




The Jewish Education Center Of Cleveland
 2030 South Taylor Road • Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
 Phone (216) 371-0446 • Fax (216) 371-2523 • Web Site: www.jecc.org



Read a Jewish book this summer!!

Please note:  indicates paperback format available...
 great for putting in a backpack and taking to camp, a vacation, or the beach!

Preschool



Abraham, Michelle Shapiro. ***My Cousin Tamar Lives in Israel***. New York: URJ Press, 2007.

A young boy compares and contrasts how he celebrates the Jewish holidays in America to how his cousin Tamar celebrates in Israel. Colorful illustrations.

Fabiyi, Jan Goldin. ***Where Shabbat Lives. Very First Board Books***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2008.

A board book that catches the essence of *Shabbat* through symbols and customs.

Horowitz, David. ***Five Little Gefiltes***. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2007.

In a parody of "Five Little Ducklings," five little *gefilte* fish sneak out of their jar and wander across an early 20th century New York City. Of course, all the *gefiltes* do eventually come back to their *meshugana* Mama "cause each was a *mensch!*" Comic asides contain *Yiddish* phrases. The illustrations are done with cut paper, charcoal and colored pencil drawings.

Jules, Jacqueline. ***Goodnight Sh'ma***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2008.

Melanie Hall beautifully illustrated the very simple board book about a young child saying the *Sh'ma* at bedtime.

Rosenbaum, Andrea Warmflash. ***A Grandma Like Yours; a Grandpa Like Yours***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2006.

A beautifully illustrated book that describes the joys of grandparents. It is told in a very simply in bouncy rhyme. The book reverses from the story about grandmas ("*savtas*") to the story about grandpas ("*sabas*") all in charming animal form.

Rouss, Sylvia A. ***Sammy Spider's First Day of School***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2009.

This is the best of the *Sammy Spider* series. Sammy Spider follows Josh to his first day of preschool. There he learns about the Jewish value of kindness to animals. Illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn.

Schon, Ruchy. ***Who am I?*** Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 2006.

An adorable board book with photography describing different occupations while incorporating Jewish content. Photographed by Tuchela Ruth.

Sheri, Shira. ***Jonathan and the Waves: Yonatan V'hagalim***. Denver, CO: Milk and Honey Press, 2006.

Jonathan is afraid of the waves at the beach. He looks for God to keep him safe. Contains English and Hebrew text.

Shulman, Goldie. ***Way Too Much Challah Dough***. Brooklyn, NY: Hachai Publishing, 2006.

Mindy tries to bake *hallot* by herself for the very first time. When she adds more yeast than she should, will her *hallah* dough ever stop growing? Mindy's *bubbe* shows her how simple it is to follow the recipe. Told in a rhyming scheme with humorous illustrations. Includes *hallah* recipe.

Sugarman, Brynn Olenberg. ***Rebecca's Journey Home***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2006.

A picture book about the adoption of a Vietnamese child by a Jewish family. The welcoming of the child and the process of giving her a Jewish identity are part of the warmly told story.

Taback, Simms. ***Joseph had a Little Overcoat***. New York: Viking, 1999.

Another version of a traditional tale about resourcefulness. Die-cut holes in the illustrations give hints of shapes to come.

Tal, Eve. ***A New Boy: Yeled Chadash***. Denver, CO: Milk and Honey Press, 2006.

Boris, an immigrant to Israel from the former Soviet Union, is a new boy in the classroom. The other children have trouble accepting him because he talks differently and the teacher favors him. Contains English and Hebrew text.

Primary (Kindergarten – Grade 2)

Bar-el, Dan. ***Such a Prince***. New York: Clarion Books, 2007.

Libby Gaborchik, a *bubbe*-like fairy, helps Marvin, a poor peasant, win the hand of the beautiful Princess Vera. The story has implied Jewish humor.

Cohen, Deborah Bodin. ***Nachshon, Who was Afraid to Swim: A Passover Story***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2009.

This is a story based on a *midrash* about Nachshon ben Aminadav set during the crossing of the Red Sea while the Israelites escaped Egypt. In Cohen's version, Nachshon, a slave under Pharaoh's rule, was very brave except for his fear of the water. Moses told him that one has to conquer fears to be truly free. When Moses led the Israelites to freedom, Nachson faced his fear and crossed the Red Sea. Jago uses oil paints to give a textured feel to his illustrations.

