

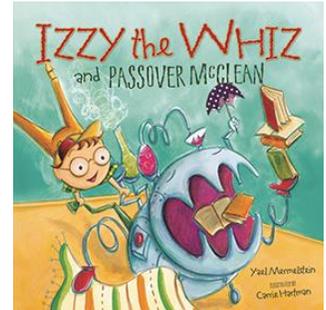
Read the PJ Library Book

Izzy the Whiz and Passover McClean (3s)

By Yael Mermelstein

Illustrated by Carrie Hartman

Published by Kar-Ben Publishing



Synopsis

Izzy the Whiz is a gadget-loving problem-solving boy who endeavors to help his mother rid their home of *hametz* (leaven and crumbs). He invents a machine that eats the furniture and spits it back out spotlessly clean and ready for Passover... most of the time. The comic rhymes and fanciful imaginings of this book will have you looking for a cleaning machine of your own. If only things were that simple!

For more information on Passover, see our Passover one-page guide [here](#).

DISCUSS the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Creativity/*ye-tzi-ra-ti-yut* – יְצִירָתִיּוּת

Cooperation/*shi-tuf pe-u-lah* – שְׂתוּף פְּעוּלָה

Introducing the value of creativity *Yetziratiyut*

From Jewish teachings

God is portrayed as an artist and creator in the very first chapter of the Torah, as God gives form to chaos and designs our planet. Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan, the father of Reconstructionist Judaism, and Rabbi Joseph Solovetchik, a leader of Modern Orthodoxy, believed that humans should strive to imitate God's creative nature. Just as God brought splendor and creativity into the world, so should humankind experiment with science, art, literature, music, and all outlets that fill the world with beauty and invention.

For the teacher

- Creativity comes in forms other than art, such as innovative problem-solving, connecting diverse ideas, and using materials in imaginative ways. How do you encourage and document different types of creativity in your classroom?
- What are your creative strengths and how are they represented in the classroom?

Questions for children

- What do you think it means to be creative?
- If creative means finding a new way to make something or solve a problem, in what ways was Izzy creative?
- What are some things you do that are creative?



Introducing the value of cooperation *Shituf pe-ulah*

From Jewish teachings

The Mishnah, an ancient collection of rabbinic commentaries, directs us to “share in the distress of the community...for he who shares in the distress of the community will deserve to behold the community’s comforting.” [Ta’anit 11a] Rabbinic literature focuses heavily on community and working toward the greater good. In many instances we are told to consider the feelings of others and the big picture or the purpose of our endeavors.

For the teacher

- What types of cooperative activities take place in your classroom?
- How do you encourage children to cooperate and work together?
- As a teacher, how can you and your colleagues model cooperation for your students?



Questions for children

- What do you think it means to cooperate?
- Izzy cooperated with his mother to help clean the house. Cooperation means working with others to get a job done. When have the members of our class cooperated to reach a goal?
- What do you like about working with others?
- When is it sometimes hard to cooperate?

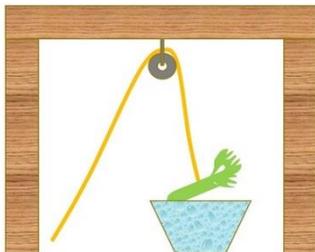
Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

How would your classroom change?

How will the books and values come to life?

In the Classroom / Centers

- ☆ **Yetziratiyut/creativity:** What are new ways you can explore the properties of matzah and hametz (bread) through **art**? Children might make a sculpture using cardboard matzah and play-dough bread or a collage of photos of matzah and muffins. Examine grains in your **science center**. Ask the young scientists to theorize what will happen when the grains become wet. How could your students prevent grains from getting wet? (Expanding grains are a no-no on Passover. For more information on matzah vs. hametz, click on our Passover guide [here](#).)



- ☆ **Yetziratiyut/creativity:** Izzy created a machine to clean bread crumbs. What types of Passover machines can your students create? Direct your students to build a dip-your-celery machine, such as the one pictured in this guide. You need a standing structure (blocks work), a rope, and celery. You don’t even need the pulley.

- ☆ **Shituf pe’ulah/cooperation:** How will your class prepare for Passover? Discuss cleaning and other suggestions at morning meeting, and plan who will take responsibility for what. Allow the children to take part in planning and executing a classroom and family Passover exploration or seder.
- ☆ **Shituf pe’ulah/cooperation:** Play games where the class has to work as a team. One example – challenge your students to pass a small ball or hardboiled egg across the room without the ball touching their hands or the floor. Each child has to have a turn carrying the object. What will they use to carry the ball? How will they pass it?



Engage the families in your community

How can you involve families and deepen home-school relationships?

Don't-break-the-matzah experiment



Set up a table with a selection of egg cartons, straws, cotton balls, bubble wrap cardboard towel rolls, toothpicks, lots of tape, and individual sheets of matzah in re-sealable plastic bags. Challenge your families to create a cocoon for a piece of matzah which protects it from a six-foot drop. Don't worry if the sealed matzah breaks. You will be ready to cook fried matzah!

Cooperation squad

Let your families know the ways in which children cooperate on tasks at school, such as snack preparation or clean-up. Ask families to send in a photograph or illustration of their child doing chores at home or cooperating as part of the "family team." Perhaps you can create a book which documents the many ways children contribute to your home and school communities.

At Home

See below for a mini-newsletter about this book. Cut on the dotted line to send directly to parents or copy any part for your website or electronic communication with families.



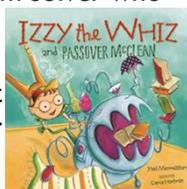
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DISCUSS Jewish values

Creativity/yetziratyut

Reflecting Creation, Judaism encourages humanity to fill the world with beauty, innovation, and invention.

- What are some of the ways our family shows creativity with art, imagination, and problem solving?

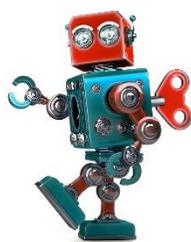
Cooperation/Shituf pe'ulah

Judaism requires we work with others to create a compassionate and caring community and society.

- What is something our family collaborates on well? In what areas can we do better?

DO fun stuff at home

What if we had a machine that...



What would make your life easier? A walk-the-dog machine or a load-the-dishwasher device? Try to draw your invention or build it out of recycled stuff around the house.

MORE resources

PJ Library Passover books:

<http://bit.ly/PJ-Passover-books>

Fostering creativity:

<http://bit.ly/foster-creativity>