

LEVELED BOOK • L

At Jacob's House



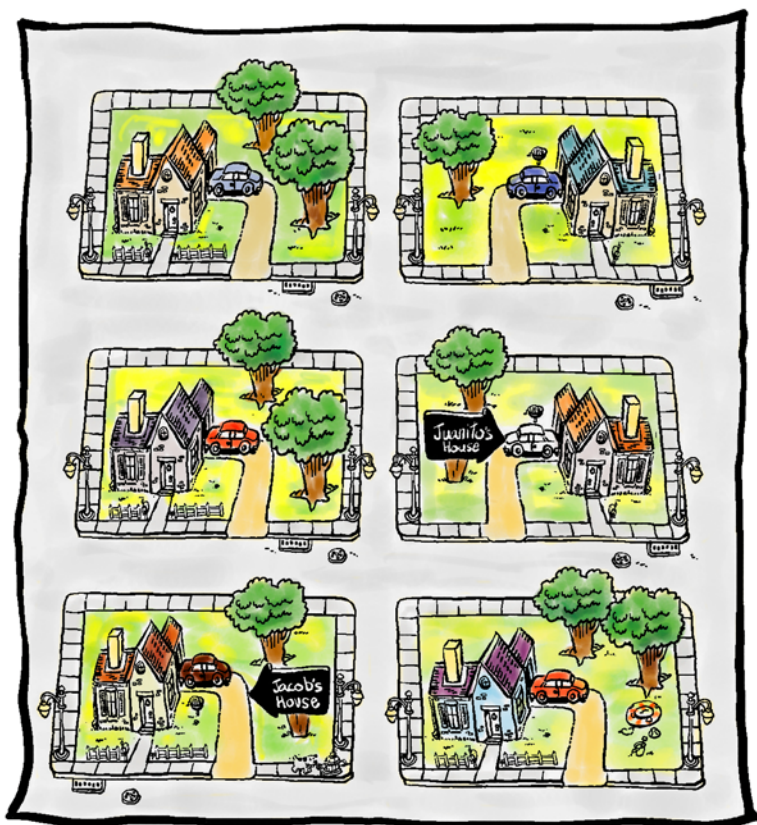
Written by Roy Ramos
Illustrated by Len Epstein

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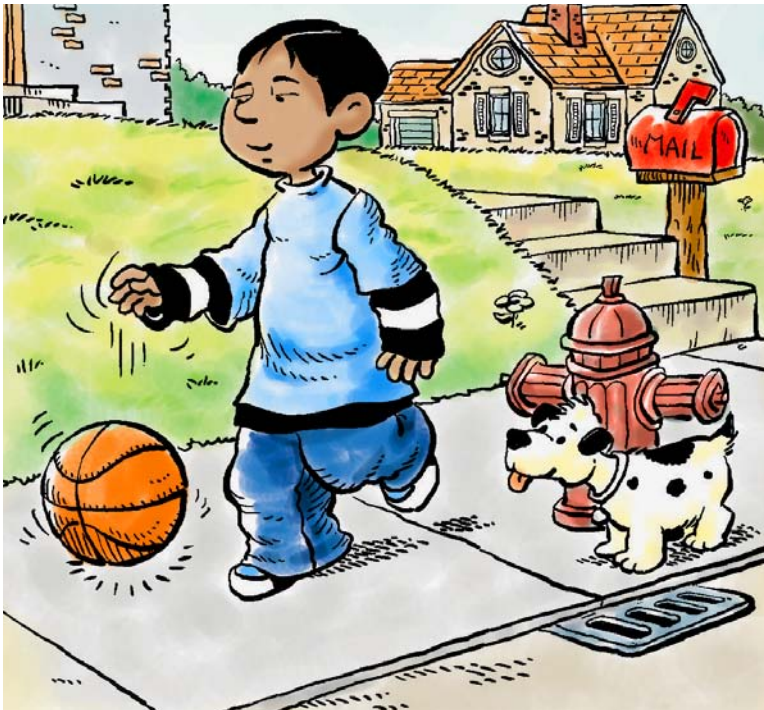
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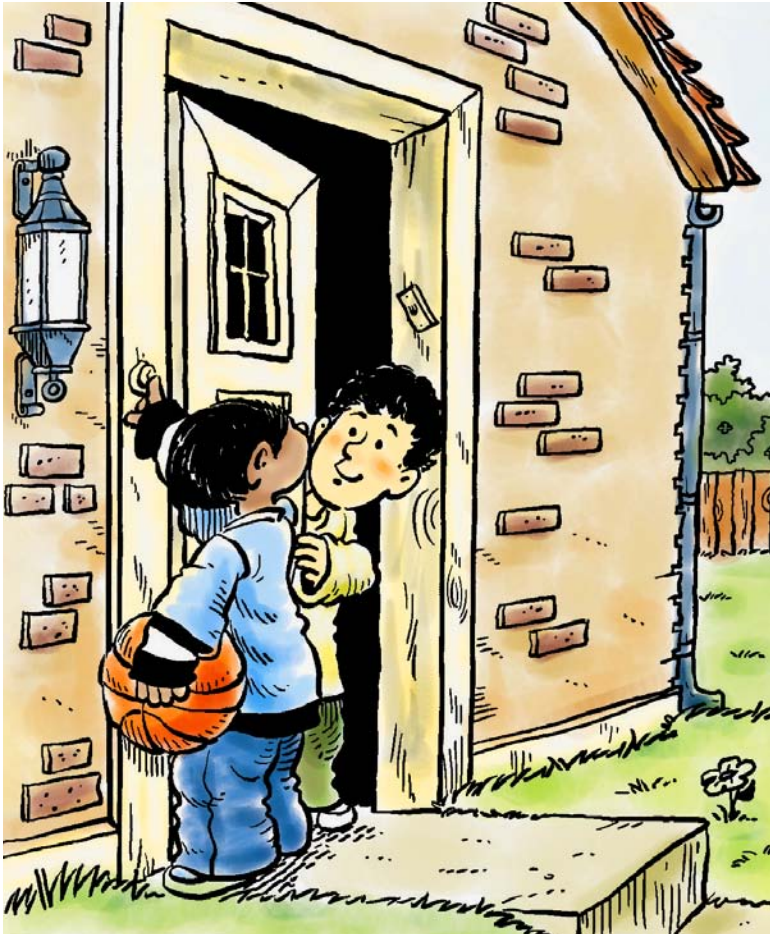


