
J-Hub K–3 Jewish Books: A Teacher's Guide

The books in this guide open windows into Jewish culture, history, holidays, and values through story, the way children meet any culture on a classroom shelf: as literature and social studies. Whether you're building a heritage-month display, adding depth to a holidays unit, or simply broadening your collection, every title here was selected with public school classrooms and libraries in mind, so you can choose from this list with confidence.

• **Jewish Identity** • **Jewish American Heritage & History** • **Global Jewish Life & Israel** • **Anti-Bias**

How to use this guide

Topics are alphabetical. Within each topic, books are grouped by grade band (PreK–K, K–2, 2–3) and listed alphabetically by author. Each entry includes an APA citation, a short synopsis, and a metadata line: reading mode, Lexile measure, theme tags, source, and ISBN. Standards appear once per topic. Most picture books never receive a Lexile measure; where none exists, the entry says so, and the book works best as a read-aloud. A measure with the AD (Adult-Directed) prefix also signals a read-aloud.

Standards alignment key

Literacy — Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts:

- RL.K–3.2 — retell stories and determine the central message, lesson, or moral (RL.2.2/RL.3.2 name fables and folktales from diverse cultures).
- RL.K–3.7 — describe how illustrations and words work together to convey character, setting, and events.
- RL.2.9 — compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story by different authors or from different cultures.
- RI.K–3.2 — identify the main topic/idea and key details of an informational text.
- RI.K–3.3 — describe the connection between individuals, events, or ideas (well suited to biography).
- SL.K–2.2 — confirm understanding of a text read aloud by asking and answering questions (supports read-aloud use).

Social Studies — Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies (2018):

- SS.BH2 / SS.BH3.a.2 — describe how groups of people are alike and different; compare a belief or custom in one culture to another.
- SS.BH1.b.4 (grades 3–5) — describe how culture, ethnicity, religion, and identity help form self-image.
- SS.BH2.b.1 — understand ways people change and adapt within a family and community.
- SS.Geog2.a — analyze where and why people live in certain places.

Social Studies — Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies (continued):

- SS.Geog2.b — explain why people move to and from communities (migration/immigration).
- SS.Hist2.b / SS.Hist2.c.i — identify patterns of change over time; analyze people and events important to historical change.
- SS.PS3.a — describe the effect an action has on members of a group; express and act on civic opinions.
- SS.Inq5.a — explore opportunities for civic engagement.

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● Jewish Identity

Standards commonly supported in this topic: RL.K–3.2; RL.K–3.7; SL.K–2.2; SS.BH1.b.4 (culture, religion & identity form self-image); SS.BH2 (groups alike and different)

Grades K–2

Gehl, L. (2025). *My body can* (A. Colombo, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Across a joyful year of Jewish holidays, children of many abilities and identities celebrate the wonderful things their bodies can do.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: body positivity, inclusion, holidays, self-worth. Source: Sydney Taylor 2026 (Honor). ISBN 9781681156859.

Samuel, S. (2021). *Osnat and her dove: The true story of the world's first female rabbi* (V. Mintzi, Illus.). Levine Querido.

In 16th-century Kurdistan, a scholar's daughter named Osnat grows up to become the world's first known female rabbi, guided by wisdom and a faithful dove.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: women leaders, learning, faith, history. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781646140374.

Grades 2–3

Burk, R., & Barouch, A. (2023). *She's a mensch: Jewish women who rocked the world* (A. Trenk, Illus.). Intergalactic Afikoman.

Short, lively profiles of Jewish women, from Henrietta Szold to Ruth Bader Ginsburg, celebrate the many ways to be a mensch.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: role models, women leaders, pride, biography. Source: Wiener (2024). ISBN 9781951365110.

Cypess, L. (2026). *Miriam's magical creature files: The mystery of the mermaid* (S. L. Reul, Illus.). Amulet Books.

In this illustrated early-reader mystery, Jewish kid detective Miriam investigates a mermaid sighting, weaving Jewish values into a funny, spooky adventure.

Reading: Independent (early reader) · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: mystery, curiosity, Jewish joy, friendship. Source: Wiener (2026). ISBN 9781419785849.

Kornblatt, M. (2024). *Mr. Katz and me* (N. Regan, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Sarah befriends her 81-year-old neighbor Saul as he finally prepares for the bar mitzvah he never had, and learns about the hardships Russian Jews once faced.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: intergenerational friendship, bar mitzvah, resilience, identity. Source: Sydney Taylor 2025 (Notable). ISBN 9781681156446.

Michelson, R. (2017). *The language of angels: A story about the reinvention of Hebrew* (K. Gudeon, Illus.). Charlesbridge.

In old Jerusalem, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and his son Ben-Zion help turn ancient Hebrew back into a living, spoken language for a modern people.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 690L. Themes: Hebrew language, identity, perseverance, revival. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781580896368.

● Jewish American History

Standards commonly supported in this topic: RI.K–3.2 & RI.K–3.3 (main idea; connect individuals/events); SS.Hist2.c.i (contributions to historical change); SS.Geog2.b (migration); SS.BH1.b.4 (culture, religion & identity)

Grades K–2

Koffsky, A. D. (2025). *The peddler and the president* (P. Rodríguez, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

The true friendship between Missouri shopkeeper Eddie Jacobson and his business partner Harry Truman helps open the door to U.S. support for the new State of Israel.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 710L. Themes: friendship, U.S. history, Israel's founding, courage. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781681156378.

Newman, L. (2019). *Gittel's journey: An Ellis Island story* (A. J. Bates, Illus.). Abrams.

Separated from her mother, young Gittel travels alone from the old country to Ellis Island, where a smudged address and a kind stranger help her find family.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: immigration, Ellis Island, courage, family. Source: Sydney Taylor 2020 (Honor). ISBN 9781419727474.

Grades 2–3

Churnin, N. (2021). *A queen to the rescue: The story of Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah* (Y. Nayberg, Illus.). Creston Books.

Inspired by brave Queen Esther, Henrietta Szold grows up to teach immigrants, found Hadassah, and bring health care to those who need it.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 970L. Themes: biography, women leaders, immigration, healing. Source: Sydney Taylor 2022 (Notable). ISBN 9781939547958.

