



A IS FOR ABRAHAM

Written by Richard Michelson

Illustrated by Ron Mazellan

From A to Z, this alphabet book incorporates Jewish concepts, historical figures, and rituals through short poems and longer explanatory text. Explored topics range from klezmer music and Albert Einstein to Purim and the Hebrew language.

Alphabet books can be great learning resources and lend themselves to many activities. *A is for Abraham* is one such book, full of Jewish traditions both historically practiced and those that are still practiced today. What activities will be successful with your youngsters? Consider introducing some of the following thoughts to spark your children's imagination:

- Which pages of this book are about a specific Jewish holiday? What familiar ones aren't included? Have your children make a list of Jewish holidays with which they are familiar. Challenge them to put these holidays in chronological or alphabetical order.
- Choose an alphabet letter. Read the poem and accompanying sidebar for that letter. List as many Judaic words as possible that begin with that letter.
- Ask your children to choose something from the book—a holiday, landmark, or person—and challenge them to find more information about this subject. This might entail a trip to your local library; if so, use this occasion to explore the Judaic section in the children's area. Have your children make a wish list of Judaic books that catch their interest; you or a relative might purchase a title from this list as a birthday or holiday gift.
- Have your children cut out a letter of the alphabet from cardboard and fill it with drawings or photos

of Jewish items or words that begin with that letter. Display proudly! For an ongoing project, encourage your children to make one such creation for each letter in their name.

- Ask your children to choose one page from this book that they would like to share with a friend or relative. Inquire why they chose that particular page. Encourage sharing at a play date or family get-together.
- Have your child choose any letter of the alphabet, determine a Judaic subject for that letter and write a poem about it similar to those found in the book.
- Examine the drawings in the book. Which are specifically Judaic in nature? Which could relate to non-Jewish themes? Do all of the drawings include people? Provide your children with art materials to make a drawing for an alphabet letter of their choosing. Challenge them to create a drawing that is completely unlike the one pictured.
- Several pages in *A is for Abraham* have a Biblical name as their subject (Abraham and David, for example). With the aid of a *Tanach* (the Bible, including the Torah, the Writings, and the Prophets), have your children search for other names to correspond to the alphabet letters. This activity can be varied greatly by your children's reading levels: they might search for 5-letter names or ones that have three syllables. Pj