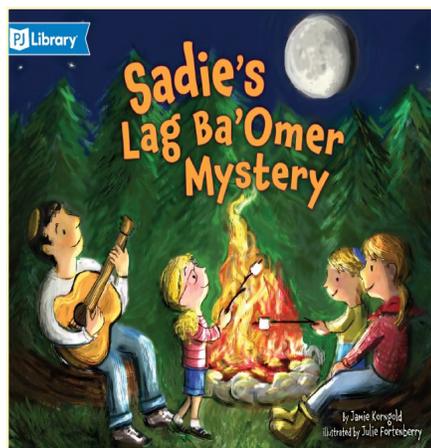


Sadie's Lag B'Omer Mystery

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{ What do you find mysterious? }

HANDS ON!

Make a Lag B'Omer Campfire

On Lag B'Omer, you can do like many Jewish families around the world and build a campfire. If for some reason you can't build a real one, no worries -- make this pretend campfire instead. Why not think about character traits while you do it, just as many people do while they count the Omer?

Supplies

- Empty toilet paper rolls
- Orange, yellow, and red tissue paper
- Pencil or marker
- Tape

Arrange the toilet papers like logs in a campfire and tape them in place.

On each piece of tissue paper, write down one of the character traits that correspond to days of the Omer: loving-kindness, strength, compassion, endurance, humility, commitment, and sincerity. Fold the pieces of tissue paper to create "flames" and add them to your "campfire," and let the light of your fire radiate!

Cave Men

This story traces the origins of Lag B'Omer to the rabbinic figure of Shimon Bar Yochai, who lived in 2nd-century Judea. At that time, the Romans ruled Judea, and there was very little tolerance for dissenters like Rabbi Shimon. In the most famous tale about Rabbi Shimon, he and his son hide from the Romans in a cave for twelve years, sustained by a miraculous carob tree and a flowing spring, and spending entire days and nights studying Jewish wisdom.

Intense Lessons

The story goes that when Shimon and his son finally leave the cave, their learning has been so intense that whatever they set their eyes upon instantly goes up in flame! A voice from heaven proclaims: "Go back to your cave! You are no longer fit for the company of other human beings." After one more year in the cave, they reemerge, and this time Shimon is able to fulfill his role as scholar and healer, which is why Rabbi Shimon's legacy is celebrated each year on Lag B'Omer. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/sadieslagbomermystery.

Counting the Days

This story tells us about counting the Omer, the 49 days between the holidays of Passover and Shavuot. As we count the days, it's traditional to devote time each day to refining our character. Each week of the Omer represents a different character trait, and each day represents another trait -- for example, the first day (gevurah, or strength) of the second week (chesed, or kindness) is the day to think about balancing strength with kindness. Lag B'Omer is Day 33, when humility (hod) overlaps with humility -- a day to set aside our own egos so we can see and appreciate the strengths and beauty of others. Lag B'Omer, with its festive lighting of bonfires, is an invitation to celebrate the light that others radiate.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

IF you were planning a Lag B'Omer celebration, what activities would you include? Why?

LOOK carefully at the illustrations of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and his students. What do you notice? How are the children similar to you, and how are they different?

WHAT do you think it would be like to live in a cave, the way Rabbi Shimon did? What would you like about it? What might be difficult?