



## THE LITTLEST MOUNTAIN

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*When God decides to speak to people from a mountaintop and give them laws to follow, the mountains vie for the privilege. Which one will be chosen?*

### SHAVUOT

*Shavuot* is celebrated on the 6th day of the Hebrew month of Sivan, which occurs in late May or early June. This holiday is the culmination of a time period that begins each spring on Passover and concludes on Shavuot: on Passover the Israelites were freed from Egyptian slavery; on Shavuot the people were given the gift of the Torah from Mount Sinai, signifying their readiness to become a nation.

*The Littlest Mountain* is a midrash, an imaginative story to explain or fill in the gaps of Biblical narrative. Here are some questions to spark conversations in your family:

- The mountains wanted so much to be chosen by God. What have you wanted badly? Did you let anyone know how strongly you felt?
- Why do you think a person might brag?
- As you heard this story, did you want Mount Sinai to speak up for itself? What might the littlest mountain have said?
- Have you ever made choices because of how a person looks or talks or what s/he can or can't do?
- When is it better to be big? When is it better to be small? What important things are necessary to be a fine mountain, a wonderful child, or a great friend?

### SAMEACH B'CHELKO

Little Mount Sinai was rocky and plain and, compared to other mountains, low; it was also the only mountain that didn't scramble and squabble to receive honor. The Hebrew phrase *sameach b'chelko* means being satisfied with what one has. A lesson in *Pirke Avot* (practical and moral teachings of ancient Jewish sages) reads: "Who is rich? One who is content with one's lot." For every child, contentment begins with feeling loved exactly as one is – sometimes silly, sometimes wise; sometimes foolish, sometimes clever; sometimes grasping, sometimes generous. Happiness also comes from gratitude for how we are made. Psalm 139, often attributed to King David, includes these words: "I praise You (God) because I am awesomely made." Celebrate with your children the variety that each little mountain and, especially, each child brings to the world.