



SHALOM EVERYBODEEE!

Written by Tilda Balsley and Ellen Fischer

Illustrated by Tom Leigh

Hang on to your hats – Grover is in Israel! Hit all the hot tourist spots with this furry blue monster.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Despite Israel's small size (comparable to that of New Jersey), this Middle Eastern country is packed with an astounding number of amazing places. Whether you are a resident or a visitor like Grover in *Shalom Everybodyee!*, there is no shortage of exciting and meaningful experiences to be had.

Israel is a fascinating mix of old and new; historic sites that are thousands of years old may be a stone's throw from high-rise apartment buildings and shopping malls. This juxtaposition is testimony to the relatively recent revitalization of the land. For close to 2,000 years, the majority of Jews lived outside of Israel. However, near the end of the 19th century, waves of Jewish immigrants began to make *aliyah* (which literally means “to go up” and also refers to moving to Israel). With loving care, the long-barren land began to bloom and thrive again. Some immigrants began a movement to revive Hebrew as a spoken language. Their dedication and perseverance led to Hebrew's modern status as one of the official languages of Israel.

Today, millions of Jews proudly make Israel their home, a dream that many of their ancestors were unable to fulfill themselves. People of all faiths and backgrounds are drawn to visit this tiny country that is simultaneously modern and deeply connected to its rich history.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Virtual visit to Israel – Together as a family, search online for photos of the places in Israel that Grover visits in this story, such as the Kotel, Masada, and the Dead Sea. In what ways are the real places like or different from the drawings in the story? Do you see people doing the same activities that Grover does?

Travel the world - Make believe that you are going on a trip to Israel or some other place you would like to visit as a family. Find creative ways to carry out the pretend experiences of packing a small bag, flying on a plane, and enjoying activities at your chosen “destination.” You might go on a hike by walking around your neighborhood, visit the market by shopping in your kitchen, or do an archaeological dig in the neighborhood sandbox. When it's time to “go home,” board the plane again and enjoy your flight!

Family travel story - Has your family ever traveled to a new place? It could be as far away as Israel or as close as the next town. Work together to make your own book about the adventures you had. Encourage all family members to contribute drawings and ideas for the story. You can also make up a story about a place that you hope to visit in the future and the things you would like to do there.