Davis, Aubrey. ***Bagels from Benny***. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2003.

A sweet retelling of a traditional tale about thanking God by leaving bread (*hallah* or bagels) in the synagogue. Illustrated by Dusan Petricic.

Edwards, Michelle. ***Chicken Man. 2nd Ed.*** Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 2008.

This is a humorous picture book set in an early *kibbutz*. Rody, the Chicken Man, loves his chickens and they love him. Because of the necessity of rotating jobs on the *kibbutz*, he must take on other responsibilities. He embraces each new task with enthusiasm. Each of his jobs, therefore, always looks good to others and causes envy among his friends. Eventually the *kibbutzniks* realize that it is Rody who makes a job seem like fun. This story portrays a historic period in Israel.

Eitzen, Ruth. ***Tara's Flight***. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2008.

A beautifully illustrated version of Noah's Ark. Aram is Noah's grandson and Tara is the dove. Peace is the theme of the story, but there are no suggestions as to why there was a flood.

Fagan, Cary. ***My New Shirt***. Ontario, Canada: Tundra Books, 2007.

Every year David receives the same birthday gift from his *bubbe*, a starched button-down white shirt. This year he subconsciously lets the shirt fly out the window. His dog Pupik grabs the shirt which leads to a wild chase. Although there is no overt Jewish content, *Yiddish* words are intertwined in the text. The illustrations are graphically presented as a photo album showing David's dream sequence and the chase.

Goldeen, Ruth. ***Alef-bet Yoga for Kids***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2009.

Children become Hebrew letters through yoga poses.

Hanft, Josh. ***Miracles of the Bible***. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple, 2007.

Stories of Daniel in the Lion's Den, Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, and other tales. Delightful illustrations by the award-winning illustrator Seymour Chwast. Contains fold-out pages.

Hartman, Bob. ***Dinner in the Lions' Den***. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2006.

When King Darius has Daniel thrown into the lions' den because he prays to his own God, an angel is sent down to help him. The angel manages to distract the lion for a whole day. The following morning, Daniel is released and his enemies are put in the den. The angel leaves the men to their own devices, telling the lions, "It's dinnertime."

Heller, Linda. ***Castle on Hester Street, 25th Anniversary Edition***. New York:

Simon Schuster, 2007.

A twenty-fifth anniversary edition of the classic story that is given a new life with jubilant illustrations by Boris Kulikov. Julie's grandfather tells her tall tales about his immigration from Russia to the United States and living on Hester Street in New York City.

Hyde, Heidi Smith. ***Mendel's Accordion: The Story of Klezmerim***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben Publishing, 2007.

When Mendel left the old country for America, he took his accordion. He met fellow *Klezmer* players on the boat and played his accordion with them. He had a family in America and played for them. As his children grew and had their own children, they developed interests in different forms of music. However, his great-grandson found his Mendel's accordion and started a *Klezmer* band. [Note: *Klezmer* is a kind of music that originated in Eastern Europe; *klezmerim* is the plural of *klezmer*.] Full page illustrations by Johanna Van Der Sterre.

Jules, Jacqueline. ***Benjamin and the Silver Goblet***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2009. Benjamin, the youngest of Jacob's sons, travels to Egypt with his older brothers to retrieve Simeon who is being jailed. In Egypt, Joseph, who is now governor, plays a trick on the older brothers by placing a silver goblet in Benjamin's bag. He would like to see if the brothers would stay back and defend their youngest brother. Natascia Ugliano uses oil paints in her rich illustrations.

Jules, Jacqueline. ***Sarah Laughs***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2008.

At God's command, Abraham and Sarah leave their home and travel to Canaan with family and friends. But their joy is always dimmed by their wish for a child. God has promised that Abraham will be the father of a nation. One day three strangers arrive at their tent. Sarah overhears them talking to Abraham, saying that she will soon be a mother. "I'm too old," she laughs. But G-d doesn't forget promises...In a year, a baby is born. She names him Isaac, who means "laughter," and the world rejoices with her. Beautiful illustrations by Natascia Ugliano.

Leshem-Pelly, Miri. ***Lon-Lon's Big Night: Halaila Hagadol Shel Lon-Lon***. Denver, CO: Milk and Honey Press, 2006.

