



SAMMY SPIDER'S FIRST PURIM

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The Shapiro family is getting ready for the exciting holiday of Purim. Young Josh is making a grogger (noisemaker) to take to a celebration at the synagogue. Sammy Spider wants to join in the fun, but his mother reminds him, "Spiders don't celebrate holidays; spiders spin webs." Sammy can't help himself and gets caught in Josh's grogger. Will Sammy escape and get home to his mother?

Early spring finds Jewish people observing the happy holiday of *Purim*. The story of *Purim* relates how an evil king's advisor, named Haman, plotted to destroy the Jewish people. A young Jewish queen, Queen Esther, spoils this scheme by the daring act of speaking frankly to her husband about the plot and about her Jewish heritage. *Purim* celebrates Queen Esther's brave action that saved the Jewish people from the evil Haman.

Sammy Spider watches as Josh makes a costume and constructs a *grogger* (the Yiddish word for noisemaker), while his mother makes *hamantaschen* (filled, three-cornered *Purim* cookies). In addition to these activities associated with the holiday, there are four commandments specific to *Purim*: listening to the Megillah (the story of *Purim* from the Biblical book of Esther); giving help to the needy; giving/exchanging *mishloach manot* (gifts of food), and having a festive meal.

Let your imagination soar as you decide how to put your own family's spin on celebrating this joyful holiday! Contact a local synagogue or Jewish Federation to find a community *Purim* celebration to attend, and consider the *Purim* ideas on the back flap of this book.

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

As you and your family prepare for *Purim*, you might consider some of the suggestions below;

- As an alternative to donating money to an organization, collect books and simple games that your children can help deliver to the children's floor at your local hospital.
- When preparing *Purim* goodies to exchange with friends and family, include favorite recipes illustrated by your children. When baking, let your children experiment with unusual fillings for *hamantaschen*—such as pineapple, butterscotch chip, or mango.
- Make *Purim* outfits a family affair. There's no law that everyone must be a king, queen, or mustachioed evildoer. Your children might enjoy dressing up as a favorite book character, crayon, ice cream cone, or number (for example, wearing three bracelets, a tri-cornered hat, the number three pinned on their shirt, and carrying a musical triangle (which can be a *grogger* to drown out Haman's name during the Megillah reading).