



Content Ideas for Ages 4 through 8 Updated July 2015

MANUSCRIPTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO PJLIBRARY@HGF.ORG

PJ Library chooses 88 titles each year for its rapidly-growing North American program. Books must compete with the best secular children's literature; only the highest quality books will do. PJ seeks stories with Jewish content that children will want to read again and again. Each book must appeal to families across a wide range of Jewish knowledge and observance. We offer the following topics to inspire stories for our participants ages 4 through 8.

Biographies of the Famous and/or Interesting

Here is a small sampling of Jewish people whose stories could translate into fascinating biographies for children. PJ biographies (most of which would become part of our Jewish Heroes series) must be child-friendly and encourage the reader to learn more about the subject's life, accomplishments, and Jewish spirit. Again, this list is only the beginning....

- ❖ Rabbi Akiva
- ❖ Leonard Bernstein
- ❖ Louis Brandeis
- ❖ Debbie Friedman
- ❖ Ruth Bader Ginsberg
- ❖ Rube Goldberg
- ❖ Theodor Herzl
- ❖ Hillel
- ❖ Honi the Rainmaker/Circle-drawer
- ❖ Judith Kaplan
- ❖ Golda Meir
- ❖ Gracia Mendes Nasi
- ❖ Rambam

- ❖ Rashi
- ❖ Rashi's daughters
- ❖ Naomi Shemer
- ❖ Isaac Bashevis Singer
- ❖ Steven Spielberg
- ❖ Levi Strauss
- ❖ Henrietta Szold

Israel

- ❖ Stories showing the rise/development of Israel as a Jewish country
- ❖ Stories of contemporary Israel that could include the following:
 - *merkaz klitah* (absorption center)
 - Yom HaAtzmaut celebrations
 - Yom Kippur in Israel
 - family vacation during Sukkot or Passover
 - early elementary school setting
 - stories occurring in Sephardic settings (i.e. Spain, Portugal, North Africa, etc.), featuring Sephardic customs
- ❖ Stories set in Israel focusing on contemporary, values-based, kid-focused issues (such as bullying, friendship, resolving interpersonal conflicts, adjusting to an unfamiliar culture).
- ❖ Stories showing how wildlife in Israel differs from the West; the Biblical Zoo
- ❖ Stories about digs, excavations in Israel
- ❖ Stories that takes place in the seaside city of Eilat

Jewish History / Jews in History:

- ❖ Jews in the Civil Rights movement
- ❖ Crypto-Jews in Spain
- ❖ Jewish education of girls in earlier times

Bible/Talmud/Midrash:

Note: Biblical stories of our heritage are of critical importance to the Jewish people. While these stories can be challenging to access, we hope authors will seek out Biblical subjects that can be crafted into stories for children through age 8. Here are some possible topics:

- ❖ Stories from Midrash and Aggadah about Kings:
 - King David
 - King Solomon (how David chose Solomon to be King, Solomon and the bag of flour, etc.)
- ❖ Modern Midrash -- a contemporary elaboration on a Biblical or midrashic text in which, for example, the author develops a fictitious plot or event while staying true to some elements of the original text.

- ❖ Stories from Talmud and Aggadah about Rabbinic Sages:
 - Akiva, who began studying when he was 40, at first learning side-by-side with his 3-year-old son
 - Akiva's wife Rachel, who sold her hair so her husband could study
 - Rabbi Tarfon, who carried his mother when her sandals broke
 - Joheved, Miriam and Rachel: Rashi's daughters
 - Deborah, the judge/prophet
- ❖ Stories about animals living with a Biblical character or a contemporary figure (Golda Meir, David Ben Gurion, King David, Joshua, etc.) -- might be told from the animal's point of view
- ❖ The relationship between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba – perhaps something playful
- ❖ David and Jonathan: stories of great and lasting friendship
- ❖ David/Goliath story -- young boy overcomes giant

Jewish Camp Stories:

- ❖ Great camp stories
- ❖ Camp books featuring boys

Environmental Stories:

- ❖ Books with a Jewish environmental message – related to *Tu B'Shevat* would be a bonus.
- ❖ Stories that encourage ecological and environmental awareness and action

Jewish Holidays:

- ❖ Books about
 - Hanukkah
 - Lag B'Omer
 - Passover
 - Purim
 - Rosh Chodesh
 - Rosh Hashanah
 - Shabbat and/or Havdalah
 - Shavuot
 - Simchat Torah
 - Sukkot
 - Tu B'Shevat

Jewish Values:

- ❖ Tzedakah
- ❖ Tikkun Olam
- ❖ Stories in which children band together for community service

- ❖ Stories showing Jews helping other Jews (*kol Yisroel aravim zeh l'zeh*)

Jewish Folktales

- ❖ Modernization of previously-published Jewish stories
- ❖ Stories occurring in Sephardic settings (i.e. Spain, Portugal, North Africa, etc.), featuring Sephardic customs.

PJ Library is particularly interested in showcasing folktales from a variety of cultures and ethnicities.

Miscellaneous:

- ❖ Jews speaking up for others
- ❖ Experiencing an older sibling prepare for bar/bat mitzvah
- ❖ Stories that inspire activities, crafts, etc. with instructions included
- ❖ Stories in which children have issues to live with/overcome (divorce, being bullied, feeling excluded) or a physical/medical challenge
- ❖ Stories about a class and its beloved Jewish teacher
- ❖ Stories showing the value and importance of literacy
- ❖ Stories with multi-generational and/or multi-racial households
- ❖ Books in which Jews and non-Jews are shown as having differing beliefs, cultures, etc. and who live and work together harmoniously
- ❖ Stories occurring in Sephardic settings (i.e. Spain, Portugal, North Africa, etc.), featuring Sephardic customs.
- ❖ Travel stories in which a family trip to visit relatives/friends for Jewish holidays is a great adventure
- ❖ Jewish stories that originate in a variety of locales – France, South America, Australia, etc.
- ❖ Humor -- We can never have too many stories that evoke laughter!

For each topic above, PJ Library is interested in showing diversity and the multi-cultural nature of Judaism today. Based on parent feedback, we encourage books with a contemporary feel. Please know, also, that books considered by the PJ Book Selection Committee tend to have female main characters/protagonists. We encourage authors to consider writing stories in which the main character is a boy.