Finkelstein, N. H. (2024). *Amazing Abe: How Abraham Cahan's newspaper gave a voice to Jewish immigrants* (V. Stamper, Illus.). Holiday House.

Immigrant Abraham Cahan builds the Yiddish newspaper the Forward, helping newcomers find work, learn English, and feel at home in America.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: biography, immigration, newspapers, community. Source: Sydney Taylor 2025 (Honor). ISBN 9780823451647.

Levinson, C. (2021). *The people's painter: How Ben Shahn fought for justice with art* (E. Turk, Illus.). Abrams Books for Young Readers.

Lithuanian immigrant Ben Shahn grows up to paint the struggles of working people, using his art to fight for fairness and justice.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: biography, immigration, art, social justice. Source: Sydney Taylor 2022 (Notable). ISBN 9781419741302.

Marshall, L. E. (2020). *The polio pioneer: Dr. Jonas Salk and the polio vaccine* (L. Anchin, Illus.). Alfred A. Knopf.

Young Jonas Salk, the son of Jewish immigrants, grows up curious and determined and develops the vaccine that ends the terror of polio.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: AD820L. Themes: biography, science, perseverance, helping others. Source: Sydney Taylor 2021 (Notable). ISBN 9780525646518.

Michelson, R. (2025). *Fanny's big idea: How Jewish Book Week was born* (A. Russell, Illus.). Rocky Pond Books.

Russian immigrant Fanny Goldstein falls in love with libraries, becomes Boston's first Jewish librarian, and in 1925 launches the celebration that became Jewish Book Week.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 920L. Themes: biography, immigration, libraries/books, pride. Source: Sydney Taylor 2026 (Notable). ISBN 9798217003259.

Rubin, S. G. (2022). *Madame Alexander: The creator of the iconic American doll* (S. Dvojack, Illus.). Feiwel and Friends.

Beatrice Alexander, daughter of immigrants, repairs dolls in her father's shop and grows up to build a famous American doll company of her own.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: biography, immigration, business, creativity. Source: Sydney Taylor 2023 (Notable). ISBN 9781250138590.

● Global Jewish Life

Standards commonly supported in this topic: RL.K–3.2; RL.K–3.7; RI.K–3.2 (main idea of an informational text); SS.Geog2.a (where and why people live); SS.BH2 & SS.BH3.a.2 (compare beliefs and customs across cultures)

Grades PreK–K

Capucilli, A. S. (2021). *And a cat from Carmel Market* (R. Teplow, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A grandmother shops Tel Aviv's Carmel Market for Shabbat and comes home with one surprise she didn't plan on: a stray cat.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Israel, Tel Aviv, market, Shabbat, first concepts. Source: PJ Library. ISBN 9781541586703.

Kimmelman, L. (2015). *Everybody says shalom* (T. Shipman, Illus.). Random House Books for Young Readers.

A rhyming tour of Israel travels from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv to the Negev, showing how many things one word, shalom, can mean along the way.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD140L. Themes: Israel, geography, Hebrew language, culture. Source: PJ Library. ISBN 9780375973123.

Grades K–2

Behar, R. (2022). *Tía Fortuna's new home: A Jewish Cuban journey* (D. Holzwarth, Illus.). Alfred A. Knopf.

As her Sephardic Cuban great-aunt says goodbye to her seaside casita and moves to a new home, Estrella learns that memories, blessings, and family travel with you.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD590L. Themes: immigration, memory, Sephardic culture, change. Source: Sydney Taylor 2023 (Notable). ISBN 9780593172414.

Lewkowicz, F. (2021). *I am Hava: A song's story of love, hope, and joy* (S. Benjamin, Illus.). Intergalactic Afikoman.

Narrated by the melody itself, this traces the song "Hava Nagila" from a wordless tune in Eastern Europe, through hardship and migration, to a worldwide anthem of Jewish joy.

*Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Jewish music, history, resilience, joy. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781951365066. *Available @ Jewish Museum Milwaukee.*

McGinty, A. B. (2026). *Tractor Zack on Sunshine Kibbutz* (R.Meet Teplow, Illus.). Kalaniot Books.

On an Israeli kibbutz, a hardworking tractor named Zack helps plant, harvest, and get ready for Shavuot, learning that everyone has a purpose.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Israel, kibbutz life, work/purpose, Shavuot. Source: Wiemer (2026). ISBN 9781962011013.

Mizrahi, A. (2024). *The blue butterfly of Cochin* (S. Benjamin, Illus.). Kalaniot Books.

A blue butterfly follows a family of Cochin Jews from their synagogue in India as they pack generations of tradition and prepare to make a new home in the Land of Israel.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Indian Jewish life, migration, tradition, Israel. Source: Wiemer (2024). ISBN 9798986396569.

Nader, S. (2024). *A bright light in Buenos Aires* (P. Wegman, Illus.). Kalaniot Books.

A child in Argentina's Jewish community discovers that owning who you are can shine as brightly as any city light.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Argentine Jewish life, identity, pride, community. Source: Wiemer (2024). ISBN 9798986396583.

Sassoon, S. (2022). *Shoham's bangle* (N. Kelner, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Forced to leave Iraq in the 1951 airlift, Shoham must give up her gold bangle but carries Nana's pita recipe, finding a taste of home when the family arrives in Israel.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 570L. Themes: Israel, Mizrahi immigration (aliyah), memory, home. Source: Sydney Taylor 2023 (Notable). ISBN 9781728438962.

Stempel, J. (2025). *With a needle and thread: A Jewish folktale from Cuba* (L. Axelrod, Illus.). Kalaniot Books.

A Cuban Jewish grandmother sews and re-sews a beloved cloth into ever-smaller treasures, showing how little can become a lot when made with love.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: resourcefulness, folktale, family, Cuban Jewish life. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781962011068.

Grades 2–3

Javaherbin, M. (2024). *My father's house* (L. Yankey, Illus.). Candlewick Press.

