

The Pirate Rabbi

By David Sherrin | Illustrated by Barbara DiLorenzo

READING GUIDE

About the Book

Inspired by the real-life Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan-born Jewish leader and sailor, comes a high-seas adventure about living your dreams and doing what's right to help others.

In 16th-century Amsterdam, Sam was torn between two goals. He wanted to grow up to be a rabbi, wise and kind like his father. But he couldn't help but wish for the excitement of being a legendary pirate.

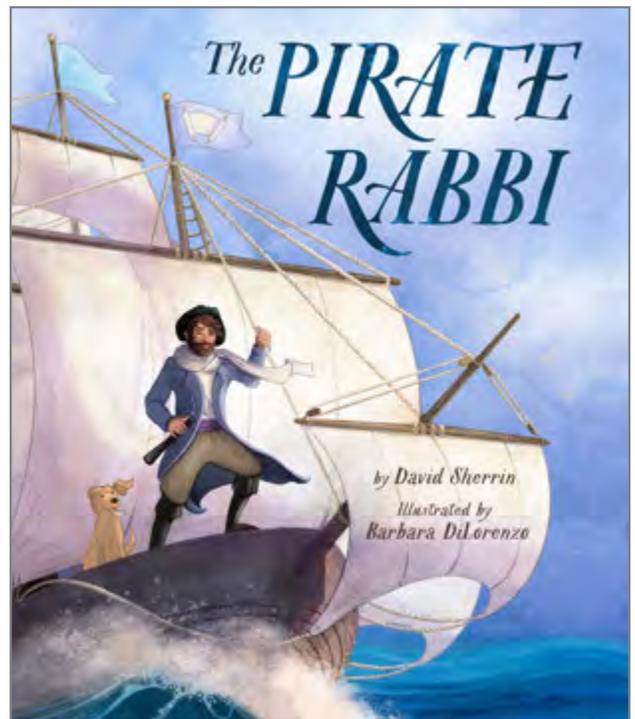
"Boats are fun," his father said. "But helping people is more meaningful."

Years passed, and Sam grew up to be a rabbi. He taught his community, bringing them joy and comfort. But when the prince enlists Sam's help to save captured people, he knows what he must do. Setting sail with his crew, Sam is determined to save his community, and even change the minds of some pirates along the way.

An author's note tells the history of Samuel Pallache, the values he lived his life by, and even includes pirate fun facts!

David Sherrin is a national-award-winning teacher at Scarsdale High School in Scarsdale, New York. His debut picture book, *Big Bad Wolf's Yom Kippur*, had featured reviews in Kirkus, Jewish Books for Kids, and the Jewish Book Council. He is also the author of several books about teaching history including *The Classes They Remember: Using Role-Plays to Bring Social Studies and English to Life*. David lives in Tarrytown, New York.

Barbara DiLorenzo's first picture book was *Renato and the Lion*, which received a starred review from Booklist and was named a Bank Street Best Book of the Year, a Junior Library Guild selection, and a CBC Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design, she has taught at the Arts Council of Princeton and the New York Institute of Art + Design. She lives in central New Jersey.



Key Themes:

Helping others, Leadership, Persistence, Selflessness

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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 illustration on the cover of the book. Now guess: When and where do you think this story takes place? What do you see on the cover that makes you think so?
- Read the title out loud. How would you describe a pirate? How would you describe a rabbi? What does the title make you wonder about a character who is both?

While Reading

As you read, watch for Jewish symbols and objects in the illustrations. What do you already know about each of them? What more would you like to learn about them?

After Reading

- Towards the beginning of the story, Sam is a young boy, and he helps another young boy. Later in the story they reconnect as adults (as the Pirate Rabbi and the Pirate!) If they had never met as children, how do you think the story might have turned out differently?
- The story explains that Sam couldn't decide between being a pirate and being a rabbi. Which one would you choose? Why? What are the good parts about being each?
- There are many different kinds of foods described in the story. Go back and find their names. Have you ever eaten any of them? If yes, which were your favorites? If not, which would you like to try?
- There are many different acts of chessed, helping, that happen in the story. How many can you find? Describe them.

