



FRIDAYS ARE SPECIAL

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For this child's family, Fridays aren't like other days. On Fridays, the hustle and bustle is a little different. Everyone seems to be getting ready for something special – something cozy and wonderful. What could it be?

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, has a number of rituals and customs, including candle-lighting, synagogue services, and special meals shared with family and friends. Taking part in these activities requires preparation. As it's said about many things, "preparation is half the fun!" The little boy in this book spends Fridays having tot-sized adventures while getting ready for *Shabbat*. There is challah to be made, groceries to buy, a meal to prepare, candles to light, and a table under which to hide and wonder at the legs and feet to be found there!

The child in this book knows there's something fascinating in his grandpa's vest: shiny coins to place in a *tzedakah* box, a plain or fancy container holding money for worthy causes. The Hebrew word *tzedakah*, often thought to mean simple charity, is literally translated as justice or fairness, indicating the Jewish obligation of giving and denoting our responsibility to help those in need. It's a time-honored custom to put aside funds for *tzedakah* before celebrating *Shabbat* and other holidays; in times of happiness, it's important to take even small, symbolic actions for others who are less fortunate. The grandfather in *Fridays Are Special* helps his grandson take part in a weekly practice he'll come to value and, hopefully, emulate.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Every parent knows that consistency and repetition help children feel safe. Family activities and holiday celebrations provide little ones with comfort and stability. How delightful that the Jewish people have a holiday to celebrate every week, like clockwork!

- Encourage even the youngest of children to help choose the food to be served on Friday evening. Given a choice of five healthy items, they're bound to choose something healthy!
- Invite someone to your home for *Shabbat* dinner. Guests don't always need to be family or close friends. Many people who are alone or lonely would be thrilled at your invitation. It's also a great way to instill in your children the Jewish practice of *hachansat orchim*, hospitality and the welcoming of guests. What better time could there be to have guests at your table? After all, Fridays are special.