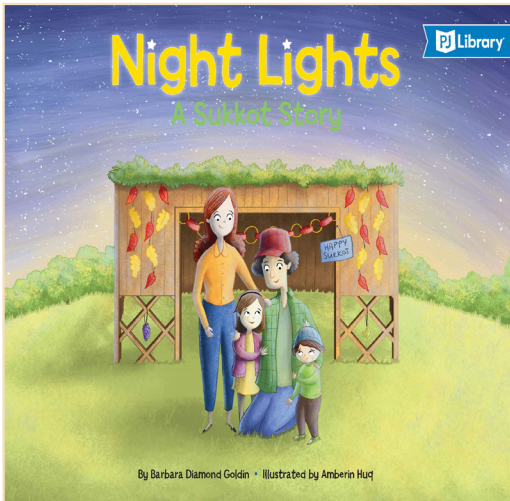


Night Lights: A Sukkot Story

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{ What makes you feel protected? }

Time to Rejoice

On Sukkot, we learn that houses can be temporary, and roofs should have holes! During this fall holiday we build a sukkah to recall how our ancient forebears lived. A sukkah is very simple – it requires only two-and-a-half walls and a roof made of natural materials (called s’khakh) such as tree branches or bamboo rods. The sukkah provides the home base for a whole week of eating, sleeping, chatting, stargazing, and celebrating. In fact, Sukkot is known as z’man simchateinu, “the time of our rejoicing.” To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/nightlights.

Saying Thanks to the Earth

Daniel and Naomi decorate their sukkah with pictures of fruit and squash because Sukkot is a harvest festival that celebrates the fall bounty. Thanks to its agricultural history, Sukkot is a great time to think about how we are connected to our environment. Sitting in a hut that is open to the breeze and the rain, with a view of the stars through the s’khakh, reminds us of our ties to our precious planet and our responsibility to help care for it.

Give Me Shelter

Sleeping is different outdoors. Daniel and Naomi hear strange noises, see the stars, feel the wind, and sense the greater world around them. It’s a little scary: they are not in control, and they need to be brave. By removing some of the walls of our actual houses, the sukkah reminds us of what it is like to be without: without shelter, without stability, and, in Daniel’s case, without a night light. However, that is what allows him to notice the light of the stars and moon, which ends up comforting him – and Naomi, too. During Sukkot, we can feel fragile and protected at the same time.

HANDS ON!

Make Your Own Star Map

Create a map of “night lights” for Sukkot or anytime.

Supplies

Black construction paper
White pencil or white crayon

Directions

Draw as many stars as you like across the whole paper. You can look at the night sky and draw what you see, or make up your own pattern. Do the stars make shapes together when you look at them, or do they shine on their own? If you like, you can tape your star map to the ceiling of your bedroom so that it feels like you have “night lights” in the sky, just like Daniel and Naomi.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

HOW do Daniel and Naomi help out on Sukkot?

WHY does Daniel decide that it’s “too hard being an ancestor”?

WHEN did you do something brave? What happened?