



PETE THE CAT: I LOVE MY WHITE SHOES

Author: Eric Litwin

Illustrator: James Dean

Jewish Value: Be Content—*Same'ach B'chelko* שְׂמֵחַ בְּחֵלְקוֹ

Additional Value: Be Grateful—*Hakarat Hatov* הַכָּרַת הַטוֹב

Enduring Understandings

- Be content with what you have.
- “When life gives you a lemon, make lemonade!” Sometimes we can make the situation better through our attitude, and sometimes by the ways in which we solve the problem.

Book Summary

Pete the Cat goes walking down the street wearing his brand-new white shoes. Along the way, his shoes change from white to red to blue to brown to WET, as he steps in piles of strawberries, blueberries, and other big messes! But no matter what color his shoes are, Pete keeps movin' and groovin' and singing his song ... because it's all good!

Be Inspired: Consider the ideas included as starting points, as you and your students explore, discover, and live the values. Be sure to elicit and encourage student and parent participation, consistently reinforcing the values being addressed. Allow lessons to authentically develop and change based on engagement and interests.



For the Educator Jewish Thought, Text, and Traditions

(For more information on Jewish values, visit www.jewishlearningmatters.com.)

Same'ach b'chelko literally means “happy or content with one’s lot.” In other words, this Jewish value reminds us that we need to be content with what we have. This not only refers to our belongings, but also implies that we should not envy what belongs to others, live in the present moment, be happy with our own talents and accomplishments, and accept who we are. There is no limit to what we don’t have, and if that is where we focus, then our lives are inevitably filled with endless dissatisfaction.

In essence, we need to be grateful for what we have and who we are. Therefore, *same'ach b'chelko* is closely connected to another Jewish value, *hakarat hatov*, gratitude. When we are content with and grateful for what we have, we don’t feel threatened by the success and good fortune of others. We can celebrate what they have by appreciating what is our own. How we feel about ourselves can have an impact on our attitude toward others. As we give thanks, our practice needs to be to recognize and honor what we have received and to be grateful for its sufficiency.

Our own contentedness, then, truly is reflective on our perspective on life: the why and how, the meaning and purpose of our existence in the world. The rabbis of the Talmud teach that we should give thanks for the ability to give thanks. The very first words we are to speak in the morning are *Modeh Ani*—I am grateful to You. Beginning the day with thanks, our eyes are attuned to blessing and our spirit renewed.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. We learn from *Pirke Avot* 4:3 that we should not underrate the importance of anything. What is the reasoning for not underrating the importance of anything?
2. Do you feel more content when you have a sense that all things have their place?
3. What makes you happy, and what are you grateful for?
4. How can you incorporate the value of *same'ach b'chelko* within the classroom?



Jewish Every Day Incorporate Jewish Values

Start each morning by singing *Modeh Ani* and ask students to share a reason to say thank you, every day at your meeting time. Hear and see example of such a ritual here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlvL32CK-lc>.

As appropriate, on occasions of disappointment or challenge in the classroom, ask students to brainstorm how they can become content, happy with the way things are, or what they can do to make the situation “sweeter”.



Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Copy of *Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes*
- After the Story: ingredients for lemonade, including lemons, sugar, and water; cups

TECHNOLOGY

- Interactive read-aloud with author and illustrator: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUubMSfls-U>
- FREE download of the *I Love My White Shoes* song: <http://harpercollinschildrens.com/feature/petethecat/audio/pete-the-cat.mp3>



Sharing the Story

INTRODUCING THE STORY

For strategies for teaching vocabulary, see Appendix, Vocabulary Strategies.

Share the cover of the book, and ask students to share what they know about Pete the Cat, the title character in a series of books. Share with students that one thing you love about Pete in this story is that he is always content; no matter what happens, he finds a way to be happy with what he has.

Help students understand the concept of cause and effect. Create a cause-and-effect chart. Let students help fill it in.

Cause (If I ...)	Effect (then ...)
drop a glass of water	the glass breaks and the floor gets wet.
eat too many cookies	(have students complete)
stay out in the sun for too long	(have students complete)
(student suggestion)	(have students complete)

Explain that throughout this story, Pete the Cat will do some silly things that make his shoes change color and that you want their help in predicting (or guessing) what the effect will be. Suggest they listen to how he deals with the unexpected things that happen.

READING THE STORY

*Read the story aloud, stopping when appropriate to explore illustrations, address comments, clarify, predict, and guide students' understanding of the story and the values to **be content**—same'ach b'chelko and **be grateful**—hakarot hatov.*

Pause just before you show each page that indicates what color Pete's shoes will be, and encourage students to predict what will happen.

