



THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR

Author: Eric Carle
Illustrator: Eric Carle

Jewish Value:

Protect the Body—*Sh'mirat Ha-guf* שמירת הגוף

Enduring Understandings

- Taking care of our bodies allows us to be healthy, both physically and mentally.
- Our body is a gift from G-d, so we must treat it respectfully.

Book Summary

A caterpillar bursts out of an egg on a leaf. He is ravenous and begins to search for food. The caterpillar eats so much during the next seven days that he begins to feel very sick. On the last day, the caterpillar eats a single green leaf. He weaves a cocoon for the chrysalis stage, and after metamorphosis, he emerges as a beautiful butterfly.

***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 value 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.)

Integral to the Jewish understanding of the human body is that the human body was created *b'tzelem Elohim*—in the image of G-d (Genesis 9:6). As such, there is something holy and uniquely special about us. Our tradition would assert that our bodies house an aspect of the Divine within. Therefore, we each must care for our body as if it were the very body of G-d. The Jewish value *sh'mirat ha-guf* encompasses the idea that we must show the utmost respect and care for our bodies.

Showing respect for and caring for our bodies encompasses a variety of different things, such as bathing regularly, brushing our teeth, eating healthy, exercising, and getting an adequate amount of sleep. When we do these things, we are protecting our bodies from ailments and, in a spiritual sense, protecting the Divine spark within. Taking care of ourselves brings out the best in us and allows us to do our best. We learn from the virtue of *sh'mirat ha-guf* what it means to be responsible for our actions, appreciate ourselves and our bodies, and lovingly care for this gift that we have been given.

Another way to understand the value of *sh'mirat ha-guf* is that we are to guard our bodies (Deuteronomy 4:9). Medieval philosophers would explain that we need to protect our body as if it were on loan from G-d. How we use our bodies is our choice. Taking care of our bodies is as if we are taking care of the Torah. We dress the Torah ornately to both symbolize how majestic it is and to guard its teachings. We make sure that we don't place our fingers directly on the text so our oils will not smear the Hebrew. We say blessings when we are about to learn from and teach the Torah as a means of sanctifying its specialness. Like the Torah, we are told not to place markings on our body, such as tattoos, because they deface it. We wear clothes on a regular basis as a way to respect our personal selves and as a way to keep our bodies cool or warm. We say blessings on a regular basis as a way to show our understanding of our actions but also to celebrate who we are and what we can become.

This value can be connected to the holidays of *Simchat Torah* and *Tu B'Shevat*. During these holidays, a discussion could focus on the concept of the "Tree of Life": In order for a tree to grow, you have to take care of it. Students can be involved in looking at the Torah, talking about why we can't touch its letters, and identifying how special it is. By taking care of the Torah, one takes care of life. By taking care of all life, one also takes care of the self. During *Tu B'Shevat*, the theme of taking care of and protecting the body can be extended to taking care of everything around us. If we take care of nature, we in turn will be provided with fruits, vegetables, and other foods that are healthy nourishment.



For the Educator

Jewish Thought, Text, and Traditions

continued

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What things can you do to become more aware of the Divine within?
2. How can we both be and act *b'tzelem Elohim*—in the image of G-d?
3. If you were to more effectively take care of your body, what types of things would you do?
4. What can you do to model this value within your life and within the classroom?



Jewish Every Day

Incorporate Jewish Values

Once a week, have a special day in which students are introduced to a new and healthy snack. Ask parents to sign up to volunteer to bring in samples. Give this day a creative name such as “Tutti-Frutti Tuesdays” or “Fresh, Fun Fridays.” You may wish to discuss the origin of each food, how it tastes, etc.

Create healthy food stations and have students learn how to clean fruit before eating. Teach students how to make orange juice using a juicer, how to peel a cucumber using a vegetable peeler, etc. (For safety reasons, do this with them.) Explain to students that eating healthy refers both to what we eat and how we treat the food that we eat. This is also a good opportunity to introduce table manners, how to use utensils, and how to wash our hands properly.



Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Copy of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
- After the Story: *sh'mirat ha-guf* cards that include actions / tasks and stickers
- After the Story: craft items to create caterpillars
- After the Story: “caterpillar snacks,” which include apple and pear slices, plums, strawberries, oranges, mint leaves, etc.

TECHNOLOGY

- One of many fantastic resources online for this book can be found at <http://www.us.penguin.com/static/pages/features/hungrycaterpillar/>.



Sharing the Story

INTRODUCING THE STORY

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

Show students the cover of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Build background knowledge on caterpillars.

- Have you ever seen a caterpillar? What did it look like?
- Have you held a caterpillar? How did it feel? How did it move?
- Give students the opportunity to move like a caterpillar!

Ask students what they see on the cover.

Does the caterpillar look happy?

Why do you think the caterpillar might be so hungry?

As you read the story, have them listen to discover all the foods the Hungry Caterpillar ate during the week!

