

The Right Table

Facilitator note: The skill is timing and audience before sharing: whose news is it, who hears first, what is the room carrying. Frame it as sequence and setting, never as secrecy - Chassi's line is the anchor: nobody is hiding; news is perishable, and where and when you serve it is part of what it is. Keep both of Perri's mistakes sympathetic: the hint (she did not "tell," exactly - and the hint was telling) and the secondhand slip (happy things travel through no one's malice). Do not shame enthusiasm; Perri's herald nature is a strength being aimed, not a flaw being fixed. Note for this age band: family simchas, engagements, and journal-type news are the everyday cases; students are never asked to disclose real family news. Activity 7 is a made-up case.

Teacher answer key

1. Mistake one: she hints at Chassi's engagement to Ruti - news that was not hers. Mistake two: she gives her own poem news away carelessly - blurting it into a worried kitchen, then letting it travel so the proper telling - the poem, the page, her own excitement - reaches her mother secondhand, after Thursday's bare mention. Same mistake two ways: both times she skipped the three questions - the not-hers news got told (wrong "whose"), and the hers news got told to the wrong room in the wrong order (wrong "room" and "who hears first").
2. Ruti reads the hint, not the words: "something nice, soon, ask me Sunday" plus eleven years of friendship is a solved puzzle. The coat line means a hint carries the news exactly as surely as a statement does - the information travels either way. "Ask me Sunday" reveals that there is news, what kind, and when it unlocks; secrecy-by-hint is not secrecy at all, and it spends the news-owner's announcement.
3. Whose news is it (news belongs to the person it's about - hold it like their Shabbos coat, never wear it out of the house); who hears first (news has an order, the way a simcha has an order - the closest hear it from the person, before the street does); what is the room carrying (the same sentence is a gift at one table and a weight at another). "Sequence and setting, not secrecy": nobody is hiding - everything gets told; only the when, where, and by-whom are chosen. The coat comparison: holding someone's news is care for their property, and the care is the point, not concealment.
4. $1 + 1 + 2 + 4 = 8$ distinct hearers besides Perri. Exactly one of them - the friend Perri told - heard it directly; the sister, the two neighbors, and their four (seven people) heard it through an indirect source - secondhand, not wrong of them; the wrongness lives in the chain, not the hearers. Arithmetic misses the mother's fish-counter moment - that hearing secondhand carries a hurt no count shows - and it cannot show whether the person who deserved first-hearing was in the chain at all. The fictional chain does not identify its hearers; no total reveals who deserved to hear first. Steps shown.

5. "First" means the relationship deserves the real telling in person, not a hurried mention on a heavy night and then the details from a stranger - the fish-counter version tells her she was placed after the grocery line in her own daughter's joy. The first look restores more than an apology because it re-does the order correctly: the mother gets the journal first, at a light table, asked-for ("Is this a good minute?"), which is the whole skill performed as an amends.
6. Open. The scene should show the lists, the two women, Perri's folded letter. Strong captions quote "The news did not change. The room did." or "News is perishable." Any honest rendering counts.
7. Sample: Baby news - "It is Mushky's cousin's news, not Mushky's." First hearers - "The great-grandmother hears in person on Friday, before Mushky tells anyone." Room-check - "Mushky checks that nobody at lunch is mid-worry before she even says she has news." Raffle - "The raffle is Mushky's own news; she tells her mother first that evening, and checks that her brother, who wanted that prize, is not sitting right there." Whose/order/room present for each counts.
8. NEWS row 1 columns 1-4; WAIT row 2 columns 1-4; ROOM row 3 columns 1-4; HERS row 4 columns 1-4; MINE row 5 columns 1-4; TURN row 6 columns 1-4; HOLD row 7 columns 1-4; ASK row 8 columns 1-3 What she holds like a Shabbos coat is the NEWS (accept NEWS); what it was not yet on Thursday is her TURN.