Praise Pete's attitude of gratitude and his ability to find ways to make a sticky situation feel happy and sweet!



Sharing the Story

continued

Encourage students to sing along, “I love my ___ shoes,” as well as “read” the repetitive sections together, for example, “Did Pete cry? Goodness no!!!!”

AFTER THE STORY

Discuss the following questions:

- How would you describe Pete the Cat?
- What do you like about Pete the Cat?
- Do you know people who seem to act like Pete the Cat—always happy or content with what they have?
- What would happen if Pete cried and got upset or angry every time something happened to his shoes?
- Pete loved his shoes. What things are you grateful or happy to have?

Reinforce the concept of cause and effect with students. Ask the following questions:

- I wonder, if Pete’s shoes were to turn green, where do you think he might have stepped?
- I wonder, if Pete’s shoes were to turn black (or purple, or any other color), where do you think he might have stepped?

Teach problem solving by turning lemons into lemonade! Pete was happy even when unexpected things happened. Involve students in the following to help them enhance and apply their understanding of gratitude and contentment through problem solving.

- Give each student a small piece of a lemon. Ask them to taste the lemon and describe it. Do they like it? How could they make it taste better? Collect ideas.
- Involve students in making lemonade: squeezing out the juice and adding water, sugar, and ice.
- Now have them sample the lemonade. How would they describe the taste? Do they like it better than the taste of the freshly-squeezed lemons?
- Share the popular saying, “If you’ve got lemons, make lemonade!” What do they think this means?
- Discuss the following scenarios:
 - If you wanted to play outside, but it started to rain, what could you do to make it “sweeter” and feel content? (make a fort, read a book, pop popcorn and watch a movie)
 - If your family decided to have a playdate with a family you didn’t know, what could you do to make it “sweeter” and feel content? (make a new friend, learn about another family, share your toys and theirs)
 - If you got a cold and couldn’t go to a party, what could you do to make it “sweeter” and feel content? (call the friend who is hosting the party to say something nice and tell them you missed them, plan a different special get-together with friends, have a pajama party with your toys, pets, or family while you are resting)



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

ROCKIN' GUITARS

DRAMATIC PLAY, ART, MUSIC

Throughout the story, Pete is depicted with his cool guitar. Create tissue-box “guitars” so that the students can play and sing. For each guitar, you will need:

- a tissue box
- a sturdy piece of cardboard in the shape of a very narrow rectangle or a paper towel tube for the “neck”
- several rubber bands, optimally different widths
- a pencil (or pencil-shaped object)
- a piece of string or fabric to make a guitar strap, if desired
- a way to decorate the box and tissues: stickers, contact paper, paint, or markers

Directions

1. Draw students’ attention to Pete’s guitar and help them identify the head, neck, body, and strings of the instrument. If possible, invite a guitar player to visit your classroom to explain the parts and their function.
2. Encourage students to decorate their tissue boxes and allow them to dry completely. If using cardboard, attach the neck of the guitar with glue (a glue gun or other strong adhesive will increase the craft’s durability) or by cutting out a hole in the top of the box and sticking the tube with glue into the box. Allow it to dry.
3. Help students stretch the rubber bands the long way around the decorated tissue box with the attached neck and play away! Different shapes and sizes of rubber bands will produce different types of sounds. Stick the pencil underneath the bottom of the tissue box hole to hold up the rubber bands. Attach a strap to the guitar if desired.
4. Encourage students to create their own new tunes about the things they love, using their guitars and their imaginations!
5. Share the songs and story with the community by visiting classrooms or having a rockin’ guitar parade!

CREATE AN I LOVE MY WHITE SHOES BIG BOOK

LITERACY, MUSIC, ART

Make a cover for your book with a title. Complete the cover with your name and your class’s name.

Mr. / Ms. _____ (teacher’s name) Class: _____ (class name)

Students each select something else they might step into and what color their shoes become. Help them write a caption on large chart paper, draw the page, and bind. It might be fun to create a video, with each child reading his or her own illustrated page and the class singing the chorus (changing it a bit for each new color).



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

continued

WE LOVE OUR PAPER SHOES!

ART, SCIENCE

- Ask each student to trace the outline of his or her shoe on a piece of white paper (copy paper works best) and then ask them to color them with washable markers. You might want to sing, “I love my _____ shoes,” describing each of the student’s color choices.
- Then drop the “shoes” into a bucket of water. If you want the students to get their own shoes back at the end of the activity, make certain to write their names in permanent marker on the shoe as well.
- Ask the students to make predictions and chart what they believe will happen to their shoes. Wait 15-20 minutes and then ask the students to remove their shoes from the water bucket. What happened to their colored shoes? Usually, washable marker soaks off of paper, leaving the paper wet but white.

