



K-2 CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

2017–2018 THEME: **FAMILIES**

Why focus on families?

Families have existed since the beginning of humankind more than three million years ago. Some scientists argue that families arose out of an innate need for emotional interdependence. Other researchers believe families developed in order to raise children, gather food, and protect one another from dangers of the wild. Families are an essential building block of our world, but what *is* a family exactly? Sociologists describe family in terms of a household of inhabitants within a shared living space; anthropologists refer to tribes, ancestry, or DNA makeup. How can we begin to define family based on common ideals and shared values?






Families have a large impact on who we are and who we become. Identity can be developed because of, or in spite of, our relationship to family. How can you study families from a historical and personal perspective that will help students understand their place in connection to their family's heritage and to the Jewish community?

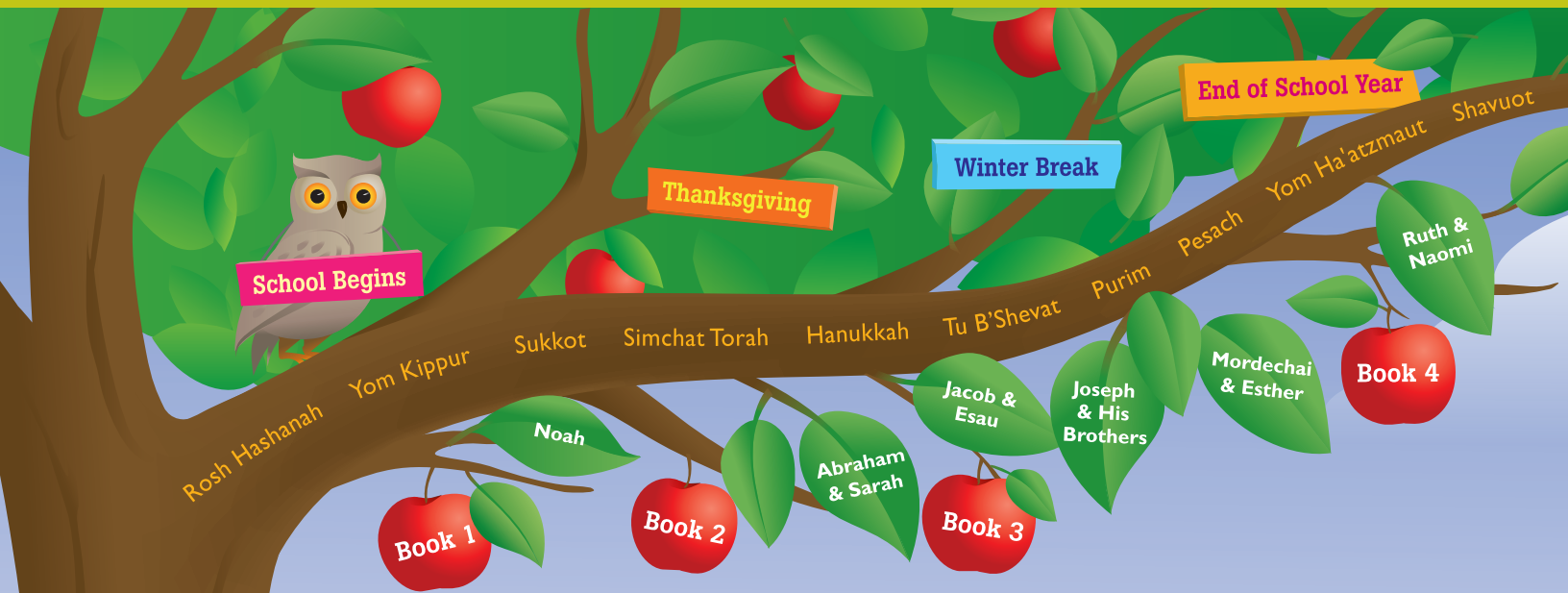
How does this guide help you?

- Program overview – instant connection of books and values to common Bible stories and prayers
- Graphic organizer – year-at-a-glance for seamless curriculum planning
- Jewish perspectives on family – build a shared vocabulary of Jewish values through meaningful dialogue
- Family engagement ideas – involve families in their children's Jewish learning
- Voices and Visions imagery mini-lesson – got a few minutes to fill?

