

About the Book

This picture book biography tells the origin story of the third-largest international sporting event.

In 1912, a teenager named Yosef Yekutieli listened to radio broadcasts from the Stockholm Olympics and hatched an idea: an Olympic-style competition for Jewish athletes from around the globe in the brand-new city of Tel Aviv.

People initially didn't take him seriously. But that didn't stop Yosef. For the next two decades, he worked to make this idea a reality. There was no stadium, pool, or running track anywhere in British Mandate Palestine. Yosef found solutions to them all.

There was one big problem left: there was no easy way to tell athletes about the games!

The solution: Motorcycles. Riding thousands of miles, over mountains and through deserts, motorcycle brigades announced the games to the world Jewish community. In 1932, the Maccabiah Games were born.



Rabbi Deborah Bodin Cohen is the award-winning author and co-author of many books for children, including the Engineer Ari series, *Rembrandt Chooses a Queen* and *The Heroes Haggadah*. She is an editor at Behrman House and the rabbi of Congregation Beth Chai. She lives in Rockville, Maryland.

Rabbi Kerry Olitzky is the author or co-author of nearly 100 books for children, adults, and scholars about Jewish and Muslim faith, including *Welcome to the Seder: A Passover Haggadah for Everyone* and *Miryam's Dance*. He lives in New Jersey.

André Ceolin studied at the School of Visual Arts in NYC, Melies, and Escola Panamericana de Artes to develop a signature look and learn new illustration techniques. He lives in Brazil.

Key Themes:

Dedication, Problem Solving, Cultural Pride, 20th Century History

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Ages 5–8 years

Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children. Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

Before Reading

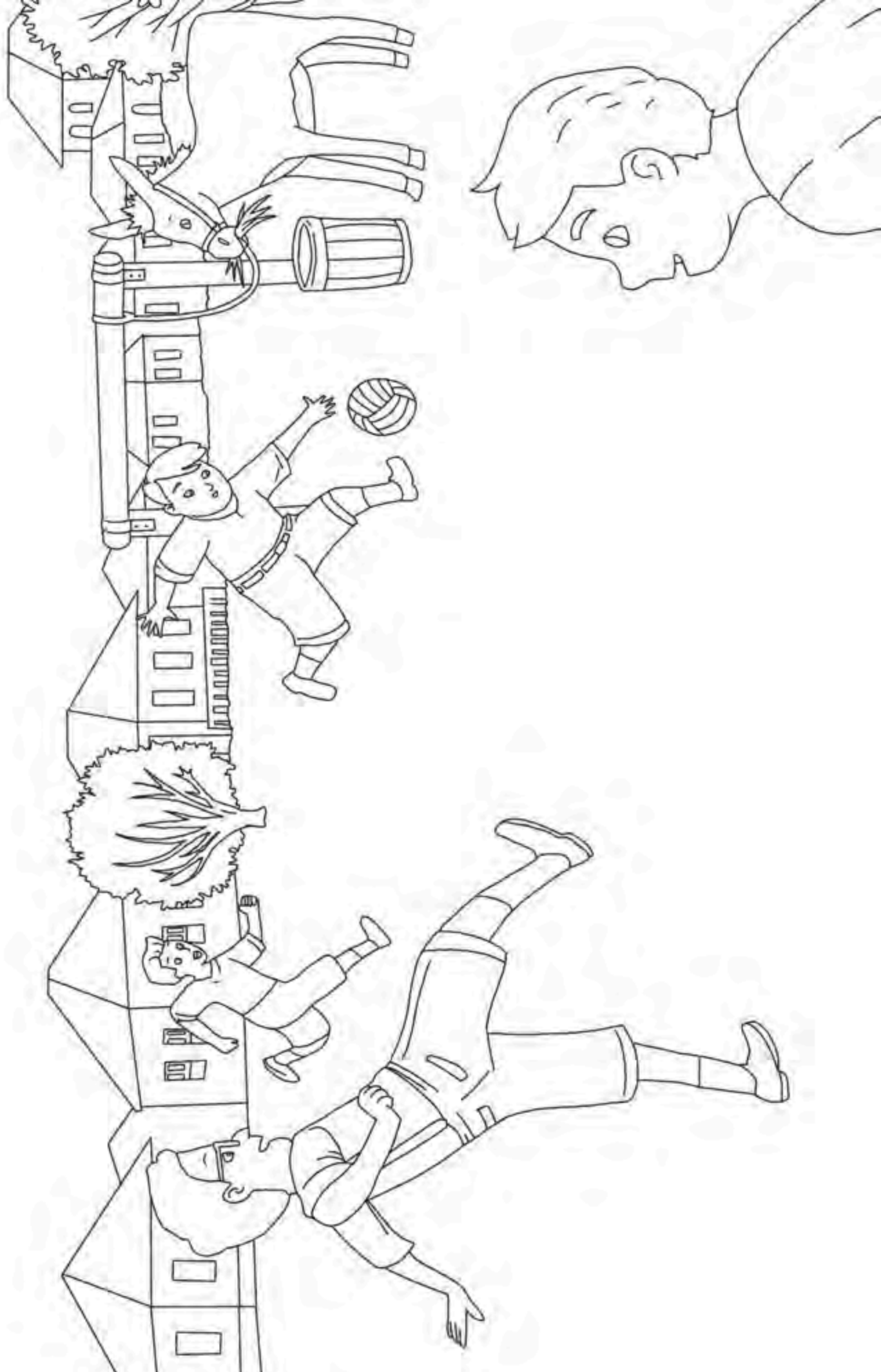
- Look at the front cover of the book. Where do you think this book takes place? Why do you think that?
- Read the title of the book: Maccabiah. What word does it remind you of? (*Hint: It's from the holiday of Hannukah.*) What might the people on the cover have in common with the Maccabees?

