ON THE Shelf

Being 6 years old with PJ Library

The most common questions about PJ Library we get are: Where is PJ Library? Can we visit?

You can visit because the library is in your home! PJ Library is sending your children a library of Jewish books of their own, one each month throughout their childhood. Here is a glimpse of that library for a 6-year-old in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. By the time kids are 6, they can handle books with more text on the page, subtler illustrations, and weightier themes – all of which translate into more sophisticated PJ Library selections.

While this library belongs to one child, one of the extraordinary things about PJ Library is the shared experience of having the same library as other kids around the world who are the same age.

When we read [Mitzvah Pizza], we told our kids we were actually going to Philadelphia on an upcoming trip. My son, Daniel, immediately asked if he could take some of his share money and buy sticky notes for people to try pizza. Fast forward to today and here we are. It was so awesome watching him come and do his mitzvah.

Thank you to PJ Library for reinforcing the values we are trying to teach at home.

- JESSICA, PJ LIBRARY PARENT IN ATLANTA

Bitter and Sweet
Written by Sandra V. Feder
Illustrated by Kyrsten Brooker
Moving away from old friends is bitter, but making new ones is sweet. A lot of life is like that, as the character in this story discovers. It turns out that a balance of flavors is the key – and the earlier we learn that lesson, the happier we are.

The Sages of Chelm and the Moon
Written by Shlomo Abas
Illustrated by Omer Hoffmann
Some Chelm stories aren’t quite as relatable to today’s audiences as others. This one holds up very well, which is why it was also selected by our sister program in Israel, Sifriyat Pijama.

The Mouse Who Danced the Hora
Written by Pamela Mayer
Illustrated by Christine Davenier
Put out by our very own imprint, PJ Publishing, this book centers on a joyful mitzvah — entertaining a bride and groom. Even rodent-phobes will find themselves rooting for Tillie Mouscovitz.
What a Way to Start a New Year
Written by Jacqueline Jules
Illustrated by Judy Stead

A special surprise was sent to PJ Library and PJ Our Way subscribers in December: aprons! We hope these aprons inspire families to try new Jewish recipes, get messy with crafts, and make lifelong memories.

Mr. Tempkin Climbs a Tree
Written by Cary Fagan
Illustrated by Carles Arbat

Cary Fagan has written multiple PJ Library selections, including The Market Wedding, Ten Old Men and a Mouse, Oy, Feh, So?, and My New Shirt. We’re excited to share his latest with PJ Library families.

Some days don’t go the way we hope they will, even special days like Rosh Hashanah. This story will resonate with kids who are still learning the twin arts of resilience and gratitude.

A Hen for Izzy Pippik
Written by Aubrey Davis
Illustrated by Marie Lafrance

If this story feels familiar, it’s because it’s a spin on a really, really old one – the Talmudic tale of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa and the chicken that eventually morphed into a herd of goats!

This story proves that even small people can make a big impact. It also might get families interested in Hezekiah’s Tunnel, just one of so many amazing sites to see in Israel.

Things Should Match
Written by Sheldon Oberman
Illustrated by Paul Meisel

When the Book Selection Committee first read this story, it was part of a larger collection of stories by the late, great Sheldon Oberman. We loved it so much, we arranged to have it illustrated as a stand-alone picture book for PJ Library families.

This book is based on the real-life Rosa’s Fresh Pizza, owned and run by Mason Wartman in Philadelphia. “The focus on tzedakah and giving back to others” was reflected in his restaurant, said Wartman, whose pizzeria fed countless homeless customers before closing last spring.

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Harry and his new apron are off to a wacky Hanukkah adventure, where they help a little girl find her pet hamster, attempt to make a mini menorah, and celebrate Purim.

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Mitzvah Pizza
Written by Sarah Lynn Scheerger
Illustrated by Deborah Melmon

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Shimri’s Big Idea
Written by Elka Weber
Illustrated by Inbal Gigi Bousidan

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