

## PURIM PLAY

Written by Roni Schotter

Illustrated by Marilyn Hafner



*With her cousins sick, Frannie is disappointed that her neighbor, Mrs. Teplitzky, has offered to take part in her family's annual Purim play. Mrs. Teplitzky, a former actress, arrives in a splendid costume. The elderly widow turns out to be a superb villain and steals the show. She also becomes a friend.*

**P**urim is one of the most joyous Jewish holidays, celebrating freedom and the capacity of an individual—in this case, a brave young woman—to affect the future of an entire people.

A *mitzvah* (in this instance, a “commandment”) of this holiday is to hear the story of Purim read from the Biblical book of Esther, commonly referred to as the Megillah. This reading is usually part of a larger community celebration, complete with costumes, plays, sweet treats, and general merriment. To find community-wide celebrations of Purim in your area, contact a local synagogue, Jewish community center or Jewish federation office.

### WAYS TO CELEBRATE

While Purim is generally celebrated publicly, families can also create home festivities, as Frannie's did. An entertaining exercise is for each family member to act the part of a different Purim personality at dinner: challenge everyone to stay in character throughout the meal. Invite your children's classmates to join you for a *hamantashen*-baking extravaganza; then dress in costumes, read the story of Esther, shake noisemakers, and share those yummy *hamantashen*.

### JEWISH VALUES

Integral to the story of *Purim Play* is Mrs. Teplitzky, who joins Frannie's family at their Purim party. Mrs. Teplitzky's

inclusion in the festivities is at first unpopular from the children's point of view; however, her presence leads to surprising results.

Several Jewish tenets are entwined here: *hachnasat orchim*, welcoming guests, and *v'hadarta p'nei zaken*, respect for the elderly.

### IDEAS FOR PARENTS

Discuss with your children ways to be sensitive and kind to older adults. Initiate a family relationship with a senior and involve your children—allow them to make an invitation to your home and help deliver it; encourage them to answer the door with you when your guest arrives; ask them to offer refreshments; suggest they send a follow-up note.

Intergenerational friendships can prove to be long-lasting, meaningful and pleasurable for everyone. Pj

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