



MY COUSIN TAMAR LIVES IN ISRAEL

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Two cousins discover ways in which Jewish traditions are observed differently in the United States and Israel.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Jerusalem

The capital of Israel, Jerusalem, which means City of Peace, is home to more than 700,000 people. The “Old City” includes the Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Armenian Quarters. The Jewish Quarter is home to the Western Wall, the retaining wall and last remaining part of the Second Temple, destroyed in 70 C.E.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is one of the most widely observed religious holidays in Israel. In Jerusalem, there are no stores or restaurants open, and hardly a car drives by. Many children in Jerusalem enjoy riding their bicycles down the middle of the usually busy streets on Yom Kippur.

Sukkot

Sukkot reminds us of the 40 years that the Jewish people wandered in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt, during which they lived in temporary shelters. *Sukkot* refers to both the name of the holiday and to the booths, or huts, which are partially open to the sky, places to “dwell” during the holiday.

Purim

Purim is especially beloved by children as it is celebrated by dressing in costumes, making noise, putting on plays and eating treats! In Israel, it is one of the holidays that both religious and secular Jews celebrate. *Purim* celebrates the rescue of the Jewish people from Persian annihilation at the hands of wicked

Haman by the brave Queen Esther.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Many children enjoy finding similarities and differences. Go through the pages of this book together. Help your children discover that there are candles and sukkot in both; on the other hand, one home shows latkes while the other shows sufganiyot. Explore together other similarities and differences in the book.

Reading this book with your children provides a wonderful opportunity to talk about your own family traditions. How does your family celebrate various holidays? What makes your celebrations unique?

If you have been to Israel, this is a great time to show your children some of your photographs. If not, search out someone in your family or among your friends who will share their photos with you. Otherwise, the Internet is a great source of pictures and activities.

There are many delicious tastes of Jewish life shown in the book. Why not sample some of them? Consider making *latkes* (potato pancakes) or *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts), both traditionally eaten during Hanukkah because they are fried in oil – a reminder of the oil that lasted eight days in the *Hanukkah* story. (Remember: there’s no law against making *latkes* in July!) You might also make *matzah* pizza together. This might be a perfect time to inject some healthy vegetables into your children’s diet!