



OY, FEH, SO?

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Jewish life centers on the family: rituals celebrating the birth of a child take place amongst close family and friends; festive holiday meals around the dining room table are as important as worship services in the sanctuary; Shabbat activities are enjoyed most when shared between the generations.

Judaism also realizes what is clearly portrayed in *Oy, Feh, So?*: You can pick your friends, but you can't pick your relatives! There is much Jewish wisdom that offers us guidance on how to appreciate the challenging kin we all have.

“Don't look at the vessel, but what is in it” (Pirkei Avot 4:27). What treasures might we discover if we dig below the surface of even the quirkiest of our relatives? Behind grumpy Aunt Essy, Aunt Chanah and Uncle Sam in this story are loving, funny, unique characters with a lifetime of stories to share.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN READING

- Why were the children initially so frustrated with their great aunts and uncle?
- What brought about everyone's change in attitude?

Children love hearing family stories. Arrange a get-together with relatives, in person or via Skype, and ask them to share some of their family favorites. Invite the children to share their own silly or poignant memories. Why not write them down or videotape the storytelling to pass along at a future date?

Humor is an important part of Jewish culture. Yiddish expressions, including “oy” and “feh,” have long been a part of that humor, partly because Yiddish words may have a comical sound to our ears. Use the Internet to find a few Yiddish words, and with your children use them to make silly rhymes (think: “schmooze (chat) about my shoes” or “oy (oh), what a toy!”). Try to use a Yiddish word in a sentence and ask your children to decide its meaning from the context. Fix a favorite family treat and read *Oy, Feh, So?* together. Be careful: don't laugh so hard that you all plotz (fall down)!