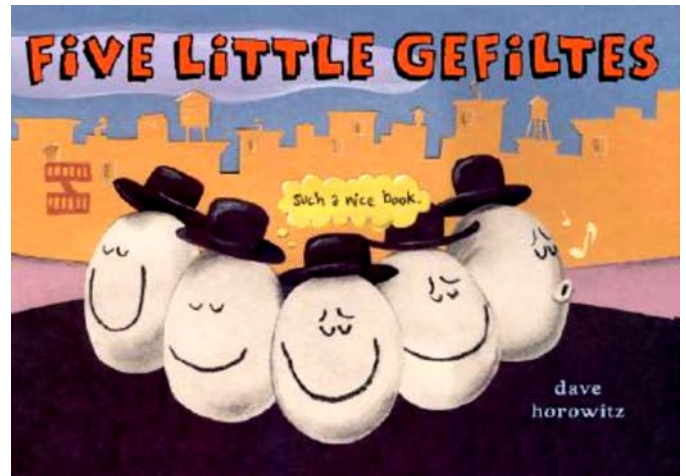


Five Little Gefiltes

By Dave Horowitz

Program Focus

Age group:	Ages 2-5
Time frame:	45-60 minutes
Central value:	Acting like a mensch Honoring one's parents



Synopsis

Mama Gefilte isn't thrilled when her curious little ones leave their jar and go out to explore the world, but she can certainly be proud of what they know about being a mensch. This playful tale is filled with fun Yiddish expressions that are great to say and listen to- even if one doesn't fully understand their meaning!

Goals

- To familiarize families with a traditional Jewish food (gefilte fish)
- To encourage families to think about ways of honoring one's mother, and ways of behaving like a mensch
- For participants to practice *Kibud Horim* by making a present for their parent/s.
- To increase participants' understanding and appreciation of Yiddish

Submitted by

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Plan in advance

Prepare Gefilte Fish Tasting

Materials

- 2 or more jars of gefilte fish
- Toothpicks or plastic forks
- Small plates or napkins
- A pitcher of water and small cups
- Trash can

Advanced Preparations

1. Use one unopened jar of gefilte fish as a display item (to examine whole, unadulterated gefilte fish balls).
2. Open the other jars of gefilte fish and cut the large balls into small bite sized pieces.
3. Place one toothpick or fork in each piece of gefilte fish.



Prepare Gefilte Fish Dolls

Materials

- Small wastebasket-sized white trash bags (8 gallon size, 22 in. x 2 ft.)
- Pieces of newspaper, torn into wide strips
- Masking tape, permanent markers
- Construction paper hats, approximately 11 inches wide and 8 inches high
- Washable markers and stickers OR glue sticks and foam/paper shapes

Prepare Re-enactment of Story

Materials

- Gefilte fish dolls (made during the introductory activities)
- Mama gefilte fish doll (made by group leader prior to the program)
- A few extra dolls on hand, in case some children arrive late

Prepare Special Gift for Parents

Materials

- Pipe cleaners
- Pony Beads (available at most craft stores)
- Metal key-chain rings
- Optional: Hebrew and English letter beads, Heart Shaped beads

Advance Preparations:

1. Tie a knot at the end of each pipe cleaner
2. Separate the letters used to spell "Mom," "Dad," "Abba," and "Ema"

Introduce with activities

Taste Gefilte Fish

Today, we are going to read a silly story about a family of gefilte fish. Do you know what gefilte fish are? Gefilte fish are very different from the kinds of fish that swim in oceans, lakes and rivers. Gefilte fish do not have tails, fins, or gills (Lift up the unopened jar, and point out the gefilte fish.) Gefilte fish are balls that you can eat that are made from several different kinds of fish. Before we read our story about gefilte fish, I'd like you to try a little bite and see just what gefilte fish taste like. After you've eaten your gefilte fish snack, please throw away your plates and napkins and move on to the next table, where you'll have a chance to make your very own gefilte fish doll.



Create Gefilte Fish Dolls

After we read our story about gefilte fish, we're going to play a game in which we act out the story using some funny gefilte fish dolls. Right now, we're going to make gefilte fish dolls using plastic bags, newspaper, and tape. Most of the gefilte fish in our book are wearing something special on their heads (Point to the cover of the book). What are they wearing? That's right, a hat! So, after we shape and stuff our gefilte fish, we're going to need to decorate a hat for them.

