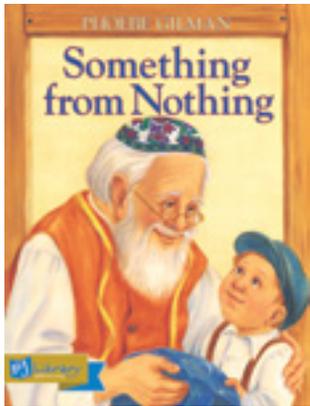


## BIG QUESTION

# How can you make something out of nothing?



Adapted from a Jewish Folktale  
by Phoebe Gilman  
Published by Scholastic Press



Do not waste - *Bal tash-chit* - בַּל תִּשְׁחִית



## READ

the book for Jewish values

Throughout the ages, Jewish thinkers have advocated conservation and resourcefulness. The Jewish concept of *bal tashchit*, not wasting, has its roots in the biblical command not to destroy fruit trees during times of war (Deuteronomy 20:19). Rabbinic sages expanded this principle to include a ban on all forms of wastefulness. Maimonides, a revered 12th-century Jewish scholar, urged everyone to preserve lamp oil, take care of vessels and clothing, and avoid clogging wells and wasting food (Maimonides, *Hilkhos Melachim* 6:10). What would our world look like today if humankind followed these suggestions?

### Optional storytelling technique

Look closely at the illustrations of this book. Just as the home has three floors, there are three stories going on. Read once to tell the story of the boy and his blanket on the main floor. Read again and ask the children to tell the mouse family's tale under the house. Now tell the story again concentrating on the upper floor. The family is expecting another baby, and she gets a blanket too. What will happen to that treasured item?



## DISCUSS

Jewish values with one another

### For the teacher's consideration

- During a typical day, how do you try to avoid waste, both in your classroom and in your home?
- What new anti-waste behaviors can you introduce to your classroom?
- What do you personally find challenging about avoiding waste?

### Questions for children

- What are some of the things made from Joseph's blanket?
- Why does Joseph keep asking his grandfather to make something new from his blanket rather than throw it out?
- Let's look around our classroom, or look through our trash can, and make a list of things that we could reuse rather than throw away.



## IMAGINE

how values will come to life



## How will the environment reflect the value of not wasting?

### Art and technology

Set up a loose parts library in your school or classroom. What objects will you collect that will inspire new creations or collages?

### Math

Invite children to come up with a system for categorizing and sorting loose parts, such as by color, shape, or material. How can this be integrated into cleanup? How will you help children recognize what is salvageable, and how to prepare things for reuse?

### Social studies

Talk to your students about taking “just enough” at snack time. Remind children that they can take seconds if they are still hungry, which is better than wasting food if you take too much at first. The same is true for art supplies, such as glue or paint.

### Engineering

Create a repair shop for broken toys. Allow children to sew torn fabric, tape ripped book pages, or create a new use for a broken item. Give children the freedom and support to fix these things in their own way, even if it is not how you envisioned the repair.



## ENGAGE FAMILIES

in conversations about values

## How can you deepen home-school relationships?

### Stay loose

Share an article, such as "100 Loose Parts" ([bit.ly/100-loose-parts](http://bit.ly/100-loose-parts)), with parents, explaining how playing with loose parts helps a child’s creativity and problem-solving skills. Enlist families’ help in setting up your loose parts library. Send home a wish list so everyone can contribute. Loose parts give all children the opportunity to exercise their creative potential. The article linked above has a few (100 to be exact) ideas of loose parts you can add to your learning environment.

### Swap meet

Invite families to come together for pizza and a toy swap. Everyone can bring a gently used game, puzzle, or book and share their treasures. Remind families to discuss in advance if treasures are for permanent trade or temporary loan.

### MORE ON THIS TOPIC

#### PJ LIBRARY BOOKS

*Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* by Simms Taback

*10 Things I Can Do to Help My World* by Melanie Walsh

#### VIDEO SHORT

Can you stop shopping?

[bit.ly/shopping-challenge](http://bit.ly/shopping-challenge)

#### PJGTS PINTEREST

Loose parts and crafts from recycled objects

[pinterest.com/pjgts/recycled-crafts](http://pinterest.com/pjgts/recycled-crafts)