



MITZI'S MITZVAH

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There's nothing Mitzi loves more than to perform a mitzvah – even if she is just a puppy! When she visits the local nursing home, she helps the residents celebrate Rosh Hashanah, and does a bunch of mitzvot along the way.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Judaism places great value on *kibud zekaynim*, Hebrew for “honoring the elderly.” Mitzi exemplifies the spirit of honoring the elderly through attention and companionship – but not at first. At the start of the story, Mitzi is left out of the Rosh Hashanah party, looking glumly through the window as the residents of Shalom House have fun with all the boys and girls. As you read this book with your children, ask them how they think Mitzi feels when she's left out, and how the residents of Shalom House feel when she is allowed to join them.

When she's finally invited inside, Mitzi becomes “the perfect guest” by “doing what she does best.” Mitzi brings happiness just by being herself. Could this be a way for your family to honor the elderly people in your life, by sharing your special skills just as Mitzi does? Think about things your family enjoys doing. If you love to garden, for example, you could offer to plant or care for flowers in your neighbor's yard. If your family loves to bake, how about bringing some muffins to a local senior center? The high holidays of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) are a great time to practice acts of loving-kindness for the elders in your community – bringing sweetness into their lives and yours.

