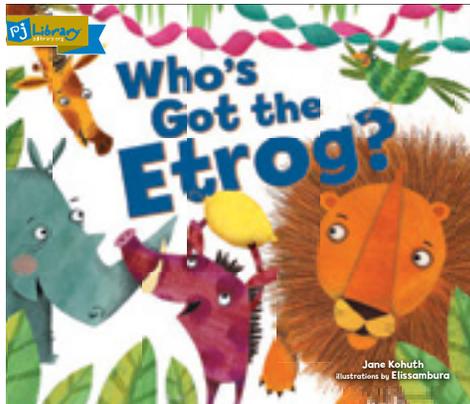


BIG QUESTION

What does it mean to share?



Written by Jane Kohuth
Illustrated by Elissambura
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Good manners – *De-rech e-retz* – דְּרֵךְ אֶרֶץ



READ

the book for Jewish values

The literal translation of *derech erez* is “the way of the land” or “the right path.” In other words, proper behavior. Rabbinic sages say that *derech erez* comes even before Torah (Leviticus Rabbah 9:3), implying that the first step in creating a Jewish life is treating others with decency and respect. Good manners are important enough to warrant the focus of two books in the Talmud, an authoritative collection of Jewish laws and custom. The books describe various rules of conduct on ways to dress, how to eat and drink, proper speech, and how we treat others.

Optional storytelling technique

Read this book while sitting in a sukkah or around a table in your classroom. Tell the children they will help Warthog learn to share. Bring a stuffed etrog or ball for the children to hold and pass. Each time Warthog refuses to share, all can exclaim, “Please pass the etrog.” The toy passes to the next child. Read the book as many times as it takes for all to have a turn holding and passing the etrog.



DISCUSS

Jewish values with one another

For the teacher's consideration

- Which manners do you believe children should develop? How do you encourage good manners among your students?
- How do you intentionally model good manners with your co-workers and staff?
- What makes it difficult for children to learn good manners?

Questions for children

- In this story Auntie Sonya's guests act very politely. For example, Parrot chatters brightly and Camel sips precisely. Which other animals show good manners? Who has difficulties with manners?
- When you visit someone, what are examples of good manners that you can use?
- Why is it important to use good manners?



IMAGINE

how values will come to life

How will your environment reflect good manners?



ENGAGE FAMILIES

in conversations about values

How can you deepen home-school relationships?

Advanced planning

It is easier to follow rules and behave respectfully when you know your routine in advance. Families can help prepare their children for the day ahead if they have a visual schedule to share with their child, such as the one shown here. This kind of home-school connection makes transitions less challenging for all.



Greet your classmates



Put things in your cubby



Free-play time in centers

Art and literacy

Create a manners book for your classroom library by snapping photos of children performing good manners. Ask your students to help make a list of poses needed for the book, such as holding the door for others, sharing a toy, cleaning up snacks, etc.

Math

Add up the number of good manners in your list. Keep a running count of the good manners your students think of and exhibit.

Gross motor

Create a derech erez path to follow with arrows or footprints. One week the students can follow the derech from the sink to the snack table, because it is good manners to wash your hands before you serve and eat food. Another day the derech may lead from the art table to the trash can, because it is good manners to clean up after yourself.

Game

Play good manners version of Simon Says, called Derech Eretz says.

Dramatic play

Prepare an overly-polite tea party for snack time or as part of your dramatic play center. Show children how to hold the chair for a friend, gently dab your mouth with a napkin, and to “please pass the biscuits.” “Thank you.” “Oh, no, thank you.” Who can hold their pinky out while drinking?

Tea time

Set a table for high tea in the lobby, so families can share in the very polite fun you started in the classroom. Suggest families try a fancy dinner or tea time at home. Ask families to share their experiences and some pictures with the class.

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PJ LIBRARY BOOKS

Estie the Mensch by Jane Kohuth

The Littlest Mountain by Barb Rosenstock

WEB ARTICLE

Social & Emotional Foundations for Early Learning csefel.vanderbilt.edu