in our community, the children have been developing some wonderful tools for negotiating. The language of sharing and taking turns is blossoming. At the start of the year we might have heard arguments about the marble run. We often needed an adult to work things out. Just yesterday, however, we heard Simon approach Yael and say "when you're done with that can it be my turn?" Yael responded "OK, but then can it be my turn again?" They are working it out on their own.

More resources and websites for inspiration

More on shalom bayit: <http://pjfor.me/shalom-bayit>

Article on the challenges of modern families: <http://pjfor.me/modern-families>

Shalom bayit beyond the home: <http://pjfor.me/peace-on-the-road>