Directions

1. Invite children to crumple numerous newspaper strips into balls.
2. Stuff wastebasket bag with newspaper balls.
3. Fold the bottom of the bag and tape the folded flap to the bag.
4. Shape the bag into a ball, by pulling the sides of the bag towards the back of the bag. Tape the sides down.
5. Use washable markers and stickers (or glue sticks and paper shapes) to decorate paper hat.
6. Tape the hat to the top of the plastic bag/ ball.
7. Using permanent markers, draw facial features onto the front of the taped bag (This may be a job for adults rather than children).



Oy vey!

Introduce the Story

Today, we're going to read a book about a family of 5 gefilte fish children and their mother. Do Gefilte fish look like regular fish? (Hold up jar of gefilte fish). Do gefilte fish have a tail and fins and eyes? What shape are gefilte fish? Gefilte fish is a type of food that is made from many different kinds of fish all chopped up and mixed together. How many of you tasted gefilte when you first arrived at our program? Did you like it? Gefilte fish is a food that many Jewish people have been eating for a very long time. My grandmother, my great grandmother, and my great, great grandmother all ate gefilte fish, and they loved it.

The gefilte fish in our story are different from the kind of gefilte fish that my grandmother and great grandmother ate. The gefilte fish in our story can walk and talk! Do you think that gefilte fish can really walk and talk? If you listen closely to this story, you might notice that when the gefilte fish speak, they often use many funny-sounding and unusual words. They say things like "Oy vey, shlep, and mensch." Our gefilte fish speak Yiddish. Yiddish is a language that many Jewish people spoke a long time ago. My grandparents and great grandparents spoke Yiddish, and I bet that many of your grandparents did as well. Today, there are many people who love Yiddish and who study this language in school and in college. There are also many people who add a word or two of Yiddish to their speech without even noticing it.

As we read our story I'll teach you a few new Yiddish words. The first word that you need to know is Oy vey! Can you say that word? Oy vey means "Oh, no". We say "Oy vey" whenever something bad happens. This morning, I dropped a glass on the kitchen floor, and do you know what I said? (Oy vey). By accident, my son dropped his teddy bear in the bath tub, and do you know what he said? (Oy vey). In our story the gefilte fish keep getting lost. Do you know what the mother says every time she discovers that another gefilte fish has disappeared? She says, "Oy vey." As I read, could you help the Mama say Oy vey?



Read the story

Invite families to join you in the reading area. Encourage children to bring their gefilte fish dolls with them (instruct the children to let the gefilte fish sit on Mom's lap while they listen to the story).

Props

- One large mother gefilte fish doll- made in advanced by leader
- Tape a triangular shaped hat to the mother's head, or give her a large pink hat to wear
- Jar of gefilte fish

Encourage Participation

- Pause and encourage the children to say "Oy vey" each time you repeat the refrain "Oy vey"
- Ask the children to help you count how many large gefilte fish they see on each page.
- Encourage the children to join you as you pantomime swimming (in the Great New York Bay), walking (move your arms and feet each time the gefilte fish "go out"), eating at the deli, driving a taxi, and crying (when the Mama Gefilte sits on the bench).
- Explain the meaning of the word *kvetch*:
 - *"The Mama feels both sad and angry that her children have gone away. The book says that she kvetches- Kvetch means to complain .When the Mama kvetches, she cries and whines; Where are those kids of mine? How come they don't call me on the phone or write?"*
- Encourage the children to kvetch along with you (In a whiney voice declare, "Where are they, why don't they come back?")

Follow Up Discussion

1. How did the mother feel when her children left her?
2. Why did the children come back?
3. How did the mother feel when the children came back?

Defining the Word "Mensch"

In the book, it says that the children came back because "each was a mensch." Do you know what a mensch is? A mensch is a Yiddish word that means a very good person. A mensch is a person who is kind, nice, and does the right thing. A mensch is someone who helps others and makes others feel happy and good. Are you a mensch? I think so! I bet that there are many times during the day when each of you acts kindly, helps others, and behaves like a mensch. Do you ever help put away your toys? Do you help clean up the table after you eat? Do you remember to say please or thank you? Do you remember to hug your mom, dad, or brothers and sisters and say "I love you?" When you do any of those very nice and special things, you are acting like a mensch. Let's see if we can all be mensches (in Yiddish, we say "menschen") right now. Can you hug the grown up next to you and tell them that you love them?

