In the beginning of Like a Maccabee, Ben has a habit of making assumptions about people before he knows or understands them. Pirkei Avot, a book of rabbinic teachings sometimes translated as Ethics of Our Ancestors, tells us: “Do not judge another until you stand in his place.” We all live and work in shared spaces and need to learn the art of empathy -- considering others’ feelings.

**QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN READING**

- Practice empathy: How is each member of Ben’s family affected by their grandfather coming to live with them?
- What is Ben’s greatest challenge in living with his grandfather?
- What do you think leads to the change in Ben’s feelings about Tank?

**USING THIS BOOK AT HOME**

Having empathy for others doesn’t mean we have to agree with everyone, but we should try to look at every situation from different perspectives. Is there a person at school or in a club whose first impression kept you from becoming friends? What was it that caused you to feel this way? Can you try to get to know that person and perhaps form a new opinion?

Ben realized he had more in common with his grandfather than he originally suspected. Think about your family. Do you see yourself in a brother or sister, a parent or grandparent? What traits do you like in yourself? What characteristics do you admire in others?

On the first night of Hanukkah, Ben’s family recited the Shehecheyanu prayer, thanking God for enabling us to “reach this season.” What momentous occasions in your family’s life deserve this type of acknowledgement?