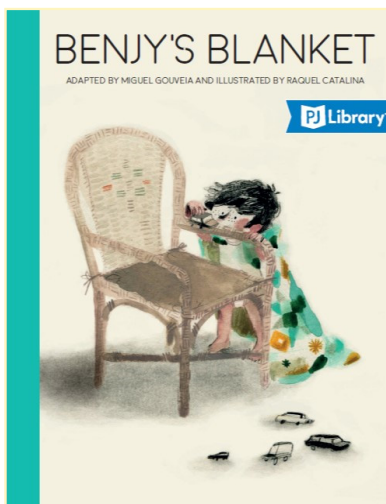


# Benjy's Blanket

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**What's worth preserving?**

## Bridging the Generations

Every time Benjy says “Grandad will know what to do,” he’s not just admiring his grandfather’s skills as a tailor. He’s noticing the deep love his grandfather stitched into the baby blanket presented at his birth, and how far his grandfather will go to keep that gift (and that love) alive as Benjy grows. The concept of *I’dor vador* (Hebrew for “from generation to generation”) is at the heart of this story. Transmitting values and wisdom from one generation to the next is a deeply held Jewish value. To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/benjy](http://pjlibrary.org/benjy).

## HANDS ON!

### Make a Sock Bunny

Maybe you have an old sock lying around. Is it “time to throw that thing away”? Of course not! Practice *bal tashchit* and turn it into a little bunny friend.

**Materials:**

- Single sock
- Scissors
- Yarn
- Permanent marker
- Rice or lentils

Fill a sock with rice or lentils, just above the heel.  
Tie yarn at the top.

Now tie yarn just below the heel of the sock, cinching it to create a distinct head and body.

Above the head is the cuff of the sock. Pinch the cuff together and cut down the middle to make some ears.

Draw a face on your bunny.

You’ve turned something old into something new, just like Benjy’s grandad would. Nice work!

## Waste Not, Want Not

Grandad is a master of the ethical principle of *bal tashchit*, Hebrew for “do not waste.” This value can be traced back to the Torah, the first five books of the Bible: “When you besiege a city in wartime, do not cut down fruit trees for use in battle.” This ancient law evolved into a general idea of valuing what we have. This includes preserving the environment and avoiding needless destruction — and for Benjy and his grandfather, that means not throwing away his blanket so long as more uses can be found for it.

## The Three R’s

This saga of recycling Benjy’s baby blanket recalls an age-old Jewish practice. In many communities, Jews would upcycle old clothing into a cloth to wrap around a Torah scroll. Among German Jews, it became customary to turn a baby’s swaddling clothes into a Torah sash. The transformed blanket, called a *wimpel*, would be painted or embroidered with the child’s Hebrew name, date of birth, and a blessing for a fulfilling life. What better way to reduce, reuse, and recycle?

## TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**DO** you still have something you were given as a baby? What do you like about it?

**WHAT** objects does your family have that are very old? What makes them special?

**IN** the end, Grandad turns Benjy’s blanket into a story. Do you have a favorite family story?