Lon-Lon, a little sand fox, was born in the Negev. He lived with his family inside an underground burrow. The first night he was allowed outside by himself to play, he found himself alone in the middle of the desert, far from his home and family. English and Hebrew text. Winner of the Nachum Gutman Award for illustrations.

Stampler, Ann Redisch. ***Shlemazel and the Remarkable Spoon of Pohost***. New York: Clarion Books, 2006.

In the village of Pohost lived a man whom everyone thought was lazy called Shlemazel. Shlemazel refused to work, because he thought he had bad luck. One day, a hard working man named Moshke gave Shlemazel a spoon to dig for his luck. While digging for his luck with the spoon, Shlemazel accomplished different jobs and found a wife. Colorfully illustrated by Jacqueline M. Cohen.

Yasgur, Abigail and Joseph Lipner. ***Max Said Yes!: The Woodstock Story***. Los Angeles: Change the Universe Press, 2009.

This is a rhyming picture book about how the Jewish farmer Max Yasgur agreed to provide the venue for the world-famous Woodstock rock concert. He said, "Yes!" because of his personal vision. He welcomed all, valuing hospitality as Abraham did. He respected community spirit and kids with big ideas. The book includes historic details from 1969. Barbara Mendes' vivid illustrations recreate action, period clothing and hair styles.

Ziefert, Harriet. ***When I First Came to This Land***. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2007.

Based on a folk song by Oscar Brand. Simms Taback's whimsical illustrations add charm and color to this immigrant experience of making good in America.

Elementary School (Grades 3 – 4)



Fireside, Bryna J. ***Private Joel and the Sewell Mountain Seder***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2008.

A chapter book inspired by a true Civil War story. At the time of *Pesah*, a Jewish soldier and his company, along with three former slaves, improvise a *seder*.



Goldman, David J. ***Jewish Sports Stars, Revised Ed.: Athletic Heroes Past and Present***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben/Lerner, 2006.

Brief biographies of Jewish athletes are organized by sport and accompanied by black and white photographs. A list of Maccabee Award winners and many sports statistics are appended.



Jungman, Ann. ***The Prince Who Thought He Was a Rooster and Other Jewish Stories***. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2007.

A collection of Jewish folktales. Introduction by Michael Rosen.

McDonough, Yona Zeldis. ***Hammerin' Hank***. New York: Walker, 2006.

A colorful picture biography of Hank Greenberg, from his life to death. The illustrations are striking and the text is clear and concise. A fine introduction to a true Jewish American hero.

Michelson, Richard. ***Across the Alley***. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons: 2006.

Abe is a Jewish boy whose grandpa aspires for him to be a violin player. Willie is an African-American boy, who is expected to follow in his father's footsteps of playing professional baseball. During the days, their ethnic and racial backgrounds keep the boys apart. However, at night, across the alley through their bedroom window, the boys share their dreams. Willie shows Abe how to pitch a slider, and he proves himself skilled at the violin that Abe hands across the alley. Abe turns out to be better at baseball than Willie, and when the lads' secret comes out, it's Willie who gives a recital at the synagogue, and Abe who takes the pitcher's mound. E.B. Lewis' lovely art captures the joy both boys feel about their respective talents.

Michelson, Richard. ***As Good As Anybody: Martin Luther King Jr. and Abraham Joshua Heschel's Amazing March Toward Freedom***. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

A handsomely illustrated book about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Heschel. The theme is that early experiences of prejudice motivated them both to become civil rights activists. Illustrated by Raul Colon.

Nobleman, Marc Tyler. ***Boys of Steel: The Creators of Superman***. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

During the Great Depression, Jerry Siegal and Joe Shuster, two shy and awkward Jewish teenagers from Cleveland, OH created Superman. They gave Superman the characteristics that they wished to possess. Clark Kent was based on their true personalities. The illustrations are reminiscent of comic strip drawings.

O'Connell, Rebecca. ***Penina Levine is a Hard-boiled Egg***. New Milford, CT: Roaring Book Press, 2007.

