

# Bagels from Benny

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{ What are you grateful for? }

## Anybody Out There?

Benny's prayer of thanks begins an eye-opening experience with the divine. We reach out into the universe with our prayers (tefillah in Hebrew), but is anyone listening? Most of us don't hear an audible voice in answer, but if we pay attention, we may feel God communicating in many ways – in kindness from a stranger, in the beauty of nature, and sometimes even in the challenges we face. If we keep our eyes, ears, and hearts open, we might begin to notice divine messages all around us. To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/bagelsfrombenny](http://pjlibrary.org/bagelsfrombenny).

## Thanks in Action

According to Benny's grandpa, if God made the world and everything in it, we should say thank you! A great way to say thank you to God is by making the world a better place. In Jewish life, this is the concept of tikkun olam (Hebrew for "repairing the world"). We can choose to speak and act with kindness, give tzedakah (Hebrew for "justice," often referring to charity), visit and care for the sick, work to enrich our families and communities . . . there are endless ways to make the world better. And like Benny, when our hearts are turned toward gratitude and good deeds, we may help someone else without even realizing it. Tikkun olam is thanks in action.

## Chain Reaction

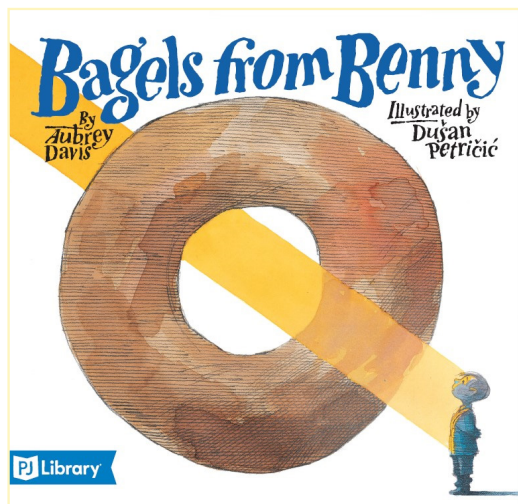
Kindness is contagious. That's what Benny and Grandpa find when they hear the poor man promise to help others as he has been helped. Performing mitzvot (Hebrew for "commandments" or good deeds) often sets in motion a sort of chain reaction of kindness known in Hebrew as mitzvah goreret mitzvah – one good action leads to another. This works on two levels – first, the more good you do, the more you will be inspired to do, and second, the recipients of your kind acts may be inspired to pay them forward. Imagine a wave of kindness sweeping over the world as it spreads from one person to another. Who knows? Maybe it could start with you.

## TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**CAN** you think of some kind things other people do for you? Name some.

**HOW** do you say thank you without using words?

**BENNY** wants to thank God for helping Grandpa make the best bagels in town. If you were going to talk to God, what would you want to say?



## HANDS ON!

### Cookie Cutter Thank You Cards

You don't have to be a bagel baker to help make the world a better place. Use common baking tools to create these cute cards as a sweet "thank you" to others.

Supplies:

- Colorful card stock
- Cookie cutters in fun shapes – hearts, stars, etc.
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Crayons and markers
- Glue

Trace a few cookie cutter shapes in pencil on the card stock. Cut out and decorate the shapes.

Glue the shapes onto a piece of folded card stock.

Write thank you messages on the inside. Consider thanking people for their acts of love: "Thank you for your smile . . . for taking care of me when I was sick . . . for reading to me . . ." Hand out the cards and get ready for big smiles!