Juanito wanted to play with his friend, Jacob, who was in his class at school. Juanito and Jacob were the same age. Both their names started with the letter J. They even lived in the same neighborhood.

Juanito walked over to Jacob's house. He brought along his basketball. Juanito had never been to Jacob's house. Juanito only knew where Jacob lived.



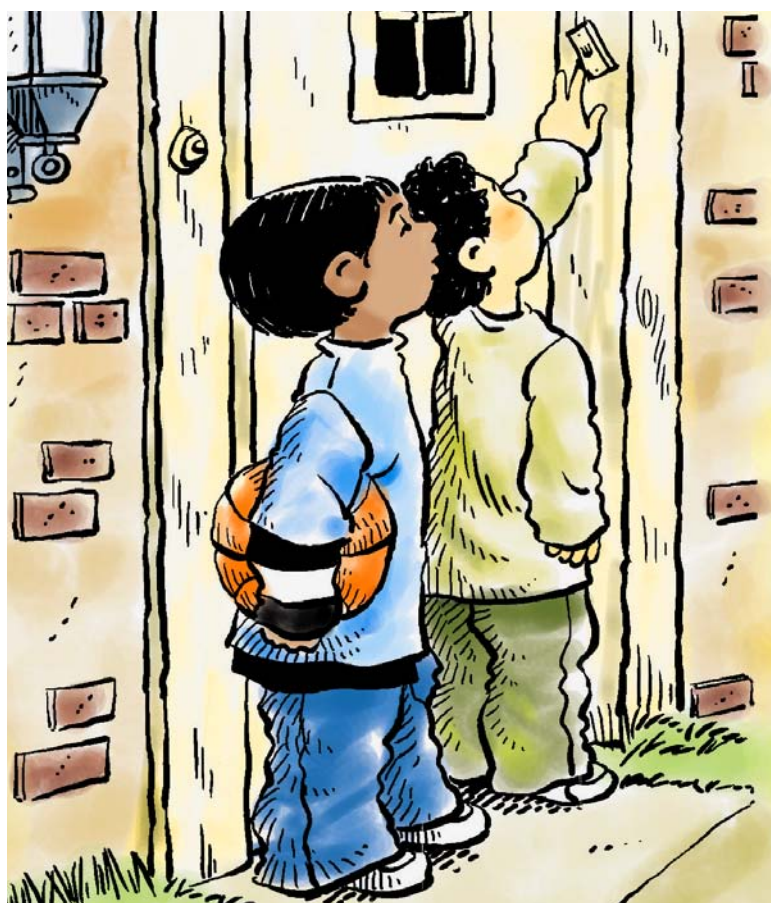
When Juanito got to Jacob's front door, he reached up and rang the doorbell.



“Hi, Jacob. Can you come out to play?” asked Juanito.

“Sure,” said Jacob after he asked his mother. “But only for a little while. I’m having dinner soon.”

