

Oh No, George!

written and illustrated by
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{ **Why are second chances important?** }

The Best of Intentions

George tries hard. “I hope I’ll be good,” he says, which is an example of *kavana*, Hebrew for “intention.” Good behavior starts with a good intention, so George is on the right track. In Jewish tradition, there are two creative drives: one to create good things and one to create bad things. In Hebrew, these drives are called *yetzer hatov*, the good inclination, and *yetzer hara*, the bad inclination. We all carry both of these inclinations within us, all the time, and whenever we make choices, the challenge is to lean toward the good. It’s not always easy! Just ask George.

Walk a Mile in My Shoes

One way to bolster our good inclination is to consider how our actions affect others. At the beginning of this book, George is thinking only about himself. Empathy is at the root of morality. That’s why a quote from the ancient sage Rabbi Hillel is still referred to today as the Golden Rule: “That which is hateful to you, do not do unto others.” Hillel famously said that this precept is the fundamental point of the entire Torah (the first five books of the Bible). When we consider other people’s feelings, the right choices become clear. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/ohnogeorge.

Turn the Beat Around

Take heart, George: Everyone messes up. The important thing is to try to fix our mistakes. This is the heart of the Jewish concept of *teshuva*, Hebrew for “returning.” When we practice *teshuva*, we correct our errors and return to the best versions of ourselves. That’s why the ten-day period of the High Holidays, which include Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), is called the “Ten Days of Returning.” This is a time to think about ways we can improve, both personally and as a community. We apologize for our mistakes and set goals to do better, just like George.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

Why do you think George eats the cake, scares the cat, and digs up the garden, even though he wants to be good?

Can you think of mistakes that you’re sorry about?

What can you do if you make a mistake?



HANDS ON!

Write the Next Page

This book ends on a cliffhanger: What will George do next? Imagine what might come on the next page of the book, if there were one. Write and draw some possible endings — one where George is his best self and others where he makes mistakes. Have fun writing and drawing!