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 value to **protect the body**—sh'mirat ha-guf.*

Ask the following questions:

- I wonder why there are holes in this book. What do you think?
- How did each of the foods the caterpillar ate make him feel?
- Why do you think the caterpillar felt sick?
- What kinds of food might have given the caterpillar a stomachache?
- What happened when the caterpillar ate the green leaf?
- Why was the caterpillar so hungry?

AFTER THE STORY

Sh'mirat Ha-guf Week

Discuss specific actions or tasks that one can do that embodies the value of taking care of one's body (for example, washing hands after going to the bathroom, drinking water, eating fruits and vegetables, helping someone carry something heavy, taking a nap, etc.). List these on *sh'mirat ha-guf* cards and give one to each student. Place stickers on the students' cards as they are earned for each accomplished action or task. Reward students with extra play time / recess time for their hard work.



Sharing the Story

continued

Caterpillar Conscience and Naming Ceremony

Have students create individual caterpillars from a variety of materials and craft items. Involve them in a naming ceremony for the caterpillar and give the caterpillar a Hebrew name. Students can take home their class-made caterpillars as a reminder to the entire family to eat healthy in order to protect the body—*sh'mirat ha-guf*. (See Home and Community Connections.)

Caterpillar Fruit Salad

Provide the opportunity for students to create their own healthy fruit salads.

- Review the fruits and leaf eaten by the Hungry Caterpillar in the book (one apple, two pears, three plums, four strawberries, five oranges, and “one nice, green leaf”).
- Ask students to suggest other fruits they enjoy in addition to those suggested in the book. Bring in some of these items (parent volunteers can help) and allow students to go through the “buffet” of healthy fruits to create their own Caterpillar Fruit Salads.
- Place the fruit salad in individual serving containers and top with a mint leaf.



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

CATERPILLAR TO BUTTERFLY

SCIENCE

A variety of caterpillar kits can be ordered online. Let students experience firsthand all the stages in the life cycle of the butterfly. Provide sketchbooks or paper so students can record their observations. When the butterfly emerges, be sure to release it outdoors to reinforce the Jewish value of kindness to animals and contribute to the beauty of the world.

BUTTERFLY FINDER

NATURE, SCIENCE

Go for a nature walk and look for butterflies and caterpillars. Have students notice the patterns of the butterflies, the colors and the shapes of their wings, and any distinct markings. Take pictures of their favorites to be framed and decorate the classroom.

CREATIVE COLLAGE

HEALTH, ART

Have students cut out pictures of fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods they like. These pictures can be pasted on paper plates, or students can draw their own nutritious food choices. Depending on their developmental abilities, students can be encouraged to fill their plate with healthy portions of food, using “My Plate” as a guide: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

GIVE ME FIVE A DAY!

MUSIC, MOVEMENT

Reinforce the value to protect the body through healthy eating and physical activity by sharing the fun food songs and by engaging students in the fruit and vegetable dances at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-people-and-families/wic/nutrition-materials/5-a-day-cd/index.html>. Encourage students to dance and move their bodies to the music!

RETELLING OF *THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR* LITERACY, TECHNOLOGY

Play the following YouTube video, an animated reading of the book: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4HI7q38VmQ. Involve students in a Story Retell. (See Appendix.) Select several pictures from the book, from the beginning, middle, and end. (See Appendix.) Give each student a different picture and help students organize the pictures in the sequential order to tell the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Once the pictures are in the correct order, have students retell the story, using the pictures as a scaffold.



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

continued

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A BUTTERFLY

ART, SCIENCE

Provide a variety of craft materials so that students can create “artifacts” to represent the stages of the life cycle of a butterfly, beginning with the egg, then the caterpillar, the chrysalis, and finally the emerging butterfly!

- The following website offers creative craft tips for making each of the above: <http://suite101.com/article/butterfly-life-cycle-craft-a207499>
- Using their “artifacts,” involve students in a story retell of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Reinforce the value of protecting the body through healthy eating.

HUNGRY HEBREW CATERPILLAR

HEBREW

Watch a kindergarten class present the story in Hebrew with props to help children understand the story: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuRAha2iBRk>

FOOD MATCH-UP

SCIENCE, MATH

Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/> and explore the different food group items. Share images of foods from each food group with the children. Ask students to identify which food group each image belongs to: meat and protein, grain, fruits, vegetables, oils and fats, or dairy.



Music

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

“Protect My Body” by “Miss” Emily Aronoff Teck Track # 5 from *Good Choices, Volume 1*

INSPIRATION TEXT

“For in the image of G-d, did G-d make humankind.” -Genesis 9:6

“When injury is likely, one should not rely on a miracle.” -Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 39b

“PROTECT MY BODY” ACTIVITIES

Before introducing this tune, ask students to create a list of the ways they protect their bodies, and then compare their ideas to the ideas included in the lyrics of the song.

