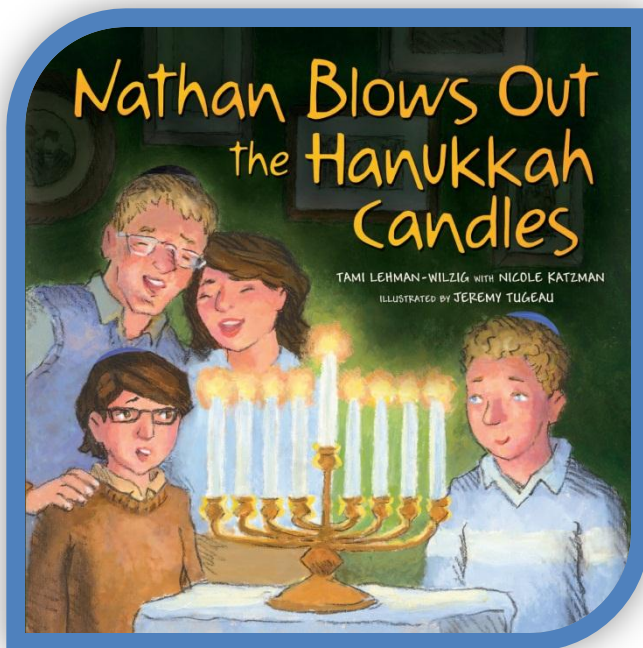




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Division

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



Nathan Blows Out the Hanukkah Candles

Tami Lehman-Wilzig (Author), Nicole Katzman (Author), Jeremy Tugeau (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-0761366584

Publisher: Kar-Ben Publishing

Year Published: 2011

Age Range: 4–8

Book Themes

People with disabilities, Family, Jewish culture, Holiday celebrations

About the Book

Jacob has an autistic brother, Nathan, whose repetitive and unusual behaviors annoy Jacob. They also embarrass him in front of his new friend, Steven. But when Steven makes fun of Nathan, Jacob comes to his brother's defense. In the end, both Steven's and Jacob's families learn to enjoy a new way of celebrating Hanukkah.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud or children read it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen

thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- How do you think Jacob feels when Nathan repeats himself? How do you know?
- What does the mom mean when she says that Nathan's "mind is wired differently?"
- When Jacob sees that a new boy moves in next door, how does he feel? Have you ever had a new kid move in next door? How did you feel?
- Why does Jacob get upset when Nathan blows out the candles?
- What does Jacob do when Steven says that Nathan is weird and starts making fun of him?
- Have you ever had to defend a sibling or a friend like that? What happened and how did you feel?
- What does it mean that Nathan is autistic? How does Jacob explain it?
- How does the story end? How did you feel when the book ended?
- What do you think was the message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Autism and People with Disabilities

The book focuses on two brothers, Jacob and Nathan; Nathan has autism. Remind your child about when Jacob's mother explains autism to him by describing Nathan in this way: "his mind is wired differently." [Autism Speaks](#) defines **autism** as a range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, speech and nonverbal communication, as well as by unique strengths and differences. Using examples from the book, you can reflect on what it means for Nathan to have autism. You can also discuss other people in your life who have autism or another disability. Find out what questions your child may have about autism or disabilities in general. You can explain that a disability is a condition (mental or physical) that affects a person's movements, senses or activities. Adults sometimes tell children not to notice or pay attention to a person's disability. It is important to convey that stereotypes and bias against people who are disabled are wrong but noticing their disability is understandable because it recognizes a part of who they are. You can also talk with your child about the extent to which their school and community are welcoming, respectful and accessible for people with disabilities and what they think is needed to make them better.

2. Differences and Acceptance

The book shows how Jacob would sometimes get annoyed with Nathan because he would repeat things over and over again and he blew out the Hanukkah candles and was not supposed to. He is also sometimes embarrassed by Nathan, especially when he makes a new friend (Steven) and Steven notices some of Nathan's behavior. When Jacob explains to Steven that his brother has autism, Steven makes fun of Nathan. After he grows tired of this, Jacob comes to his brother's defense and demands, "Stop making fun of my brother." This shows that even though he sometimes gets upset and frustrated with Nathan, he accepts him for who he is and stands up for him. You can

talk with your child in general about similarities and differences and talk about other kinds of differences including gender, race/ethnicity/culture, family structure, religion and other aspects of identity. Talk with them about differences you may have within your family, with their classmates and friends and the extent to which they have friends who are different in certain ways. Emphasize that we shouldn't ignore differences nor should we allow differences to get in the way of forming friendships.

3. Hanukkah and Holiday Traditions

In the book, Jacob and his family celebrate Hanukkah. Elicit from your child what they learned about Hanukkah through reading the book (i.e. lighting candles, playing dreidel, eating jelly doughnuts, spending time with family, etc.). If they don't already know, explain that Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday which celebrates the victory of the Jewish people over another group of people who were treating them unjustly. It is often called the "Festival of Lights" because Hanukkah is celebrated with the lighting of the menorah (also called a hanukkiyah) for eight nights, commemorating a miracle that happened during this time, where just a day's supply of oil allowed the menorah in the Temple to remain lit for eight days. Talk with your child about holidays that your family celebrates and the traditions that are a part of those holidays including family activities, food, games, gift giving, songs, stories, etc. Also, talk with them and ask them about what holidays their friends, classmates and neighbors celebrate and draw out both the similarities and differences in those holiday traditions.

Other Books You May Like

Armond Goes to a Party by Nancy Carlson, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/armond-goes-to-a-party

Hanukkah Moon by Deborah Da Costa, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/hanukkah-moon

Jeremy's Dreidel by Ellie Gellman, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/jeremys-dreidel

The Mitten String by Jennifer Rosner, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-mitten-string

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people with disabilities, ableism, Jewish culture and holiday celebrations.

Curriculum Resources

Equal Treatment, Equal Access: Raising Awareness about People with Disabilities and Their Struggle for Equal Rights, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/equal-treatment-equal-access-raising-awareness-about

Who Am I? Identity Poems, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems

Tools & Strategies

Communication Guidelines Relating to Ability,

www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/communication-guidelines-relating-to-ability.pdf

Winter Holidays: December Dilemma or Teaching Opportunity?,

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/winter-holidays

Websites

Definitions Related to Bias, Injustice and Bullying

www.adl.org/education/resources/glossary-terms/definitions-related-to-bias-injustice-and-bullying

A listing of terms and definitions relating to bias, diversity, bullying and social justice concepts written for elementary-age children.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

www.adl.org/education-outreach/anti-bias-education/c/parent-family-and-caregivers.html

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

The Question Corner

www.adl.org/education-outreach/early-childhood/c/the-question-corner.html

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Ability, Disability & Ableism, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[160\]=160&tid\[161\]=161&tid\[162\]=162&tid\[163\]=163](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[160]=160&tid[161]=161&tid[162]=162&tid[163]=163)

Jewish Culture & Anti-Semitism: Jewish Culture, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[191\]=191](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[191]=191)