Jewish sixth-grader Penina Levine is annoyed when her public school teacher asks her to create a letter from the Easter bunny for a kindergartner. When she tries to fulfill the spirit of the task without compromising her beliefs, Ms. Anderson shows a remarkable lack of sensitivity and gives her a zero. She confides the situation to her grandmother when they are preparing for the *Pesah seder*. Her grandmother calls her a "hard-boiled egg," because she gets tougher when the heat is turned on. Her parents learn about the assignment during the *seder*, and their call to the principal results in a quickly arranged unit on diversity. Penina is a feisty and thoroughly enjoyable heroine. The humorous illustrations by Majella Lue Sue complement the story.

Podwal, Mark. ***Built by Angels: The Story of the Old New Synagogue***. New York: Harcourt/Houghton Mifflin, 2009.

This story is based on legend about Prague's Altneshul (Old New Synagogue). Some of these include: angels built the Temple out of stones from the Temple in Jerusalem; how it has been saved from destruction time and time again by miracles; how the Golem was its caretaker and how its attic is the Golem's resting place. The author's illustrations are done in acrylic, gouache, and color pencils that depict the synagogue, from different angles and perspectives, inside and out. An end note by the author gives a short, factual history of the Altneshul and describes some of the customs that are unique to it, such as the recitation of Psalm 92 twice at Sabbath evening services.

Polacco, Patricia. ***Mrs. Katz and Tush***. New York: Bantam, 1992.

A Jewish widow shares her love and religious traditions with an African-American boy when the two neighbors are brought together in caring for a scrawny kitten named Tush.

Schram, Peninnah. ***The Hungry Clothes and Other Jewish Folktales. Folktales of the World***. New York: Sterling, 2008.

A collection of Jewish folklore from around the world. The illustrations look like oil paintings from the Renaissance period.



Schwartz, Ellen. ***Stealing Home***. Toronto: Tundra, 2006.

Set in Brooklyn in 1947, this is the story of a mixed race orphan who is sent to live with his Jewish relatives. As Joey yearns for acceptance, especially from his stern grandfather, his struggle is mirrored by that of his favorite baseball player, Jackie Robinson, who stoically endures prejudice on the baseball field. Well written and fast-paced, this has believable characters and a plot with sports appeal as well as sound values.

Shulevitz, Uri. ***How I Learned Geography***. New York: Farrar Strauss Giroux, 2008.

This is an autobiographical account of how Uri Shulevitz's family fled Poland during World War II and moved to Turkestan. Although the family lived in poverty as refugees there, Shulevitz's father bought him a map. With the map, Shulevitz learned about different countries and imagined visiting them. The author's illustrations with different textures are very charming.

Waldman, Neil. ***Say-Hey and the Babe: Two Mostly True Baseball Stories.***

New York: Holiday House, 2006.

Two loosely connected tales evoke the days when baseball legends interacted with ordinary fans. In the first story, which harks back to 1927, Babe Ruth hits a ball into the stands and strikes a young Jewish spectator. As Mona Finkel recovers after the game, Ruth presents her with a ball signed by the entire Yankee team. It is a cherished family heirloom, until her brother, Harry, loses it down a sewer hole while playing stickball. The second tale is set in 1951 and concerns Harry's son, Peter, who loves playing stickball and watching Giants great Willie Mays. When Peter hears that Mays is playing stickball in Harlem, he goes to watch and ends up rediscovering his family's missing treasure.

Weber, Elka. ***The Yankee at the Seder.*** Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press, 2009.

Soon after the Civil War, Corporal Myer Samuel Levy, a Union soldier, stops at a Jewish home in Virginia and spends seder with the family. Adam Gustavson, illustrated with oil paintings.

Winter, Jonah. ***You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax.*** New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2009.

This biography of the Jewish pitcher is written in street slang as if the author is part on the Brooklyn Dodgers and talking to the reader. It shows Koufax as unpredictable and independent. It mentions anti-Semitism from other players and the famous time Koufax refused to play the World Series game over *Yom Kippur*. The cover has a hologram of Sandy Koufax pitching. The illustrations by Andrea Carrilho are three-color artwork with gold, grey and black. Statistics are dispersed throughout the book. There is a glossary of baseball terms.



Yavin, T.S. ***All Star Season.*** Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2007.

Brothers Reuven and Avi are opposites. Reuven is serious and quiet, while Avi is happy-go-lucky and out going. When they play on the same baseball team, Reuven cannot help his feelings of jealousy over Avi's increasing athletic abilities. Reuven is focused on making the All Star team and feels threatened by any obstacles in his way including his brother. Eventually, Reuven overcomes his competitiveness towards his brother and helps him succeed.

