

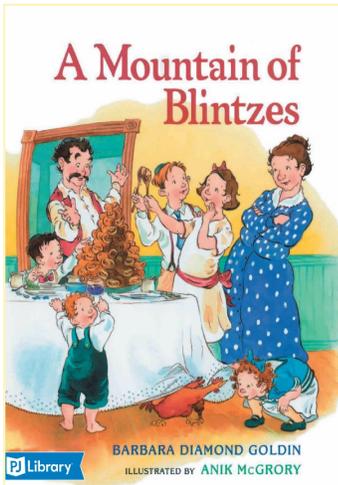
A Mountain of Blintzes

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When do you take responsibility?

Body and Soul Food

When the family in this story starts envisioning their Shavuot plans, “a mountain of blintzes” is on everyone’s mind. This tasty image refers back to the mountain where the holiday of Shavuot was born -- Mount Sinai, which Moses climbed thousands of years ago to receive the Torah. What do blintzes – and the tradition of eating dairy foods on Shavuot – have to do with such a lofty event? One connection is that as milk nourishes the body, Torah and Jewish learning nourish the soul. Also, Moses and the Israelites were heading toward the Land of Israel, long known as the “land of milk and honey.” No wonder blintzes (thin rolled pancakes filled with sweetened soft cheese) are the perfect Shavuot treat. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/mountainofblintzes.

HANDS ON!

Make a Helping Chart

In this story, neither Sarah nor Max take responsibility for saving up to make blintzes, but their kids prove that taking responsibility can be fun and satisfying, especially if there’s a goal you’re working toward. Make your own helping chart for your family.

Supplies:

- Large sheet of paper or poster board
- Markers/crayons
- Stickers
- Helping hands

Sit down as a family and make a list of household tasks that need doing (dishes, laundry, gardening, cleaning, and so on).

Use the markers or crayons to create a simple chart that lists the tasks and which family members will be responsible for them. Include spaces for stickers to be added every time a task is completed.

Stay motivated by thinking of a reward you can give yourselves when you reach a certain number of stickers, such as a fun family outing or a blintz night!

Call and Respons-ibility

If the Ten Commandments can be summed up in one word, it might be responsibility. Each commandment is a call to take personal responsibility for our relationships. In this story, Sarah and Max try to save up money for those Shavuot blintzes, but responsibility goes out the window. She assumes he will, he assumes she will, and no one takes ownership of the part they need to play to make it work...except those wise, resourceful children of theirs! Thanks to them, there’s a happy ending, and Sarah and Max learn a Shavuot lesson in taking responsibility. Everyone deserves a blintz!

From Chelm to the Catskills

This story is based on a traditional folk story about Chelm, a Polish shtetl (Yiddish for “little town”) filled with fools getting into funny scrapes. This version, however, is set in the Catskills, a region of upstate New York that was once home to hundreds of Jewish vacation resorts. The Catskills was also a hotbed of Jewish humor; many Jewish comedians of the 20th century did standup in these resorts. Whether the story is set in Chelm or the Catskills, the moral is the same: When difficulties loom large, we have to find a way to laugh. And we can’t give up – help may be right there in front of us.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

THIS story takes place about a hundred years ago. Look closely at the illustrations. What is different about the way this family lived back then? What’s the same as today?

THE family in this book is looking forward to eating blintzes for Shavuot. What foods do you like to eat on special days?

IN this story, the kids have lots of responsibilities. What responsibilities do you have at home or at school?