



Chana's First Sleepover

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities



Chana's First Sleepover

Chana has been invited to Shira's sleepover, and she's said yes before she's had time to think.

Now it is Saturday night, and her pink duffel bag sits by the front door. Inside are her pajamas, her toothbrush, and her sleeping bag with the yellow ducks. Everything is packed. Chana isn't sure she can go.

"Are you excited?" asks Mommy.

"Mm-hm," says Chana. She doesn't feel excited. She feels like she's swallowed a handful of marbles.

Shira's house is only six blocks away, but it has never seemed so far. When Chana walks in, there are already five girls on the living room floor with pillows and bags of popcorn.

"Chana's here!" shouts Shira.

For the first two hours, it is a blast. They paint their nails. They play hide and seek in the basement. Shira's mother makes a chocolate fondue, and everyone dips strawberries until their fingers are sticky.

Then the lights go out.

Shira's mother tucks them into sleeping bags in the living room and says goodnight. The room goes dark. One by one, the girls' voices drop to whispers, then yawns, then soft breathing.

Chana lies on her back, staring at the ceiling. The house makes unfamiliar sounds, a tick of the radiator, a faraway hum. The sleeping bag feels

scratchy. Her bed at home is soft, and her little sister Rivky sleeps in the bed next to hers.

A lump rises in her throat. She wants her mother. She wants to go home. I'm a baby, she thinks. Everyone else is asleep. I'm the only one who's scared.

She squeezes her eyes shut, but a tear slides out anyway.

She thinks about what Morah Leah has taught the class. When you feel scared or sad, find something you can do to feel a bit better. A tool.

She sits up quietly. The first tool is breathing. She breathes in for four, out for four, five times. The marbles in her stomach roll, but they don't clatter as much.

The second tool is her flashlight. Mommy has tucked a tiny one into her duffel, with a note that says, Just in case. Chana clicks it on, makes a circle of light on the ceiling, and moves it around. The room doesn't look so strange anymore. It is only a living room with a couch and a lamp.

The third tool is a picture. She has one in her bag, a little photo of her family on a picnic blanket. She holds it under the light. Mommy is laughing. Totty has Rivky on his shoulders. It feels like a hug.

"Chana?" whispers a voice.

It is Shira, up on one elbow. "Are you awake?"

"Yes," says Chana. Her voice shakes. "I'm a little homesick."

"Me too, sometimes," whispers Shira. "When I slept at my cousin's. I asked my aunt for hugs at midnight."

"Did it help?"

"Yes. Do you want to ask my mom for a hug?"

Chana thinks. She has been afraid that asking will make her a baby. But it doesn't feel that way. It feels smart.

She tiptoes with Shira to the kitchen, where Shira's mother is still washing cups. Shira's mother has said that anyone can ask for anything if she needs to.

"I'm missing home a little," says Chana.

"Of course you are, sweet girl," says Shira's mother. She gives her a hug and a small cup of warm milk. "Missing home means you love it. And being brave doesn't mean not missing. It means you're here anyway."

Chana drinks the milk slowly, feeling lighter. She and Shira tiptoe back to their sleeping bags.

"Better?" whispers Shira.

"Better," says Chana.

She falls asleep with the flashlight under her pillow. In the morning, the first thing she smells is pancakes. She's done it, and she can't wait to tell Rivky.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. Whose sleepover is it?

2. What is in Chana's duffel for 'just in case'?

3. What does Chana do when she feels homesick?

4. What does she smell in the morning?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Chana's sleeping bag has yellow ducks. Fact / Guess
2. Everyone else at the sleepover is asleep and fine. Fact / Guess
3. Shira says she's felt homesick too. Fact / Guess
4. Shira's mother gives Chana a hug and warm milk. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. What helps you feel better when you miss home?

2. Why does asking for help not make Chana a baby?

3. What would you pack in a feel-better kit?



Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: SLEEPOVER, FLASHLIGHT, PHOTO, POPCORN, PANCAKES, DUCKS

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



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. GSENPEIL = _____

2. GSLALFTHIH = _____

3. CONOPRP = _____

4. NCAAEKSP = _____

5. FLDEUF = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'm a little homesick."

"Can I have a hug? I miss home."

"I can do this."



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Feel Better Kit

Day / moment	What I used	How it helped	When I used it
Moment 1			
Moment 2			
Moment 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw Chana in her duck sleeping bag with a circle of flashlight on the ceiling.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to draw Chana in her duck sleeping bag and a circle of flashlight on the ceiling.



Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Shira's
2. A tiny flashlight with a note from Mommy
3. She breathes, uses the flashlight, looks at her photo, and asks Shira's mother for a hug
4. Pancakes

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

Scrambled words: SLEEPING, FLASHLIGHT, POPCORN, PANCAKES, DUFFEL

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