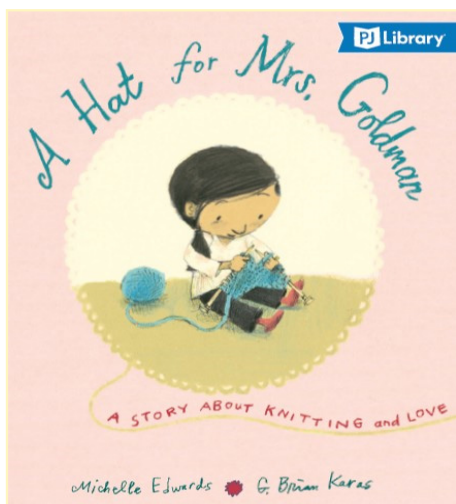


A Hat for Mrs. Goldman

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{ **What's your mitzvah?** }

Thou Shalt Keep Keppies Warm

“Keeping keppies warm is a mitzvah,” says Mrs. Goldman, “and a mitzvah is a good deed.” The Hebrew word mitzvah literally means “commandment,” and there are 613 commandments listed in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. Does the Torah ask us to keep keppies (Yiddish for “heads”) warm? Well, not exactly. But it does tell us to love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18), love the stranger (Deuteronomy 10:19), and give charity to the needy (Deuteronomy 15:11). There are only 613 mitzvot in the Torah, but countless ways to perform them. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/hatformrsgoldman.

HANDS ON!

Make a Hot Cocoa Kit

Sophia makes a hat to help keep Mrs. Goldman's keppie warm. Using the instructions in the back of this book, you can make a hat to help keep someone else's keppie warm, too. Why not add a hot cocoa kit while you're at it?

Supplies:

- A mug (you can find used ones at thrift stores to give away)
- Plastic baggie
- Sweetened hot cocoa mix (or unsweetened chocolate and sugar)
- Marshmallows

Scoop hot cocoa mix and marshmallows into the baggie. On a separate piece of paper, write how many tablespoons of hot cocoa mix to add to a mug of hot water. Tuck the closed baggie and the instructions into the mug, then give it to a friend with a warm greeting.

Pretty Is as Pretty Does

It's good to perform a mitzvah, but it's even better to perform it with style. Why make a plain hat when you could add a pom-pom (or twenty)? That's the point behind the Jewish value of hiddur mitzvah, Hebrew for “beautifying the commandment.” According to the Talmud (the core collection of rabbinic writings), making a mitzvah extra special is a way of honoring the commandment -- and it makes the world more beautiful, too.

Start with Self-Care

Rabbi Hillel, a first-century Talmudic sage, famously said: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” Mrs. Goldman seems to have forgotten the first part of that saying. She makes hats for everyone but herself, and then she ends up with a cold keppie. It's important to look after other people, but in order to do that well, we have to take care of ourselves first. Thankfully, Mrs. Goldman's good friend Sophia reminds her.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHY do you think Mrs. Goldman likes making hats for everyone else instead of herself?

WHEN Sophia knits Mrs. Goldman's hat, it doesn't turn out the way she wants -- at first. How do you think she feels? Have you ever felt that way?

HAVE you ever made gifts for friends or neighbors? Why do you think people like getting homemade gifts?