

The Golden Bell

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What does the past tell us about ourselves?

Lost and Found

You know that sinking feeling when you lose something important — and the relief when it's found? Just as satisfying as finding your own lost treasure is reuniting another person with theirs. Returning lost items — *hashavat aveida* in Hebrew — is a fundamental value in Jewish life. If we find a lost item, we are instructed to make a reasonable effort to find the owner: "You shall not see your fellow's ox, sheep, or goat cast off, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely return them" (Deuteronomy 22:1). The person claiming the object has to identify a defining characteristic of the item to prove that it's theirs. If people can prove they're the owners, no finders keepers! To learn more visit pjlibrary.org/goldenbell.

Best Dressed

Some say that "the clothes make the man." But in the case of the priests who served in the Temple in Jerusalem, we might say that the clothes make the *mitzvah* (Hebrew for "commandment"). The priests — *kohanim* in Hebrew — had a profoundly important job. In ancient Israel, expression of devotion to God took place in the Temple. When Israelites brought animals, grain, and money to the Temple, it was the kohanim who made offerings on people's behalf, bringing each Israelite closer to God. (The Hebrew word *korban*, "sacrifice," comes from the word *karov*, "close.") Such a high occupation called for special garments — "vestments of sanctity...for glory and splendor" (Exodus 28:2). When you're dressed in your best, you may feel a deeper sense of purpose and seriousness about what you're doing. In their exquisite outfits, the kohanim must have felt that, too.

Links to the Past

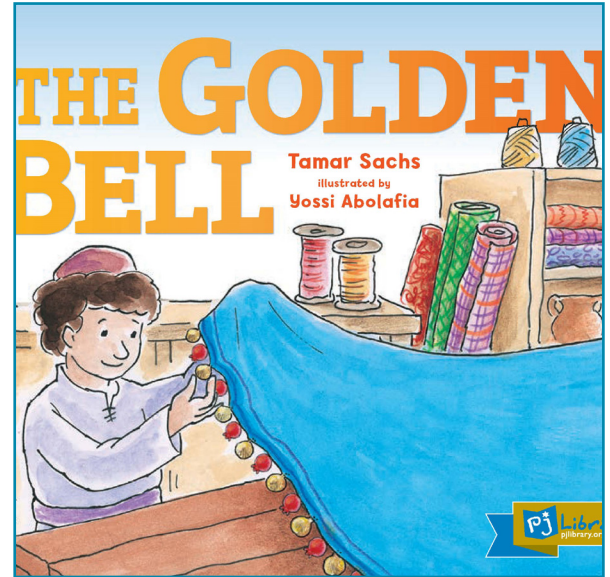
This story imagines one way that a priestly bell might have been lost and hidden for centuries until its discovery a few years ago. In Israel, archaeologists and regular citizens alike often find similar treasures such as coins, necklaces, and household objects. One of the most incredible discoveries to date is the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are among the oldest existing handwritten copies of the Bible. These ancient texts were found in a cave in 1947 by a young Bedouin who was simply out herding his sheep. Even a small object, like a priestly bell, can tell a big story about our heritage and culture and help us feel connected to the long, powerful continuum of Jewish history.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

Have you ever helped someone find a lost belonging? How did you feel about it?

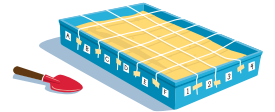
Can you think of other people who wear special clothing to do their job?

What job would you like to do when you grow up? Can you describe what you'd probably wear?



HANDS ON!

Create Your Own Dig Site



Want to try your hand at an archaeological dig? You don't have to go all the way to Israel — you can create your own mini-dig right at home.

Supplies

Deep tray filled with sand
(plastic bins and roasting pans work, too)
String, tape measure,
tape, scissors, paper,
marker, shovels, brushes,
or other digging tools
"Treasures" —
small toys or other interesting items



Kids can help with the setup. Measure the length and width of your tray. Cut pieces of string and use them to divide your site into square sections of equal size, so that you end up with a grid of strings running across the length and width. Tape the ends of the string to the sides of your tray. Make letter labels for the grid spaces running across the width of the site (A, B, C, D, E, and so on), and number labels for the spaces running lengthwise (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.). Tape the labels to the end of each row. Choose a person to bury treasures in some of the grid spaces (make sure to keep track of which spaces hold the booty, such as A2, B4, and so on). That person then calls out the spaces where they've buried treasure, and the finders locate the spaces and start digging!