

The Mixed-Up Suitcase: A Play

By Mrs. Risa Gross

Grade Level: Elementary-Middle School

Description:

An editable Chanukah script for girls revolving around the themes of sameach bechelko, simcha and p'sach leebey. Laya's suitcase filled with clothes and gifts is accidentally delivered to a poor Russian family as a tzedakah package. Laya is forced to make a difficult choice when she sees the Russian girl wearing her special Shabbos dress.

Goals/Objectives:

Students will view the play and examine and evaluate the different options available to Laya in terms of how to respond to a difficult situation. They will internalize the messages of the play.

Instructions:

1. Teachers should perform the play at a school assembly.
2. Costumes and props can be provided if desired to enhance the play.
3. Conduct open discussions with the students to clarify and further explain the themes raised in the play.

Variation:

- Stop the play at crucial points and have the students predict how and why Laya will react to the situation. Discuss the pros and cons of different reactions.
- Have students come up with a scenario in where the same themes are addressed, either in play form or as a written assignment.
- Can include intervals for choir songs and an optional slideshow that would lengthen the skit to 45 minutes-1 hour with scene changes.

THE MIXED UP SUITCASE

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P'SACH LEEBY CHANUKAH

FINAL

Bubby walks in from back, shuffling suitcases:

Bubby Risa: Oh, excuse me, Oy these suitcases are so heavy. It was such a long trip from Eretz Yisroel. But I'm so glad to visit my old YSV friends. Do you remember me? I'm Bubby Blooma. Shalom Aleichem, How are you. I brought you some souvenirs from Eretz Yisroel Oh, I love your new uniform skirts.

Laya Zipora: Bubby Blooma. How are you? When did your plane land?

Bubby: Oh Laya, sweetie, It's so nice to see you, my, you have grown.

SOUND EFFECTS BUS --

(Laya and Bubby seat themselves on the Monsey bus a little moving and shaking)

Bubby: Excuse me, I'm so sorry. Laya, it is such a crowded Monsey bus this afternoon. It must be the Erev Shabbos Rush. Everyone wants to go to Boro Park. After all, it is Shabbos Chanukah.

LAYA: Bubby Blooma, I'm so excited that we are going to cousin Heshy's Bar Mitzva this Shabbos. Bubby, you can't imagine the delicious cakes my mother made. She feels so bad she and Abba can't come for Shabbos but baby Sarala is only 2 weeks old. So I told Mommy that I would go as the big sister and represent the whole family. And of course it is so special that I get to go with you, Bubby. Bubby, in my suitcase I have a lot of scrumptious food and yummy stuff for the Bar Mitzva and home baked Challah, Chanukah cookies and a MILLION chocolate Chanukah coins.

Bubby: A MILLION, Oh, Lychoo, no exaggerating! Do you remember my last trip when we baked Emes cookies? We must be careful to say the exact truth.

Laya: You're right Bubby, I mean I really have a lot of Chanukah coins, Why I have enough Chanukah coins for all of my friends at YSV. But, I'll give it to them later. And, my mother made Tante Cham a white lace tablecloth and I also have a very special Bar Mitzva gift for Heshy. It's this beautiful Siddur. It has a dark brown leather cover and inside it is lined with gorgeous white satin. This is a new special Siddur for Heshy to daven from at his Bar Mitzva when he davens for the Tzibbur.

Bubby: Oh, Laya that was so nice of your mother to cook and bake all of those things, I'm sure Tanta Chani appreciates it very much. I hope you had some room left for your clothes.

Laya: Oh Bubby this is a very special suitcase. It has a lot of different compartments I put my clothes in different sections. Mommy bought me a very special dress. It's really a very grown up looking dress. I'm so excited about it. It's made of green velvet with a high waistband on the skirt and gold embroidered lace on top. I can't wait to wear it!

Bubby: Boruch Hashem, Laya, You must always remember to be thankful for what we have. It is important to always be a Sameach Bcheloko. It is easy to be happy with what you have when you have a beautiful, new Shabbos outfit. The real test is being happy even if you had to wear an old Shabbos dress.

When we appreciate what we have, then we feel real happiness and are B'simcha

Laya: You know Bubby Blooma, that is exactly what we have been learning at school. all about Simcha. Sameach Bchelko and the theme for G.O. is Ivdu es Hashem B'Simcha. It is all part of learning to open our hearts, Psach Leeby. And once we open our hearts we can really do Mitzvos with meaning and feeling and be really good Ovdei Hashem. I know we should daven with Kavana and I try. Morah is teaching us the meaning of the Tefilla that we say. It helps me understand better. But, how else can I open my heart?

