



NOAH'S BED

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It's storming outside, and Noah's ark is rocking from side to side. How is young Eber ever going to fall asleep? Pretty soon he ends up in bed with grandpa Noah...and a few other guests.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Noah and the Flood

The story of Noah and the Flood comprises one of the first major accounts of the Bible and comes chronologically after the creation of the world, the Garden of Eden, and Cain and Abel. Most cultures have a similar flood story in their teachings, in which a hero is directed by God (or another divine being) to build a boat and thereby escape the destruction of the world by water. For those who feel that the story of the Flood can be problematic for young children, *Noah's Bed* offers a wonderful opportunity to discuss Noah's Ark and the Flood without talking about God punishing wickedness or waters destroying the world.

Midrash

Noah's Bed is an example of a modern *midrash* (a creative explanation or elucidation of a character or an event). In a midrash, liberties may be taken with both names and personalities. For example, Eber is not named in the Biblical book of *Bereshit* (Genesis); he is listed in as the *great-great-grandson* of Noah, descended from his son Shem. And there's certainly no evidence in the text that Noah handed his grandchild a handkerchief in the middle of the night and told him to blow his "snuffly nose!"

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Eber is a help to Noah and Nora at the beginning of this book. Put this in a Jewish context for your children by reminding them that this special helpfulness has a name: doing a good deed or a kindness is called a *mitzvah* (literally, a "commandment"). Talk about times your children have helped out by carrying groceries, sharing toys, etc. Tell them that you'll watch for more *mitzvot* (the plural of *mitzvah*) and that your special, secret response will be "Wow! Just like Eber!"

Noah's Bed lends itself to great family discussion! Some questions that spring forth from the book include:

- What do you think it would have been like to sleep on the ark?
- Which animals would have been the most fun to have on the ark?
- Which animals would you not want to have nearby?