GOODNESS SEEKERS

MOVEMENT

Invite students to practice *hakarat hatov* by asking students to “find the good” in various situations. Encourage students to explore their environment and accompany them as they go on a “good” scavenger hunt. Document all their ideas and share with the community.



Music

(Access all songs at www.jewishlearningmatters.com/music.)

“You Get What You Get” by “Miss” Emily Aronoff Teck
Track # 6 from *Good Choices, Volume 1*

INSPIRATION TEXT

Ben Zoma says, “Who is rich? The one who appreciates what he has” -*Pirke Avot* 4:1

“YOU GET WHAT YOU GET” ACTIVITY

When friends or family become upset, encourage students to use the chorus of this song to remind them to try to be content.

LYRICS

CHORUS

You get what you get, and you don’t get upset
You get what you get, and you don’t get upset

All the toys are great but there is one I like the best
When we share toys, I want one more than all the rest
If I don’t get what I want, I know I’ll be okay
If I start to get sad, my friends know what to say

CHORUS

When I sit at the table and it’s time to eat
I know I should eat healthy foods but I want something sweet
I see what’s on my plate, and I sorta want to cry
But I make a better choice and give new healthy foods a try

CHORUS

It is time for bed, time to read with Mom or Dad
They let me choose two books, but I want more and I get mad
I’m cranky and it’s late, and I see my parents sigh
‘Til I have a good idea, sing this as a lullaby ...

CHORUS



Music

continued

I've slept all through the night. I'm in a happy morning mood
I'm thinking about this song and about my attitude
With a small shift in how I think, I will better understand
If I'm grateful, I'll feel rich, feel my life is truly grand!

New CHORUS

I have what I have, and I am quite glad
I've got what I've got, I'm content with my lot
I have what I have, and I am quite glad
I've got what I've got, I'm content with my lot

ADDITIONAL MUSIC CONNECTIONS

To access additional Jewish and secular songs from a variety of traditional and contemporary artists that reinforce and teach these values, visit www.jewishlearningmatters.com/music.



Evidence of Learning

Through the various activities, discussions, and problem-solving scenarios, students can articulate what it means to be content or happy with what they have.



Home and Community Connections

Encourage families to learn more about the values and reinforce the concepts with their children through video and song by visiting www.jewishlearningmatters.com.

Hold a school-wide shoe drive to donate shoes to children, explaining that there are many children in our community who don't have shoes to wear.

Send a note home to families about the "lemons into lemonade" activity, encouraging them to involve children in problem solving and finding ways to "make things sweeter" when a challenge arises.



Literature Connections

Title	Author(s) and Illustrator(s)	Summary
<i>Let the Whole Earth Sing Praise</i>	Tomie dePaola	Inspired by biblical scripture and the folk art of the Otomi people of Puebla, Mexico, this small picture book praises the goodness and beauty of G-d's creation. Through song-like verse and tropical-hues collage, it extols the joy to be found everywhere you look—from land, sea, and sky to all of humanity.
<i>The OK Book</i>	Amy Krouse Rosenthal Tom Lichtenheld	This book plays on words to help children discover that sometimes something that seems just “OK” can actually be great.
<i>How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids</i>	Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer Maurie J.Manning	Through the story of a little boy named Felix, this charming book explains to children how being kind not only helps others, it helps them, too. As he goes about his day, Felix interacts with different people — his sister Anna, his grandfather, other family and friends. Some people are happy, but others are grumpy or sad. Using the metaphor of a bucket and dipper, Felix' grandfather explains why the happy people make Felix feel good, while the others leave him feeling bad — and how Felix himself is affecting others, whether he means to or not.
<i>It Could Always Be Worse*</i>	Margot Semach	Once upon a time a poor unfortunate man lived with his mother, his wife, and his six children in a one-room hut. Because they were so crowded, the children often fought and the man and his wife argued. When the poor man was unable to stand it any longer, he ran to the Rabbi for help. In his little hut, silly calamity follows foolish catastrophe, all memorably depicted in full-color illustrations that are both funnier and lovelier than any this distinguished artist has done in the past.

*PJ Library Book



Thematic Connections

Pete the Cat Series

Cause and effect

Music: guitars

Thanksgiving

LESSON CONTRIBUTOR

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