



BAGELS FROM BENNY

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While working in his grandfather's bakery, Benny learns the joys of giving and receiving, caring and gratitude.

The Hebrew word *mitzvah* means “religious obligation” or “commandment.” In many circles a *mitzvah* has come to mean any good deed. The rabbinic sages in *Pirke Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), an ancient treatise on moral principles and philosophy, stated: “*Mitzvah goreret mitzvah.*” (One good deed leads to another.) The satisfaction of acting justly and the opportunity to perform another *mitzvah* are considered recompense for our worthy acts.

YOUR OWN MITZVAH

Taking a cue from Benny, plunge into baking by making bagels with your children! While the ingredients are straightforward, the process is a bit more complicated than simply mixing and baking; the result, however, is worth the work. Keep some of your home-baked bagels for your own use, but have your children accompany you to donate a portion of the bagels to a soup kitchen or homeless shelter, or give some to a new neighbor. Such a seemingly small act of kindness can make an impression on your children that will last a lifetime — and, at the same time, bring a feeling of belonging and happiness to others.

TIKKUN OLAM

Tikkun olam (literally, “repairing the world”) is a basic Jewish tenet. By demonstrating care for others and for the earth, we hope to bring about wholeness and peace in the world. Each adult and child can contribute to this work. Helping children see the value in acting compassionately is a lasting gift to them. Explore with your youngsters ways in which they can show gratitude and respect for parents, teachers, and others. Benny’s way not only helped a man in need, but also resulted in the man vowing to help others. What deeds can your family perform to make the world a brighter place? Arrange ways for your children to act independently to make the world a kinder, better place. Some suggestions include donating outgrown toys and books or helping a neighbor with yard work.