Find the beat and move your body! Invite students to create gestures that match the chorus’ lyrics and encourage students to move in a variety of ways to the beat of the song for each verse. For example, clap the beat on the first verse, march to it on the second, and do jumping jacks on the third. Invite students to think of new ways to exercise their bodies each time you share the song.

LYRICS

CHORUS

I protect my body, I’m telling you the truth.

I protect my body, in Hebrew, *sh’mirat ha-guf*.

I eat and drink and bath and brush to keep my body right.

I exercise and choose good foods and sleep every night, to keep my body right.

My body is amazing, it is one of G-d’s creations.

With bones and muscles and skin to feel all the world’s sensations.

I am thankful every day for the body G-d gave me.

So, I will show respect and love, keeping it healthy, keeping it healthy!

CHORUS

I’ll listen to my body, I’ve got to stop and think and feel.

Sometimes my body tells me what it needs to grow or heal.

I’ll keep my body busy and make my body strong.

I’ll stretch and move and dance for fun, remembering this song, remembering this song!



Music

continued

CHORUS

So, since I want to be happy and spend time with my family,
We'll all make choices that will keep us healthy.
Protecting our bodies is like a gift we keep on giving.
We enjoy our time together, sharing healthy living, sharing healthy living!

ADDITIONAL MUSIC CONNECTIONS

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



Evidence of Learning

The children can substitute different nutritious foods eaten by the caterpillar during the first five days. For example, ask, “What could the caterpillar have eaten instead of two pears?” Responses could include items such as two carrots, two walnuts, two celery stalks, two bananas, etc.

Students are able to identify foods that are nutritious in various activities included in the lesson.

Students will be able to describe ways in which they can regularly take care of their bodies.



Home and Community Connections

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

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Share this link with families to explore healthy eating habits:

http://www.us.penguinroup.com/static/pages/features/hungrycaterpillar/downloads/vhc_online_guide.pdf

EATING HEALTHY, GROWING STRONG

Suggest that parents download the growth chart based on *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and discuss how we keep our bodies healthy through good dietary habits and physical activity. The chart will help them keep track of their children's journey to becoming stronger and healthier. http://www.us.penguinroup.com/static/pages/features/hungrycaterpillar/downloads/vhc_growthchart.pdf

CATERPILLAR CONSCIENCE

Have students take home the caterpillars they made and named. (See After the Story.) Encourage families to display the caterpillars as a reminder to eat healthy in order to protect the body—*sh'mirat ha-guf*. Families may wish to display the caterpillar on their refrigerator, take it to the grocery store, place it as a centerpiece on the dining table, etc.

CATERPILLAR SNACKS

Send home a list of the foods the Hungry Caterpillar ate that were healthy. Suggest that families make a game out of snack time and give their children the option of selecting good snacks from a variety of foods that the caterpillar ate. Encourage parents to take their children to the grocery store to shop for additional healthy snacks to add to the list. They can tell children that these are “caterpillar snacks,” which helped the caterpillar turn into a beautiful butterfly and will keep their bodies healthy as well.

Suggest that parents model eating a balanced diet and include weekly physical activity into their routines. Tell them to use “teachable moments” to explain how a balanced diet and physical activity help children grow and develop, concentrate and learn, build strong bones and muscles, and maintain a healthy weight. Encourage parents to find creative ways of keeping children active. Share the government's web resource on “My Plate”: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html>.



Literature Connections

Title	Author(s) and Illustrator(s)	Summary
<i>I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato</i>	Lauren Child	Lola has a long list of foods that she is obstinate about eating. These include carrots, peas, potatoes, eggs, spaghetti, fish sticks, and the dreaded tomato. Her big brother hatches a plan to get Lola to eat the foods that are good for her. He renames the foods and makes them sound so appealing that Lola eats them.
<i>Good Enough to Eat: A Kid's Guide to Food and Nutrition</i>	Lizzy Rockwell	This book presents an introductory education on nutrition, written specifically for kids. It introduces six categories of nutrients as well as five recipes.
<i>The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food</i>	Stan Berenstain and Jan Berenstain	The bear cubs and Papa Bear are getting chubby from eating too much junk food. Their family doctor shows a slide show on the body and how it works. The junk food is replaced by healthy snacks.
<i>Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli</i>	Barbara Jean Hicks Sue Hendra	Monsters would rather eat tractors, rocket ships, and boulders. They do not eat vegetables. Monsters like to eat maple trees and giant redwoods, which have a canny resemblance to the dreaded broccoli.
<i>Burger Boy</i>	Alan Durant Mei Matsuoka	This is a cautionary tale about a boy who will only eat burgers, even after being warned about all the terrible things that can happen to him (dogs hound him, cows threaten him, hungry children chase him). His mother saves him with fruit and vegetables so he doesn't become a sideshow attraction at a burger franchise.



Thematic Connections

Life cycles
Insects
Basic food groups
Simchat Torah
Tu B'shevat

LESSON CONTRIBUTOR

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