



# We Need Your Middle-Grade Books!

## What is PJ Our Way™?

PJ Our Way is the next chapter of PJ Library. Each month, kids ages 9 through 12 come to the PJ Our Way website ([pjourway.org](http://pjourway.org)) and choose one book out of a selection of four. Every month we offer a range of titles that try to appeal to a broad audience of kids with a wide spectrum of interests, reading abilities, and Jewish backgrounds. We do offer some titles again, usually after two years (by which time most kids will be at a different reading level and will choose a different book). To date there are more than **32,000 kids** signed up for the program, and we now mail **18,000 books every month**.

PJ Our Way seeks stories with positive Jewish content that are “page turners,” stories that inspire AND entertain tweens. On the website, kids can see the front and back covers of each book, as well as read the first chapter and see reviews from other kids. That is why fresh and exciting writing that will engage our readers from page one is so important to the selection process. Our membership is almost equally split between boys and girls, and we welcome stories with protagonists of any gender, especially stories geared towards younger readers (age 9). Graphic novels are very popular across the age range. All books must meet age-appropriate requirements like avoiding violent/romantic/scary/profane content.

## New Author Incentive!

PJ Our Way is now offering a \$5,000 author incentive for new Jewish middle-grade manuscripts! For each new story submitted to PJ Our Way that is accepted by the Book Selection Committee for use in our program, we will present the author with \$5,000. This award is truly an award – it is separate from and in addition to any monies received by the author from a publisher. We will also accept three complete chapters and an outline as an initial submission instead of a completed manuscript. For graphic novels, we will accept an outline, three written chapters, and several sample illustrations. If the Committee decides that this initial submission has potential to be a PJ Our Way selection, we will award the author \$2,000. Once the author submits the completed manuscript and it is accepted for use in the program, the author will be awarded the remaining \$3,000. Stories may be submitted by anyone, including authors, agents, and publishers. Multiple stories by one author are eligible. The only disqualifying factor is if the story is already available in the trade market or has previously been considered by PJ Our Way’s Book Selection Committee – that is to say, it must be new.

## Guidelines for Submission Selection

- The book should reflect historical Jewish life, contemporary Jewish life, or some valuable aspect of Jewish experience.
- We look for strong Jewish characters and content where Jewish identity plays a positive role, but we want the Jewish content to be natural – we don’t want to be all message and no story!
- The content needs to be age-appropriate. We avoid content that might make middle-graders or their parents uncomfortable, which means no alcohol or drugs, no bad language, and any romance needs to be very innocent. (We avoid offering Young Adult content.)
- We generally avoid books about the Holocaust. We do occasionally include a book that touches on aspects of the subject, but we avoid graphic material or stories set in concentration camps or ghettos. We are more likely to consider second generation or refugee stories with a hopeful message.
- Genres that are popular with this age group are humor, graphic novels, fantasy and magical (with a Jewish twist), series, historical fiction, fun non-fiction, and simple biographies (such as the Who Is/Was series from PRH).

## Submit a Book for PJ Our Way

PJ Our Way now accepts submissions through Submittable only at [submissions.pjlibrary.org](http://submissions.pjlibrary.org). Submitters must create a free account and complete a short form. The status of a submission can then be tracked through this platform.

Our website contains numerous resources to help authors, agents, and publishers become familiar with our submission guidelines and book selection processes. We encourage all submitters to carefully review these guidelines at [pjlibrary.org/manuscripts](http://pjlibrary.org/manuscripts) before beginning the submission process. We also recommend looking at PJ Our Way’s current lineup to get a sense of the kinds of books we offer.