



DON'T SNEEZE AT THE WEDDING

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The big day is finally here: Anna is the flower girl in her aunt's wedding! Uh Oh – Anna feels a funny tickle in her nose. Achoo! How is Anna going to get through the ceremony without sneezing?

THE JEWISH WEDDING

Weddings are such exciting celebrations! As with contemporary ceremonies of all kinds, Jewish weddings have great variety -- from vows and venues to food and flowers! The Jewish wedding in this cheerful book includes:

- the *chuppah* (canopy), a tent-like structure made of cloth attached to four poles. A Jewish couple stands under the chuppah during the wedding ceremony. Whether simple or ornate, the chuppah symbolizes the home a bride and groom will create together.
- the *ketubah* (document), a marriage contract, that explains the obligations required by Jewish law of a husband to his wife. A rabbi reviews the document and witnesses sign it. A ketubah is often beautifully illustrated. Today, some couples have a second document, reflecting an egalitarian approach to their shared commitment.
- the *Sheva Brachot* (Seven Blessings), which are recited during the wedding ceremony, offering praise to God and making appeals for the couple's happiness.
- At the end of a Jewish wedding, it is customary for the groom to step on a glass. Breaking the glass is a reminder that even at times of great happiness we remember the sorrow of past events, such as

the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Once the glass is broken, the guests shout “*Mazel Tov!*” (Congratulations!)

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Traditions can be wonderful links to the past and lovely ways to honor one's heritage; they are often adapted or updated to create personal meaning. Many children are curious about customs associated with weddings, a topic that often comes up when youngsters are about to attend one for the first time.

A natural way to begin explaining traditions (of all kinds) is by sharing family photos or videos with your children. As you look at them together, help your children spot people they know. This is a great time to tell stories and to talk about why your family's distinctive customs are meaningful to you.

Attending a wedding with your child? Keep young guests engaged by providing tools to capture what they observe: a disposable camera or a sketch pad, for example. Before the big day arrives, talk to your children about what will take place. Ask them to be on the lookout for certain parts of the wedding: having things to watch for can help with those inevitable wiggles!