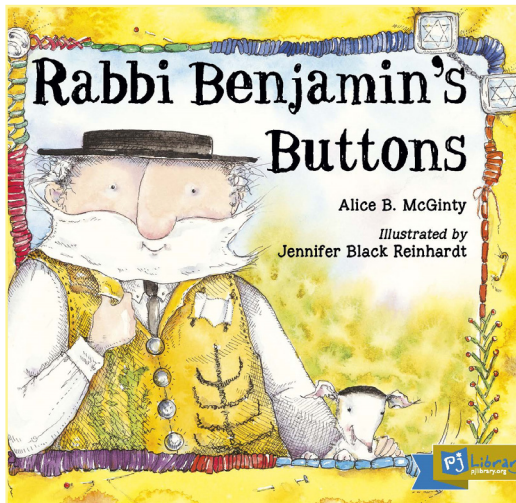


Rabbi Benjamin's Buttons

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{ **How can a community show its love?** }

Pot Luck

Lucky Rabbi Benjamin! Every member of his congregation is a good cook, and as the Jewish holidays arrive, they are all eager to celebrate “in the very best way”— by sharing delicious food! Rabbi Benjamin’s friends are good examples of the Jewish value of *kol Yisrael arevim zeh baze* (Hebrew for “all of Israel is responsible for one another”). This is generally understood to mean that every community member is expected to look out for and take care of each other, and that’s exactly what happens in this story — sometimes with accompanying apple torte, sweet pumpkin pie, and crispy latkes.

HANDS ON!

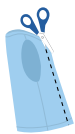
Make a No-Sew Vest

Supplies

- Old, oversized T-shirt
- Scissors
- Newspaper
- Fabric markers



1 Fold the T-shirt so the sleeves overlap. Cut both sleeves off above the shoulder seam.



2 Now fold the T-shirt so that the middle is creased down the center. Cut along the center crease, about an inch in.

3 Trim the bottom in a curve so that the front of the vest is longer.



4 Cut the collar out.

Spread newspaper over your workspace, then use the fabric markers to decorate your vest. Simply tie the front ends together, and you are ready to go have special meals with “the sunshine of your heart.”

Too Much of a Good Thing?

This puts Rabbi Benjamin in a (yummy) pickle. Jewish holidays are peppered throughout the year, with festive occasions popping up in every season, and Rabbi Benjamin has a *lot* of friends... “Oy-yoy-yoy,” groans Rabbi Benjamin as his lovely vest starts losing its buttons. In Jewish practice, it’s not just our souls that we nurture, but our bodies as well. Rabbi Benjamin takes to heart the Jewish obligation to take care of one’s health, known in Hebrew as *shmirat haguf*. That’s why, rather than frown “all summer long,” he makes a point of getting outside and moving his body.

Sharing Is Caring

Luckily, there are many opportunities for Rabbi Benjamin both to be healthy and to do *mitzvot* (Hebrew for “commandments” or good deeds). By planting and picking and sweating and fishing, Rabbi Benjamin is not only being healthy and active — he’s also giving back to his community, not to mention having fun with the people he cares about. Celebrating holidays “in the very best way” isn’t so much about food, after all — it’s about being together with loved ones. Turns out that taking care of others *and* oneself can be deliciously rewarding. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/rabbibenjamin.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

RABBI Benjamin thinks of his congregants as “the sunshine of his heart” — and they think the same of him. Who is the sunshine of your heart?

WHAT foods do you like to eat during holidays?

DO you do any of the things Rabbi Benjamin does to stay active? What else do you do?