

# READ★PRAY★WONDER★PLAY

## A GUIDE TO SHARING STORIES WITH CHILDREN

### A Very Big Problem

By Amy-Jill Levine, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, & Annie Bowler

In the Jewish tradition of midrash (the art of crafting a story around a biblical text and considering a contemporary application), the authors of this book imagine a story of creation in which a big problem occurs. Everyone—from the land and rain, plants and birds, earthworms and animals, and even the children—thinks they are the best and should be loved the most by God. Upon hearing all the commotion, God recognizes the gifts of each and the value of each to this world. God's love is big enough for all. Understanding that love, or resources, or even human rights, are abundant and available to all if we all recognize the value of one another rather than claim it for ourselves is a concept that will grow with children.

Before you read the story together, wonder what might be the very big problem that the title suggests.



### ★ ★ WONDER TOGETHER ★ ★

- Name different things in creation and imagine something that each one might like about itself. For example, flowers might like that they bring beauty and scent to the world.
- *With older children:* How are different parts of creation interconnected and dependent on one another? For example, how are cows connected to rain?
- *With older children:* What is the problem that the story presents? How do you see it in the world today?
- Why do you think the story of creation was told in this way with different parts boasting and bragging?
- What might God want us to know about all the parts of creation?

### ★ ★ EXPLORE THE STORY ★ ★

- Draw a picture of some items of creation that you like.
- Act out the story together.
- In the story the different elements of creation boast and brag. Take turns boasting or bragging about something you like about yourself. Then take turns complimenting one another about something you like about each person. Talk together about how each of you are interconnected and dependent on one another. For example, if a parent makes wonderful meals, how does that connect to and support the other members of the family?
- Imagining a story in a new way can help us understand something new. What do you imagine about God's big, wide love? Draw a picture or write a story about it.

### PRAY

Loving God, thank you for your big, wide, all-encompassing love you have for each one of us and all your creation. Help us to see one another and the world around us as you do. Help us to treat each person, and the world around us, with love and care. Amen.



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## ★ ★ DIG DEEPER ★ ★

Because Bible stories are human stories about God's interaction with God's people, the Jewish practice of midrash allows us to take ancient stories and give them meaning in our lives today.

With older children, try the Jewish practice of midrash. Choose a favorite Bible story and together use your imaginations about the story. Picture yourselves in the story. Consider what you are seeing and hearing, what questions you might ask. Try telling the story as it might happen in modern times, in your own home, neighborhood, or school.

In this story each element of creation wants to claim that God should love them best. Explore the idea of fairness and equality with your child. Doing so helps develop empathy and appreciate diversity. Search for videos about "fairness and equality for children" online or do an internet search for children's picture books using the same keywords. As you move through your days, point out examples of fairness and equality, emphasizing, when possible, how equality makes room for all and fairness provides each person with what they need. Children often struggle with fairness because it seems "unfair" to them, someone getting more or being treated differently. Help your child consider what others' needs are and how they are being met.

## MORE TO READ & DO

CLICK THE LINKS BELOW TO LEARN MORE

### ADDITIONAL BOOKS BY AMY-JILL LEVINE & SANDY EISENBERG SASSO

- [\*Who Is My Neighbor?\*](#)
- *Who Counts? 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons* - Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Korean](#)
- *The Marvelous Mustard Seed* - Available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Korean](#)
- [\*100 Sheep: A Counting Parable\*](#)
- [\*The Good for Nothing Tree\*](#)

Guide written by Meg Elliot Rift and created in partnership with PC(USA)'s initiative "[Around the Table](http://pcusa.org/aroundthetable)" ([pcusa.org/aroundthetable](http://pcusa.org/aroundthetable)).



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