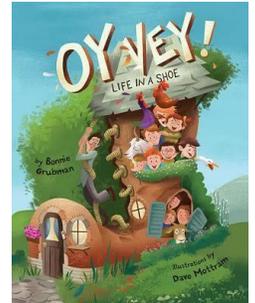


Oy Vey! Life in a Shoe

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On one foot: This is a retelling of a well-known folktale in which a man seeks advice about his overcrowded home. Some sources say the story originated in Poland, though similar stories surfaced in Turkey in the 13th century. In our story Lou has 12 sons and a daughter, similar to the Biblical patriarch Jacob. The opening pages demonstrate the family’s understanding of one another’s quirks.

Highlighted Jewish values

Peaceful home

שְׁלוֹם בַּיִת
Sha-lom ba-yit

Being happy with what you have

שִׂמְחַ בְּחֶלְקוֹ
Sam-e-ach be’chel-ko

Connection to families (theme)

Families may not always get along, but they can grow closer by learning to appreciate each other’s strengths and challenges.

Optional preparation for reading the story

Display farm and barnyard animal figurines around the room.
Get a roll of masking tape for “drawing” on the floor.

Before You Read

Jewish values and background information

Shalom bayit – Peaceful home

Three aspects of this value to consider

- More than the absence of fighting, peace requires active work
- Compromise and respect are integral to family life
- The word *shalom* connotes a sense of wholeness

The Jewish value of *shalom bayit* teaches that a house, bayit, is meant to be more than a physical structure providing shelter. Ideally a home should be filled with *shalom*, a Hebrew word meaning peace or completeness. Maintaining a peaceful home is no easy task, and according to *Pirkei Avot*, a second century book of ethical teachings, “according to the effort is the reward” (5:23). Learning to resolve differences, share responsibilities, and treat one another with mutual respect are critical skills that require some effort. As King Solomon declares in Proverbs, “Better a morsel of dry bread with peace, than a house full of feasting with strife” (17:1).

Sameach bechelko – Happy with what you have

Three aspects of this value to consider

- One can learn to focus on the good
- Quality, not quantity is what matters
- Contentment is different than complacency

The Jewish value of *sameach b'chelko*, being happy with what you have, emphasizes the importance of appreciating the positives in one's life. Ben Zoma, one of the scholars quoted in *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Ancestors), notes that when individuals focus on their personal strengths rather than on what they lack, they will feel wealthy and fulfilled (4:1). Being happy with what you have does not, however, imply complacency or prevent self-improvement. The prophet Jeremiah warns that "a rich man shouldn't glory in his riches" but should strive at all times to emulate God, acting towards others in compassionate ways (9:22-23).

When You Read

Introducing the story and engaging the children

Set the stage with questions

Choose a storytelling technique (optional)



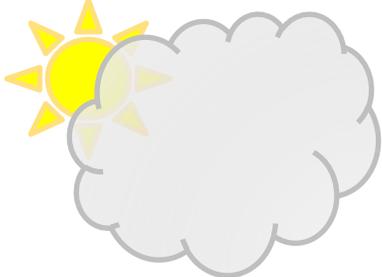
- 1: Assign the children to be specific people or animals in the story. They might even hold small figurines or pictures of the animals. Have them then make the sounds of the animals or chatter like the people that enter the house in the story. Instruct them to be quiet when that person or animal leaves.
- 2: Use masking or painters tape to add the outline of a shoe on the floor. As each person or animal is introduced in the story, have another child step inside the shape.

After You Read

Making connections and making it personal

Shalom bayit/peaceful home	Sameach bechelko/happy with what you have
<p>Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term <i>shalom bayit</i> means "peace in the home." How might a <i>shalom bayit</i> – a peaceful house – look, feel, and sound? • Instead of going to the rabbi and bringing animals into the house, what could the family have done in order to bring <i>shalom bayit</i> to their house? • When does your home feel as if it's filled with <i>shalom</i>? • When does our classroom seem to be filled with <i>shalom</i>? What could we do to bring more peace and wholeness to our classroom? 	<p>Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the father in this story seem to be unhappy about at the beginning? • By the end of the story, the father has changed his outlook on his home and his family. How did that happen? • The Jewish value of <i>sameach b'chelko</i>, being happy with what you have, means focusing on the good things in life. Can you name some of the things that are good in your life? • What might be a good way to show your appreciation and gratitude for the positives in your life?



<p>Shalom bayit/peaceful home</p>	<p>Sameach bechelko/happy with what you have</p>
<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House or home: Review the story with the students and ask them to drop a marble into a (clean) shoe for every person or animal mentioned in the story. Then provide other materials (Legos, cardboard, blocks, etc.) and ask them, in teams or small groups, to construct a different kind of home where each marble would have some personal space. Where would they all prefer to live? • Animal house: Create sets of cards with animal names on them and then distribute them throughout the class. Tell each child to find the other student who has the same card while only making the sound of that animal. How could you do it more quickly? Quietly? • Calm corner: Create a space in the classroom where children can go when they are having an emotional moment or need to take a break. Have the students brainstorm what they would like to have in that area, such as a bean bag chair, pillows, or books. Enlist your families' help in making this space a reality. 	<p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way you make me feel: Invite the students to bring one object from home that truly makes them feel happy. Make the time for each child to share what it is about their object that makes them feel that way. • Happy dance: Make a happy music playlist and use it to play freeze dance in class. It's not just things that evoke joy. When we move our bodies and get our endorphins going, we are more likely to view the world in a positive light. • Silver linings: Have each child work with a partner to tell a story about a time that they were disappointed. Their partner can help to reframe the story to see a positive aspect of what occurred. Reframing of the story can be real or imagined. Either way, it takes practice to be positive. The students can write and illustrate the stories to remind themselves to look on the bright side. 
<p>Engaging families – Shalom bayit/peaceful home</p>	<p>Engaging families – Sameach bechelko/ happy with what you have</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people have “gone green” when it comes to the environment, but there is also an initiative known as “Green Speech” that helps us reduce the pollution of negative comments, gossip, and bullying. Invite families to talk together about how to eliminate this kind of language in the community. Perhaps you will create a pledge for everyone to sign. • Host a shalom-themed wine and cheese evening for parents and caregivers. Provide materials to make comfort objects for their children and/or essential oil diffusers for themselves. See examples here. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with the trend popularized by Marie Kondo, create an opportunity for families to do some decluttering of their closets. Provide a place in your classroom or school to bring items that they would like to donate to a local shelter. Have families share how it felt to eliminate clutter and hang on to things that they truly appreciate and love. 

