

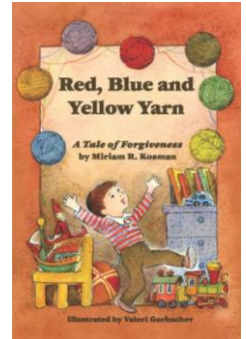
Read the PJ Library Book

Red, Blue, and Yellow Yarn: A Tale of Forgiveness (4's)

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Synopsis

Bubby, Donny's grandmother, is coming for a visit. Bubby has a lot of rules, and Donny always seems to break some of them. This time is no exception. Donny is drawn to Bubby's collection of yarn, and before he knows it, the yarn is everywhere. The daunting clean-up task brings Donny to tears. Bubby to the rescue! They work together as Bubby tells stories about herself as a child. Soon the yarn is piled neatly into balls on Bubby's bed, and Donny has learned some valuable lessons about cooperation and correcting ones mistakes.

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Repentance/*Te-shu-vah* - תשובה

Honoring our elders/*Ki-bud ze-kei-nim* - כבוד זקנים

Introducing the value of repentance *Teshuvah*

From Jewish teachings

We interpret *teshuvah* as repentance. It comes from the Hebrew word for "return." The translation hints at its deeper meaning. True repentance means we act differently if we again face, or return to, a similar situation. Rabbi Jonah Gerondi, a 13th century scholar who wrote extensively about repentance, suggested that "the repentant sinner should strive to do good with the same faculties with which he sinned." Donny exemplifies this strategy as he carefully winds the balls of yarn he unraveled.

For the teacher

- Think of a situation you faced twice (or more) that didn't go so well the first time. What steps did you take to correct your mistakes and ask for forgiveness?
- How can we help children recognize and correct mistakes they make?



Questions for children

- What are ways we can show someone we are sorry?
- If you had a chance to return to the time you made a mistake, what might you have done differently so that it would not have been made?
- Sometimes we make a mistake by using hurtful words, not listening, or harming another person. In what ways can we use our mouths, ears and hands to help fix a mistake?

Introducing the value of honoring our elders
Kibud z'keinim

From Jewish teachings

The Torah teaches “You shall rise up before the aged and show deference to the elderly” (Leviticus 19:32). According to the Talmud, a collection of rabbinic commentaries, the Hebrew word for elderly, *zakein* (*z'keinim* is plural), comes from three letters which are an acronym for “**Zeh she-KaNeH** [*chachma*]” – this person has acquired [wisdom]. Jewish tradition supports the notion that we gain understanding of life through our accumulated experiences, and we deserve the respect this perspective affords us.

For the teacher

- One reason we respect our elders is because of what we learn from them. Consider what values or gifts you embody that came from a parent or mentor.
- Why do you feel respecting elders is important in Judaism? How has this value has changed in our society over time?
- Based on values and traditions past down to you from an older generation, what do you strive to convey to the children you teach?



Questions for children

- In what way can you show your grandparents or other older people in your life how much you love and appreciate them?
- When did you learn something from an older person, and what did they teach you?
- When you are a grown-up what is one important thing you want to teach other kids?
- Why is it important to take advice from and listen to parents, grandparents, and other older people?

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

In the Classroom / Centers

- ☆ **Teshuvah/repentance:** Make a Body-Atonement chart with your class during **morning meeting**. Ask the students how the parts of their body can be put to the best use in avoiding mistakes or misunderstandings with their friends. For example, ears can listen, mouths can smile or say “I’m sorry,” and feet can walk to do a mitzvah.
- ☆ **Teshuvah/repentance:** Tangled yarn is a physical representation of that uncomfortable tied-in-knots feeling we get when we become aware of the mistakes we make. Perhaps a basket of mildly tangled yarn in need of smoothing out can be an entryway for a child to reflect on mistaken behaviors, and help him calm down. This could be the focus of a **confrontation station**, where two frustrated children **cooperate** to iron out the yarn and their misunderstanding.



☆ **Kibud z'keinim/honoring our elders:** In this story Donny learns there is more to his Bubby than her rules and idiosyncrasies. Perhaps you are fortunate enough to have a senior center nearby or activities for seniors in your building. **Invite a senior guest** to your classroom. Ask your guest to tell a story from their childhood, possibly about **cooperation** or mistakes made as a child and how those mistakes were rectified.

☆ **Kibud z'keinim/honoring our elders:** What are your students’ perceptions about old age or relationships with senior relatives? [Steel yourself for the inevitable answers that put you into a very old age bracket.] Add some wigs to your **dramatic play area** and encourage children to act out scenarios that involve grandparents and grandchildren.



Bridging Home and School

What do you see in this picture?



One way to show respect to our elders (and each other) is to listen to another person's ideas or memories. Display some photos that might spark conversation, such as a picture of a phone with a dial, a typewriter, or bell-bottom jeans. Invite family members of all ages to share their experiences with these objects. What other photos might you send home to elicit comments and stories?

Family cooperation games

Host a game night at school, where families work together to complete puzzles, draw a hopscotch court and play, or go on a treasure hunt. Instead of prizes, family members might earn the bowls, spoons, ice cream scoops, and toppings for a cooperative and yummy sundae.

Family Engagement at Home

Skype-a-thon

Honor your elders by contacting an older family member or friend. Ask your families to help you achieve the collective goal of 18 or 36 calls during "Skype week." (The number 18 is associated with the Hebrew word *chai* or life; the Hebrew letter equivalents add up to the number 18. Thirty-six is known as "double chai.") Perhaps the children will share with you who they called, and how happy and honored they made the call recipient.



Share

 your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... about teshuvah

Teshuvah is a difficult concept for children and adults alike. Look carefully for incidents where children avoid mistakes they previously made. Read their accomplishments aloud to them. For example: *Last week Sam accidentally bumped Janet as he put on his jacket before playground time. No one was hurt, and Sam apologized. Now when Sam puts on his jacket he looks around first to make sure he won't bump into anyone by mistake.*

Submit your story for our monthly eNews! Email PJGtS@hgf.org.

More

 resources and websites for inspiration

Repentance pjfor.me/repentance

Research paper about children and cooperation pjfor.me/children-cooperation

New trends in grandparent relationships pjfor.me/grandparent-relationships