In Isfahan, Iran, a Jewish girl explores the streets of her father's childhood, where neighbors of many faiths share tea, courtyards, and respect.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Persian Jewish life, interfaith respect, family, home. Source: Wiemer (2026). ISBN 9781536225532.

Schenker, A. R., & Addisu, G. (2025). *Call me Gebyanesh* (C. Fedele, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

An Ethiopian-born girl holds tight to her name, her mother's injera, and the Sigd holiday as she finds her place in a new home in Israel.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Ethiopian Jewish life, immigration (aliyah), identity, belonging. Source: PJ Library. ISBN 9781681156606.

● Holidays and Lifecycle

Standards commonly supported in this topic: *RL.K–3.2 (retell / central message); RL.K–3.7 (illustrations & story); SL.K–2.2 (understand a read-aloud); SS.BH2 & SS.BH3.a.2 (compare customs across cultures)*

Grades PreK–K

Sukkot

Gellman, E. B. (1988). *Tamar's sukkah* (K. J. Kahn, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Simple, repetitive text follows Tamar as she and her friends add decorations until the sukkah is just right.
Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, friendship, sharing, first concepts.
Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780930494797.

Halpern, J. (2022). *The stars will be my nightlight: A Sukkot story* (C. Fedele, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A child's cozy, slightly nervous first night sleeping out in the sukkah becomes magical under a blanket of stars.
Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 510L. Themes: Sukkot, courage, family, nature. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781728439044.

Newman, T. (2017). *Sukkot is coming!* (V. Garofoli, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A rhythmic board book about building the sukkah, shaking the lulav, and welcoming guests as Sukkot arrives.
Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, family, seasons, first concepts.
Source: Wiener (2024). ISBN 9781512408287.

Hanukkah

Spiro, R. (2021). *Baby loves angular momentum on Hanukkah!* (I. Chan, Illus.). Charlesbridge.

A STEM board book that pairs the spin of a dreidel with the science of angular momentum for the littlest Hanukkah scientists.
Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, dreidel, STEM, first concepts.
Source: Wiener (2023). ISBN 9781623541903.

Purim

Silberberg, A. (2022). *Meet the hamantaschen*. Viking Books for Young Readers.

Googly-eyed hamantaschen introduce themselves and the fun of Purim in a bright, silly romp for the youngest celebrators.
*Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Purim, hamantaschen, food, humor, first concepts. Source: PJ Library. ISBN 9780593351574. *Available @ Jewish Museum Milwaukee.*

Sussman, J. K. (2024). *Happy Purim, Grover!* (T. Leigh, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Sesame Street's Grover dresses up, shakes his grogger, and shares mishloach manot in a cheerful first introduction to Purim.
Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Purim, costumes, giving, first concepts.
Source: Wiener (2024). ISBN 9781728492841.

Passover

DePaola, T. (2015). *My first Passover*. Grosset & Dunlap.

A gentle board-book walk through the seder plate, the four questions, and the search for the afikomen, introducing Passover to the very youngest.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, seder, family, first concepts.

Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780448447919.

Koffsky, A. D. (2025). *My matzah*. Apples & Honey Press.

A bright board book in which a toddler hunts for the afikomen and celebrates the simple joy of matzah at Passover.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, matzah, toddlers, first concepts.

Source: Wiener (2025). ISBN 9781681156132.

Shabbat

Ultman, S. (2025). *Shabbat shalom: Let's rest and reset*. Penguin Workshop.

A soothing board book that frames Shabbat as a weekly pause to rest, notice, and begin again, with whimsical art for the youngest.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Shabbat, rest, mindfulness, first concepts.

Source: Sydney Taylor 2026 (Winner). ISBN 9780593751930.

Grades K–2

Rosh Hashanah

Barash, C. (2019). *Jackie and Jesse and Joni and Jae: A Rosh Hashanah story* (C. Battuz, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Four friends bake, dip apples in honey, and hear the shofar as they welcome the Jewish New Year together.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, friendship, new beginnings.

Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155500.

Cohen, D. B. (2008). *Engineer Ari and the Rosh Hashanah ride* (S. Kober, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

On his first New Year run across early-1900s Land of Israel, boastful Engineer Ari learns to say sorry and make amends.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, apology, trains, Israel.

Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780822586487.

Gehl, L. (2022). *The Rosh Hashanah recipe* (O. Ivanov & A. Ivanov, Illus.). Albert Whitman.

A treasured family recipe, passed down the generations, brings the whole family into the kitchen to welcome the sweet new year together.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, family recipes,

intergenerational, tradition. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780807571712.

Heiligman, D. (2007). *Celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with honey, prayers, and the shofar*. National Geographic Children's Books.

Vivid photographs from around the world introduce the sounds, foods, and meaning of the High Holidays as Jews everywhere begin the year.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 620L. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, world cultures, nonfiction. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781426300769.

Jules, J. (2013). *What a way to start a new year! A Rosh Hashanah story* (J. Stead, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

New to town and nervous, a girl finds that apples, honey, and welcoming neighbors can turn a hard start into a sweet new year.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, moving, belonging, hope. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780761381167.

Ofanansky, A. (2011). *What's the buzz? Honey for a sweet new year* (E. Alpern, Photog.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Photographs trace honey from beehive to Rosh Hashanah table, explaining why we dip apples for a sweet new year.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 580L. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, honey/bees, nonfiction, Israel. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780761356400.

Rouss, S. A. (1996). *Sammy Spider's first Rosh Hashanah* (K. J. Kahn, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Curious Sammy Spider watches the Shapiro family dip apples in honey and hear the shofar, learning the New Year's colors and customs.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, curiosity, colors, family. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780929371993.

Schnur, S., & Schnur-Fishman, A. (2010). *Tashlich at Turtle Rock* (A. Steele-Morgan, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

On a family nature walk for Tashlich, Annie leads the custom of casting away regrets and naming what she is grateful for.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, Tashlich, nature, reflection. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780761345091.

Wayland, A. H. (2009). *New year at the pier: A Rosh Hashanah story* (S. Jorisch, Illus.). Dial Books for Young Readers.

