



SAM AND CHARLIE (AND SAM TOO!)

Written by Leslie Kimmelman

Illustrated by Stefano Tambellini

Sam and Charlie (and Sam, too!) are pals. To be a good friend, we have to be willing to compromise, be sensitive and, sometimes, admit being wrong.

The importance of friendship is acknowledged in Pirke Avot (a book of Jewish ethical teachings) with the instruction to “acquire yourself a friend.” Doing this keeps us from being lonely and also helps us grow and develop as people. Friends don’t merely share interests or a sense of humor; they also occasionally disagree or challenge each other – as Sam and Charlie sometimes do.

YOM KIPPUR

Even good friends sometimes hurt each other. The Jewish High Holiday of Yom Kippur is an opportunity to think about ways to improve and resolve mistakes. To do this, Jews are expected to ask forgiveness not just of God, but of one another, as Sam and Charlie do. When people wrong us, we want them to acknowledge it and apologize, which is why we must do the same. As the Torah teaches: “Love thy neighbor as thyself” (Leviticus 19:18).

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Hachnasat Orchim

A mitzvah is a Jewish commandment, often understood as a good deed. One mitzvah is that of hachnasat orchim, welcoming guests. When Charlie moved, she didn’t know anyone until Sam said hello. How does your child think a “new kid” might feel? When we welcome others, we perform an important mitzvah – and make new friends at the same time.

Bikur Cholim

When Charlie is sick in bed, she not only feels badly, but is bored and lonely, too. And when Sam visits her, he’s performing an important mitzvah: bikur cholim, visiting the sick. When your child’s friend is sick, offer to pop in for a short visit. You might also arrange to visit a local nursing home, where residents welcome a cheerful face. As Charlie happily tells Sam, “Friendship is the best medicine.”