

Saliman and the Memory Stone

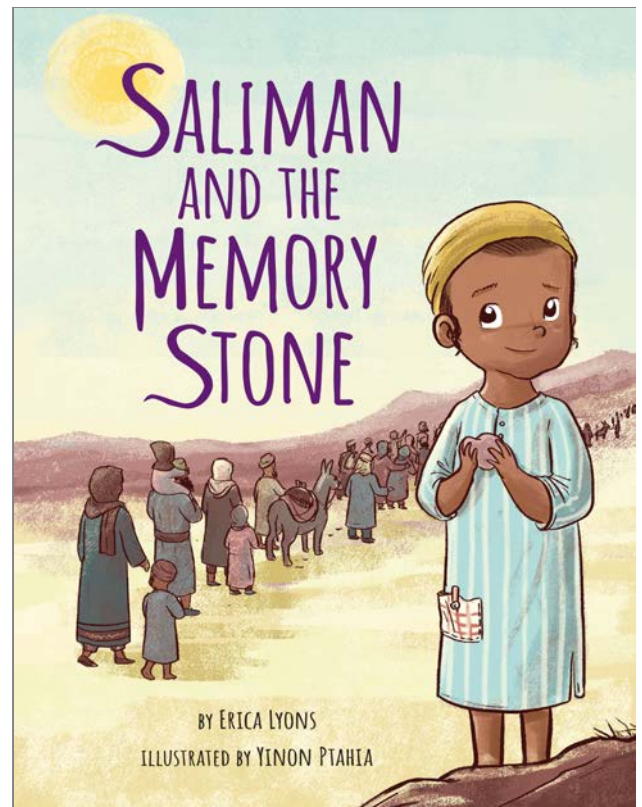
By Erica Lyons | Illustrated by Yinon Ptahia

READING & ACTIVITY GUIDE

About the Book

When young Saliman's family left Yemen in 1881 to move to Jerusalem, there were so many things they could not take along. Saliman promised to remember it all, even the names of each of their goats and the color of their fur. He clutched his memory stone, a piece of his house that he kept in his pocket, as a way to keep Yemen in his heart.

Saliman and the Memory Stone is a fictionalization of the real emigration of thousands of Yemeni Jews to Jerusalem. Saliman might be leaving home, but he will always have his memories of Yemen. And even when they have nothing but their songs and stories, he is reminded that he has everything he needs in his heart and in his community.



Key Themes:

Emigration; Community; Family; Remembering

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Ages 4–7 years



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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 characters on the cover of the book. Now guess: Where do you think this story takes place? When? What do you see on the cover that makes you think so?
- Read aloud the title. How does a name like “Saliman” help you know where the main character might be from?
- What do you think a memory stone might be?

During Reading

As you read the book, you will come across some Arabic words: ab, um and jad. Do you know what the words mean? If not, look at the words around them—does that help you understand them? What pictures they are next to?

As you read, look for other words in the story that are not in English. Can you guess their meaning?

After Reading

- How do you think Saliman feels about leaving Yemen? How do you think he feels about his new home at the end of the book?
- Why do you think Saliman chooses to take the stone from the bottom of his house on his journey with him? What does the stone mean to him?
- Do you have an object that’s important to you? What makes it meaningful to you?
- Saliman’s Jad says that their home is far across the sands and seas in Jerusalem. Why do you think Jad feels Jerusalem is their home, even though they have never been there before?
- In the beginning and at the end of the book, Saliman celebrates the holiday of Sukkot. What do you know about Sukkot? What about Sukkot connects to Saliman’s story?

Extension Activity (Optional)

In the book, Saliman draws pictures of his memories from Yemen, such as his goats. Make your own memory drawing. Draw something that you remember that’s important to you. It can be a person, animal, or an object. When you are done, write a sentence or two on the back of the paper or next to your drawing about why that memory is meaningful to you.

Discussion questions by Ann Diament Koffsky



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CHARACTER CUT-OUTS