Izzy makes an 'I'm sorry' list and, at Tashlich by the pier, casts bread on the water to let go of mistakes and start the year fresh. Highly recommended (two sources).

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, Tashlich, apology, growth. Source: Jewish Book Council; PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780803732797.

Yom Kippur

Adler, D. A. (2017). *Yom Kippur shortstop* (A. Ceolin, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Star shortstop Jacob has a championship game on Yom Kippur; with his rabbi's example, he weighs the big game against the holiest day of the year.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Yom Kippur, choices, sports, values. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155210.

Sukkot

Berkowitz, L. R. (2023). *The moving-box sukkah* (S. Vargo, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

New to the neighborhood and surrounded by unpacked moving boxes, a family builds a sukkah from what they have and welcomes new friends inside.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, moving/new home, resourcefulness, friendship. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681156279.

Cohen, D. B., & Olitzky, K. (2024). *An etrog from across the sea* (S. Dressen-McQueen, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

In the 1700s Hudson Valley, Leah waits for her father's ship to bring a precious etrog from across the sea so the family can celebrate Sukkot. Highly recommended (three sources).

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, early America, Sephardic life, family. Source: Sydney Taylor 2025 (Winner); Jewish Book Council; Wiemer (2024). ISBN 9798765604496.

Goldin, B. D. (2020). *Night lights: A Sukkot story* (A. Huq, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Big sister Daniel helps her little brother overcome his fear of the dark so they can sleep out together in the sukkah.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, courage, siblings, night. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155470.

Kimmel, E. A. (2008). *The mysterious guests: A Sukkot story* (K. Krenina, Illus.). Holiday House.

A generous brother and a greedy one each host mysterious guests in their sukkah; a folktale about hospitality and the ushpizin.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, hospitality, folktale, generosity. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780823418930.

Kimmelman, L. (2013). *The very crowded sukkah* (B. McMahon, Illus.). Two Lions.

When rain sends the animals scurrying for shelter, a welcoming sukkah proves there is always room for one more.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, hospitality, animals, welcome. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781477817162.

Kohuth, J. (2018). *Who's got the etrog?* (Elissambura, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

On the African savanna, Auntie Sanura's etrog is passed from warthog to zebra to elephant until the animals learn to share it and celebrate Sukkot together.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD520L. Themes: Sukkot, sharing, animals, Global setting. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781541509665.

Lapon, S. (2020). *Hillel builds a house* (Á. Ruiz, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Hillel loves building houses for every holiday, but only at Sukkot does he find the perfect house to build and truly live in.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD530L. Themes: Sukkot, holidays, building, patience. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781541544024.

Mandell, S. (2019). *The elephant in the sukkah* (I. Kuman, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A music-loving elephant named Henry longs to stay in the family's sukkah, and a boy figures out how everyone can celebrate together.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, friendship, music, welcome. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781541522121.

Nambi, S. (2022). *The very best sukkah: A story from Uganda* (M. Yogev, Illus.). Kalanot Books.

In Uganda's Abayudaya Jewish community, competitive Shoshi wants to win the sukkah contest, until a storm teaches her that neighbors helping neighbors is the real prize. Highly recommended (two sources).

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, African Jewish life, community, humility. Source: Sydney Taylor 2023 (Honor); Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781735087580.

Ofanansky, A. (2009). *Sukkot treasure hunt* (E. Alpern, Photog.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Photographs follow an Israeli family searching orchards and markets for the four species that decorate the sukkah.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, four species, Israel, nature. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780822587637.

Packer, R. O. (2016). *Sky-high sukkah* (D. Zemke, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Two city friends have no yard for a sukkah, so with the whole apartment building's help they build one on the rooftop.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, community, city life, problem-solving. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155135.

Rouss, S. A., & Rouss, S. (2013). *A watermelon in the sukkah* (A. Iosa, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A preschool class tries every silly way to hang a heavy watermelon in the sukkah before finding a clever solution.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Sukkot, teamwork, problem-solving, humor. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780761381198.

Steinberg, L. (2017). *The best Sukkot pumpkin ever* (C. Madden, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Micah grows a prizewinning pumpkin but gives it away to feed neighbors in need, learning the joy of tzedakah at Sukkot.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD600L. Themes: Sukkot, tzedakah (giving), generosity, harvest. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781512408652.

Hanukkah

Jenkins, E. (2018). *All-of-a-kind family Hanukkah* (P. O. Zelinsky, Illus.). Schwartz & Wade Books.

On New York's Lower East Side, the five sisters of the classic All-of-a-Kind Family prepare latkes and light the menorah, while littlest Gertie learns to wait her turn.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD520L. Themes: Hanukkah, sisters, early-1900s NYC, patience. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780399554193.

Kimmel, E. A. (2013). *Hanukkah bear* (M. Wahnoutka, Illus.). Holiday House.

Nearly blind Bubba Brayna mistakes a hungry bear for the rabbi and shares her latkes; a warm, funny Hanukkah tale of hospitality.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD520L. Themes: Hanukkah, hospitality, humor, latkes. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780823428557.

Kimmelman, L. (2020). *The eight knights of Hanukkah* (G. Bernstein, Illus.). Holiday House.

Sir Applesauce, Sir Latke, and their fellow knights ride out to do deeds of kindness and defeat a dragon before the family's Hanukkah party.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, kindness, humor, teamwork. Source: Sydney Taylor 2021 (Notable). ISBN 9780823439584.

Kimmelman, L. (2023). *Eight nights of lights: A celebration of Hanukkah* (H. Kushnir, Illus.). HarperCollins.

A family lights the menorah, plays dreidel, and shares latkes across all eight nights in a joyful survey of Hanukkah traditions.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, family, traditions, light. Source: Wiener (2023). ISBN 9780063242487.

Perl, E. S. (2020). *The ninth night of Hanukkah* (S. Kober, Illus.). Sterling.

After a move leaves their Hanukkah boxes lost, Max and Rachel are helped by new neighbors, so they invent a ninth night to thank them.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, gratitude, neighbors, moving.

Source: Sydney Taylor 2021 (Notable). ISBN 9781454940883.

