

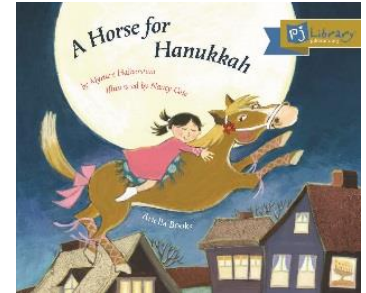
Read the PJ Library Book

A Horse for Hanukkah (4's)

By Myriam Halberstam

Illustrated by Nancy Cote

Published by Ariella Books



Synopsis

Hannah's priorities are a bit skewed, so when she wakes up the morning before Hanukkah begins to find that her dream gift – a horse – is on its way, she is delighted. Hannah's joy quickly fades as the horse wreaks havoc in her home. Golda the horse becomes more and more of a nuisance as Hanukkah goes on. Will Hannah realize her family's peace of mind is more important than her desire for this impractical pet?

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Peaceful home – *Sha-lom ba-yit* - שלום בַּיִת

Being happy with what you have – *Sa-me-ach b'chel-ko* - שְׂמֵחַ בְּחֶלְקוֹ

Introducing the value of peaceful home *Shalom bayit*

From Jewish teachings	For the teacher	Questions for children
<p>Jewish tradition teaches that if we wish to live in harmony, we must learn to make compromises. A popular song and prayer from Jewish liturgy states: “<i>Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael.</i>” This translates to “May the Maker of Peace in the heavens, bring peace to us and to all of Israel.” Scholars explain that by placing “peace to us” before “peace to all of Israel,” it emphasizes that peace begins with ourselves at home. Living in harmony with our loved ones provides a blueprint for creating a peaceful world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When does your classroom feel most peaceful? • Reflect on what works to bring peace to your classroom, and what tends to escalate tension. • How do you help children recognize and enjoy moments of “shalom bayit” your classroom? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does your home look and feel like when it is filled with “shalom” (peace)? • What sometimes chases away the peace in your home? • What helps bring shalom back after it momentarily disappears?



Introducing the value of being happy with what you have *Sameach b'chelko*

<p>From Jewish teachings</p> <p>It seems to be human nature to want what we cannot, or do not, have. We all know the story of Adam. He is living in paradise, the Garden of Eden, yet he can't resist eating the forbidden fruit. In <i>Pirkei Avot</i>, the Ethics of our Ancestors, Ben Zoma says, "Who is rich? The one who is happy with what he has." [4:1] How do we teach ourselves and our children this concept?</p>	<p>For the teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we help families lessen the emphasis on gift giving at Hanukkah time? • How can we help children reduce their desire to have what everyone else has? • When do we know that our classroom has too much stuff, and how can we reduce the excess? 	<p>Questions for children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As we look through the book's illustrations, describe some of the good things you notice in Hannah's life. • What makes you feel happy? • For what are you grateful?
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Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

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

In the Classroom / Centers

☆ **Being happy with what you have/sameach b'chelko:** Turn the idea of a wish list on its head, by keeping a running tab of things students are happy for instead of want they want. You could prompt the children by using a different header on the list each day. For example: "What's something you're happy for that starts with the same first letter as your name?" Or, "What are you happy about during the summer?"



☆ **Being happy with what you have/sameach b'chelko:** Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative! Weave happy **songs** into your day, especially at times which may be challenging. You could add new lyrics to *If You're Happy and You Know It*, highlighting some Jewish values that could bring joy. Start simply: "If you're happy and you know it **give tzedakah.**" Get a little more outrageous each time: "If you're happy and you know it **give away clothes that no longer fit.**"

☆ **Peaceful home/shalom bayit:** Calm in the classroom is often disrupted when children aren't sure how to articulate their feelings. Help them gain **expressive language skills** by role-playing. Ask questions such as, "What could you say if Taylor took those blocks away from you?" or "How do you feel when Leo hugs you without asking? What words let him know you don't like it?"



☆ **Peaceful home/shalom bayit:** A precursor to peace in the classroom is reinforcing children's understanding of emotions. You might create a facial expression bingo game for your **game center**. You can use magazine images or photos of the children. Provide lots of mirrors so they can practice making different emotion-related facial expressions. Take pictures as they practice the faces so they can reflect upon them in later **documentation**.



Engage the families in your community

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

Bringing school home

We often try to emulate a home environment in the classroom, but what about emulating a classroom environment at home? To help create a sense of shalom bayit for your families, send home some



resources that have been successful at school in creating a sense of calm. Perhaps it has been creating visual schedules so the children know what to anticipate, or furnishing a cool-down area in your classroom. These practices might work equally well at home.

December declutter

As families are celebrating the December holidays, encourage them to think about what they might remove from their homes in order to make way for the potential gifts or new clothes. This could be a great opportunity to collect gently used clothes and toys for a local shelter. The families can both be acknowledging that they're "happy with what they have" and doing a meaningful act of *tzedakah*.

At Home

See below for a mini-newsletter about this book. Cut on the dotted line to send directly to parents, or copy any part for your website or electronic communication with families.



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Hannah receives a horse for Hanukkah, and while initially delighted, her joy diminishes as the horse wreaks havoc on her home. Will Hannah realize her family's peace of mind is more important than her desire for this impractical pet?



DISCUSS Jewish values

Peaceful home/*shalom bayit*

Learning to compromise and establish peace at home can serve as a first step to bringing peace to the world

- What does our home look and feel like when it is filled with *shalom* (peace)?

Being happy with what you have/*sameach b'chelko*

True contentment comes from acknowledging the positives in our lives.

- How many wonderful things can we say about our family in one minute? Go!

DO fun stuff at home

Bless Our Home, Mad Libs Style

Compose your family's own prayer for a peaceful home by asking family members to complete one or two of the following statements:

Let our home be filled with _____ ;

May _____ stay far away from our home.

Thank you for making our home _____.

MORE resources

Declutter and be happier? <http://bit.ly/PJ-blog-happy>

Gretchen Rubin and how to be happier at home: <http://bit.ly/happy-at-home>

