



WHEN I FIRST HELD YOU

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Illustrated by Wendy W. Lee

The unique and immediate connections between parents and newborns come to life in this sweet Israeli lullaby.

When *I First Held You* will surely transport the reader back to that breathtaking moment of enveloping a baby in one's arms for the first time. We read in the Talmud, the collection of rabbinic thought and Jewish law compiled from 200 B.C.E. to 500 C.E.: "With every child, the world begins anew." Welcoming a baby into one's family offers a broad range of opportunities to act in uniquely Jewish ways—from choosing a name to announcing the arrival. There are numerous means of welcoming him or her (or them!) into the Jewish community: traditional expressions include *brit milah* (ritual circumcision, for a boy) and *brit bat* (covenant naming ceremony, for a daughter).

Though the very young will not comprehend the meaning of its text, even the youngest of babies will enjoy being lulled by this book's gentle words. As you read to your little one, consider what gives this book its tender tone. Might it be the references to animal families and the natural world? Is it the poetic beauty of the words themselves? The inclusion of a photo of your little one at the conclusion of *When I First Held You* will make a lovely reason to return to this book time and time again.

THE JEWISH FAMILY

From the earliest chapters in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) there is a clear imperative for people to join together and create families. Beyond extending life from one generation to the next, the union of the family is meant for care, comfort, companionship, joy, and love. At no time is this clearer than with every baby's arrival. Whether through birth or adoption, children are at the foundation of Jewish family life and one of its most precious benefits. Parents are traditionally considered God's sacred "partners" in the creation of each child, a collaboration that lasts a lifetime. Pj

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