Snyder, L. (2025). *The book of candles: Eight poems for Hanukkah* (L. Hatch, Illus.). Clarion Books.

Eight quiet poems, one per night, follow a modern family as the menorah's light grows and old traditions meet new surprises.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, poetry, family, light. Source:

Sydney Taylor 2026 (Honor). ISBN 9780063278141.

Weber, E. (2023). *Mrs. Maccabee's miracle* (A. Videlo, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A warm twist on the Hanukkah story in which Mrs. Maccabee's determination keeps the light going and the family together.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, perseverance, family, light.

Source: Wiemer (2023). ISBN 9781728477916.

Weissman, E. B. (2023). *Hanukkah upside down* (O. Hoffmann, Illus.). Abrams Books for Young Readers.

Cousins Noah in New York and Nora in New Zealand compete over whose Hanukkah is best, one in snowy winter and one in summer sun.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Hanukkah, family, geography, humor.

Source: Sydney Taylor 2024 (Honor). ISBN 9781419762963.

Passover

Basseri, E. (2022). *A Persian Passover* (R. Kheiriyeh, Illus.). Kalanot Books.

In Iran, Ezra and Roza rescue their family's broken matzah and discover the warmth of Persian Jewish Passover customs along the way.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, Persian Jewish life, family,

tradition. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781735087566.

Burk, R. (2025). *Passover on Everest* (C. Orback, Illus.). Intergalactic Afikoman.

High on a mountain expedition, a family improvises a seder, proving that Passover can be celebrated anywhere with creativity and pride.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, adventure, adaptability, family.

Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781951365288.

Cohen, D. B. (2015). *Engineer Ari and the Passover rush* (S. Kober, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Rushing his train home for the seder, Engineer Ari learns that helping others matters more than hurrying. Set on the Land of Israel's first railway.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 590L. Themes: Passover, kindness, trains, Israel. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9781467734707.

Kiffel-Alchek, J. (2025). *The curious case of the pot roast: A Passover mystery* (M. Halberstadt, Illus.). Green Bean Books.

When the seder's pot roast goes missing, a young sleuth follows the clues, and the trail keeps circling back to the four questions.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, mystery, humor, four questions.

Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781784389161.

Kimmelman, L. (2010). *The little red hen and the Passover matzah* (P. Meisel, Illus.). Holiday House.

A bossy but big-hearted hen does all the work of making matzah while her friends beg off, in a Passover twist on the classic tale.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD620L. Themes: Passover, teamwork, folktale, humor. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780823419524.

Kusel, S. (2021). *The Passover guest* (S. Rubin, Illus.). Holiday House.

During the Depression, generous Muriel invites a ragged street juggler to the seder, and his surprising magic fills the table for the whole neighborhood. Highly recommended (three sources).

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, generosity, wonder, community. Source: Sydney Taylor 2022 (Winner); Jewish Book Council; Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9780823445622.

Levine, A. (2025). *Roadside seder* (N. Lahav, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Stranded on a journey at Passover, a family turns a roadside stop into a seder, discovering that the story travels wherever they do.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, travel, improvisation, family. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781681156613.

Newman, L. (2020). *Welcoming Elijah: A Passover tale with a tail* (S. Gal, Illus.). Charlesbridge.

Inside, a boy waits through the seder; outside, a lonely kitten waits too. When the door opens for Elijah, the two find each other.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 430L. Themes: Passover, Elijah, kindness, friendship. Source: Sydney Taylor 2021 (Winner). ISBN 9781580898829.

Newman, T. (2019). *Around the Passover table* (A. Santos, Illus.). Albert Whitman.

A warm, rhyming gathering of family and friends moves through the seder's songs, foods, and traditions.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, seder, family, tradition. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780807504468.

Offsay, C. (2025). *Matzah day!* (J. Kirschner, Illus.). Holiday House.

A child follows matzah from mixing and rolling to the seder plate in a bouncy celebration of the holiday's most famous food.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, matzah, food, tradition. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9780823458257.

Olitzky, K., & Cohen, D. B. (2023). *An invitation to Passover* (M. Kolker, Illus.). Kalanot Books.

A family invites more and more guests of different backgrounds to their seder, showing that everyone belongs at the Passover table.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, hospitality, diversity, welcome. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9798986396507.

Preble, J. (2025). *Happy Passover, Edie Rose!* (V. Cis, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Young Edie Rose helps prepare, asks the four questions, and hunts the afikomen in a bright first Passover story.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, seder, family, participation. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9798765629949.

Wayland, A. H. (2016). *More than enough: A Passover story* (K. Kath, Illus.). Dial Books for Young Readers.

A family shops, cooks, and gathers for the seder, giving thanks 'dayenu' for each small blessing that is more than enough.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD510L. Themes: Passover, gratitude, family, Dayenu. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780803741263.

Wieder, J. N. (2020). *The Passover mouse* (S. Kober, Illus.). Doubleday Books for Young Readers.

When a mouse runs off with a crumb of chametz just before Passover, the whole village pitches in to set things right.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD590L. Themes: Passover, community, folktale, cooperation. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9781984895516.

Shabbat

Koffsky, A. D. (2025). *Fairy GodBubbie's Shabbat*. Intergalactic Afikoman.

A magical bubbe swoops in to help a family get ready, showing that the real magic of Shabbat is coming together.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Shabbat, family, humor, togetherness. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781951365318.

Lehman-Wilzig, T. (2021). *Soosie: The horse that saved Shabbat* (M. Halberstadt, Illus.). Kalaniot Books.

When the baker falls ill, his faithful delivery horse Soosie remembers the route and makes sure every family has challah in time for Shabbat.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Shabbat, responsibility, community, animals. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780998852775.

Lifecycle

Silver, E. (2022). *Sitting shiva* (M. Theodore, Illus.). Orca Book Publishers.

A grieving girl doesn't want the visitors who fill her home after her mother's death, until their food, stories, and company begin to comfort her.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD560L. Themes: loss, mourning (shiva), community, grief. Source: Sydney Taylor 2023 (Honor). ISBN 9781459827721.

