

Read the PJ Library Book

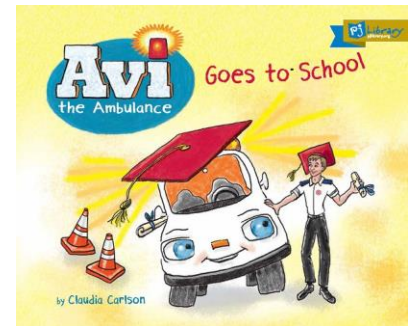
Avi the Ambulance Goes to School (3s)

Written and Illustrated by Claudia Carlson

Published by Apples and Honey Press

Synopsis

Avi is a little ambulance who lives in Israel. Longing to be as helpful as the other members of his ambulance family, Avi attends school where he learns how to zig and zag, zoom and stop, and how to treat patients with kindness and empathy.



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

Kindness - *Che-sed* - חֶסֶד

Caring for our body - *Shmi-rat ha-guf* - שְׁמִירַת הַגּוּף

Introducing the value of kindness *Chesed*

From Jewish teachings

The Jewish value of *chesed*, kindness, is so important that it appears 245 times in the Torah. Kindness is described in rabbinic literature as something for which we do not expect reward. According to Talmudic sage Rabbi Simlai, the Torah begins and ends with acts of kindness, from God making clothing for Adam and Eve, to Moses' burial. (Sotah 14a)

Rashi, a much-quoted biblical commentator, taught that kindness comes from the effort or bother we take, whether it is offering money, a smile, or a kind word to address someone's needs.

For the teacher

- What are some acts of kindness that you enjoy performing for others? What types of kindness do you find more difficult to enact?
- How do you create an environment of kindness within your classroom?
- As the year progresses, what classroom behaviors might you hope to see that will affirm that the children in your class are growing in their understanding of kindness?

Questions for children

- Who behaved kindly in our story, and what did they do to show they were kind?
- Can you describe a kind act that you performed recently?
- How can you tell if someone needs help or kindness?
- Has anyone recently been kind to you? What did the person do for you, and how did you feel as they were being kind?



Introducing the value of caring for our body
Shmirat haguf

From Jewish teachings

Judaism views the human body as a precious gift on loan from God. Moses reminds the people of Israel to “guard yourself, and your soul diligently” (Deut. 4:9). The *Shulchan Orech*, a code of Hebrew law, explains that “guarding yourself” means we should not put ourselves in physical danger. Beloved Jewish philosopher Maimonides was also a physician. He encouraged eating nutritious foods, getting a good night’s rest, bathing, and exercising on a regular basis. According to Maimonides, healthy behaviors not only prevent illness, but give us the strength and stamina to perform mitzvot. (Guide to the Perplexed 3:27)

For the teacher

- What strategies do you use for caring for your body and maintaining your health?
- What would you cite as your top reasons for safeguarding your body and your health?
- What healthy habits would you like to see your students develop over the course of the year?

Questions for children

- How do you take care of your body?
- Why is it important to care for your body?
- What kinds of people and things help your body stay healthy?



Imagine your community living these Jewish values

How would your classroom change?
How will the books and values come to life?

In the Classroom / Centers

☆ **Chesed/kindness:** Be on the lookout for showing kindness to others. Place binoculars in your **social studies center**, so students can look around the classroom or **playground** and notice



who might need help. Once children have identified a possible kindness recipient, help them follow through on helping their classmates or teachers.

☆ **Chesed/kindness:** The entire body and the **five senses** can be utilized in being kind, particularly when children learn how to control their bodies in a group. Being gentle with our touch and careful in how we interact with others is a meaningful way to show kindness.

☆ **Smirat haguf/caring for our body:** Children are often anxious about visiting the dentist. Help allay their fears by turning your **dramatic play area** into a dentist office. Set out x-rays of teeth, different types of toothbrushes, dolls, or tooth models so children can practice their brushing technique. This utilizes small and gross motor skills, as well as math as children count teeth. Perhaps the x-rays will inspire works of black and white **art**.

☆ **Shmirat haguf/caring for our body:** One important stay healthy skill is frequent and proper hand washing. Teach the children to **sing Yom Huledet Sameach** (Happy Birthday) while washing their hands, so they know that they are washing an appropriate amount of time. Put a **mirror** behind the faucet so children can see themselves doing this important mitzvah. Ask parents to contribute different types of soap for children to compare. **Chart** the children’s findings of textures and scents.



Engage the families in your community

How can you involve families and deepen home-school relationships?

Kindness Notes

On a table near the entrance to your classroom, provide a set of notecards along with pens and instructions for parents to write “kindness notes” to their children. Read the notes aloud at lunch time or rest time. By first instilling regular acts of kindness between family members, children will learn to imitate that with others. Record notes that the children dictate to you to be sent home to their parents.

Respect for Nature and Creatures

At a back to school night or school Shabbat, talk with families about steps we can take to protect our environment and the animals living in it. Afterwards, send home these suggestions to families and be sure to check in about what everyone is doing.



At Home

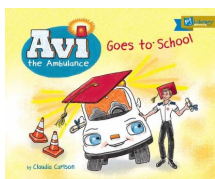
See below for a mini-newsletter about this book. Cut on the dotted line to send directly to parents, or copy any part for your website or electronic communication with families.



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DO fun stuff at home

Home Olympics



Amp up your exercise routine with Olympics-inspired workouts at home. Run with the Olympic torch around the neighborhood. Jump in and out of the Olympic rings (aka hula hoops) on your living room floor. Do some figure skating, with or without ice!

DISCUSS Jewish values

Kindness/Chesed

Staying attuned to the needs and feelings of others is a fundamental principle of Judaism.

- Describe a time when you were kind to someone. What prompted you to behave kindly?

Caring for the body/Shmirat haguf

Judaism teaches individuals to eat well, sleep, and exercise regularly so that they remain healthy and strong enough to perform mitzvot.

- Think of all of the ways that you cared for your body today. Were there any times during the day you could have taken better care of yourself?

MORE resources

Children and kindness:

<http://bit.ly/Parents-kindness-4-ways>

Fun kid workouts:

<http://bit.ly/Pinterest-exercise>

