



HANNAH'S WAY

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It's the Depression, and after her father loses his job Hannah's family moves to Minnesota, where she is the only Jewish child in her class. How will Hannah explain that her family's Jewish observance doesn't permit her to ride in a car to a Saturday picnic?

In *Hannah's Way*, we are introduced to Hannah and her family, who are the only Jewish family in rural Minnesota during the depression. Hannah's family is *Shomer Shabbat* and after her teacher arranges a Saturday picnic, Hannah must overcome the dilemma she is presented with when she realizes that her observances restrict her from driving to the picnic.

Judaism is practiced in many different ways. *Shomer Shabbat* is a term that describes those who observe the Jewish Sabbath by following all Sabbath-related commandments outlined in the Torah. These include refraining from driving or riding, using electronics, or lighting a flame. To some, these practices might seem restrictive, but families who observe Shabbat in this manner see it as an expression of true freedom. The Torah teaches that the world was created in six days and that on the seventh day God rested; for those who are *Shomer Shabbat*, Sabbath observance connects them to beauty and peacefulness as it might have been at the time of creation.

GEMILUT CHASADIM

Jewish sages taught that the world stands on three things: *Torah* (study & wisdom), *Avodah* (worship) and *Gemilut Chasadim* (acts of loving kindness). Children and adults can

help make the world a better place by giving their time, effort, words and support to those in need. The children in Hannah's class are excellent examples of *gemilut chasadim* put into practice.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Moving to a new home raises many questions for children. Will I make new friends? What will my school be like? In this book, Hannah is faced with additional questions as the only Jewish child in her class. When she discovers that her class picnic will take place on Shabbat, she is faced with a dilemma. Here are some questions and ideas to consider and discuss:

- If a new student joins your class, how will you reach out to welcome that child?
- Can you think of time when someone reached out to you when you needed help?
- How did you feel when you read how Hannah's classmates responded at the end of this book?
- Think of a dilemma you have experienced. What was the problem and who helped you along the way?
- Make a list of times you have shown *gemilut chasadim* towards your family. Pj