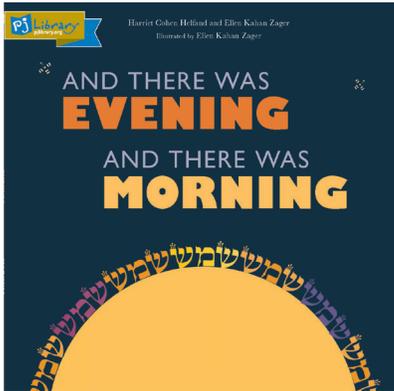


BIG QUESTION

What do you find amazing about the world?



And There Was Evening And There Was Morning

Written by Harriet Cohen Helfand
and Ellen Kahan Zager
Illustrated by Ellen Kahan Zager
Published by Kar-Ben Publishing



Taking care of the Earth – *Shmi-rat ha-a-da-mah*
שְׁמִירַת הָאֲדָמָה



Read

the book for Jewish values

Jewish tradition teaches that people have the responsibility to appreciate and safeguard the wonder and beauty of the natural world. According to the Torah, humankind's first task after being created was "working and guarding the earth" (Genesis 2:15). A famous midrash (legend) envisions God leading Adam and Eve through the Garden of Eden, instructing them: "Look at my works! See how beautiful they are... For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it" (*Midrash Kohelet Rabbah*, 1 on Ecclesiastes 7:13). Centuries before protecting the environment and global warming became hot topics of conversation, ancient sages understood that the Earth's resources are limited.

Optional storytelling technique

As you read the story, invite children to portray the objects of creation with body sculpture. How will they pose as a cloud, the sun, a flower, or a giraffe?



Discuss

Jewish values with one another

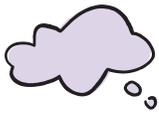
For the teacher's consideration

- What about the Earth inspires awe and wonder for you?
- In your classroom, how do you personally model caring for Earth?
- What do you think children might first need to understand before they can begin actively caring for Earth?

Questions for children

- There is very unusual art in this book. Let's look at the illustrations – tell me what you see.
- How do we take care of the things we see in this book?
- Why do you think God made people last?

Many of the objects and animals in this book are drawn using Hebrew letters. Use the glossary in the back for reference.



Imagine

how values will come to life

Science

Study outdoor plants. Have children in groups of three observe a plant. Do they notice any bugs that nibble on it for food? Can they identify the plant’s unusual characteristics? Children might draw or photograph their plant at different times of the day. Have them tell stories about their plant.



How does your environment support the value of taking care of the Earth?

Dramatic play

Create mini environments of the Days of Creation in small trays or bins. Make a different tray for each day or find a way to segment a larger container. For ideas, look on our Pinterest board: www.pinterest.com/pjgts/days-of-creation/.

Music

Go outside and listen to the sounds of the environment. Can you hear animals? Cars? Wind? What musical instruments can you make from found objects such as leaves, twigs, or acorns?

Social studies

Create a new environment-based job for your classroom job chart. Students holding the position of *shomer* (or *shomeret* for girls) are “Earth lovers,” who will be responsible for making sure lights are turned off, water faucets are not dripping, and classmates remember to recycle.



Engage

families in conversations about values

How can you deepen home-school relationships?

Magnet letter creatures and loose parts

Display Hebrew or English magnet letters (or cut-outs) in your lobby or at your sign-in spot. Challenge families to make creatures from the letters by adding pipe cleaners, clay, or loose parts. Snap a picture of their creations and make a creature gallery.

Recycled stuff garden

You can make a planter out of virtually anything. Ask families to donate old rainboots, purses, cans, or drawers – preferably with potting soil. Create a beautiful garden inside your classroom or out. Maybe families will work with you on this beautifying project.



More on this topic

PJ Library books

10 Things I Can Do to Help My World by Melanie Walsh

It’s a Mitzvah, Grover by Tilda Balsley

Web article

Taking care of the outdoors isn’t just a Jewish value, it’s good for you; too.

bit.ly/children-in-nature