

# And There Was Evening, and There Was Morning

written by

Harriet Cohen Helfand  
and Ellen Kahan Zager

illustrated by

Ellen Kahan Zager

{ What inspires you to create? }

## In the Beginning

Stories of creation, or cosmogonies, are a universal storytelling motif across cultures. It is a distinctly human tendency to wonder where we come from. Creation stories help people organize their sense of the world and their own place within it. The Jewish creation story, found in the portion known as *Bereshit* (Genesis) at the very beginning of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), is a layered tale that covers many concepts, including the origins of time, the physical world, and humanity.

## Just Say the Word

As the familiar story goes, God created the world in six days—starting with light, then sky, land, vegetation, celestial bodies, wildlife, and finally, us. In the biblical account, words play a key role in creation: “And God said ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.” The Kabbalistic (Jewish mystic) tradition goes further. In mystic lore, God creates the entire universe using the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This mystic connection between the Hebrew language and the creation of the world is hinted at in the illustrations of this book.

## Separate and Together

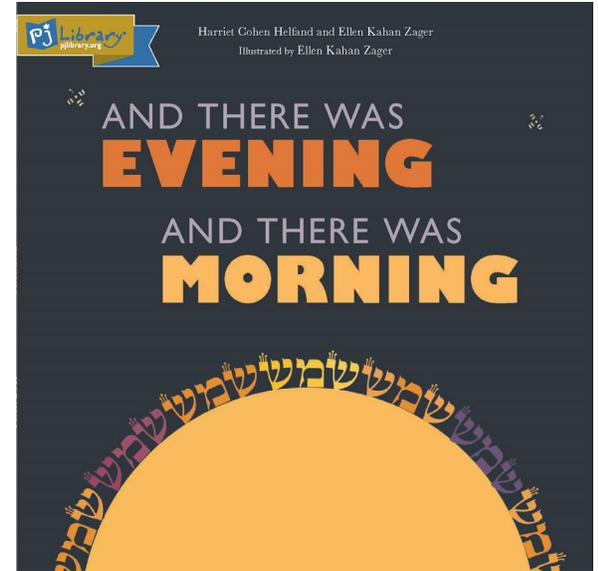
Much of the creation story involves separating elements from one another—light from dark, night from day, water from land, species from species. Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, is a separation between the workweek (God’s productive first six days) and a day of rest, a separation between holy and mundane. In fact, the first thing in the Torah to be called “holy”—*kadosh* in Hebrew—is not a thing or a place: it’s Shabbat, a time to refrain from creating and to reflect on the beauty of creation itself. It’s also a precious opportunity for family time—a day apart for the sake of being together. To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/andtherewasevening](http://pjlibrary.org/andtherewasevening).

## TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**I**n this story, God made light first. Why? What would you create first?

**W**hat is your favorite creature?

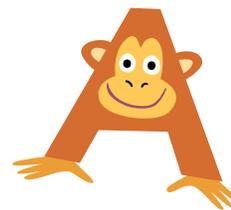
**H**ow do you think it would feel to be the first human?



## HANDS ON!

## Make Alphabet Animals

The illustrator of this book plays with Hebrew letters as design elements. Break out some paper and crayons to try the same thing with the alphabet in English (or any language).



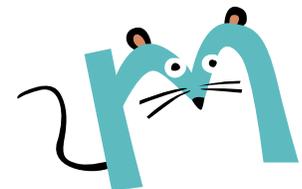
Draw an A as an ape...



...an S as a snake...



...an I as an iguana...



...or an M as a mouse!

Now go create a story with your letter characters!