



THE LITTLEST MOUNTAIN

Written by Barb Rosenstock

Illustrated by Melanie Hall

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.