

BIG QUESTION

What does it mean to be a friend?



The Better-Than-Best Purim

Written and Illustrated

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Friendship – *cha-ve-rut* – חֵבְרוּת



Read

the book for Jewish values

Judaism teaches that we need friends to help us learn and grow spiritually and emotionally. It is no coincidence that the Hebrew word for friend, *chaver*, is related to the word *chavruta*, a study partner. Rabbinic sages encouraged learning from one another and “lifting each other up” if one should fall (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). Rabbi Yosef Yavetz, a 15th-century Spanish scholar, explains that friendship is a precious commodity that can only be acquired through hard work and effort. He taught that friends should anticipate one another’s needs, listen empathetically, be thoughtful with their speech, and always work toward compromise.

Optional storytelling technique

The first time you read the book, direct children to guess what the animals are doing. Read the book again and encourage children to act out the party preparations. Take turns, switching out who plays which animal on each page.



Discuss

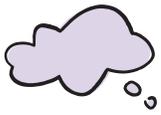
Jewish values with one another

For the teacher’s consideration

- What are the ways you cultivate and maintain friendships in your life?
- How do you take time to observe developing friendships in your classroom? How can you provide opportunities to help children further develop their friendships?
- What skills do you think children need to make a friend and be a friend?

Questions for children

- What does the word friend mean to you? The friends in this book enjoy celebrating Purim together. What do you like to do with your friends?
- What are the ways that the dog, cat, parrot, and little old lady show they are friends?
- How does the little old lady feel when her friends says they are too busy to help her bake hamantaschen? What else could the friends have said or done when the old lady asks them to help? How would that change the story?



Imagine

how values will come to life

How does your environment support the value of friendship?

Music/Gross motor

Play a Purim music CD or log onto PJ Library Radio and try Friendship Freeze Dancing. Every time the music stops, ask the children to find a new dance partner.

Dramatic play

Who is hiding under the cloth? One child leaves the room while you hide another child under a cloth. The children give hints about who is concealed based on what they know about the hidden child.

Social-emotional learning

Help children learn social cues when they look at one another. Introduce mirroring games where children can alternate between being the leader and the mirror. Try the game with facial expressions, then take it outside for gross motor mirroring.

Hint: Slow movements are more easily mirrored.



Engage

families in conversations about values

How can you deepen home-school relationships?

Friends in the making

How are you telling the story of deepening friendships in the classroom? Write down the moments when two children first notice something they have in common, perhaps over snack or a sparked discussion in morning meeting. Watch and photograph as they begin to play more often with one another. Let families know about growing friendships. Hopefully, the families will become friends, too.

Parent social

Gather families for an early dinner. Allow for grown-ups to meet new friends while their children have friendship fun in another room.



More on this topic

PJ Library books

The Little Red Hen and the Passover Matzah

by Leslie Kimmelman

Sammy Spider's New Friend

by Sylvia Rouss

Web article

Stages of friendships by age

bit.ly/friendship-stages-by-age