



KIPPI AND THE MISSING MATZAH

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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.

A hallmark of Sesame Street has always been inclusiveness, whether with people of various ethnicities, abilities, languages or religions. The same characteristic is true of the Passover seder. Near the beginning of the *Haggadah*, the book which guides the ordered ritual of the seder, we read: "Let all who are hungry come and eat." Just as Kippi advises his friends, everyone is welcome at the seder. Many families make it a point to invite non-Jewish friends and family to their seder, and synagogues, Jewish community centers and federations often help pair people who are hosting a seder with those who are looking for one to attend. What a wonderful example for children to see that inclusiveness is alive and well and living in your home, your family, and your community. Consider encouraging your children to invite a friend or neighbor to a seder in order to proudly share their history and culture with others who would enjoy and benefit from the experience. You could be starting a fabulous family custom to last a lifetime!

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

While it's a unique practice for guests to go out on the street in search of *matzah* for use at the Passover seder, perhaps one should expect such a thing on Sesame Street!

What is not unique is for all participants to be highly engaged in a seder. The purpose of the seder is to regularly remember the bitterness of the Israelites' slavery in Egypt and the sweetness of their eventual freedom. In the Bible, parents are instructed to tell their children about the deliverance of the ancient Israelites, and all people are to consider themselves as having been present at that time and themselves delivered from bondage.

Be innovative and make the evenings of the seder not only educational—as they should be—but fun and memorable as well. Plan ahead, and encourage children to prepare as well. Explain in advance the *afikoman* (from the Greek, for dessert, that portion of the *matzah* that is hidden and then, traditionally, found by children and "ransomed" for a small gift) and its place in the seder. Make a list with your children of the places in your home where that special *matzah* could be hidden, and practice hiding a *matzah* stand-in in some wacky spots: within the pages of a large book or in a mud boot or under a *matzah* box in the kitchen! By making the seder a celebration to remember, your children will find themselves drawn each year to its comfortable repetition, family togetherness and easy familiarity. Pj