BEAUTY AND UGLINESS

Global Day of Jewish Learning: Curriculum

NOV. 12. 17
www.theglobalday.org
A Project of the Aleph Society
Teaching it to our children means also making them partners in what is so very important.

— Rabbi Steinsaltz

PJ Library Curriculum

NOV.12.17
**Hiddur Mitzvah**

Books that show how beautiful objects are used (or created) to enhance the performance of a mitzvah or the celebration of a holiday

*Biscuit’s Hanukkah* (age 2)
Hanukkah is all about sharing fun, food, and festivity with family and friends — even the furry ones. Isn’t that right, Biscuit?

*Hanna’s Sabbath Dress* (age 3)
When Hanna helps an old man carry a heavy bundle of coal, her new *Shabbat* dress becomes dirty and stained. The moon rewards Hanna for her kind deed, changing the stains into shimmering diamonds of light.

*A Mezuzah on the Door* (age 4)
Noah hasn’t had a good night’s sleep since moving from his noisy apartment in the city to a quiet house in the suburbs. That all changes after his parents invite former neighbors to a *Hanukkat Habayit*, the dedication of their new house as a Jewish home.

*Mrs. Moskowitz and the Sabbath Candlesticks* (age 4)
An elderly woman is unable to enjoy her new residence until her rediscovery of a pair of memory-filled Sabbath candlesticks turns an apartment into a home.

*The Shabbat Box* (age 4)
When Ira loses his class’s precious *Shabbat* Box in a snowstorm, he learns valuable lessons about honesty, trust, and eventual good outcomes.

*The Eighth Menorah* (age 5)
Sam loves celebrating Hanukkah with his family - and especially his grandma. But when his class makes menorahs in school, he’s worried — his family has a lot of menorahs. He comes up with a plan so that this new menorah has the best home ever.

*Nonna’s Hanukkah Surprise* (age 5)
Rachel’s Italian grandma, Nonna, doesn’t celebrate Hanukkah, so Rachel plans to bring Hanukkah to her house. When her plans go awry, Nonna makes it all okay.

*Joseph’s Sabbath Fish* (age 6)
Joseph always welcomes guests to his Sabbath table, while his neighbor Judah scoffs at Joseph’s generosity. Even as his fortunes decline, Joseph’s door remains open. Times change and Judah turns to Joseph for help. A very special fish helps save the day.

*Lotty’s Lace Tablecloth* (age 7)
In a 19th-century Viennese shop, Lotty, a lace-maker, displays her most prized possession: a tablecloth she has created to help welcome the Sabbath Queen each week. Empress Elizabeth sees the tablecloth and wants it. How will Lotty react?

*The Always Prayer Shawl* (age 8)
A prayer shawl makes its way from grandfather to grandson in this poignant story of tradition and love passed along from one generation to the next.

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**The Beauty of Individual Differences**

Books that celebrate individual differences, highlighting the unique characteristic found within each person/creature

*The Littlest Pair* (age 2)
There isn’t one animal happy to see a pair of termites come aboard their temporary floating home. When things aboard the ark get slippery and uncomfortable and the little termites have a solution to their problem, all those creatures quickly change their tune.

*Estie the Mensch* (age 3)
Estie does not always know how to be around other people and sometimes when her grandmother reminds her to be a mensch, she’d rather not. She’d prefer to be a turtle or a seagull. Eventually, something happens that shows her grandmother and Estie herself what a *mensch* the girl can really be.

*Beautiful Yetta* (age 4)
Yetta the chicken escapes from the farmer’s cage. But what is a country hen to do in big, unfamiliar Brooklyn?

*The Only One Club* (age 4)
As the only Jewish child in her class, a young girl not only learns that each person is unique but is able to share this understanding with her classmates.
How Dalia Put a Big Yellow Comforter Inside a Tiny Blue Box (age 5)
Dalia and her classmates create beautiful tzedakah boxes. With the money they save in their boxes, they purchase materials that help brighten and beautify an old woman’s world.