Grades 2–3

Rosh Hashanah

Kimmel, E. A. (2017). *Big Sam: A Rosh Hashanah tall tale* (J. Starr, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

A giant named Big Sam blows a shofar so mighty it wakes the world to the New Year, in a playful American tall tale.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, tall tale, shofar, humor. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155258.

Levington, R. G. (2025). *Finding forgiveness* (D. Mayo, Illus.). Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

At the Rosh Hashanah custom of Tashlich, two squabbling sisters learn to apologize and to forgive themselves as they cast their regrets into the water.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, Tashlich, forgiveness, sisters. Source: Sydney Taylor 2026 (Notable). ISBN 9780374392024.

Livney, V. (2021). *Rosh Hashanah with Uncle Max*. Kar-Ben Publishing.

A child's favorite uncle brings his own warmth and quirks to the family's New Year celebration.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, family, intergenerational, tradition. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9781728429069.

Marshall, L. E. (2022). *Measuring a year: A Rosh Hashanah story* (Z. González Hoang, Illus.). Abrams Books for Young Readers.

From one Rosh Hashanah to the next, a child measures all the ways she has grown, in body, skill, and heart.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, growth, reflection, time. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9781419744976.

Rubinstein, E. (2019). *Once upon an apple cake: A Rosh Hashanah story* (J. Naalchigar, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

In this illustrated early chapter book, Saralee has the world's best sense of smell and uses it to save her family's Rosh Hashanah dinner.

Reading: Independent (early reader) · Lexile: 540L. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, family, humor, problem-solving. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155494.

Ungar, R. (2007). *Even higher*. Tundra Books.

A skeptic follows the rabbi who is rumored to fly to heaven before the New Year, and discovers him quietly delivering firewood to a poor widow, an act 'even higher' than heaven. A Peretz retelling.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Rosh Hashanah, tzedakah, humility, folktale. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780887767586.

Sukkot

Rubinstein, E. (2021). *Starlight soup: A Sukkot story* (J. Naalchigar, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Saralee returns in a Sukkot early chapter book, cooking up a magical soup and a plan to fill the sukkah with guests.

Reading: Independent (early reader) · Lexile: 540L. Themes: Sukkot, hospitality, family, humor. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781681155647.

Hanukkah

Adler, D. A. (2011). *The story of Hanukkah* (J. Weber, Illus.). Holiday House.

A clear retelling of the Maccabees' fight for religious freedom and the miracle of the oil that gives Hanukkah its meaning.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: AD810L. Themes: Hanukkah, history, religious freedom, courage. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780823422951.

Kimmel, E. A. (1989). *Hershel and the Hanukkah goblins* (T. S. Hyman, Illus.). Holiday House.

Clever Hershel outwits the goblins who have forbidden Hanukkah in a mountain village, lighting the menorah each night until the king of goblins is beaten. A Caldecott Honor classic.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: AD550L. Themes: Hanukkah, courage, trickster tale, light over darkness. Source: Jewish Book Council; PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780823407699.

Koster, G. (2017). *Little Red Ruthie: A Hanukkah tale* (S. Eastland, Illus.). Albert Whitman.

On her way to Bubbe's with latke fixings, quick-witted Ruthie outsmarts a hungry wolf in this Hanukkah spin on Red Riding Hood.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: AD740L. Themes: Hanukkah, cleverness, folktale, family. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780807546468.

Passover

Heiligman, D. (2007). *Celebrate Passover with matzah, maror, and memories*. National Geographic Children's Books.

World-spanning photographs introduce the seder, the exodus story, and how Jewish families everywhere mark Passover.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 870L. Themes: Passover, world cultures, nonfiction, freedom. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9781426300189.

Marshall, L. E. (2013). *The Passover lamb* (T. Mai-Wyss, Illus.). Random House.

When the family's ewe has triplets and rejects one lamb, Miriam must bottle-feed it, threatening to make them late for the seder, until a solution appears.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, responsibility, animals, family. Source: PBS KIDS. ISBN 9780307931771.

Sutton, J. (2025). *Zayde babysits before Passover* (K. Chappell, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Left in charge before the seder, a loving but bumbling Zayde turns Passover cleaning into a joyful, messy adventure with his grandchildren.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Passover, grandparents, humor, preparation. Source: Wiener (2025). ISBN 9798765619889.

Shabbat

Ludwig, S. (2024). *Rising* (S. Vincent Guy, Illus.). Candlewick Press.

As a mother and child knead and braid challah for Shabbat, a new baby is quietly 'rising' too, in a tender parallel of dough and family.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Shabbat, challah, family, new baby. Source: Sydney Taylor 2025 (Honor). ISBN 9781536225495.

Lifecycle

Goldberg, A. (2025). *The remembering candle* (S. Alko, Illus.). Barefoot Books.

On the first anniversary of Grandpa's death, a family lights the yahrzeit candle and shares the customs and memories that keep him close.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: loss, remembrance (yahrzeit), family, memory. Source: Sydney Taylor 2026 (Notable); Wiener (2025). ISBN 9798888596487.

Newman, L. (2024). *Joyful song: A naming story* (S. Gal, Illus.). Levine Querido.

Zachary and his two moms parade through the neighborhood inviting everyone to his baby sister's naming ceremony, where he proudly shares her name.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: lifecycle (baby naming), family, community, joy. Source: Sydney Taylor 2025 (Honor). ISBN 9781646143702.

Newman, L. (2026). *Something sweet: A sitting shiva story* (S. Rich, Illus.). Charlesbridge.

A child learns what to do when a friend is grieving, discovering that showing up with something sweet and a listening heart is what matters. For grades K-5.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: loss, mourning (shiva), empathy, friendship. Source: Wiener (2026). ISBN 9781623545710.

The Jewish Year

Newman, L. (2014). *Here is the world: A year of Jewish holidays* (S. Gal, Illus.). Abrams Books for Young Readers.

Lyrical verse carries readers through a full year of Jewish holidays, from Rosh Hashanah to Tisha B'Av, tying each to the turning seasons.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: AD980L. Themes: Jewish year, holidays overview, seasons, tradition. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781419711855.