Yolen, Jane. ***Naming Liberty.*** New York: Philomel, 2008.

Two stories, one fact and one fiction, are intertwined to tell the story of how the Statue of Liberty came to America and what it meant to one little Jewish immigrant girl. Excellent illustrations and interesting biographical information about the French sculptor, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. Illustrated by Jim Burke.

Middle School (Grades 5 – 8)



Anton, Maggie. ***Rashi's Daughter, Secret Scholar.*** Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2008.

A novel for teens based on the author's novel for adults about Rashi's older daughter, Yocheved. It vividly portrays Rashi, his family, and the society in which they lived. The story will appeal mainly to girls.



Boyne, John. ***The Boy in the Striped Pajamas: Movie Tie-in Edition.***

Oxford, England: David Fickling Books/Random House, 2008.

This edition includes discussion questions and an interview with the author. A story set at Auschwitz and told through the innocent eyes of the commandant's nine year old son. Readers will grasp the meaning of the story and feel its shock gradually.

Cheng, Andrea. ***The Bear Makers.*** Asheville, NC: Front Street, 2008.

Eleven-year-old Kata tries to make sense of the changes in Hungary that have affected her family. Her father's factory was confiscated by the Hungarian Worker's Party. Her mother makes purses and stuffed bears to sell on the black market in order to support the family. Kata's brother, who she idolizes, keeps going to secret meetings and eventually escapes to Vienna. Her family fears the secret service and never wants to raise suspicion.



Codell, Esme Raji. ***Vive La Paris.*** New York: Hyperion Books for Children, 2006.

Fifth-grader, Paris McCray, lives with her four older brothers and parents in a small apartment in the inner city of Chicago. Paris' views of the world around her are broadened when she takes piano lessons from Mrs. Rosen, a Holocaust survivor. Mrs. Rosen teaches Paris some life lessons which help her understand why her brother refuses to defend himself against a bully and to empathize with the bully's personal situation.

Ferber, Brenda A. ***Julia's Kitchen.*** New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

This is a hopeful story. Grieving for her mother and younger sister who have died in a house fire, eleven-year-old Cara finds solace when she starts to bake using her mother's recipes. The author was a winner of the Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award.

Fleischman, Sid. ***The Entertainer and the Dybbuk.*** New York: Greenwillow Books, 2008.

A struggling American ventriloquist in post-World War II Europe is possessed by the mischievous spirit of a young Jewish boy, a *dybbuk*, murdered by a Nazi child hunter. Author's note details of the murder of over one million children by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

Grossman, David. ***Duel.*** New York: Bloomsbury, 2004.

A mystery involving a twelve year old Israeli boy and a German-Jewish resident of the Hebrew Home for the Aged in Jerusalem. Love, loyalty, and honor are the themes of an entrancing and unusual story by a leading Israeli writer.

Hesse, Karen. ***Brooklyn Bridge.*** New York: Feiwal Friends, 2008.

In the early 1900s, Joseph Mictom only wants to play stick ball and to go to the amusement park at Coney Island. However, his life gets complicated when his Russian Jewish immigrant parents invent the stuffed teddy bear. His parents constantly work and expect him to help them with the bears. He misses the pleasures of family togetherness and simple times.



Konigsburg, E.L. ***The Mysterious Edge of the Heroic World.*** New York: Atheneum, 2007.

Amadeo, the new kid in St. Malo, FL, dreams of someday making an important discovery. When he works on a house sale for his eccentric neighbor, Mrs. Zender, he discovers a piece of Degenerate Art, art deemed unfit by the Nazis. Dramatic revelations about the victimization of homosexuals and other figures during the Holocaust also become part of the story.

Kurtz, Jane. ***The Storyteller's Beads***. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1998.

A blind Jewish girl and a Christian girl overcome prejudice and suspicion as they help one another on a hazardous exodus from Ethiopia to a refugee camp in the Sudan

Little, Melanie. ***The Apprentice's Masterpiece***. Buffalo, NY: Annick/Firefly, 2008.

Living under the constant threat of the Spanish Inquisition in Cordoba in the late 1400's, two boys - one a *Converso* and one a Muslim - exemplify the conflicts and prejudices of the period. Their stories are told in free verse and are very moving. Historical notes provide background.

