



GATHERING SPARKS

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“Where did all the stars come from?” A grandfather offers an age-old Jewish explanation to his granddaughter and, in the process, teaches her about *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).

At the conclusion of *Gathering Sparks*, the concept of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) is explained. *Tikkun olam* is described as a child asks her grandfather where the stars came from. The grandfather tells a version of the creation story, explaining *tikkun olam* in a way that even young children can understand and put into action.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

How can children feel they are contributing to a more beautiful and restored world? Help them think outside the box with some of the following ideas about gathering sparks:

- What can be accomplished in your neighborhood? Is there a bench to paint, a playground to clean, or a flowerbed to weed?
- Reminders about important environmental tasks can make a real difference. A colorfully illustrated note in a public space draws attention to recycling, while a bright sign in your bathroom reminds every “tooth brusher” to conserve water.
- Spending a few extra minutes with the family pet, offering a smile to the school crossing guard, and remembering manners can also repair the world.

With every step toward *tikkun olam*, we confirm that one person can change the world. Actions don’t need to be extravagant or costly to be worthwhile and effective. Sparks

are gathered whenever and wherever simple acts of love and kindness take place.

GENERATION TO GENERATION

Many aspects of Judaism are passed down person-to-person, from one generation to the next—from the wisdom of Torah to family traditions. In Hebrew, connections and responsibilities between the generations are referred to as *l’dor v’dor* (literally, generation to generation). By virtue of having lived many years, seniors have a broad understanding of the world and many memories to share. Perhaps your children have grandparents nearby to love, nurture, and teach them. If that’s not the case, consider a “stand-in” grandparent for your children. Any loving older person with a generous spirit and time to give can make a real difference for your children. Your family might hear of a *bar mitzvah* that took place seventy years ago or about the special foods at a Passover seder in Poland! In such relationships, everyone wins! Pj

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