The Chameleon that Saved Noah’s Ark (age 6)
Noah’s Ark didn’t just hold animals - it held food for all those animals to eat. But the chameleons were very picky eaters! No one could have guessed how this problem would be solved.

Jumping Jenny (age 6)
Jenny loves to jump, but when her energetic jumping gets her into trouble, she decides to retire her pogo stick. Then her school decides to hold a fundraising fair, and she discovers that her skill can be used for a good cause.

The Peddler’s Gift (age 7)
Shnook the Peddler isn’t known for being very bright — so Leibush, a young shtetl boy, figures he can get away with swiping one of his dreidels. But it turns out Leibush doesn’t enjoy the stolen dreidel much as he thought he would — and Shnook is wiser than he looks.

How Kindness Creates Beauty
Books in which acts of kindness make beauty appear

Hanna’s Sabbath Dress (age 3)
When Hanna helps an old man carry a heavy bundle of coal, her new Shabbat dress becomes dirty and stained. The moon rewards Hanna for her kind deed, changing the stains into shimmering diamonds of light.

Grandma Rose’s Magic (age 4)
Grandma Rose stitches a little something extra into everything she makes. To thank her for her kindness, the recipients of Grandma Rose’s gifts reward her with a beautiful set of Shabbat dishes.

Gathering Sparks (age 5)
A grandfather teaches his granddaughter how every kind deed restores a spark of beauty to the world.

How Dalia Put a Big Yellow Comforter Inside a Tiny Blue Box (age 5)
Dalia and her classmates create beautiful tzedakah boxes. With the money they save in their boxes, they purchase materials that help brighten and beautify an old woman’s world.

One Good Deed (age 5)
A street that was once grey and dreary becomes more beautiful as the neighbors begin to help one another.

Gabriel’s Horn (age 7)
With each act of kindness performed by a family, a tarnished horn begins to shine more brightly, eventually being transformed into a gleaming new horn.

The Mysterious Guests (age 7)
As a reward for graciously welcoming guests into his sukkah, a poor man’s sukkah is transformed, with the fruits and vegetables magically being turned into gold and silver.
Hiddur Mitzvah: Books that show how beautiful objects are used (or created) to enhance the performance of a mitzvah or the celebration of a holiday

How Kindness Creates Beauty: Books in which acts of kindness make beauty appear

Read the PJ Library Book

Hanna’s Sabbath Dress
BY ITZHAK SCHWEIGER-DMI’EL
ILLUSTRATED BY ORA EITAN
PUBLISHED BY SIMON & SCHUSTER

Synopsis
Hanna is delighted when her mother makes her a beautiful new Shabbath dress. Hanna tries to keep her new dress spotless, but when she sees an old man struggling with a heavy bag of charcoal, she rushes to help him, soiling her dress in the process. Just when Hanna fears that her dress is permanently ruined, the moon comes to her aid, rewarding Hanna’s kindness with a special moonlit kindness of its own.

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary

Acts of loving kindness — ge-mi-lut cha-sa-dim — גמילות חסד
Welcoming the Shabbath — Ka-ba-lat Sha-bat — קבלת שבת
Beautifying the commandment — hi-dur mitz-vah — הידוර מצוה

Acts of loving kindness / gemilut chasidim. Pirkei Avot (Ethics of Our Ancestors) — a collection of rabbinic sayings — notes, “The world rests upon three things: Torah, avodah (work or prayer), and gemilut chasidim (acts of loving kindness)” [Chapter 1:2]. Our ancient sages felt that the world depended not only on our learning the right things to do, but putting our reflections into action through kind deeds. Attempting to clarify the definition of gemilut chasidim or chesed (kindness), the Talmud, a book of Jewish law and custom, explains that chesed is an all-encompassing term. It involves helping others by offering kind words, a helping hand, a listening ear, and/or financial and material assistance [Babylonian Talmud Sukkot 49b].