● Jewish Family Life

Standards commonly supported in this topic: RL.K–3.2; RL.K–3.7; SL.K–2.2; SS.BH2.b.1 (people change and adapt within a family); SS.BH2 (groups alike and different)

Grades K–2

Asher, S. (2024). *Sophie's monster goes to shul* (A. Colombo, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Sophie's imaginary monster is nervous about synagogue, so she shows him the songs, dances, and friends that make shul a joyful place.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: synagogue, imagination, belonging, family. Source: Wiemer (2024). ISBN 9781728460239.

Cohen, P. (2022). *Big dreams, small fish*. Levine Querido.

At her family's immigrant grocery, young Shirley is told she is too little to help, until her clever gefilte-fish scheme wins over the whole neighborhood.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: family business, determination, immigration, food. Source: Sydney Taylor 2023 (Honor). ISBN 9781646141265.

Ho, R. (2023). *Two new years* (L. Scurfield, Illus.). Chronicle Books.

A Chinese Jewish family celebrates two new years, Rosh Hashanah in fall and Lunar New Year in spring, honoring both halves of who they are.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: multicultural family, identity, holidays, belonging. Source: Sydney Taylor 2024 (Winner). ISBN 9781797212814.

Kam, J. W. (2022). *Until the blueberries grow* (S. Walker, Illus.). PJ Publishing.

A boy and his aging grandfather trade worries about change, learning to treasure their time together while the blueberries slowly ripen.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: intergenerational love, change, patience, family. Source: Wiemer (2023). ISBN 9781736557334.

Sassoon, S. (2024). *This is not a cholent* (V. Garofoli, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A neighborhood cholent cook-off turns into a delicious celebration of how many different ways Jewish families make the same Shabbat stew.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Shabbat food, Jewish diversity, community, humor. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781728486482.

Wolpin, M. (2023). *Bring back the babka!* (M. Safer, Illus.). Barefoot Books.

When the family babka goes missing, a determined child follows the crumbs through a funny, food-filled hunt to bring the beloved treat home.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 650L. Themes: family food, humor, problem-solving, tradition. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9798888590089.

● Jewish Values

Standards commonly supported in this topic: RL.K–3.2 (central message / moral); RL.2.9 (compare folktale versions across cultures); SL.K–2.2; SS.BH2 & SS.BH3.a.2 (compare beliefs across cultures)

Grades K–2

Copeland, M. (2020). *I am the tree of life: My Jewish yoga book* (A. Ceolin, Illus.). Apples & Honey Press.

Children move through yoga poses paired with brief stories from Jewish tradition, connecting body, breath, and values.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: mindfulness, movement, wellbeing, tradition. Source: Sydney Taylor 2021 (Honor). ISBN 9781681155524.

Edwards, M. (2016). *A hat for Mrs. Goldman: A story about knitting and love* (G. B. Karas, Illus.). Schwartz & Wade Books.

Mrs. Goldman knits hats for everyone but herself, so young Sophia struggles to knit her a warm one in return, learning that a mitzvah is worth the effort.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD520L. Themes: kindness (chesed), gratitude, perseverance, neighbors. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780553497106.

Jules, J. (2014). *Never say a mean word again: A tale from medieval Spain* (D. Y. Bernhard, Illus.). Wisdom Tales.

Ordered to make sure a boy never insults him again, young Samuel tries a surprising path, turning an enemy into a friend. Based on a legend of Samuel ha-Nagid.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 480L. Themes: forgiveness, friendship, folktale, peacemaking. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781937786205.

Lyons, E. (2023). *Zhen Yu and the snake* (R. Metallinou, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

In the medieval Jewish community of Kaifeng, China, a merchant's daughter's small act of kindness to a snake is repaid in wondrous ways. A Talmudic tale retold.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: lovingkindness, folktale, reward, Global Jewish life. Source: Sydney Taylor 2024 (Notable). ISBN 9781728460253.

Nadler, J. R. (2020). *Such a library! A Yiddish folktale re-imagined* (E. van den Berg, Illus.). Intergalactic Afikoman.

A boy hunting for a quiet spot to read is given noisier and noisier company by a knowing librarian, until he discovers how good his first quiet really was, a fresh spin on the classic "it could always be worse" tale.

*Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: folktale, perspective, gratitude, humor. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9781951365028. *Available @ Jewish Museum Milwaukee.*

Robinson, D. K. (2026). *A place to pray: A tale of friendship and community* (Y. Li, Illus.). WorthyKids.

Neighbors of different backgrounds work side by side to build a shared place to gather, modeling respect and repairing the world. Inspired by a true story.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: community, respect, tikkun olam, cooperation. Source: Wiemer (2026). ISBN 9781546009139.

Ruff, J. (2025). *Noah and his wagon* (K. Jacobs, Illus.). Kalanriot Books.

Noah shares his little red wagon so freely that he helps his whole neighborhood, learning the joy of generosity.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: 510L. Themes: generosity, sharing, community, and kindness. Source: Wiemer (2025). ISBN 9781962011037.

Stiefel, C. (2026). *Awe! It's everywhere!* (S. Gal, Illus.). Scholastic Press.

A joyful invitation to notice the wonder all around us, from a spider's web to a starry sky, and to feel gratitude for it.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: AD500L. Themes: wonder/awe, gratitude, mindfulness, nature. Source: Wiemer (2026). ISBN 9781546150350.

Tarcov, S. (2023). *The rabbi and his donkey* (D. Renjina, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

When the great sage Maimonides is given a fast horse, his loyal donkey feels left behind, until both learn that everyone and everything has its purpose. Set in medieval Egypt.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: purpose, humility, friendship, folktale. Source: Sydney Taylor 2024 (Notable). ISBN 9781728445595.

Grades 2–3

Pritchard, C. K. (2025). *The keeper of stories* (S. Alko, Illus.). Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

After a 1966 fire threatens a library's treasured books, a community forms a human chain to rescue them, an act of memory, unity, and repairing the world.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: tikkun olam, books/memory, community, teamwork. Source: Sydney Taylor 2026 (Honor). ISBN 9781665914970.

