



CAN YOU HEAR A COO, COO?

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Noah has built his ark, and the animals are getting ready to climb aboard – in pairs of two, because they know that in stormy weather, friends stay together!

JEWISH CONCEPTS

The tale of Noah's ark is among the most famous from the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), and with good reason: it's a great story. But it has an important Jewish value embedded in it, too: *tzaar baalei hayim*, preventing cruelty to animals. Humanity's responsibility to the animal world is forecast in the earliest chapters of the book of Genesis, in which Adam is tasked with naming all the species. The story of Noah underscores this caretaking relationship – the ark is enormous, but few humans climb aboard. Most of that space is reserved for animals so that they may live on after the waters recede. Jewish law protects animals in a variety of ways. For example, Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath) is a day of rest not only for humans but also for animal workers. At mealtime, Jewish law instructs us to feed our animals first. Working animals may not be muzzled, so that they may have food if they get hungry while they work. As you read this book to your little one, have fun with it; most children are naturally drawn to animals, and learning to count by twos is a great activity for toddlers. The story of Noah is a fun one for children – that's why it has been told again and again. But a deeper message may resonate, too: We humans have always been interlinked with the animal world.