



## THE BEDTIME SH'MA

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*Peace and gentleness are evoked in this nighttime rendition of the central Jewish prayer of God's oneness, the Sh'ma.*

Often without conscious thought, parents and children develop bedtime patterns that offer comfort to the little ones and serenity to the parents. These traditions may include a lullaby or favorite song sung quietly, a calming story and the assurance that with your nearby presence your child will be protected during the night. In seemingly small ways, you can add a Jewish context to the nightly bedtime customs you share with your children. Consider giving these routines a Jewish context by carrying out some of the suggestions below.

- Play soft Judaic music that includes Hebrew lyrics.
- Use *The Bedtime Sh'ma* to reassure that today is complete and tomorrow brings a fresh new start for everyone.
- Include *The Bedtime Sh'ma* as a regular part of the getting-ready-to-sleep routine, adding portions as your children mature.
- Share with your children that rest and sleep are important for growing and learning and are gifts given to us.
- Offer your children your personal blessing, mentioning unique attributes you cherish, such as kindness or generosity.

### USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

*The Bedtime Sh'ma* offers young children essential ideas to be considered and discussed. This can lead to a dialogue between parent and child that softly move toward the relaxed state that allows for sleep. Depending on how your children's day (and yours!) progressed, one idea or sentence in the book might prove particularly meaningful; on that evening you might choose to concentrate on just that segment of the book.

A CD entitled "*The Bedtime Sh'ma*," by Rabbi Julia Andelman with Benjamin Dreyfus, includes portions of *The Bedtime Sh'ma* with additional music, traditional songs, and lullabies. Like other music of Jewish content for children, it is readily available online. [Pj](#)

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