



## SNOW IN JERUSALEM

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*Two boys living in Jerusalem—one Muslim, the other Jewi—are surprised to discover they've been looking after the same stray cat.*

**S***now in Jerusalem* offers a great opportunity to talk with your child about Israel. The illustrations are a wonderful depiction of the Old City of Jerusalem. Point out to your children the different languages written on storefronts, the various types of dress shown, and the fact that many of the buildings are made of white (Jerusalem) stone.

While the Arab-Israel conflict is certainly central to this story, fundamentally the conflict between these two boys is as familiar and universal as any conflict between children. One of the great feats of this book is the way in which the author demonstrates that ultimately children want, need and think about the same things, despite their differences. You can use this text to show your children how remarkably similar children are to one another.

### PROPER TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

*Tza'ar ba'alei chaim* literally means “pain of living things.” Jewish law not only prohibits the mistreatment of animals, but mandates compassion, protection, and mercy for them. The Torah specifies our moral responsibilities toward animals, including allowing animals to rest, prohibiting an animal from carrying too heavy a load, and sparing a mother from seeing its baby taken.

### HELPING CHILDREN DEAL WITH CONFLICT

By virtue of living in the world, children will deal with conflict. With young children, issues might be a broken belonging, an unkind

remark, or real or perceived unfairness or favoritism. With your help, your children can learn to deal positively and constructively with many different people and situations. Within families, the Jewish precept for getting along together is called “*shalom bayit*,” peace in the home. Beyond our families, the imperative to act cooperatively is based on *v'ahavta l'rei'acha k'mocha*: you should love your neighbor as yourself—which involves treating others as you would like to be treated.

- Acknowledge to your children that they will come across difficult situations and people that will upset them.
- Discuss things that are necessary for a conflict to be resolved: an opportunity for each person to speak; a requirement that each person listen to the other; an attempt to understand the other's point of view; and a desire to resolve the issue.
- Children profit from reminders that if they exhaust their own efforts to resolve a conflict, there are adults close by, ready to help them. Point to specific people your children know and can trust when they need help.
- Role-playing is an excellent way for children to practice making sense of the world. As a family, brainstorm situations to act out, discussing feelings and reasoning.
- Remark on your children's ability to handle themselves well in difficult situations. Congratulate them when they are successful, pointing out specific behaviors. Pj