Pushker, Gloria Teles. ***Toby Belfer Learns about Heroes and Martyrs***. Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2009.

This is a more serious book from the Toby Belfer series. Toby Belfer visits Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and is struck by the Avenue of Righteous Gentiles. She learns about 26 Christians who offered protection to Jews. She returns home to Louisiana and learns about the gentile school children in Whitwell, TN who dedicated the Paper Clip Project to the Jews killed in the Holocaust. Emile Henriquez draws wonderful portraits of the righteous gentiles in pencil.



Rosen, Sybil. ***Speed of Light***. New York: Atheneum, 1999.

Set in Virginia in the 1950's, this novel deftly blends themes of racism, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and astronomy.

Shahak, Bat-Chen. ***The Bat-Chen Diaries: Selected Writings by Bat-Chen Shahak***. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben, 2008.

In March 1996, Bat-Chen Shahak was killed by a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv's Dizengoff Center. It was her 15th birthday. But the gifted teenager left behind a rich legacy of diaries, letters, poems, and drawings. Bat-Chen wrote about teachers and friends, the angst of young love, and her yearning for peace in the world. There are cards to her Arab pen-pal, a thank you note to her ear doctor, a letter of sympathy to Leah Rabin when her husband, Israel's Prime Minister, was assassinated. Animated with the young girl's drawings and doodles, as well as photos of family and friends, the book captures the life of a sensitive teenager living in a country not yet at peace.

Siegal, Aranka. ***Memories of Babi***. New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2008.

The author reminisces of her visits to her "Babi's" (grandmother's) farm in Hungary during the 1930s. The book contains nine of these heartwarming and sometimes humorous stories.



Silverberg, Selma Kritzer. ***Naomi's Song***. Philadelphia: JPS, 2009.

A modern *midrash* about Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law. She was a woman of low rank in the ancient world. She faced many hardships as she went from girlhood to marriage to motherhood.



Weil, Sylvie. ***Elvina's Mirror***. Philadelphia: JPS, 2009.

Elvina, the granddaughter of Rashi, was first introduced in ***My Guardian Angel***. In 1097, she lives in Troyes (now France) and is a 14-year-old girl. When violent Crusaders attack Jewish people, a German Jewish family who had been forced to convert to Christianity come to Troyes. The Jewish community shuns the family, but Elvina helps the family. Translated from French.

Whelan, Gloria, ***After the Train***. New York: Harper Collins, 2009.

In 1955, Peter doesn't understand why his teacher is so emotional when he talks about the Holocaust. Then, Peter finds a letter that makes him question his own identity. Peter discovers that not only is he adopted, but that his birth mother was a Jewish woman on her way to a concentration camp. With the help of Herr Schafer, a Jewish man who works for his father, Peter is able to come to terms with his past and reconcile life with his family. *After the Train* is a part mystery and part coming-of-age novel.

Wulf, Linda Press. ***The Night of the Burning: Devorah's Story***. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2006.

Devorah, 12, is haunted by the loss of her parents to war and typhus. She is driven from her Polish *shtetl* during the murderous anti-Semitic pogroms of 1921. Then, Devorah and her younger sister, Nechama, are taken with two hundred other Jewish orphans to safety to South Africa's Jewish community by the Jewish philanthropist Isaac Ochberg. Devorah struggles to accept her new home, the memories of what she left behind, and her guilt: Is feeling safe and happy a betrayal of Mama and Papa?

High School (Grades 9-12)



Elkeles, Simone. ***How to Ruin a Summer Vacation***. Farmington Hills, MI: Flux, 2006.

Amy, a teenager, is dragged to Israel for a summer by her estranged father. There, she meets a family she didn't know existed and who didn't know she existed, either. Amy is transformed from a self-centered girl to a loving and caring young woman because of her experience. Life in modern Israel is presented positively, with emphasis on love of country, responsibility, and Israeli determination.



Elkeles, Simone. ***How to Ruin My Teenage Life***. Farmington Hills, MI: Flux, 2007.

