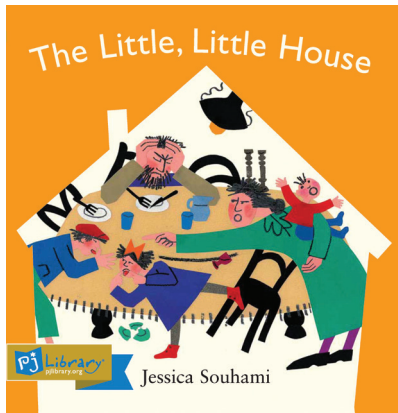


## BIG QUESTION

### When do we have enough?



#### **The Little, Little House**

Written and Illustrated  
by Jessica Souhami  
Published by France Lincoln  
Children's Books



Being happy with what you have – *Sa-me-ach be-chel-ko*  
שִׂמַח בְּחֵלְקוֹ



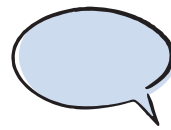
## Read

the book for Jewish values

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 *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of our Ancestors), a collection of rabbinic sayings, the sage 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? Can we create paradise for ourselves by learning to appreciate what we have?

### Optional storytelling technique

Use masking tape to "draw" a house on the floor. As you read about each animal coming into the house, invite more children into the space. Remember to ask "What happened?" as the book prompts.



## Discuss

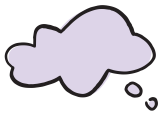
Jewish values with one another

### For the teacher's consideration

- How do you train yourself to look at the positive side of any situation? Similarly, how do you acknowledge the often overlooked things in your life for which you are grateful?
- How do you help children acknowledge what is going well in their day?
- How can we minimize children's desire to have what someone else has?

### Questions for children

- Why is Joseph unhappy at the beginning of the story? How does he feel at the end of the story? What changes?
- Sometimes it's important to pause and think about all the good things that happen in our life. Tell me something good that has happened today.
- Joseph learns to love his house. Tell me something you love about where you live.



# Imagine

how values will come to life

## Social-emotional learning

Being happy with what you have is different than “you get what you get and you don’t get upset.” It is natural to react when choices are made for us. Create classroom experiences where children have choice and can appreciate what they’ve chosen, such as varied art materials or two flavors of a special treat.

## Social studies and fine motor

Build a happy home at snack time using graham crackers and sunflower butter. Before you make the blessing and eat your creations, encourage your students to talk about what makes them happy at home or in school.

## Dramatic play

Allow children to create small-world scenarios that reflect their happy homes, by creating blocks of family members. Ask families to provide small photos (that won’t be returned) of family members – including pets. Glue the pictures onto small blocks for children to incorporate into their play. Add chickens, etc. to act out this story.

How does your environment support the value of being happy with what you have?

## Manipulatives

Challenge children to build and appreciate homes of different sizes and structures. Populate the block area with laminated pictures of houses, apartment buildings, and unique architecture to inspire new creations. Project images onto the block structures to make them come to life.



# Engage

families in conversations about values

## How can you deepen home-school relationships?

### School appreciation

Make a large drawing of your school to hang in your lobby. Encourage families to answer the question “What do you love about our school and community?” Provide post-its and pens for their answers.

### Reward yourself

Declutter with Marie Kondo and appreciate your home and school space. Clear out toy clutter with your children. The reward is a toy drive and party at school that will benefit a homeless shelter or children’s hospital.

## More on this topic

### PJ Library books

*It Could Always Be Worse*  
by Margot Zemach

*Just Enough and Not Too Much*  
by Kaethe Zemach

### Web article

Education news: What might it look like if your classroom had less?

[bit.ly/spare-the-decor](http://bit.ly/spare-the-decor)