



## THE PEACE BOOK

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*What is peace? According to The Peace Book, it means making friends, helping someone in need, sharing what you have, and being yourself*

With its simple yet expressive text, *The Peace Book* lends itself to a myriad of discussions and activities with youngsters of various ages. After an initial reading you might pick one thought each day or each week to focus on.

### PURSUING PEACE

While at first glance *The Peace Book* may not appear to be a “Jewish” book, it is included in PJ Library because peace is a core Jewish value. Psalm 34:15 teaches that we should “Seek peace, and pursue it,” while the *Talmud* (rabbinic teachings and laws) explains, “Peace must be sought at all times; at home and away from home, we are obligated to seek peace and pursue it.”

*Shalom* is the Hebrew word for peace and comes from the Hebrew root *shalem*, meaning whole or complete. While in English we tend to think of peace as the absence of war, in Hebrew it implies “wholeness” or “one-ness.” *Rodef Shalom* is the Jewish value of seeking peace; those who seek out peace and work for it are called Pursuers of Peace. Since there can be no true and lasting peace in the world while there are some who do not have wholeness of body or spirit, we are instructed to diligently work for peace.

The world situation may sometimes seem overwhelming to us as adults. Though we shield our young children from these realities as best we can, they will become aware

of hardship and sorrow, and we may struggle to answer their questions. One way of responding is by encouraging each family member to be an active Pursuer of Peace. In this way, each of our homes can be a *mikdash ma’at*, a “little sanctuary” where our children feel safe and protected.

### DISCUSSION IDEAS

Here are a few discussion ideas for that can be adapted for children in a range of ages and stages:

- Talk with your children about their new friends. While at the playground, gym class, or at the library, encourage your children to introduce themselves, share toys, etc.
- Play various kinds of music in your home. Listen for the variety of sounds and rhythms, and share feelings evoked by the music.
- Find a way to help a neighbor by pulling weeds, delivering home-baked muffins, or just chatting etc.
- Have a conversation about the many people you and your children love. Draw pictures of them.
- Plant a tree or a garden as a family.
- Invite a guest over to share a meal, especially someone who might otherwise eat alone.
- Pick up litter together.
- Buy items to donate to a food pantry. Take your children with you when delivering it. Pj