Extension Activity: Make a Pirate Rabbi Hat

You will need:

A printed copy of the template

Scissors

Marker or crayons

Step 1: Print out the template

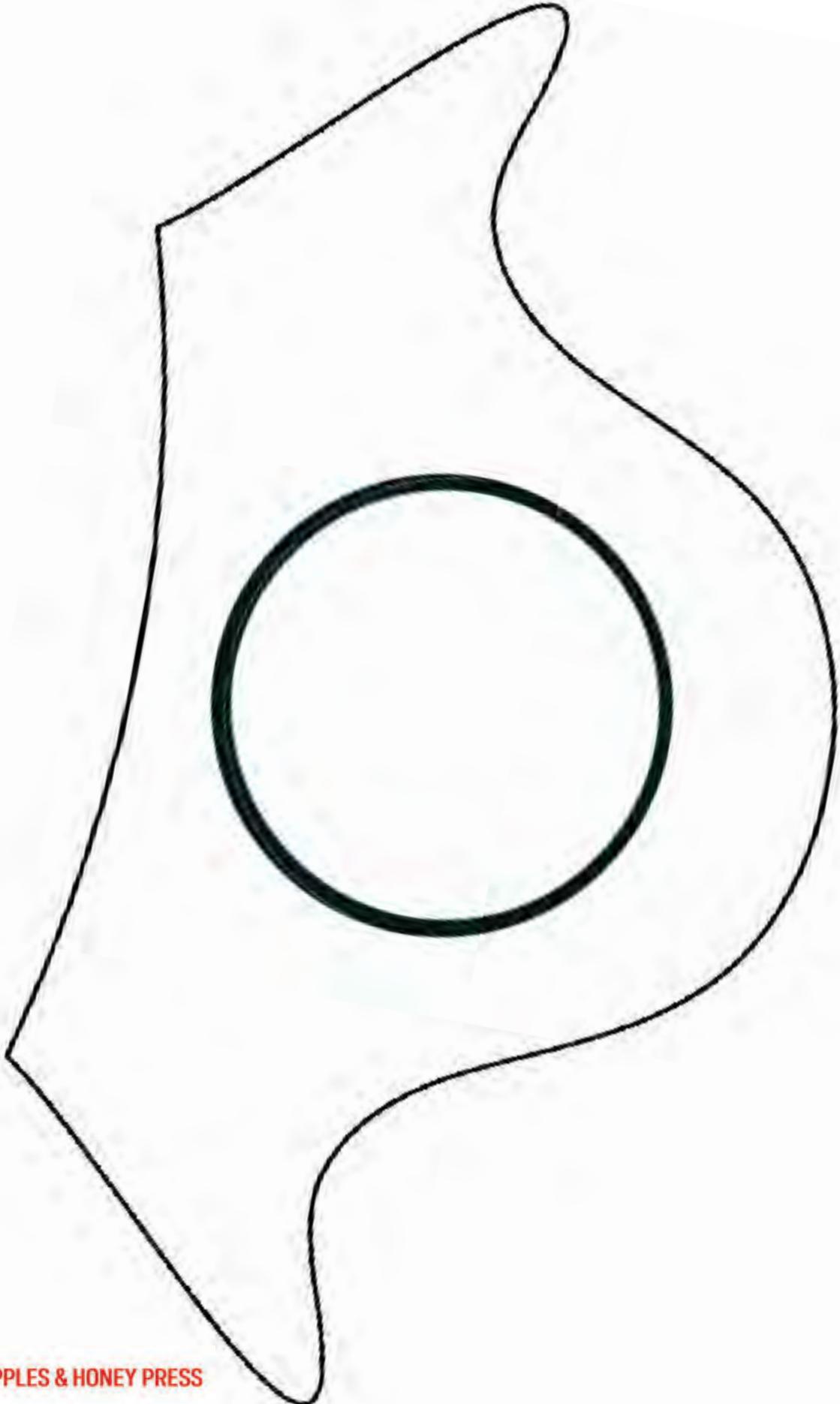
Step 2: The pirate Rabbi had a symbol of a Torah on the top of his pirate ship. To make this a pirate rabbi hat, choose a Jewish symbol and draw it in the center of the circle. (It could be: A torah, dreidel, tzedakah box, shofar—your choice!)