Welcoming the Shabbath / Kabalat Shabbat. Jewish poems, prayers, and songs often describe Shabbat as a queen or bride, as a way of showing how much the coming holiday is revered and anticipated. During the 1500’s, Kabbalistic (mystical) Jews usually dressed in white and went out into the fields to dance, sing, and joyously welcome Shabbat into their midst. It is still common to wear white on Shabbat, just as Hanna does in this book. The well-known song Lecha Dodi Likrat Kallah (“Come my beloved, to meet the Shabbat bride”) was composed during this time period as a way to usher in the Shabbat queen. The song is sung in many homes and synagogues today, with hundreds of variations on the melody. As the last line, “bo-i kallah” (“enter bride”), is sung, it is customary to turn toward the door and bow to greet and joyously welcome the arrival of Shabbat.
**Beautifying the commandment / hiddur mitzvah.** The Jewish concept of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautifying the *mitzvah*) means that when people set out to do a *mitzvah* (a commandment or good deed), they should try to perform the action enthusiastically, using the most beautiful materials available. For example, the Talmud states that when a person builds a *sukkah* (a temporary structure for the holiday of Sukkot), he or she should try to decorate it as beautifully as possible, and a Torah scribe should use the finest ink and the finest pen [Babylonian Talmud *Shabbat* 133b]. Many families engage in *hiddur mitzvah* as they get ready for *Shabbat* by cleaning their homes, cooking their tastiest dishes, and beautifully preparing the table with cloth, lovely dishes, and artistically designed ritual objects.

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**Imagine your community living these Jewish values**

**How would your classroom change? How will families be involved?**

**In the Classroom / Centers**

- **Loving kindness:** Create a kindness/chesed book for your classroom library. Snap photos of children acting kindly towards one another, and ask the children to help you describe kindness for the caption on each page. Parents can add to the book as they notice kindnesses at home.

- **Loving kindness:** At morning meeting create a list of school helpers, such as the truck driver who delivers juice and snacks, the custodian, or the school secretary. Brainstorm ways in which you could thank those people, such as baking cookies, writing thank-you notes, or making a kindness medal to wear. Try to carry out one act of kindness for one school helper each week.

- **Welcoming Shabbat:** Increase children’s anticipation for *Shabbat* by having them begin to prepare early in the week. For example, bake special treats at the beginning of the week, but save them for your Friday *Shabbat* celebration. Creating room and table decorations such as “*Shabbat Shalom*” cards or napkin rings might always be an art choice. Ask the children to help you display the decorations on Fridays. Perhaps after school they can then decorate their own homes.

- **Welcoming Shabbat:** Choreograph a *Kabalat Shabbat* dance during large motor skills time. Pick a lively piece of *Shabbat* music, and elicit children’s suggestions for gestures and movement that symbolize welcoming a friend, bride, or queen into the house.

- **Hiddur mitzvah:** Invite your class to work together to create a beautiful “*Shabbat Shalom*” banner for the room. Consider using silk or other beautiful fabrics to make this banner extra special. Create a classroom ritual of singing a song and hanging the banner in the room every Friday morning. You might choose to recite *havdallah* (separation ritual) before removing the banner on Mondays.

- **Hiddur mitzvah:** Your Friday job chart might reflect *Shabbat* preparation tasks, such as straightening blocks, washing placemats, organizing the bookshelf, and setting the *Shabbat* table. Set a timer and ask the class to engage in a ten-minute pre- *Shabbat* cleaning race to see if they can make the classroom the cleanest ever.
Bridging Home and School

**Kindness Snacks To-Go**
Have a snack bag assembly line ready at pick-up or drop-off times. Provide brown paper bags and markers or crayons to decorate them. Families can choose a combination of healthy pre-packaged snacks to put into their bags, such as juice packs or applesauce containers. Perhaps one or several families would volunteer to deliver the completed snack bags to a local food pantry, homeless shelter, or afterschool program for disadvantaged families.

