

THE FOUR CHILDREN OF HUMAN RIGHTS

In the Passover *Haggadah* each year, we read the story of how our ancestors fought for liberation from oppression. Along the way, we tell the tale of four children: one who is wise, one who is wicked, one who is simple, and one who does not know how to ask questions. But the truth is that none of us are fully wise, wicked, simple, or silent. We are—each of us, child or adult—a beautiful complexity.

How do we respond to our children or ourselves when we feel more wicked than wise or more silent than simple? Use our bookmarks below as a guide for how to respond to the complex challenges and questions of our lives—and as a tool to ground you as you experience both gratitude for our freedom and empathy for those who are not yet free. And for the littlest ones, flip the bookmark over for a fun coloring activity.

The Activist Child



"The Torah tells me, 'Justice, justice you shall pursue.' But I don't know how."

EMPOWER THEM to seek pathways to advocate for the vulnerable. As Proverbs teaches, “Speak up for the mute, for the rights of the unfortunate. **Speak up, judge righteously, champion the poor and the needy.**”



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The Cynical Child



“The world’s problems are too many and too big. I can’t possibly make a difference.”

ENCOURAGE THEM by explaining that they need not solve the problems; they must only do what they are capable of doing. As we read in *Pirkei Avot*, **“It is not your responsibility to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.”**



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The Apathetic Child



“Why should I care? None of this affects me. I have everything I need.”

PERSUADE THEM that responsibility cannot be shirked. As Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel writes, “The opposite of good is not evil; the opposite of good is indifference. **In a free society where terrible wrongs exist, some are guilty, but all are responsible.**”



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The Lost Child



“The child is silent—overwhelmed by the complexity of life.”

PROMPT THEM to see themselves as an inheritor of the Jewish people’s legacy. As it says in Deuteronomy, **“You must befriend the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”**



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During this season of liberation, let us work toward the liberation of all people.

Let us answer our children's questions, address their concerns, and inspire them with action and justice.

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