In the sequel to *How to Ruin a Summer Vacation*, Amy is back from her trip from Israel and beginning to embrace her religion and her father. She has a non-boyfriend, Avi, who is unfortunately in military training back in Israel. Her mom got married and moved to the suburbs, and now they are going to have a baby. Amy moves in with her dad in Chicago and there's this totally annoying boy, Nathan Rubin, who just moved into her apartment building.



Farber, Valerie ***City of Refuge***. San Ramon, CA: Falcon, 2008.

In a love story that takes place in Ancient Israel, Bat-Schachar is a teenage daughter of a scholar whose coldness makes her leave home. On her journey, she witnesses pagan rituals and is mortified. She meets Tzuriel, a metalworking apprentice who wants to lead his people against marauders. He infiltrates enemy territory to acquire forbidden skills of crafting iron weapons. When they are both expelled from their tribes, they meet. The appendix includes drawings of ancient equipment and procedures described in the book.

Fleischman, Sid. ***The Escape! The Story of the Great Houdini***. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2006.

A biography of the magician Harry Houdini's life. Includes information on his childhood and his rise to fame by perfecting tricks involving illusion. It also includes many photographs of Houdini and his wife, Bess, along with memorabilia.

Grimberg, Tina. ***Out of Line: Growing up Soviet***. Toronto: Tundra Books, 2007.
This book contains sometimes humorous, autobiographical stories of the author's life in Kiev. Her family left the Soviet Union in 1979.

Haddix, Margaret Peterson. ***Uprising***. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007.
An historical novel that provides in-depth information about the history of immigration, the struggle for women's rights, the beginnings of the organized labor movement, and the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911. The story is told from the alternating perspectives of: Bella, an Italian immigrant teen; Yetta, a Russian Jewish immigrant; and Jane, the daughter of an upper-class American businessman.



Levitin, Sonia. ***Strange Relations***. New York: Knopf, 2007.
Marne thinks that spending the summer in Hawaii with her aunt's family will be paradise. When she arrives, she realizes that her aunt's family is *Hasidic*. Staying in an Orthodox home is a culture shock for her, because her family is secular. Furthermore, she is expected to help take care of her aunt's seven children. Slowly she discovers the joy that this Orthodox lifestyle brings as she helps with the children and becomes an integral part of the community of women. She also begins to reflect on her own spirituality and identity. Portrays *Chabad* outreach in remote areas with smaller Jewish populations.



Levy, Marilyn. ***Checkpoints***. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2008.
Noa is a typical Israeli teen until a suicide bombing at a Passover *seder* in Netanya shatters her family and their sentiments about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The feelings and grievances of both Israelis and Palestinians are aired through the characters, and Noa's friendship with a Palestinian girl is portrayed with sensitivity.



Lieberman, Leanne. ***Gravity***. Victoria, British Columbia: Orca, 2008.
Ellie Gold is an Orthodox teen struggling with her sexuality. She tries to fight the feelings of attraction to other young women, because she knows that goes against her parent's religious beliefs.



Pressler, Mirjam. ***Let Sleeping Dogs Lie***. Asheville, NC: Front Street, 2007.
On a class trip to Israel, Johanna learns that her grandfather acquired the family business from a Jewish family under Nazi *aryanization*. After her grandfather's death, Johanna copes with the shame of his Nazi past and seeks the truth about how he acquired the business.



Rabb, Margo. ***Cures for Heartbreak***. New York: Delacorte Press, 2007.
Mia, a fourteen year old, just lost her mother to cancer, and now her father has heart trouble. While she mourns the loss of her mother and is scared for her father's health, she still endures teenage angst in a comical way. The atrocities of the Holocaust that her grandparents encountered hang over her family as well. Geared towards a more mature audience because some of the content alludes to sex and the language includes a few expletives.



Reinhardt, Dana. ***A Brief Chapter in My Impossible Life***. New York: Wendy Lamb Books, 2006.

Simone, a sixteen year old, has always known she was adopted but has never had any real desire to meet her birth mother despite the fact that she knows her parents keep in touch. It never mattered to her that she looks different and has different talents from her parents and younger brother. That all changes when her birth mother, Rivka, a 33-year old former *Hasidic* Jew, calls and wants to meet her. Some sexual content and strong language.



Roof, Ami Sands. ***The White Space Between***. Toronto, ON: Second Story Press, 2009.