Before they stepped off the front porch, Juanito asked Jacob, "Hey, what is that little box by the door?" Jacob said it was a *mezuzah* as he reached up to touch it softly and kissed his two fingers.





Juanito repeated the word,
“MeZOOzah? What is it for?”

Juanito knew English and Spanish,
but he had never heard this word
before.

“It has Hebrew words from the
Shema inside,” Jacob answered.



“ShehMA? What’s that?” asked Juanito as he bounced the basketball a couple of times.

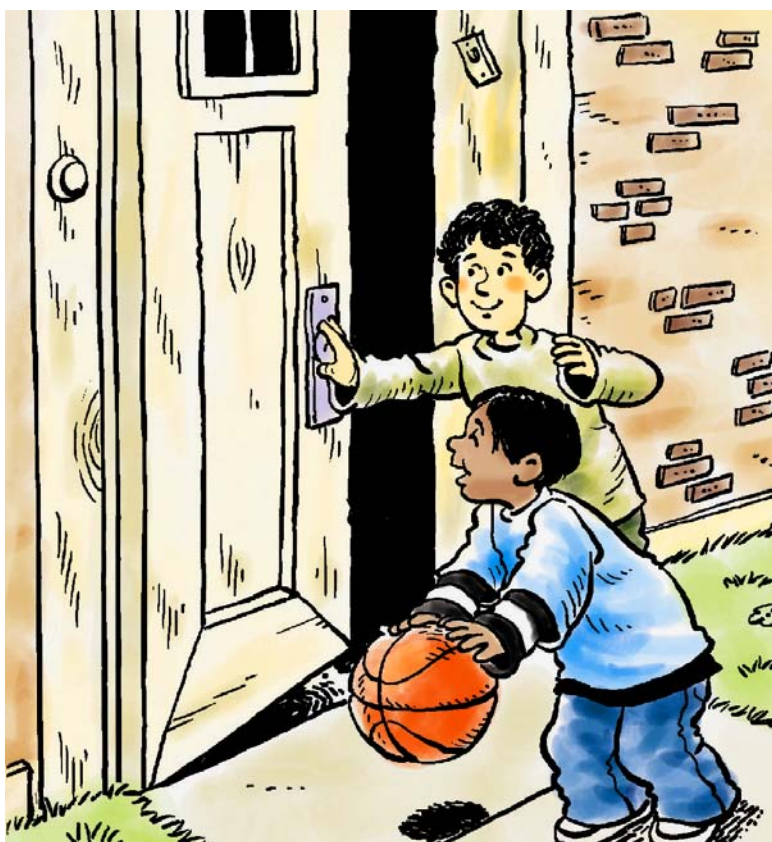
Jacob replied, “A few words from the *Torah*. They’re words Jewish people say as we pray every day . . . Ready to play?” He grew anxious as a cricket started to signal that evening was near.

“The TOHrah? What’s that?” Juanito was still curious.

“It is part of the Bible,” Jacob said.

“Come inside. I’ll show you.”

Bible was a word that Juanito knew. His family was Roman Catholic.





Jacob reached up to touch the *mezuzah* again and then kissed his two fingers as he and Juanito went into the house. His father taught him to do this every time he entered and exited the house.

Soon they were in front of a tall bookshelf filled with books and other things. As Jacob pointed up to a set of five books, he said, “See, that’s the Torah.”

There were so many more new things for Juanito to see, including what looked like a ram’s horn.



“How about this? Is it a musical instrument?”

Handing the curled horn to Juanito, Jacob said, “That’s what it is, all right. But we call it a *shofar*.”

“SHOfar?” Juanito chuckled. “So far I have learned four new Hebrew words!”





“Go ahead, try to play it like a trumpet,” said Jacob. Juanito did. He startled himself and the cricket outside as he strained to play a steady note. The sound brought Jacob’s father to the living room.



At first, Juanito thought Jacob's dad would be angry. After all, Juanito's dad was a little angry when Juanito had played with his trumpet. But instead, Jacob's dad burst into laughter. Then, the sound of the cricket came back.

"Mother is waiting. It is time to welcome the *Sabbath* now, son."

Juanito almost asked a question about this new word, but Jacob's dad asked, "Would you like to join us, young man?"

"Can you stay for dinner and sleep over, Juanito?" asked Jacob.

Juanito telephoned his mother to ask. She said he could stay since tomorrow was Saturday.



Juanito stayed that night at the house of his friend, Jacob. Juanito learned some more about being Jewish, and he learned another new word—*mitzvah*. But mostly they talked about playing basketball the next day. Both agreed that playing basketball with a friend was far better than playing alone.



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At Jacob's House

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