Follow Up activities and resources

Re-enact the Story Using Dolls

Intro Words

When many of you arrived today, you had a chance to make your very own gefilte fish. Can you show me your gefilte fish? Are these gefilte fish real? Can we eat them? No, but do you know what we can do with these gefilte fish? We can play a game with them. Our gefilte fish can be just like the ones in the story. They can go out for a walk and leave their mother, but when they find out that their mother is sad and lonely what should they do? That's right, they should come right back to their mother and blow her a kiss. Do our gefilte fish want the mama to be sad? No way! Our gefiltes are mensches. They want their Mama to be happy. Are you ready to pretend to be a gefilte fish and a mensch? To play this game, you need to listen closely to the words of my song and follow my directions. We're going to march to several different places in the room. My song will tell us where we need to go. Whenever we hear the words "Oy vey," we're going to need to hurry back home to Mama Gefilte and blow her a kiss.

Directions

1. Leave Mother Gefilte fish in the group leader's chair.
2. Group Leader sings the "Five Little Gefilte Fish" song and encourages the children to hold their gefilte fish and follow her as she marches to specific locations in the room.
Example - "Five Little Gefiltes went out one day, over the hills and to the door (or to the corner of the room, the toy sink, the blocks, or the art table.) Once everyone is huddled in the location described in the song, the group leader sings, "Mama Gefilte cried out Oy vey". At the words "Oy vey", the group leader encourages the children to race back to the Mama Gefilte, and blow her a kiss.
3. Repeat the game, using at least 4 different locations.

Adaptations for Older Children

Add an element of color identification to the game. Set up an empty chair in each corner of the room. Tape a different colored piece of construction paper to each chair. Sing, "Five Little Gefiltes went out one day, over the hills and to the _____ (insert the name of a color) chair.

Ask the children to dash to the correct chair.



Act like a Mensch by Making a Special Gift for Parents

Intro Words

When we read our story we learned that the gefilte fish came back to their mother because each was a mensch. What is a mensch? Anytime we act nicely towards our parents or grandparents and let them know how much we love them, we are acting like a mensch. "Mensch" is a Yiddish word. In Hebrew, whenever we act nicely towards our parents and show them honor and respect, we say that we are practicing the mitzvah of Kibbud Av v'Em. Kibuud means "honor." Av or abba is father, and Em or Ema is mother. Right now, we're going to have one more chance to act like a mensch and practice the mitzvah of Kibud Av V'Em. We're going to make a special present for mom, dad, grandma, or grandpa. You can use these beads to make a bracelet or a key chain for your mom, dad, or grandparents. If you want to act like a super-duper mensch, remember to give mom or dad a hug and a kiss when you give them this special present. Be sure to tell them just how much you love them. OK menschen, are you ready to get to work and make your special presents?



Directions

1. Ask children to string beads onto a pipe cleaner.
2. When the pipe cleaner is almost completely covered in beads, ask the child if he/she would like to make a bracelet or a key chain. (For a bracelet, twist the free, unknotted end of the pipe cleaner around a segment of pipe cleaner which is near the end-knot.
3. For a key chain, fold the pipe cleaner in half and wrap both ends of the pipe cleaner around the metal key ring.

Adaptations for Older Children

Encourage older children to use beads to spell out the words Mom, Dad, Abba, or Ema. Hebrew letter beads can also be used in this project. (Hebrew Letter beads can often be ordered from <http://www.jewishcrafts.com/MothersFathersDay.html>)

Resources for parents, teachers, families

Nurturing the Family

- Create and distribute hand-outs at the end of the program or send hand-outs to families that include suggestions for ways that children can “be a Mensch.” The hand-out may be entitled “Top Ten Ways to Be a Mensch.”
- Encourage families to take home extra pipe cleaners and beads for children to construct their own “Mensch Bracelet”. Each time a child is spotted acting like a mensch at home, he/she is given one bead to add to his/her bracelet. The child’s goal should be to make the bracelet as beautiful as possible, by adding as many beads as possible to the bracelet. Ask children to wear their completed mensch bracelets to your next program.
- The following website contains additional ideas and resources on how to encourage “menschlike” behavior at home:
 - [Raising a Mensch](#), a PJ Library blog post