Jana lost her entire family in the Holocaust. However, she was spared because in Auschwitz she worked for the Nazis, typing out death certificates for her fellow prisoners. Years later, Jana raises her daughter, Willow, on the beautiful scrapbooks she kept of her own childhood in Prague before World War II. But her stories end with the beginning of the Holocaust and Willow knows little of her mother's life during the war and its aftermath. Jana's memories of this time are so guarded that Willow is uncertain who her father is – the answer left behind in Montréal, the city where Jana first settled after the war. When both Willow and Jana find themselves back in Montréal, the past can no longer be hidden. New loves are found and lost loves rekindled, and mother and daughter decide to journey to Prague to unearth the stories that can no longer stay buried.



Rosen, Renee. ***Every Crooked Pot***. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2007.

As Nina Goldman grows up in a Jewish family in Akron, Ohio, she feels like an "ugly duckling" due to the strawberry birthmark over her eye. She spends most of her adolescent years trying to cover it. Her home life is rocky due to her father's volatile moods. Nina will do anything to fit in with other peers. She finally realizes that she lets her eye condition hold her back from becoming her true self. Intended for the mature teenager due to sexual content and references to underage drinking and recreational drug use.

Sandell, Lisa Ann. ***The Weight of the Sky***. New York: Viking, 2006.

Written in free verse that reads like prose, this sensitive growing up story is told by Sarah, who spends the summer of her sixteenth year working as a volunteer on a kibbutz. Independent for the first time in her life, Sarah gains confidence in herself and the ability to make her own choices. Living as a Jew among Jews, including young people close to her own age, she is transformed by her Israel experiences, which are both joyful and sad, like the country itself. The vibrancy of life in contemporary Israel is shown, with only a few references to the Palestinian conflict.



Sonnenblick, Jordan. ***Notes from the Midnight Driver***. New York: Scholastic Press, 2006.

Angry about his parent's separation, Alex, an awkward sixteen year old, decides to get drunk, steal his mom's car, and drive to his father's home. For drinking and driving, Alex is sentenced to 100 hours of community service at a nursing home. He is assigned to meet with Solomon Lewis, a grumpy old man who uses *Yiddish* phrases. Eventually, Solomon and Alex learn from each other how to face challenging relationships and to take responsibility for their actions.



Toksvig, Sandi. ***Hitler's Canary***. New Milford, CT: Roaring Brook Press, 2007. Bamse's family is theater people. They don't get involved in politics. Yet, when Germany occupies Denmark in 1940, ten-year old Bamse feels a need to take a stand. He fears that his best friend Anton, who is Jewish, will be persecuted by the Nazis. Also, his daring older brother Orlando has gotten involved with the Danish Resistance, despite their father's counsel of quiet cooperation. Gradually, though, the whole family sways to Orlando's position - refusing, along with thousands of other Danes to be "Hitler's canary" and "just sit in a cage and sing any tune he wants." Based on historic facts about the Danish Resistance during World War 11.



Whitney, Kim Ablon. ***The Other Half of Life: A Novel Based on the True Story of the MS St. Louis***. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009. After *Kristallnacht*, over 900 passengers are bound for Cuba on the MS St. Louis. The ship is eventually turned away at several countries' ports, and forced to return to a European cities that will shortly be under Nazi domination. Fifteen-year-old, Thomas is a fictional character aboard the ship. His father has been sent to Dachau and his non-Jewish mother places him on the ship for safety. During the voyage, Thomas meets some men from the German crew and an official in the Nazi party.



Zenatti, Valerie. ***A Bottle in the Gaza Sea***. New York: Bloomsbury, 2008. Seeking peace between Israel and Palestine, seventeen year-old Tal Levine writes a letter, places it into a bottle, and gives it to her brother, asking him to toss it into the Gaza Sea. A young Palestinian man in Gaza finds the bottle. The two start an email correspondence where they discover a lot about each other. Written by the author of ***When I was a Soldier***.



Zusak, Marcus. ***The Book Thief***. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006. Death, shocked by the cruelty of people, narrates this story, set in World War II Germany, about a young orphan girl, Liesel, and her foster parents. Liesel feels relief from her personal sadness and the poverty around her when she steals books. The only outwardly love she receives is from her foster father and her best friend Rudy. Through their love of stories and a good fist fight, she finds unexpected companionship with Max, the Jewish man that her foster parents hide in their basement.