



Batya and the Noisy Neighbors

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities

Batya and the Noisy Neighbors

Batya likes quiet.

She likes reading in her room with the window open and a soft breeze coming in. She likes the hush of Shabbos afternoon. So when a new family moves into the apartment upstairs, with six children and a very loud piano, she isn't happy.

"Thump, thump, thump," go the little feet on the ceiling. "Plink, plink, PLUNK," goes the piano.

"They're so noisy," says Batya, holding a pillow over her head. "I can't think."

"They just moved in," says Mommy. "It takes a while to settle."

"But it's every day!"

On Friday, Batya is trying to finish her homework when a crash comes from upstairs, followed by laughing. She frowns. She marches to the front door and stands in the hallway, ready to knock and complain.

But then she hears something. A little girl's voice, singing. It is Shabbos songs, the ones she knows. Shalom Aleichem, high and sweet, wobbling a bit. Batya finds herself humming along.

She stands there until the song ends. Then, slowly, she goes back inside.

That night, at the Shabbos table, the family from upstairs can be heard through the ceiling, singing zemiros at the top of their lungs. Batya's brother grins. "They're having fun."

"They sure are," says Totty.

Batya listens. It isn't quiet. But she notices something she never noticed before: the songs are happy. Thump, thump, thump is just a family dancing.

The next day after lunch, she meets the girl from upstairs on the stairs. She is about Batya's age, with a missing front tooth and a ponytail.

"Hi," the girl says. "I'm Yocheved. Are you the one who lives under us?"

"Yes."

"Sorry about the noise. We're loud. Mommy says it's because we're so happy to be in a new place."

Batya hesitates. "It was loud," she admits. "But I like your singing."

Yocheved beams. "Do you want to learn a new song? My Zaidy taught me."

They sit on the step, and Yocheved sings a tune Batya has never heard. By the third time, Batya joins in. The sound echoes up the stairwell.

After that, Batya and Yocheved become friends. Yocheved comes down to read quietly with her sometimes, and Batya goes up to see the piano. The children are still loud, but Batya has found a way. When the noise gets to be too much, she puts on her soft earmuffs and goes to her room with a book. When she wants company, she goes upstairs.

At the end of the month, Yocheved's mother comes down with a plate of warm cookies. "Thank you for being so understanding," she says. "I know we're a lot."

"You're a happy lot," says Batya's mother, smiling.

A few weeks later, Batya is feeling sick with a cold, and a soft knock comes at the door. It is Yocheved, holding a card the whole family has signed, with six different handwritings and a doodle of a piano. Batya laughs out loud, and her cold feels a little smaller.

That night, Batya hears the thump, thump, thump from the ceiling. This time, she smiles. She knows those thumps. They belong to friends.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. How many children are in the new family?

2. What instrument is loud?

3. What is the girl's name upstairs?

4. What does Batya use when it gets too loud?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Batya hears Shalom Aleichem from upstairs. Fact / Guess
2. Batya moves away because of the noise. Fact / Guess
3. Yocheved has a missing front tooth. Fact / Guess
4. Yocheved's mother brings cookies. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. Why does the noise bother Batya at first?

2. What changes her mind?

3. How can you get along with people who are different from you?

Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: PIANO, QUIET, NEIGHBOR, SINGING, STAIRS, COOKIES

N	H	N	L	B	B	K	H	R	O	Y
Y	J	C	S	B	J	E	B	L	S	G
W	H	A	N	P	E	V	S	M	B	R
S	I	N	G	I	N	G	E	W	Y	E
P	J	E	W	U	U	S	I	J	C	Q
Y	J	I	R	T	O	T	K	O	G	U
I	A	G	B	K	N	A	O	F	G	I
Y	M	H	U	F	A	I	O	P	R	E
M	T	B	Y	Y	I	R	C	M	H	T
W	V	O	B	J	P	S	L	K	M	L
L	O	R	M	Y	V	M	S	K	U	M



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. NIAOP = _____

2. TQEUI = _____

3. SIRTAS = _____

4. SEKOOCI = _____

5. EURSMFFA = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"It's loud, but I like your singing."

"Do you want to learn a song?"

"We can make it work."



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Getting Along Chart

Day / moment	What bothered me	What I did	What I noticed
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw Batya and Yocheved singing together on the stairs.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing of Batya and Yocheved singing together on the stairs.



Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Six
2. A piano
3. Yocheved
4. Soft earmuffs

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: PIANO, QUIET, STAIRS, COOKIES, EARMUFFS

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.