**Kabalat Shabbat Picnic**
Organize a *Kabalat Shabbat* picnic for your classroom. Choose a park, select a meeting time, and invite families to bring a picnic dinner to the park. After everyone has eaten and the children have had ample time to explore the playground equipment, ask the children to teach their parents some of their favorite Shabbat songs.

Family Engagement at Home

**Kindness Challenge**
Ask families to make a list of people who might benefit from a friendly phone call. Challenge families to Skype or call at least one person on their list each week.

Share your stories and experiences

**What happened? How can the learning go deeper?**

**Tell us a story about eagerly awaiting Shabbat**
Share how the children in your class joyously prepare for Shabbat. For example: On Fridays, our children adore singing Shabbat songs as they march down the hall to the lobby of our school. We help the director light Shabbat candles. It feels almost magical. We then invite all of the adults who are in the lobby to join us as we hold hands and perform a Shabbat dance. We love Shabbat!

Share your story with all of us in our private Facebook group! http://pjfor.me/pjgts-facebook

More resources and websites for inspiration

- Easy acts of kindness for children: http://pjfor.me/kindness
- Simple silk banners/scarves-sponge painting: http://pjfor.me/silk-painting
The Beauty of Individual Differences: Books that celebrate individual differences, highlighting the unique characteristic found within each person/creature

Book-Based Family Program

The Only One Club
BY JANE NALIBOFF

Program Focus
Age group: Ages 4–6
Time frame: 45–60 minutes
Central value: Uniqueness (B’Tzelem Elohim), Appreciating Diversity

Synopsis
When Mrs. Matthew’s first grade class starts to make Christmas decorations, Jennifer is allowed to make Hanukkah decorations because she is Jewish. As a result, Jennifer decides to create and become the sole member of “The Only One Club.” However, she is resistant when her classmates want to join. As the unique qualities of her classmates are revealed, Jennifer realizes that each of her classmates is also “the only one” at something, too! This wonderful story encourages children to embrace their own uniqueness and to actively look for special qualities in others beyond race or culture.

Goals
- Highlight and connect the major themes of this book to daily life.
- Promote ways in which children are able to see themselves as both very similar to and very different from others, in a positive way.
- Encourage children and adults to consider individual differences among family members, friends, communities, and beyond to celebrate the marvels of diversity.

Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary

Each person is unique — A-dam ya-chid — אָדָם יָחִיד
Community — ke-hi-la — הקהל
Introducing the value of the uniqueness of every person: *adam yachid*

**From Jewish Teachings**

One tenet of Judaism is that within every person there is something unique only to them. The Biblical story of Creation notes that God made the first human *b’zelem elokim*, in God’s image (Genesis 1:26). Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, a contemporary religious thinker, notes that being created in God’s image means that, like God, every person has infinite value and uniqueness; we are therefore all on equal footing.

**For the teacher**

1. What do you consider your most unique attributes?
2. What aspects of you are reflected in your classroom?
3. How do you set up your classroom to meet the needs of a diverse student population?
4. What policies, customs, or changes to the classroom environment have evolved that take into account students’ unique talents and challenges?

**Questions for children**

1. Let’s talk about some of the things that make you special. We can start by thinking about the things you like to do and the places you like to go. (Teachers may want to write the children’s answers down so their responses can be used in the “I’m thinking of someone who…” guessing game described in the Classroom/Centers section of this resource guide.)
2. Is there an area of the classroom or an activity that makes you feel the most like “you?”

Introducing the value of community: *Kehillah*

**From Jewish Teachings**

Jewish tradition strongly encourages every person to “give back” to their community. The Talmud teaches that we are responsible for one another, and notes that within 30 days of moving to a new community, a person must begin to contribute to the community’s soup kitchen. Within a year of joining a community, the new resident must help with the community’s clothing and charity drives, and must assist with the repair of the community’s structures [Babylonian Talmud *Bava Batra* 8a].

