



PJ Our Way Content Needs for Ages 9 Through 11

PJ Our Way is the next chapter of PJ Library for kids ages 9 through 11. With PJ Our Way, kids choose their books by coming to the website (pjourway.org) every month and choosing 1 book from a selection of 4. We do repeat some titles from year to year and even within the course of a year. Since piloting PJ Our Way in October 2014, we have offered **70 unique titles** and will be offering an additional **26 in the 2017-18 lineup**. Within the range of titles that we offer every month, we try to appeal to a broad audience of kids with a wide spectrum of reading abilities and Jewish background. To date there are more than **25,000 kids** signed up for the program, and we now mail more than **16,500 books every month**.

PJ Our Way seeks stories with positive Jewish content that are “page turners,” stories that inspire AND entertain tweens. On the website, kids can see the front and back covers of each book, as well as read the first chapter and see reviews from other kids. That is why it is imperative that PJ Our Way books have appealing covers with fresh and exciting writing that will engage our readers from page one. Our membership is close to equally split between boys and girls, and although we welcome stories with protagonists of any gender, now we have a need for exciting stories with boy protagonists, especially stories geared towards younger boys (age 9). In general, graphic novels are very popular, and all books must meet age appropriate requirements regarding any violent/romantic/scary/profane content.

Guidelines for Submission Selection

- The book should reflect historical Jewish life, contemporary Jewish life, or some valuable aspect of Jewish experience.
- We look for strong Jewish characters and content where Jewish identity plays a positive role, but we want the Jewish content to be natural – we don’t want to be all message and no story!
- The content needs to be age-appropriate. We avoid content that might make middle-graders or their parents uncomfortable, which means no alcohol or drugs, no bad language, and any romance needs to be very innocent. (We avoid offering YA content.)
- We prefer to avoid books about the Holocaust. We do occasionally include a book that touches on aspects of the subject. We avoid graphic material or stories set in concentration camps or ghettos. We are more likely to consider second generation or refugee stories with a hopeful message.
- Genres that are popular with this age group are graphic novels, fantasy and magical (with a Jewish twist), and simple biographies (such as the Who Is/Was series from PRH).

Sought After Subject Matter for PJ Our Way Books

Contemporary Jewish life in North America

- We are especially seeking books about Jewish summer camp experiences
- Boy Scouts
- Diverse characters and portrayals of Jewish families from around the world
- Jewish characters facing “every day” middle grade challenges with an emphasis on Jewish values (e.g. kindness, helping others, inclusion)

Contemporary Jewish life in Israel

- Contextualized for an American audience
- Highlight similarities and differences in Jewish life in both countries
- Jewish Ethiopian life in Israel
- Avoid political stories

20th century American life told from the point of view of Jewish characters

- Civil rights
- Labor movement
- Jewish life in the Mid-West and South

Jewish historical fiction

- Biblical, especially interpretations of stories that relate to Jewish holidays such as Passover, Purim, Hanukkah
- Ancient Israel/Greece/Rome
- Early Jewish life in Sephardic Countries
- Early Western European Jewish life
- Early Zionism
- Founding of the State of Israel, early Israel, Kibbutz life
- Immigration to Israel (Ethiopian/Soviet Union/American/Yemenite)

Biographies/memoirs based on the heroic, famous and/or interesting

Contemporary:

Ruth Bader Ginsburg	Steven Spielberg	Barbara Streisand
Gal Gadot	Adam Sandler	Jerry Seinfeld
Aly Raisman	Natalie Portman	Natan Sharansky
Mayim Bialik	Bob Dylan	Ilan Ramon

Modern

Golda Meir	Creators of Superman and	Chaim Weizmann
David Ben Gurion	Batman	Harry Houdini
Hannah Szenes	Henrietta Szold	Marc Chagall
The Marx Brothers	Louis Brandeis	Theodore Herzl

Historical

Queen Esther	Bruria	Yosef Karo
Judah	Benjamin of Tudela	Disraeli
Maccabee/Hasmoneans	Rashi	Henrietta Szold
Hillel	Maimonides	Levi Strauss
Rabbi Akiva	Dona Gracia	

Submit a Book for PJ Our Way

Submissions can be made directly to the book selection committee as a PDF to submissions@pjourway.org.

We prefer PDFs but (3) hard copy submissions can be made to:

Harold Grinspoon Foundation
67 Hunt Street, Suite 100
Agawam, MA 01001
Attn. PJ Our Way

Author Incentive

PJ Our Way is now offering a \$5,000 author incentive for new Jewish middle grade book manuscripts!

For each *new*, unpublished story submitted to PJ Our Way from September 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018 that is accepted by the Book Selection Committee for use in our program, we will present the author with **\$5,000**. This award is truly an award – it is separate from and in addition to any monies received by the author from a publisher.

And wait! There's more...

We will now accept three complete chapters and an outline as an initial submission. If the Committee decides that this initial submission has potential to be a PJ Our Way selection, we will award the author **\$2,000**. Once the author submits the completed manuscript and it is accepted for use in the program, the author will be awarded the remaining **\$3,000**.

Stories may be submitted by anyone, including authors, agents, and publishers. Multiple stories by one author are eligible. The only disqualifying factor is if the story is already available in the trade market or has previously been considered by PJ Our Way's Book Selection Committee – that is to say, it must be new.