Bubby: Laya, part of opening our heart means, we have to take a closer look at our emotions, how we think and feel- feelings like joy, sadness, fear, anger, hate and even jealousy. We have to be in charge of those feelings and direct them in the way Hashem wants us to. Sometimes we get so angry or jealous, we lose control and say or do things we shouldn't. Those feelings of anger or jealousy over take us. We have to be in charge of our feelings. Sometimes, we have to stop for a minute and think before we act. Understanding how we feel will help us do the right thing. Always remember when you get upset STOP, FEEL and THINK.

Laya: It sounds like really hard work Bubby.

Bubby: It is Laya, but it is surely worth it. It will make us happier people, not getting angry causing fights on the bus or at recess or being jealous that Shaindy got a new coat and you didn't. Don't you feel good when you are sensitive to somebody else's feelings? I know I feel good when I am giving or thinking about another person.

Laya: Yes, Bubby. I think I understand a little more about what P'sach Leeby-Open my Heart really means.

Bubby: Look at all the beautiful Menorahs in everyone's window. Chanukah is my favorite holiday with memories that I treasure - Spinning Dreidels, Latkes and Maoz Tzur. The beauty of the flames of Chanukah always touch my heart. Those shining holy Neiros. HaNeiros Hallalu...

(GIRL LIGHTS THE MENORAH) then (CHOIR Haneros Hallalu)

(Laya and Bubby continue to mouth to each other in earnest)

Shayna Bus Driver: Last stop Boro Park.

(Bubby and Laya get up and hustle and bustle with all of their packages)

Narrator Yocheved: Laya was surely put to a test that day to see if she had really learned from Bubby Blooma what it meant to take charge of her emotions, her feelings. You see in all of the confusion of getting off the bus and reaching for their suitcase an exchange of suitcases was made.

(Woman behind Laya exaggeratedly picks up Laya's suitcase and leaves hers for Laya)

*****SOUND EFFECT

Narrator Shayna: It seems the lady seated behind Laya mistakenly took Laya's suitcase and left her suitcase for Laya. It was an honest mistake, my friends, as the suitcases were identical. They looked exactly alike. As you can well imagine, this caused great distress for Laya when she finally realized on Erev Shabbos that she had someone else's suitcase. Laya was left with no clothes, Tante Chani didn't

have all of the baked and cooked foods that Laya's mother, had made for the Bar Mitzva and Heshy would certainly not get that beautiful Siddur as a gift.

Narrator Yocheved: The story is just beginning to unfold, dear friends. The lady who mistakenly took Laya's suitcase was actually on her way to do a very special Mitzva. She had quite a few suitcases that day. She was delivering them to a very poor Russian Jewish family who just came to this country they did not have any more than just the clothes on their backs. The other suitcases were filled with warm clothes and shoes for the family. A suit for the father, a dress for the mother, some pants for the boys.

Let's look in on the Romanov's, the Russian Jewish Family now,

(Move to Stage 2) Stark broken table and chairs.

Mother: Wasn't that nice of Mrs. Gutfriend to bring us all these nice warm clothes. I'm so glad because with Shabbos coming and our not having enough money for heat at least these warm clothes will keep the boys warm. I'm sure Mrs. Gutfreind didn't realize that we also have you, my only daughter, in the family or she would have brought clothes for you too. Quickly Mashala, let's empty the rest of these suitcases. The holy Shabbos is coming. We might not have a lot of Shabbos food but B'H we are in a safe place, these new clothes will warm us along with our beautiful songs of praise, thanks and Zemiros that we will sing at our Shabbos table.

(MASHA opens Laya's suitcase, her mouth falls open)

Masha: Mama, Mama, come quick. Look at all of this Shabbos food, delicious Challa, cake, and Chanukah cookies. Mama - candies, chocolate Chanukah coins. Oh my, this will be a wonderful Shabbos. Mama, look at this charming white tablecloth it looks like handmade lace. Mama, look at this gorgeous green velvet dress. So Mrs. Gutfriend did know about me, (laughing) Why Mama, it is just my size. I can even wear it to Malkie's brother's Bar Mitzva tomorrow.

(Keeps emptying suitcase)

(Pause) Mama, this, this is incredible, my hands are shaking I am holding the most precious gift of all. A brand new Siddur Mama, the only siddur we own.

(CHOIR SIDDUR SONG)

Masha: WOW! This siddur is beautiful just because it is a siddur but it's beauty is enhanced by this leather cover and magnificent white satin lining. Thank you Hakodesh Boruch Hu, Thank you for your Kindness. Oh Mama, we will surely have a Shabbos to remember.

Narrator Shayna: An unforgettable Shabbos it surely was for Masha and Laya alike although each one didn't know the other existed. While Masha was happy preparing her Shabbos table, Laya was just drying her tears.