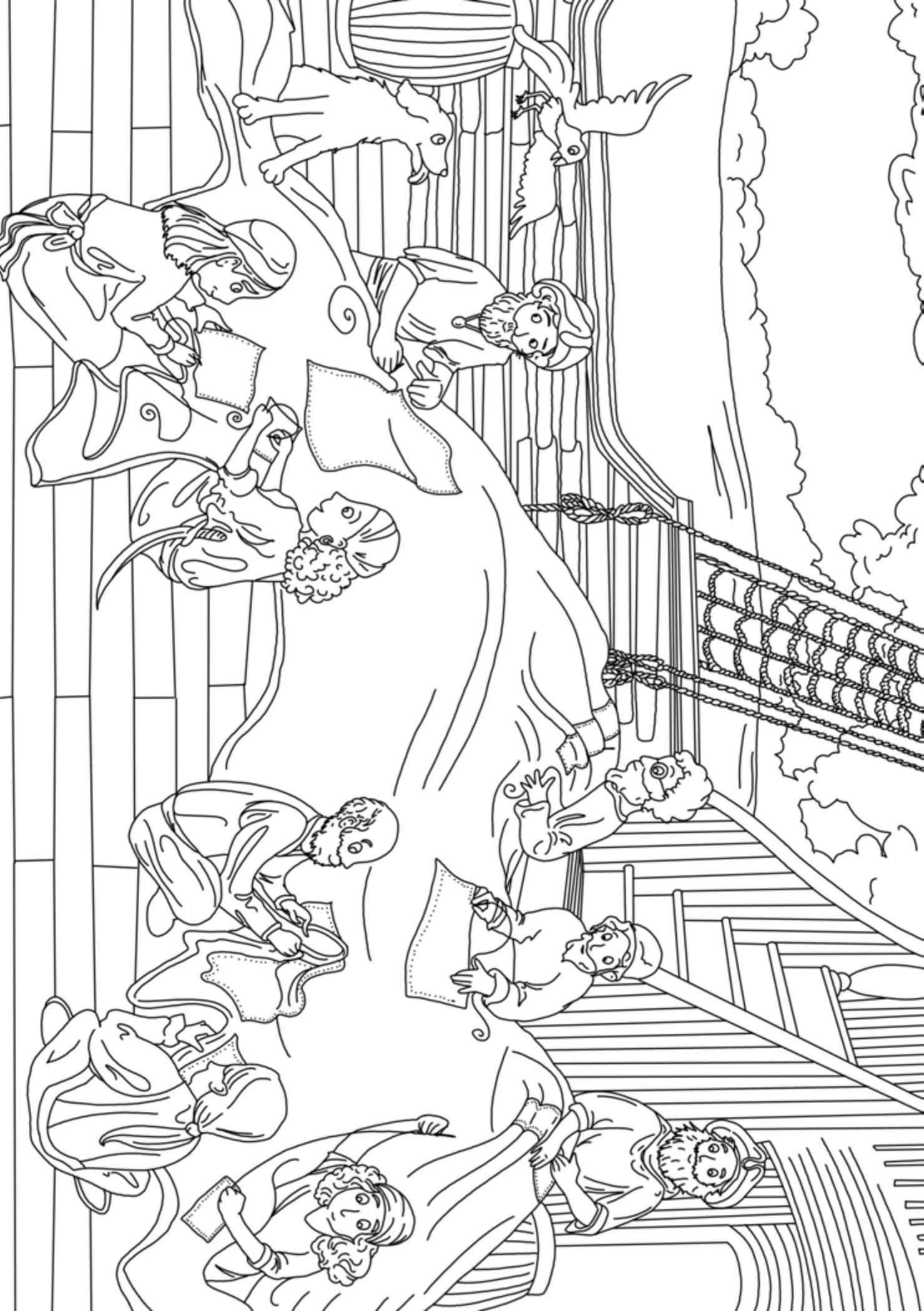
Step 3: Color in the rest of the template

Step 4: attach a strip of paper to each sides of the hat with tape or a staple. Then wrap the strips around your head and attach again at the back.

Arghhhh, matey!

Discussion Questions by Ann Koffsky







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Character Cut Outs

