

Activities for *The Matzo Ball Boy*

By Lisa Shulman

A. Make Matzo Ball Soup

Follow the recipe below to make a tasty pot of matzo ball soup. When you uncover the pot, watch out for runaway matzo balls!

Ingredients:

2 eggs
2 tablespoons oil
1/2 cup matzo meal
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons water
pinch of pepper
2 quarts chicken stock

1. Beat eggs and oil together.
2. Stir in the salt, pepper, and water. Add the matzo meal and mix well. Refrigerate the mixture for 30 minutes.
3. Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a large pot. With wet hands, form the matzo meal mixture into small balls. Carefully drop the matzo balls into the stock.
4. Reduce the heat, cover the pot, and simmer for 30 minutes.

B. Dramatic Reading

Reread *The Matzo Ball Boy* and have children act out the different parts. Encourage the whole group to join in on the villagers' refrain, "Oy! Oy! You look good enough to eat, little matzo ball boy!" and the matzo ball boy's answer, "Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the matzo ball man!"

C. Write a Story

Ask each child to think of a traditional food that his or her family enjoys. Encourage them to imagine that this food is a character that runs away like the gingerbread boy or the matzo ball boy. What people or animals would this character meet? Where would it run? What would happen to it in the end? Have children write their own gingerbread boy type stories, and share them with the class.

D. Exploring Yiddish

Explain to the children that some of the words in the book, such as *bubbe* and *oy* are Yiddish. Yiddish is a language that was spoken by many Jewish people in the past, but very few speak it now.

Write the following Yiddish words on the board, and review their definitions: *boychik* (a tricky fellow; boy), *bubbe* (grandmother), *feh* (phooey), *nosh* (a little bite to eat; a snack), *oy vey* (oh dear!), *schlemiel* (a fool). Invite children to create their own sentences using one or more of these Yiddish words. For example: *Oy vey!* Did you see what happened to that poor *schlemiel*?