PROGRAM MATERIALS

Book-specific resource guides and additional materials can be found online in our Educators' Center: pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/educators

Books & Materials	Values	Jewish Text	This book shows...
 <p><i>Oy Vey! Life in a Shoe</i> (Apples and Honey Press)</p>	Peaceful home Being happy with what you have	The biblical patriarch Jacob had 12 sons and one daughter, just like the family in this book. They suffered hardships and jealousy, but family loyalty won in the end.	Family members can learn to understand each other's quirks and needs
 <p><i>Rebecca's Journey Home</i> (Kar-Ben Publishing)</p>	Significance of names Each person is unique	God gave Abram and Sarai the names Abraham and Sarah to help them identify with their new roles as the patriarch and matriarch of the Jewish people.	Families are created in many ways
 <p><i>Chicken Soup, Chicken Soup</i> (Kar-Ben Publishing)</p>	Passing tradition from generation to generation Learning from everyone	<i>L'dor va-dor</i> , from generation to generation, is a central concept of the daily Jewish liturgy as well as the Haggadah for Passover. Families of every origin have traditions and stories to pass along.	Family members come from different backgrounds and faiths
 <p><i>Mrs. Katz and Tush</i> (Doubleday Books)</p>	Remembrance Loving others	The <i>Amidah</i> (central prayer in Jewish worship) opens with the passage <i>Avot</i> , ancestors. Its purpose is to gain favor with God by making a connection to the past.	Friends can become part of our family
 <p>Voices & Visions Frames of Mind Notecards</p>	Jewish values through visual arts	A Jewish families "instant lesson" for one poster is included in this guide. Find in-depth lessons at voices-visions.org	From ancient to modern history, our ancestors offer words of wisdom



Building a classroom family tree

A family tree has come to be the quintessential symbol of the family. Its roots signify family heritage; the branches and leaves point to the twists and turns of history and choice. This tree organizer is also an expression of the school year, with its holidays and Torah stories. When will you choose to read your books in the blossoming year?

Tree decals and ongoing investigation

The family tree decals included in your PJGtS kit can be used as a reflection of your in-class learning as well as a catalyst for family involvement. See the suggestions below. The decals work well on a white board or window. Use dry-erase markers on the leaves.

Book	Using the tree decals
<i>Oy Vey! Life in a Shoe</i> Dates: _____	Have each child write his/her name on one leaf and draw an activity his/her family enjoys on another. Let everyone describe their family to the class. How will you connect families with similar interests? Add photos or hand-drawn family portraits around the tree and a classroom family portrait in the center.
<i>Rebecca's Journey Home</i> Dates: _____	Build on your classroom family tree experience by changing to Hebrew names on the leaves. Invite families to tell the story behind their children's names. Families may want to create a Hebrew name with you or the rabbi if they haven't yet done so.
<i>Chicken Soup, Chicken Soup</i> Dates: _____	Families come from all over the world. Ask parents to tell their children where their families originated. Write cities, states, or countries on the leaves. Encourage children to learn something about that place to share with classmates.
<i>Mrs. Katz and Tush</i> Dates: _____	What are the different ways we can show love and care? Display students' proposals on leaves next to the tree. Encourage the children to act on their suggestions. Revisit the ideas and move leaves onto the tree as children accomplish acts of caring. Can you fill the whole tree?

“It is not good for a person to be alone...”

...לאִטוֹב הָיֹוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ...

Lo tov he-yot ha-a-dam le-va-do...

(Genesis 2:18)

Jewish perspective on families

The Torah teaches that humans are meant to live, form relationships, and interact with others. God realizes immediately that Adam should not be alone and creates Eve as a partner. God then instructs them to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28), in other words, to raise a family. So central is family to Judaism that the first book of the Torah focuses primarily on stories about family relationships. Families in the Bible are anything but normative or perfect. Examples of family life reflect different configurations, as well as many positive and negative facets of human behavior. The Torah offers guidelines for creating an ideal home, such as honoring one’s parents (Deuteronomy 6:7) and teaching children Torah, a trade, and how to swim (*Kiddushin 29a*).

The Talmud, a book of Jewish wisdom, refers to the home as a *mikdash me’at*, a tiny Temple or sacred space. Jewish sages say that the home should be the center of moral education and a “gathering place for scholars” (*Pirkei Avot 1:4*). Yet it is the love and respect families show one another that make the home truly holy.