**For the teacher**

1. What can you do to foster students’ sense of belonging to — and contributing to — the school community? Keep in mind that your classroom may be the first experience your students have with community outside of their family.
2. What are some of the aspects of community that you would like to convey to the children in your classroom?
3. What steps can you take to help the families feel like they are part of the community?
Questions for children

1. A community can be a neighborhood you live in or a group that you belong to, such as a team. What groups or communities do you belong to?
2. Why is it good to be part of a community?
3. In what ways do you help your community and the people in it?

Plan in advance

Prepare: “UNIQUE” thumbprint poster

MATERIALS
- White poster board
- Several washable ink-pads of various colors
- Markers
- Wet-wipes
- Pushpins or tape to display poster when complete
- A nametag for each participant, if desired

ADVANCE PREPARATIONS
1. Prepare poster board with the word UNIQUE written in large letters.
2. Have ink-pads, markers, and wet-wipes (and nametags if using) at a table near the entry.

Prepare: “The Only One Club” badges

MATERIALS
- 3” round oak-tag or heavy-weight paper circles
- Washable markers or crayons for writing and decorating the badge
- Pin backings to affix to each badge (one for each badge, and glue to attach them); or rolled masking tape to (temporarily) stick the badge to child’s clothing
- Any small decorative stickers, puffy paints, or glitter glue for decorating

ADVANCED PREPARATIONS
1. Neatly print the words “The Only One Club” on each badge, making sure you have extras.
Prepare: “Only One” family mobile

MATERIALS

- Poster board in a variety of colors
- Scissors
- Stencils (roughly 3” x 5” in size) of different shapes (Jewish star, dreidel, etc.)
- Colored markers
- Stickers
- Glitter and jewels
- White labels for writing on
- The words ‘Happy Hanukkah’ and חנוכה שמח (Hanukkah Sameach) to use as guides
- Wire clothes hangers
- String or yarn
Prepare: “The Only One Club” refrigerator list

MATERIALS
- Pencils or pens
- Make copies of the refrigerator list, included at the end of this activity guide

Introduce with an activity

Make Unique Thumbprint Posters

DIRECTIONS
1. Direct adults and children to a table where there is a large piece of white poster board on which the word “UNIQUE” is written in large letters.
2. Have available several washable colored stamp pads, washable markers, and wet-wipes (for cleaning inky fingers).
3. Encourage all (including adults) to use their thumb to tap on the stamp pad and use the print to help fill in the letters of the word. They could also use markers, as some may not want to use the stamp pads.
4. When finished, the leader draws everyone to the reading area.

Introduce the Story

READ THE INTRODUCTION:
Today, we’re going to read a book about a little girl who discovers that in some ways she is very much like her friends but in other ways she isn’t. Do you think that’s true about all of us? Of course! Each of us is different and special. Each of us is unique, one of a kind. I hope you enjoyed helping to fill in the word UNIQUE on our group poster. Did you know that no two people in the world have the same exact thumbprint? That’s one way in which each of us is unique, one of a kind. We’re about to find out many more ways in which children and adults can be unique. Let’s read The Only One Club.

Read the story

PROPS:
Display the UNIQUE poster where it can be easily seen by all.
The Beauty of Individual Differences

Encourage Participation

NOTES:
Gauge how much interaction you want to encourage and act accordingly depending on the number of children involved, the space, the age range, whether other adults are present, the time you have allotted for the reading, etc.

- When showing the book’s cover, ask: “What can we tell about the book from the cover?”
- After reading the first several pages, ask: “Where are these children?” “What time of year is it? How do you know?”
- When the children are making decorations in the book, ask what decorations/objects are used for Hanukkah.
- At the full-page illustration of the children dressed for cold weather, ask how the children appear similar and different. Point out that people are different from each other in ways that can’t be seen as well as in ways that are obvious.
- Ask how the children think Jennifer felt at the beginning of the book and at the end of the book.

