



BENI'S FAMILY TREASURY

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Beni and his family and friends celebrate Jewish holidays throughout the year. In this collection of five stories, Ben has adventures on Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, Chanukah, Purim and Passover.

This collection of Jewish holiday tales featuring Beni and his extended family combines cooking and story-telling to create a window into Jewish culture and tradition. As the exquisitely drawn bear family celebrates together, they learn the lessons of each holiday. Beni learns forgiveness at *Rosh Hashanah*, his cousin Goldie is inspired by the bravery of Queen Esther at *Purim*, and Rosie understands the importance of learning from previous generations at Passover. Together, the bear family recognizes the enhanced brightness of the holidays when celebrated with family and friends.

The themes of forgiveness, problem-solving and respect for one another runs throughout the stories—and there is a delicious recipe to try after each tale!

THE JEWISH CALENDAR

Through watching Beni's family celebrate a year of Jewish holidays, we can observe how the rhythm of the Jewish calendar is the beat by which Jews live life. This calendar details Hebrew dates and festivals, candle-lighting times and Torah portions, and provides the narrative of the Jewish people's relationship to God and the land of Israel.

Rabbi Irving ("Yitz") Greenberg talks about the Jewish calendar as a "vehicle of Jewish solidarity," a framework to form "personality and identity in light of Jewish memory

and Jewish values." Jews have always taken comfort in the cyclical nature of the year, deriving meaning from holidays, customs and traditions.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

This classic compilation offers wonderful lessons about forgiveness, perseverance, inclusion and bravery. Here are some questions for you and your children to think about as you read:

- Which of these stories do you connect with and why?
- Think about the characters in these stories. Which are your favorites? Who would you want to be your friend?
- From which story does the cover illustration come? Why do you think this picture is on the cover?
- Which of the activities in this book could you comfortably include in your own holiday celebrations?

The celebration of Jewish holidays can be a wonderful time for *simchah* (joy) and family togetherness. Consider creating a wall calendar with your children that includes the holidays mentioned in this book. Use photos or drawings to demonstrate holiday themes. This calendar can also be a wonderful place to incorporate recipes, stories and holiday traditions that you will want to remember for years to come. Pj