Your own perspective

- Who are the people (and pets) you consider to be part of your family?
- Has your role in your family changed over time? How so?
- In what ways has family enriched your life? What aspects of family life have been challenging?
- What are the highlights of your family’s story?

With families

An ongoing investigation of family life can foster students’ appreciation for one another and their families, including all of their gifts and challenges. Help students recognize that all families are different, and it’s okay to be different. Here are a few ways to celebrate families’ unique qualities.

- **Family slide show.** At various times of the year ask families to take a photo with an assigned topic, such as having dinner, playing outside, attending a sporting event, enjoying a holiday celebration, or having fun during a school break. Collect the photos, perhaps in a private Google drive. Have a mini-slide show after each assignment, culminating with a dinner-theatre style presentation of all of the photos.
- **Family game night.** Invite families to bring their favorite board game to school. Pair families together to play games. Don’t forget the snacks!
- **Family quilt.** Provide families with fabric squares or cardboard, at home or at school, and ask families to represent themselves somehow on the square. They might use fabric markers, puffy paints, embroidery thread, or glue and felt. Let their imaginations run wild. Assemble the squares in a family appreciation ceremony.





GOES to SCHOOL

POSTER IMAGE INSTANT LESSON

Natan Sharansky was born Anatoly Shcharansky in the former Soviet Union. He was a well-known *refusenik*, a Soviet Jew who was denied permission to leave Russia to go to Israel. Natan's marriage was not recognized by the Russian government, because he and his wife Avital had a religious ceremony instead of a civil ceremony.

Natan Sharansky became an activist and freedom fighter, and was later arrested. He spent eight years in prison. A movie-like prisoner exchange of spies finally gave Mr. Sharansky his freedom. Natan left immediately for Israel, where he held many government positions and wrote several books.

“We must believe not only that all people are created equal, but also that all peoples are created equal.”

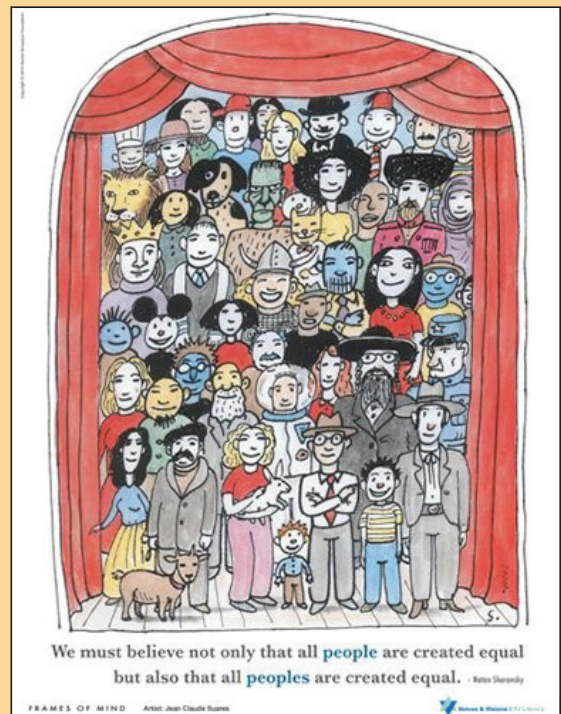
Natan Sharansky

Unpack the poster with your students: What do you see? Which one of these people is most like you? Point to the people who remind you of members of your own family.

Use your imagination: If you were going to create a family, who from this poster would be in it, and why?

Read the quote aloud: What do you think that means? The word “peoples” can be defined as a large group of individuals who share the same language, religion, or traditions. An example is *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish people.

Think again: Change the word “peoples” to “families.” What does this quote mean if we say all families are created equal?



Additional resources

Researching your family tree: www.myheritage.com

Family tree 201: <http://bit.ly/PJ-blog-family-tree>

Resource for interfaith Jewish families:
www.interfaithfamily.com

Importance of family stories:
<http://bit.ly/nytimes-family-stories>

Keys for building strong families:
<http://bit.ly/build-strong-families>

The Torah's first family: <http://bit.ly/love-lessons>

Sibling relationships in the Torah:
www.myjewishlearning.com/article/sibling-relationships/

TedEd's surprising history of marriage:
<http://bit.ly/TedEd-history-of-marriage>