



SIMCHAT TORAH IS COMING!

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Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkot are have just ended, and the synagogue is getting ready to have a big celebration with its Torah. What holiday is coming? You guessed it.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

If you've ever heard the Jewish community referred to as "the people of the book," there's a reason why. *Simchat Torah* (literally "rejoicing in the Torah") is, as the name suggests, a joyous holiday that celebrates the Torah, the first five books of the Bible. On the morning of Simchat Torah, the very last reading in the Torah is read aloud – and then is immediately followed by the very *first* reading. Ending and immediately restarting the Torah symbolizes the never-ending project of learning and growing, as well as the cyclical nature of the Jewish year.

Many congregations rewind their Torah scrolls from end to beginning on Simchat Torah, and some open their scrolls completely. A Torah scroll can be impressively long, stretching from one end of a building to the other! Children are welcomed to join in Simchat Torah festivities, and are often invited to receive a special blessing. It's traditional to dance around the sanctuary with the Torah scrolls, and children usually love to parade through the aisles, just as the kids do in this book. At home, you can take a cue from this book-based holiday and pick out a favorite book to read and reread with your child – just as the Jewish community does with its favorite book, the Torah, year after year.