● Anti-Bias and Belonging

Standards commonly supported in this topic: RL.K–3.2; SL.K–2.2; SS.PS3.a (effect of actions on a group; civic voice); SS.BH2 (how groups are alike and different); SS.Inq5.a (civic engagement)

Grades K–2

Gottesfeld, J. (2021). *The Christmas mitzvah* (M. L. Agatha, Illus.). Creston Books.

On Christmas Eve, Al Rosen quietly takes the work shifts of his Christian neighbors so they can be with their families; his good deed spreads year after year and is finally honored by the whole community.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: kindness, cross-cultural respect, community, giving. Source: University Children's Library Guides. ISBN 9781939547941.

Mayer, P. (2016). *Chicken soup, chicken soup* (D. Melmon, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

Sophie loves Bubbe's kreplach soup and Nai Nai's wonton soup; when her Jewish and Chinese grandmothers argue over whose is right, Sophie shows them that being 'a little of both' is a lot like her.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: multicultural family, belonging, grandparents, food. Source: PJ Library. ISBN 9781467794145.

Stampler, A. R. (2013). *The cats on Ben Yehuda Street* (F. Carabelli, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

When a neighbor's cat goes missing on a Tel Aviv street, the grouchy man next door surprises everyone by joining the search, showing what it means to be a good neighbor.

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: belonging, good neighbor, kindness, second chances. Source: PJ Library. ISBN 9780761381242.

Wing, N. (1996). *Jalapeño bagels* (R. Casilla, Illus.). Atheneum.

Asked to bring something from his culture for International Day, Pablo, whose mother is Mexican and father is Jewish, bakes jalapeño bagels, a food that is a mixture of both, just like him.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: multicultural family, belonging, identity, food. Source: Reform Judaism (2018). ISBN 9780689805301.

Grades 2–3

Ades, A., & McKinney, J. S. (2025). *Jason belongs: The story of Jason Schachter McKinney* (I. Muñoz, Illus.). Kar-Ben Publishing.

A biracial Jewish boy, Jason, keeps being asked whether he is 'really' Jewish; his family's love and pride help him claim a place that is fully his own.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: identity, belonging, Jewish diversity, race. Source: Wiener (2025). ISBN 9798765620809.

Cohen, B. (1983). *Molly's pilgrim* (M. J. Deraney, Illus.). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard.

Teased for her accent, Russian Jewish immigrant Molly brings a clothespin doll dressed like her mother to class and teaches everyone that a pilgrim is anyone who comes seeking freedom.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 590L. Themes: immigration, belonging, kindness, Thanksgiving. Source: Jewish Book Council. ISBN 9780688021047.

Kleinrock, L., & Pritchard, C. K. (2024). *What Jewish looks like* (I. Gottlieb, Illus.). HarperCollins.

With more than fifteen million Jews in the world, there are more than fifteen million ways to look and be Jewish; this bright, affirming book answers the question, 'What does Jewish look like?'

Reading: Read-aloud · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: Jewish diversity, belonging, identity, anti-stereotype. Source: University Children's Library Guides. ISBN 9780063285712.

Polacco, P. (1992). *Mrs. Katz and Tush*. Dragonfly Books.

When Larnel, a young African American boy, befriends Mrs. Katz, a lonely Jewish widow, over the care of a stray kitten, the two build a lasting friendship and find how much their families' histories of hardship and hope have in common.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: No published Lexile. Themes: cross-cultural friendship, belonging, shared history, kindness. Source: University Children's Library Guides. ISBN 9780440409366.

Rockliff, M. (2019). *Doctor Esperanto and the language of hope* (Z. Dzierżawska, Illus.). Candlewick Press.

Growing up amid hatred in a divided city, young Jewish doctor L. L. Zamenhof invents Esperanto, a shared language meant to help people of every group understand one another.

Reading: Read-aloud or independent · Lexile: 640L (work-level). Themes: language, empathy, peacemaking, standing up to hate. Source: Sydney Taylor 2020 (Notable). ISBN 9780763689155.

Appendix: How These Titles Were Sourced

We drew candidates from the established award committees, review journals, and curated lists below, then vetted each for literary quality, cultural authenticity, and public-school fit: Every title teaches about Jewish culture, history, and values through literature and social studies.

Book awards and review bodies

The Sydney Taylor Book Award has been presented annually since 1968 by the Association of Jewish Libraries to books that authentically portray the Jewish experience. Gold medals go to Winners in Picture Book, Middle Grade, and Young Adult; Honor Books receive silver; and Notable Books are named in each category. It is the closest thing Jewish children's literature has to the Newbery or Caldecott, so a Sydney Taylor citation is our strongest single mark of quality and authenticity.

The Jewish Book Council is a national organization that has reviewed and championed Jewish books for generations and administers the National Jewish Book Awards. A title drawn from its reviews and reading lists has passed a professional editorial eye.

Vetted reading programs

PJ Library, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, selects and mails free Jewish children's books to hundreds of thousands of families each month. Its vetting is rigorous and its age recommendations are reliable, which makes it especially useful for matching a book to the right reader.

PBS KIDS, the parenting service of public television, publishes curated "Booklists" for families at pbs.org/parents/read/booklists. The holiday titles tagged this way were drawn from its Jewish-holiday lists, including those for Passover, Rosh Hashanah, and Hanukkah, and pair well with read-aloud instruction in the youngest grades.

Expert columns, library guides, and curated lists

Liza Wiemer is a Wisconsin author and educator whose monthly column in the Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle reviews new Jewish children's literature. A 'Wiemer (year)' tag means she recommended the title in her column that year, giving this guide a current, regional, expert eye, especially on brand-new releases.

University Children's Library Guides are the curated reading lists that academic education libraries maintain to support teacher training. The titles tagged this way were drawn from the Jewish-identity and religion-in-children's-literature guides at the Indiana University Education Library and the University of South Florida Libraries, whose entries carry catalog records and verified ISBNs.

J•Hub Content Specialists: Every book on this list was reviewed by our internal team of educators to ensure books meet Wisconsin academic standards and our own expectations of high-quality educational resources for K-12 environments.