(MASHA sets table)

Laya: Bubby, I'm so angry at whoever took my suitcase. I'm sure my name is written in there somewhere. Don't they realize I have all of my clothes inside that suitcase. My mother's hard work and cooking is going to waste and poor Heshy will never get his gift. Ooh!

Bubby: Laya, Laya, sweetheart. I know you are very upset about not having your dress for Shabbos. But let's stop and think about what we can do about the situation instead of putting so much energy into your

anger. It looks like it is getting to close to Shabbos to try to find your suitcase. Let's stop and ask your cousin Malkie if she has a dress to lend you. She's about the same size.

Narrator Yocheved: As it turned out, Tante Chani had plenty of scrumptious food that Shabbos as the whole neighborhood sent in all kinds of delicious Shabbos and Bar Mitzva treats. Laya fit into one of Malkie's dresses. Although, It wasn't Laya's favorite color, she still looked like a dream in Malkie's dress.

Everyone was enjoying Heshy lamed beautifully and davened from his own old Siddur doing a great job. When Davening was over there was an overflow crowd for the kiddush and that is when LAYA'S WORLD COLLAPSED. (SOUND EFFECTS PIANO)

Narrator Shayna: Laya noticed Malkie rush over to greet a girl she didn't recognize. In fact, all of Malkie's friends ran over to greet this new girl. They were all complimenting her on the lovely green velvet dress she was wearing. Laya strained to see the girl through the crowd. Laya's mouth dropped. She glared at the girl. She became infuriated; her heart began to pound. What do you think was going on with Laya? Malkie brought the new Russian girl in her class, Masha Rominov, over to meet Laya. Tears sprang to Laya's eyes and she ran off in a hurry.

Laya: Bubby, that girl, Masha, that girl is wearing my dress! To think she just somehow got my suitcase and decided to wear my new velvet green dress! The worst part is she looks so good in it!! I'm angry and upset. I'm even jealous of her.

Bubby: Laya, stop. Remember our bus ride here, we were talking about how to open our hearts, and how to train our feelings, not to take over. Laya, I understand that you are upset but let's take a moment to figure out what is upsetting you. You think that Masha is wearing your dress. Now, it could be that Masha is not actually wearing your dress but a similar one. Perhaps, if she really is wearing the dress your mother bought for you from your suitcase, I am sure there is a very good explanation for it. Laya, try to be sensitive to another's feelings. Why don't you calmly go and investigate.

Narrator Shayna: Well friends, Laya had a choice to make. Could she overcome her natural feelings of anger, frustration and jealousy, Kinah. Could she show some caring and Ahavas Habrios towards the new girl. Could she put herself in Masha's shoes so as not to embarrass her? Laya made a decision that she would channel and redirect her feelings.

CHOIR PSACH LEEBY I

Shayna: She would be in charge. Laya calmly and peacefully went over to Masha introduced herself and told her the story of the "Mixed Up" suitcase.

Masha: Laya to be honest that suitcase changed my family's life this Shabbos. Your mother's food was incredibly delicious. We haven't eaten like that as long as I can remember. When my father lovingly opened the exquisite Siddur, His face lit up with love and tears streamed down his face.

Narrator Yocheved: It had been a long time since Masha's father was able to open a Siddur without fear of being persecuted by the Russians. Today, all of Russian Jewry is seeking the Torah. Craving to be frum Yidden. Today, most Russians emigrate to America or to Eretz Yisroel so they can give back to their children the golden chain of Torah. Papa Romanov reminisced and remembered his youth when he lived Poland He remembered his Rebbi teaching him the Aleph Bais.

RISA SCRIPT

SLIDE SHOW

(go to spotlight)

Narrator Shayna: Laya, without knowing it, brought new meaning and Simcha to the Romanov family's life. They really appreciate all that they have and are Sameach B'chelko. They know that all they need to have is trust, B'tachon, in Hashem.

Masha: I guess you could be pretty angry at me, Laya. But you don't seem to be at all. Of course, I will return the dress and tablecloth right after Shabbos and the Siddur as well I'm afraid it is a little too late for the delicious food, though.

Laya: Masha, you have to keep all of those gifts, they are for you. You have taught me a much more important lesson. As Bubby says, STOP, FEEL, AND THINK. When we get angry or jealous, we should STOP then FEEL and know what we feeling and why. Then, we will be in charge of our feelings and THINK of the right way to act. We each hold the key to Open Our Hearts- we all have the power and are able to direct our feelings and use them to enrich our world of Avodas Hashem. Psach Leeby.

Psach Leeby song - SPOTLIGHT