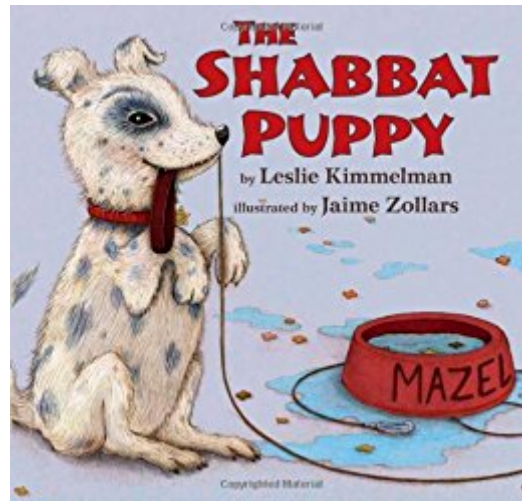




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The Shabbat Puppy (Shofar)



Synopsis

Every Saturday morning Noah and Grampa take a special walk. It's the best time to find Shabbat shalom, some Sabbath peace, Grampa explains. Noah loves their time together, but he'd love it even more if his puppy, Mazel, could join them. That wiggly, waggly, wet-nosed puppy? says Grampa. He's just too noisy. But Noah keeps asking, and one day Mazel proves that he, too, can find Shabbat shalom. Jaime Zollars stunning illustrations, prepared with graphite and digital paint, show that peace can be experienced, even with a lively puppy nearby.

Book Information

File Size: 10552 KB

Print Length: 32 pages

Publisher: Two Lions (May 8, 2012)

Publication Date: May 8, 2012

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B007IVLCAG

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #355,674 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #19

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Customer Reviews

Really enjoyed this book with my little granddaughter. She began to understand how the nature around us can bring peace and joy.

I am writing this review as someone who is not familiar with Judaism, but who does select books for a library. Finding holiday books for Jewish holidays and concepts can be a difficult task, yet we do want to offer them. It's always good to expose children to other ideas and religions. The Shabbat Puppy is an adorable story that will appeal to all children. They may learn some new words, but the

words will not detract from their interest in the story. Every Sabbath, Noah and his grandfather go for long walks to try and find Shabbat Shalom, Sabbath peace. Noah always asks if his puppy Mazel can join but grampa doesn't think Mazel will help them find peace. Throughout the year they walk and talk about finding peace. Finally, one day, grampa says Mazel can come. As they walk, grampa discovers that Mazel helps them find their Shabbat Shalom. The illustrations set the scenes very well as they go from season to season. The people are given colorful friendly faces and the dog looks cute and happy. Kids 3 and older will enjoy the illustrations and story while younger kids will enjoy the colorful illustrations of the seasons and the dog. It's a very good story that will leave you feeling peaceful.

When rating a children's book, there are a few things that I look for: Illustrations: Vivid, pleasing to the eye. Caught my son's attention and held it. Words per page: Depending on the age of the child, you will want to have a limited number of words on a page because, when they get bored of the pictures, they want to turn the page. Even when they are reading themselves (which my son does), they don't want to spend forever on one page. For the most part, this book's wordiness is under control. There are a couple of parts where it is borderline on being too much, but overall, the book does this well. Singable Wording: A number of children, especially younger ones, will be more interested in reading a book whose word setup can be sung. This is not one of those books. Fortunately, it's strengths in other areas make up for that. Overall, this is a good book. I would say ages 6 and up, but that's just me.

I selected this book because it was recommended for age 3 and up, but felt that the language was a bit hard for my 3-year old son. My son was interested in the book at first, and liked it enough for a second reading, but then quickly lost interest. As an adult, I found the story is a bit complex, long, and really not really that interesting. It was pretty repetitive at first, with Noah asking if he could take his dog Mazel with him on their Shabbat walk. Grandpa says no. Noah asks again, Grandpa says no. This happens a few more times until Grandpa says yes. While the three of them are out, Mazel does a mitzvah and saves a baby bird. (The penultimate scene with the rescue was actually a little hard to follow as an adult, and I'm pretty sure that my son didn't grok it.) But after doing that, Grandpa welcomes Mazel's presence on his future walks. I definitely appreciated author Leslie Kimmelman's attempt to reach less observant families who might not go to Synagogue for Shabbat, but might do other things that make Saturday "different" than a normal day. Also, weaving the Grandfather into the story was particularly well received by my Dad, a fellow Grandpa. I found

the illustrations nice, but wasn't a huge fan of the style.

This book was given to me for my review. "Shalom means hello, goodbye and peace," writes the author Leslie Kimmelman in her forward. In the story *The Shabbat Puppy*, a grandfather and his son leave the house each Shabbat to seek out "Shabbat Shalom", and each time they leave the house, the little boy asks if he can take his puppy. Grandfather tells the child no because the puppy is too noisy and wiggly. It would be disruptive, and they would not be able to find "Shabbat shalom", which seems to mean, in the grandfather's mind, a in the peace and quiet of the day. The little boy, being a child, seeks out evidence of nature everywhere as they walk and finds Shabbat shalom in things like a spider's web, a line of ducks, and a snowfall, and each time asking his grandfather if these are "Shabbat shalom". The grandfather says yes. It seems that to the boy, "Shabbat shalom" is less about quiet, and more about the evidence of God and joy found in nature and daily life, though the story does not exactly state that. However, in Judaism, Shabbat is a focus on God, and therefore is not just about rest and peace but about joy and pleasure, so this would seem to fit. Finally, one day, the boy convinces his Grandfather that Mazel, the little dog, is mature enough to go with them on their walk. The dog begins to bark, and the reader wonders if the boy is wrong, but the little dog has sighted a baby bird that has fallen from its nest. Grandfather puts the fledgling back into the nest and when the boy asks if that is "Shabbat shalom" the grandfather says yes, and he agrees that Mazel is a good Shabbat pet. In the end, it seems that the Grandfather sees more of what the boy sees about Shabbat shalom, so that the two share the day in both joy and peace. Jaime Zollars' illustrations are semi-realistic, colorful, and yet touched with fun and whimsy. I think that if a thoughtful adult is willing to really discuss the story at an age appropriate level for a child, then it would be a great way to introduce the concept of Shabbat shalom. It is a book that is meant to be shared.

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