

# A story for Succoth

## A Jewish story

**Key Ideas: Judaism, precious things, gifts, the gift of love**

A father wanted to give his new, first-born baby girl a special gift for Succoth, to reflect how thankful he was for her birth and the hopes he had for her future. But what should he give her? He asked his friends. They gave him lots of different answers; 'A long life', 'Freedom from poverty', 'A lovely holiday'.

He finally decided to seek the most beautiful toy he could find. At the toymaker's, he chose a spinning top. He asked the toymaker if this was the best present he could give. 'Yes, for it is beautiful and bright as new clothes for a festival!' he said.

The father put down the top and rushed to the tailor's. He chose a beautiful, many coloured, embroidered cape. 'Is this the best possible gift?' 'Yes,' said the tailor, 'it will keep her as warm as freshly baked Sabbath bread!'

The father left hurriedly and the pattern was followed again at the baker's. He was told, 'Those loaves are as warming as a sheep's winter fleece.' At the shepherd's he chose a lovely new-born lamb and was told, 'This little one is as good as gold!' The jeweller showed him a bag full of shining gold dust, 'As precious as the scent of spring flowers!' The chemist showed him a bottle of the most delicate perfume, 'As rare as the dove of peace!'

A tiny baby dove was his choice at the fowler's, who said, 'It's feathers remind us of the fringes on a believer's prayer shawl which reminds the wearer of his belief in God and his hopes for a peaceful future.' He also said, 'It is as precious as the very first kiss you give to someone whom you are coming to respect and love.'

For a moment, the father hesitated, then he seized the fowler's hand, 'Come with me!' He rushed through the village and called to the chemist, the jeweller, the shepherd, the baker, the tailor, and the toymaker to join him. He seemed so excited that they all followed him.

Onlookers also followed, and he was joined by friends, his wife and the rabbi. At his house he suddenly stopped, putting his finger to his lips for quietness. He crept into the house and into the bedroom where his baby daughter slept in her cradle. Quietly, everyone tried to crowd in after him.

'I've searched everywhere for the very best present for my new daughter, something to help and please her as she grows up. I had already given it to her!'

Very gently he bent over the cradle and kissed her. She opened her eyes and laughed and laughed. People cannot be truly happy without love; love given, love received. With love you cannot only find happiness, you can also learn to bear suffering, sadness and disappointment without becoming overwhelmed by bitterness, hatred, loneliness.

Everyone in the room felt that they had learned of the greatest truth of all.