

## Free Books for Jewish Children PJ Library and PJ Our Way

**PJ Library** is for children ages 6 months to 8 years. **PJ Our Way** is for children ages 9-11. Sign your child up for either program and you will receive (older kids choose) a book a month. Each book, is geared towards a specific age. Families with Judaism as part of their lives are welcome to sign up. All Jewish families are welcome, whatever your background, knowledge, family make-up, or observance may be.

The PJ Library program originated with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. It relies on partnerships with local philanthropists and is administrated by local Jewish organizations. In our area the local administration is handled by the Jewish Community Foundation of the Greater East Bay. **Contact Marilyn Kinch, Program Officer: [marilyn@jfed.org](mailto:marilyn@jfed.org)**  
510-318-6438.

Both programs are designed to help children and their families explore core Jewish values and traditions. The original concept was to provide bedtime story books for parents to read to their children (PJ = pajamas), but with the recent addition of the program for older children (PJ Our way) this concept has been taken to a whole new level. PJ Library sends Jewish children's books and music every month to more than 500,000 children and their families in North America and is growing every month.

**About “PJ Library”** the program for younger children.

Books for PJ Library are chosen from among the very best of Jewish children's books. A committee of writers, early childhood professionals, and Jewish content specialists seek out compelling stories, captivating illustrations, and diverse perspectives on Jewish customs and practice. Through an extensive evaluation process, the committee selects books for every age group. Many of the books selected to be included in PJ Library have received awards including Caldecott Medals and the Sydney Taylor Book awards, given to the best of Jewish children's literature.

**About “PJ Our Way”** the program for older children.

The kids choose their own books. The choices are on a website geared to the children in this age group. The **PJ Our Way Website** is a completely safe and moderated space, perfect for acclimating older kids to using the web independently. Every month, from the 1st to the 10th of the month kids visit this website to choose a book from a selection of four high-quality titles that have been reviewed by a panel of PJ educators, parents, and kids. The website has summaries, reviews, and video trailers created by the members themselves. Kids can participate in monthly interviews and challenges, post their own reviews or videos, and comment on blog posts.

On the Parent Blog, parents are invited to read about each book and find suggestions for family conversations. These blog posts give parents tools to help children make book choices that are appropriate for them. The books are carefully selected by top national Jewish educators, with an eye on books that are joyful, highly engaging, and represent the best Jewish children's literature available.

If congregant families are signed up the **CBS Conrey library** will also receive a copy every month of the book selection. A few of these are temporarily located on a table in the library.

**Mendel's Accordion** Ages: 4 to 5 Years

Written by Heidi Smith Hyde Illustrated by Johanna Van Der Sterre

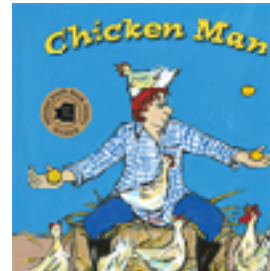
**Synopsis:** In this winning story, the memory of a young man's long-forgotten accordion playing resurfaces when his great-grandson comes upon his instrument.



**Chicken Man** Ages: 4 to 5 Years

Written and illustrated by Michelle Edwards

**Synopsis:** An Israeli kibbutz is the setting for this tale in which a man always does his best regardless of the job he is given, though he'd prefer to be working in the chicken coops.



**It's A Mitzvah** Ages: 6 to 7 Years

Written by Liz Suneby Diane Heiman, Illustrated by Laurel Molk

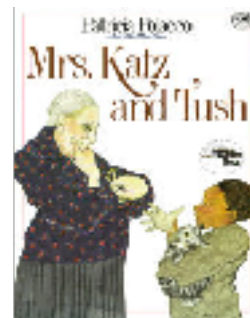
**Synopsis:** Mitzvah Meerkat loves the simple acts of kindness that help lead to tikkun olam (repairing the world). Whether it's welcoming friends, sharing food with the hungry, respecting our elders, or forgiving others for mistakes, there's almost always an opportunity for a mitzvah.



**Mrs. Katz and the Tush** Ages: 5 to 7 Years

Written and Illustrated by Patricia Polacco

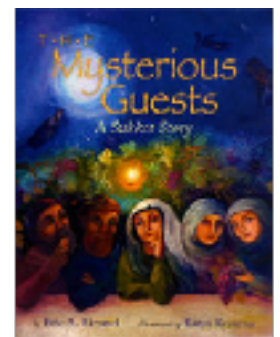
**Synopsis:** A long-lasting friendship develops between Larnel, a young African- American, and Mrs. Katz, a lonely Jewish widow, when Larnel presents her with a scrawny kitten.



**The Mysterious Guests** Ages: 6 to 8 Years

Written by Eric A. Kimmel, Illustrated by Katya Krenina

**Synopsis:** Three mysterious guests appear at generous but impoverished Ezra's table on Sukkot and bless him, but don't do the same for his rich but selfish brother, Eben.



**The Shabbat Box** Ages: 4 to 5 Years

Written by Lesley Simpson,

Illustrated by Nicole in Den Bosch

**Synopsis:** When Ira loses his class's precious Shabbat Box in a snowstorm, he learns valuable lessons about honesty, trust, and eventual good outcomes.



**Sammy Spider's First Day of School** Ages: 4 to 5 Years

Written by Sylvia R. Rouss, Illustrated by Katherine Kahn

**Synopsis:** The ever-curious Sammy Spider visits a Jewish preschool, where the teacher uses the story of Noah's Ark to engage the children in a discussion about "an important Jewish value"--kindness to animals.



**I Love Camp!** Ages: 3 to 4 Years

Written by Todd Parr, Illustrated by Todd Parr

**Synopsis:** With his unique illustrations and peppy text, Todd Parr shows the active, fun-filled summer that a Jewish camp offers.



**Beautiful Yetta** Ages: 3 to 5 Years

Written by Daniel Pinkwater, Illustrated by Jill Pinkwater

**Synopsis:** Yetta escapes from the chicken farmer's cage, but what is a country hen to do in big, unfamiliar Brooklyn?

