

Latke, the Lucky Dog

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How do we learn what's right?

A Miraculous Holiday

Latke the dog faces challenges, but he doesn't give up, and he doesn't lose hope. That's also the message of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights. Falling on the 25th of the Jewish month of *Kislev*, which coincides roughly with the winter solstice, Hanukkah's flickering candles are a symbol of faith in the midst of struggle. They also help brighten up the darkest nights of the year. When Jews the world over kindle Hanukkah menorahs, they remember the Maccabees' hope and persistence centuries ago — and the miraculous results.

That Dog's Got Spirit

Zach and Zoe experience another kind of miracle — they adopt a new furry family member! But it isn't easy right away. Latke is spirited — curious, impulsive, and energetic. In Jewish tradition, each of us has an inclination to do good (*yetzer hatov* in Hebrew) and...not so good (*yetzer hara* in Hebrew). We don't need to be ashamed of our natural impulses; the aim is to manage them, and to say we're sorry when we mess up. Judaism places high value on *teshuva* (Hebrew for "returning"), making amends. Latke's new family gives him a second chance to figure out how to behave — in fact, they give him eight chances, one for each night of Hanukkah! He is a lucky dog. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/latketheluckydog.

A Happy (Imperfect) Home

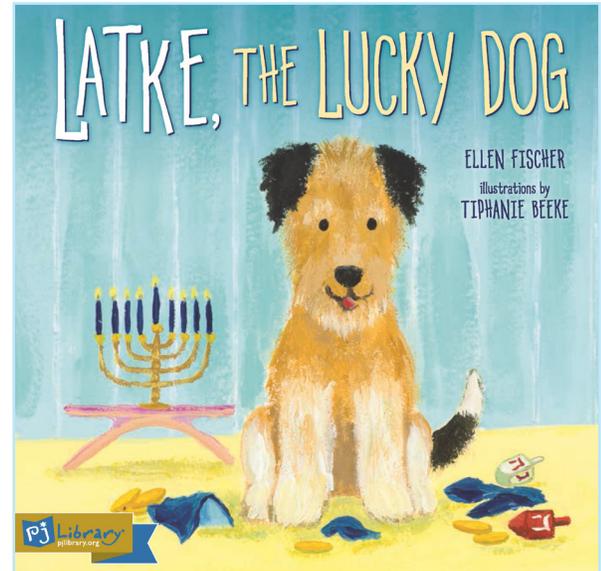
Zach wants a large dog, and Zoe wants a small one. When the twins compromise with medium-size Latke, they engage in the Jewish value of *shalom bayit* (Hebrew for "peace in the home"), which calls on us to set aside disagreements for the sake of family love and togetherness. In classic Jewish sources, the role model for *shalom* (peace) is Moses' brother Aaron, who was known for pursuing peace and loving all creatures. Sounds a lot like Latke's new family!

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

Why do you think Latke keeps making mistakes?

When people (not dogs) mess up, what can they do to make things better?

How is Latke lucky? How are *you* lucky?



HANDS ON!

Make a Homemade Dog Toy

A chew toy is the perfect Hanukkah gift for Latke. Recycle some old T-shirts to make a special present for one of your lucky canine pals — or to donate to an animal shelter.



Supplies

A couple of old T-shirts
(bonus if they smell like you!)
Scissors



1 Cut the T-shirts into long strips about an inch wide. Put aside two strips.



2 Gather the rest of the strips together, using one of the reserved strips to tie them at one end.



3 Divide the rest of the fringes into three roughly equal sections and braid them together. Tie them at the other end with the other reserved strip.

