



SHABBAT SHALOM, HEY!

Written and Illustrated by Ann D. Koffsky

Sing along with the lion, monkey, and toucan as they get everything ready for Friday night dinner. Shabbat Shalom!

JEWISH CONCEPTS

The Jewish Sabbath, *Shabbat*, is a joyous holiday that arrives every Friday night at sundown and continues until Saturday evening, when three stars appear in the night sky. The biblical injunction to “remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8) has taken shape in practices held by Jews all over the world. The objects that appear in this book – candles, a cup of grape juice (or wine), and *challah* (a traditional braided bread) – are used on Friday evening with blessings that usher in this special day. Another beloved Shabbat prayer is *Birkat Hayeladim*, the blessing of children, which gives parents the opportunity to take a few moments each week to express love and gratitude for the precious young members of their family.

For many Jews, Shabbat is treasured family time. Relatives and loved ones come together, eat delicious food, gather together at home and synagogue, and take part in relaxing and rejuvenating activities. Many families form their own special traditions as the years go by – a special walk in the afternoon or a particular dessert after dinner. While Shabbat may look slightly different in different households, it’s always a festive time of togetherness, set apart from the rest of the week and its busy ways. Taking the time to light candles and break bread together each Friday is a welcome way to escape the rigors of the workweek and revel in special family time.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Preparing for Shabbat is a time of pleasurable anticipation. Depending on their ages and skill levels, children can be active participants in much of it. Very young children can learn the names of the ritual objects used during Shabbat, and can enjoy the sensory pleasures of looking at candlelight, sipping grape juice, and eating tasty challah. As they grow, encourage your children to help set the table, fold napkins, make place cards for guests, get dressed up in nice clothing, pour grape juice, and learn to recite the blessings. Involving children helps create excitement for the day. It also helps strengthen the habit of observing Shabbat, which encourages families to pause from the pressures of the week and focus on one another and the blessings they share.

The words in this book are usually set to happy, upbeat music. If your family is unfamiliar with the tune, searching “Shabbat Shalom Hey” online will result in countless videos of children singing the song. Singing together is one of the joys of Shabbat, along with eating, walking, reading, playing, praying, and even napping! No matter how your family chooses to observe Shabbat, your children can play an active role, and joy and love can always be at the center.