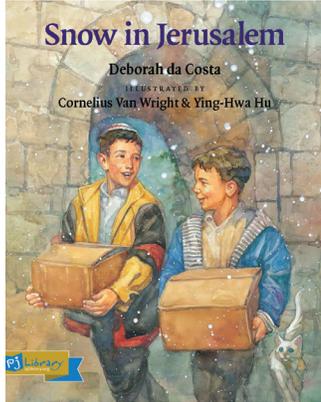


BIG QUESTION

What does it mean to walk a mile in someone's shoes?



Snow in Jerusalem

Written by Deborah da Costa
Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright
& Ying-Hwa Hu
Published by
Albert Whitman & Company



Judging everyone favorably - *Dan le-chaf ze-chut*
דן לכף זכות



Read

the book for Jewish values

How does this book reflect the theme of pursuing peace?

Avi and Hamudi, one boy Jewish and the other Muslim, live in the Old City of Jerusalem. A cat wanders between both homes. The boys must overcome biases they hold about one another in order to solve their shared problem – and share the cat. Appropriately, the book is illustrated by a husband and wife team who say that collaborating through art has heightened their awareness and interest in different cultures. **Being open-minded and accepting of people of different backgrounds** is invaluable to the pursuit of peace.

Three aspects of this value to consider:

- Be open to getting to know people who are different from you.
- Don't jump to conclusions – investigate first.
- Try to put yourself in someone's shoes – develop empathy.

The Hebrew term *dan lechaf zechut* is frequently interpreted as giving the benefit of the doubt but literally means “judge on the positive scales of merit.” In *Pirkei Avot*, a book of ethical teachings, Yehoshua ben Perachya states that we should “judge the whole person favorably” (*Pirkei Avot* 1:6). His teachings tell us: Look for the best in others, don't assume you know the whole story, and consider the most positive explanations for someone's behavior.

Storytelling techniques

1. (*Materials needed: Israeli music, spices, and/or Israeli snacks*) Try to create an atmosphere of Jerusalem by engaging the senses. Play Israeli music in the background and fill the room with the scent of spices common in Israeli cooking, such as za'atar, cardamom, cloves, and cinnamon. You might also enjoy an Israeli snack, like falafel or hummus and pita, while reading.

2. (*Materials needed: Jewish and Arab skullcaps*) This story has two strong main characters from different cultures. You might show the two types of headwear they wear in the book – a *kippah* (Jewish skullcap) and a *taqiyeh* (Arab skullcap). Ask the children to put on their imaginary hats as you read about one boy or the other. Encourage your students to imagine what the characters are feeling.

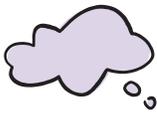


Discuss

Jewish values with one another

After you read

- Why do you think the boys immediately distrust and dislike one another?
- What makes them change their minds?
- You may have heard the phrase “giving the benefit of the doubt.” What does that mean?
- If you could change the story so the boys give each other the benefit of the doubt when they first meet, what would they say?



Imagine

how values will come to life

Different perspectives

The Israeli artist Yaacov Agam specializes in artwork that looks different depending upon the angle from which you look at the picture. Create some Agam-style artwork. Look on the PJGtS Israel Pinterest board for ideas:

www.pinterest.com/pjgts/israel-books-and-activities/

Guess the picture

When you only see a small piece of something, your understanding of the big picture is limited. Try guessing these objects: <http://floorsix.blogspot.com>. You can also try making your own versions.

Scales of merit

“Judge your fellow on the positive scales of merit” (*Pirkei Avot 1:6*). Small changes of attitude or perception can tip the scales in one direction or another. Make a scale and then find the smallest thing that will tip your scale. Here is a simple scale made from a hanger:

www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Balance-Scale-for-Kids.



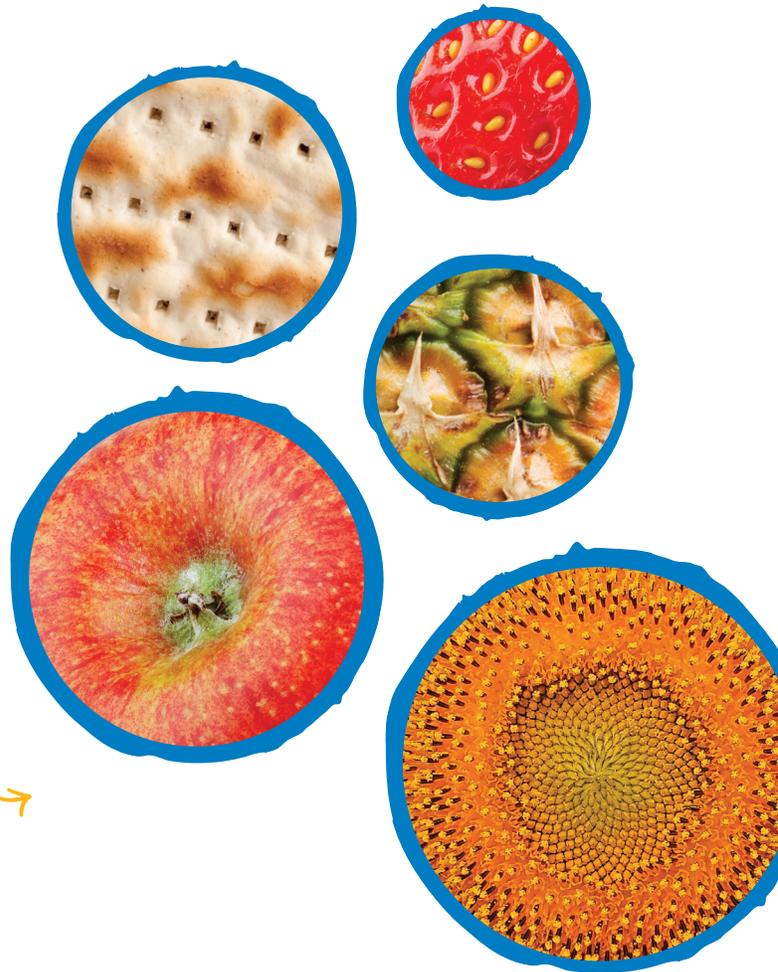
Engage

families in conversations about values

Suggest your families look at a series of optical illusions and talk about what each person sees. Here is an example of a downloadable poster:

bit.ly/kiddush-cup-or-faces.

Families can also try their hand at creating their own optical illusions.



More on this topic

PJ Library books

The Knish War on Rivington Street by Joanne Oppenheim

Beautiful Yetta: The Yiddish Chicken by Daniel Pinkwater