Discussion

There are many ways in which people are “The Only One” that have nothing to do with what we look like on the outside. What ways do you know that people can be different from each other? I hope it makes each of you feel wonderful to know that you aren’t just like anybody else, and that your family and friends love you because you aren’t like any other person in the world. You can be a member of The Only One Club, just like all of the children in Jennifer’s class. Let’s get together in some small groups and talk about ways that we are the Only One.

- Make smaller groups of children and parents for a short discussion.

Follow Up activities and resources

Make “Only One Club” Badges

INTRO:
Jennifer gave everyone a badge to show that they were members of The Only One Club. Each of you will also have a badge. Your badge shows that you are one-of-a-kind, the “only one” in very special ways (hold up a badge that you have pre-decorated for the children to see). This is the badge I made for myself. I am The Only One because _______. Now you may use these materials to decorate a badge that you can take home with you.

DIRECTIONS:
1. Have each child decorate a badge with the provided materials.
2. Encourage discussion among the participants as they decorate.
3. As children finish, an adult should attach the pin backing.
4. Allow a few minutes for children to mingle, sharing the appearance of their badges.
Make “Only One” Family Mobile

INTRO:
Jennifer learned that each person in the class, including her, was “the only one” of something. There is a Hebrew phrase for this idea: Adam Yehidi Nivrah. Jennifer and her friends learned to appreciate their differences. Is that a good thing to do? Why? Every family has a lot of things that they share; the way they look, the foods they like to eat, or games they like to play. However, I am sure that everyone in each of your families is “the only one” in some special way. Today, you are going to make “Only One” mobiles for your families that you can take home and hang up as a special Hanukkah decoration. An important thing about Hanukkah is that it teaches us that it’s okay to be different, especially if it also means doing something we believe in.

DIRECTIONS:
1. Cut out a shape for every member of the family (pets can be included if you’d like).
2. Decorate the shapes (on one side only), and remember to leave some space to write the person’s name and what they are the “only one” of.
3. Punch a hole in each shape and thread the string/yarn through.
4. Take a wire hanger and tie the shapes to it.
5. If they wish, they can use the Hebrew or English “Happy Hanukkah” guides to make a sign to put at the top of the hanger.
6. Suggest putting a picture of each family member on the other side of their ‘only one’ shape when they get home.

Make Refrigerator List

DIRECTIONS:
Show pride in the individuality of everyone in your family. Fill out the list (included at the end of this activity guide) for each family member. As new ways present themselves, lengthen each list of things that make each person in your family unique. Have fun!
ADD YOUR NAME TO THE “ONLY ONE CLUB” ONLINE DIRECTORY

Go to www.flashlightpress.com/onlyoneclub.html where children can add their name to the long list — which includes this book’s author and illustrator! — and tell what makes them unique. It’s a great list to read aloud. Adults can join in the fun as well!

PLAN A “FAMILY FUN FEST OF FEATURES”

- Find a really big piece of paper and some color markers, pencils or crayons.
- Take the paper, markers, and the entire family to a spot where everyone can spread out and sit together on the floor.
- Choose a phrase like “The Only One Club” or “Family Fun Fest” — any other phrase that makes you think about how unique people can be - and write it vertically on from top to bottom on the side of the paper.
- This is an “acrostic” — you’ll write across starting with the letter on the left. Everyone brainstorm and go acronym-crazy! Think of words that begin with those letters that make you think of important and unique features of each family member. For example, the letter C could stand for “Caring”, L might be “Loves to Dance”, H can be “Helpful”, etc...You can write as many phrases after each letter as you wish.
- Everyone can suggest positive words or phrases and have a great discussion about what makes us each special. Then, read them all together to see what makes your family a unique group!
### “Only One” Family List

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The Beauty of Individual Differences

The Only One Club
I'm the only one who...

The Only One Club
I'm the only one who...

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The Only One Club
I'm the only one who...
The Beauty of Individual Differences