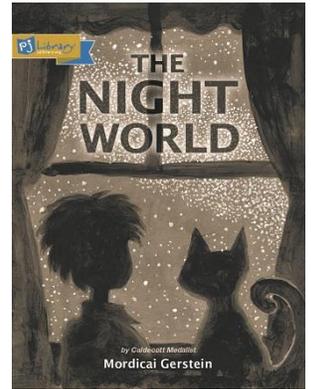


Read the PJ Library Book

The Night World (3s)

Written and Illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein

Published by Little, Brown and Company



Synopsis

Everyone is asleep - except a young boy and his cat. Together they explore the night world of their backyard. What are those strange shapes and shadows? Could those be roses? The boy delights in his discovery of nocturnal animals and familiar plants that fill his yard. The animals eagerly whisper, "It's coming," and the boy watches in amazement as the shadows of nighttime give way to the glorious colors of dawn.

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Miracles and wonders/*Ni-sim ve-ni-fla-ot* - נְסִיִּים וְנִיִּפְלְאוֹת

Creation/*B'ri-ya* - בְּרִיאָה

Introducing the value of miracles and wonders

Nisim ve'nifla-ot

From Jewish teachings

Judaism asks individuals to be aware of and thankful for the wonders that surround them. Theologian and social activist Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel suggests that one's goal should be to live in a state of "radical amazement" and appreciate the world's everyday miracles. This biblical poem exemplifies that sentiment: How numerous are Your wonders, O Lord!

In wisdom You have made them all; the earth is full of Your riches.

Psalms 104:24

[For a fun musical version of this poem, "Mah Rabu" by Josh Warshawsky, go to our [song page](#).]

For the teacher

- What do you find miraculous in the world?
- For which miracles are you most grateful?
- How might you increase your own awareness of everyday wonders?
- How can you make the observation and acknowledgement of every day wonders part of the life of your classroom?



Aurora Borealis

Questions for children

- A miracle or wonder is when something very special or unusual happens. The boy in the book believes the sunrise is a miracle. What do you think made the morning so special for him?
- Other examples of miracles are the birth of a baby, the hatching of a chick from an egg, and when the Red Sea split in the Passover story. Can you describe any miracles that you have seen?
- Where would you go to look for miracles and wonders?

Introducing the value of Creation *Briya*

From Jewish teachings

In the biblical account of Creation, God's first act was to bring light into the world. "Let there be light; and there was light... God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day" (Genesis 3-5). All other creations followed light. Judaism views the start of each day as a type of mini-Creation. The daily morning liturgy offers thanks to God, who "renews every day the work of Creation." With each day as the world begins anew, we have an opportunity to renew ourselves and look for the light that arises out of darkness.

For the teacher

- What do you think are important lessons of the Creation story?
- What are the metaphors or images that come to mind when we discuss light VS darkness?
- In what ways can you experiment with light and dark that might inspire wonder?



Questions for children

- The Torah teaches that when God began creating the world, God made light and saw that it was good. What do you think is good about creating light?
- In the beginning of the world, God made the sun, the moon, and stars, and all living and growing things. How many of these creations can we name together? How can we take care of these things?
- In what ways can people imitate God and create things?

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

**How would your classroom change?
How will families be involved?**

In the Classroom / Centers

- ☆ **Nisim ve'nifla-ot/miracles and wonders:** Search for wonders by color during **outdoor play**.

Challenge your students to find items in nature that match an assigned color. They can work individually or in teams.

- ☆ **Nisim ve'nifla-ot/miracles and wonders:** Explore the wonders of **science, indoors and out**.

Many classrooms choose the spring to incubate eggs until they hatch into chicks or watch the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly. You might also observe the wondrous bugs and animals that inhabit your outdoor play space. Lay a plank of wood down in a quiet, vegetated area of your playground. Visit the spot every few days, lifting up the wood to make notes, and take photos and draw pictures of any slugs, ants, or pill bugs who come to inhabit your cozy microcosm.



- ☆ **Nisim ve'nifla-ot/miracles and wonders:** Play the song "Mah Rabu" (How Many Wonders) as a freeze dance during **large motor skill time**. (You can find it in our Educators' Center on the [song page](#).) When the music stops, act out a wonder of creation, such as a tree or a river.
- ☆ **Briyah/Creation:** Play with concepts of light and dark. You might create a dark and cozy cave-like space. Supply flashlights and glow sticks. Take note of how different objects look in bright light, low light, or blue light.



Engage the families in your community

How can you involve families and deepen home-school relationships?

Light and dark

Set up an overhead light projector in the entranceway of your school. You might have an assortment of interesting Creation objects and shapes such as stars, moons, suns, and plants. Give families an opportunity to recreate the world as they arrive at school for a new day.



Find the wonder

Invite families to gather for a picnic dinner. Before dessert, encourage families to work together and find wonders of nature. Snap photos and share on a group page. Optional: Teach everyone the blessing recited when you see a wonder of nature.

Baruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, oseh maasei v'reishit.

Blessed is Adonai, sovereign of the world, who does the work of creation.

What wondrous creation can you and the children prepare for dessert?

At Home

See below for a mini-newsletter about this book. Cut on the dotted line to send directly to families, or copy

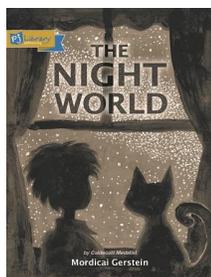


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DO fun stuff at home

Fine dining



Try dining by candlelight with your family or have a bedtime snack by the light of the moon to experiment with light and darkness. What looks or feels different?

DISCUSS Jewish values

Miracles and wonders/nisim venifla'ot

Theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel suggests that one's goal should be to live in a state of "radical amazement" and appreciate the world's everyday miracles.

- A miracle might be a moment so special, such as a beautiful sunset, it makes us stop and think, "Wow!" Where would we go to look for wonders?

Creation/b'riya

In the biblical account of Creation, God's first act was to bring light into the world.

- How does light help us? What activities are better by day? By night?

MORE resources

Stages of wonder: <http://bit.ly/what-kids-wonder>

Jewish views on miracles: <http://bit.ly/jewish-miracles>

PJGtS Pinterest, light/wonder: <http://bit.ly/light-wonder>