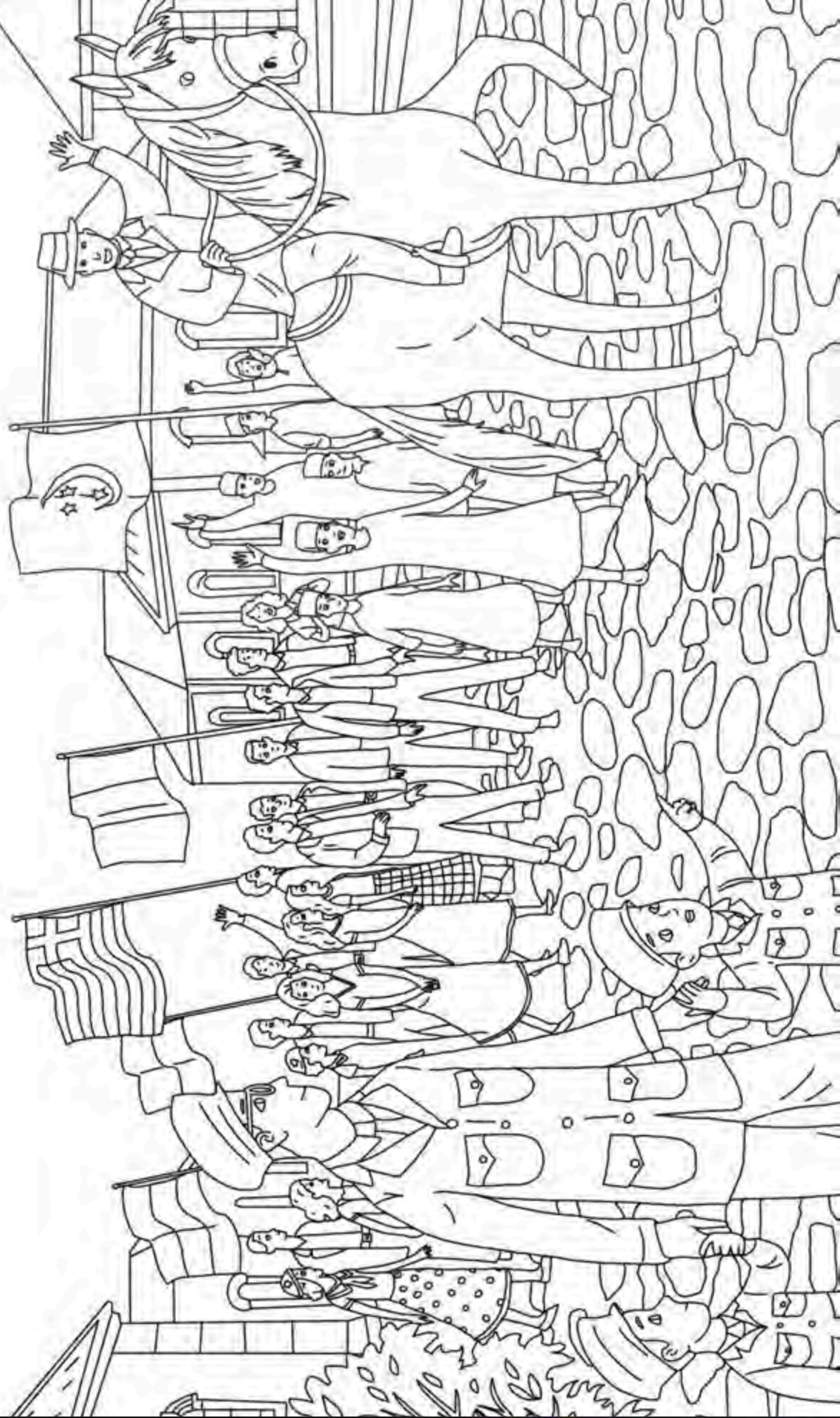
After Reading

- Yosef has a crazy dream. What is it? What makes it impractical? How do you think he felt when his friends doubted him? Have you ever had a crazy dream like Yosef did? What is it?
- Yosef and his friends solved each problem one by one, finding a creative solution for each. What do you think made them successful in solving these issues? Think about a time when you had a challenging problem. What solution did you find? Did you solve it on your own or with other people?
- How do you think Yosef and Efraim chose which cities to visit on the motorcycle brigade?
- Yosef says, "Sports brings people together." How do you think sports might bring people together?
- Near the end of book, Yosef walks with his young sons and sees all the athletes. What do you think his sons might have been thinking at that moment?
- The book's illustrator, André Ceolin, looked at many original photos when doing the artwork. Look at the original photographs at the end of the book. Can you find examples in the book of illustrations inspired by these photographs?

Optional: Extension Activity

Look at the printed papers inside the front and back covers of the book. They have images of each of the Maccabiah posters. How do the images change over time? Do you have a favorite? Using markers or colored pencils or any craft materials you choose, make a poster for the next Maccabiah Games.





Maccabiah

By Deborah Bodin Cohen and Kerry Olitzky
Illustrated by André Ceolin

Character Cut Outs

