



## JOSEPH AND THE SABBATH FISH

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*Joseph always welcomes guests to his Sabbath table, while his neighbor Judah scoffs at Joseph's generosity. Even as his fortunes decline, Joseph's door remains open. Times change and Judah turns to Joseph for help. A very special fish helps save the day.*

This story tells us that “no one honored the *Sabbath* more than Joseph.” What exactly does that mean? Each person can honor *Shabbat* in his/her own way. Joseph lighted the *Sabbath* lamp, ate *challah* and fine wine, and put all the finest foods on his table. He practiced *hachnasat orchim* (welcoming guests), which is a *mitzvah*—the Hebrew word for “commandment,” a religious obligation. Joseph acted with great joy and love. Judah viewed his obligations differently. Here are some ideas to talk about:

- Joseph treated all of his guests the same. Why is that important? What other traits or circumstances might cause us to treat people differently?
- Was it fair that Joseph lost his wealth after sharing so much? Was he wise or foolish?
- Even after most of his possessions were gone, Joseph was still happy. What does this say about Joseph?
- When Judah ran away, the story says that he took his ruby but doesn't mention his family, a pet, or a special drawing? Why?
- How can your family practice *hachnasat orchim*? You might invite guests for a Friday night meal or for some other special occasion.

### RETURNING LOST OBJECTS

It's interesting to note how the fortunes of Joseph and Judah changed throughout this story: at first, each of them was wealthy, then each lost his riches and ultimately both regained them. Joseph regained his wealth by finding Judah's ruby. What obligation did he have to return the valuable gem?

Judaism has a lot to say about how we treat others and about our responsibilities when we find someone else's belongings. The adage “finders keepers, losers weepers” really doesn't apply; we need to make every effort possible (without causing harm to ourselves) to return something we find. It's a great discussion to have as a family. You might ask you children: what would we do if we found an iPod, a \$100 bill, or a puppy? What would Joseph do? Pj

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