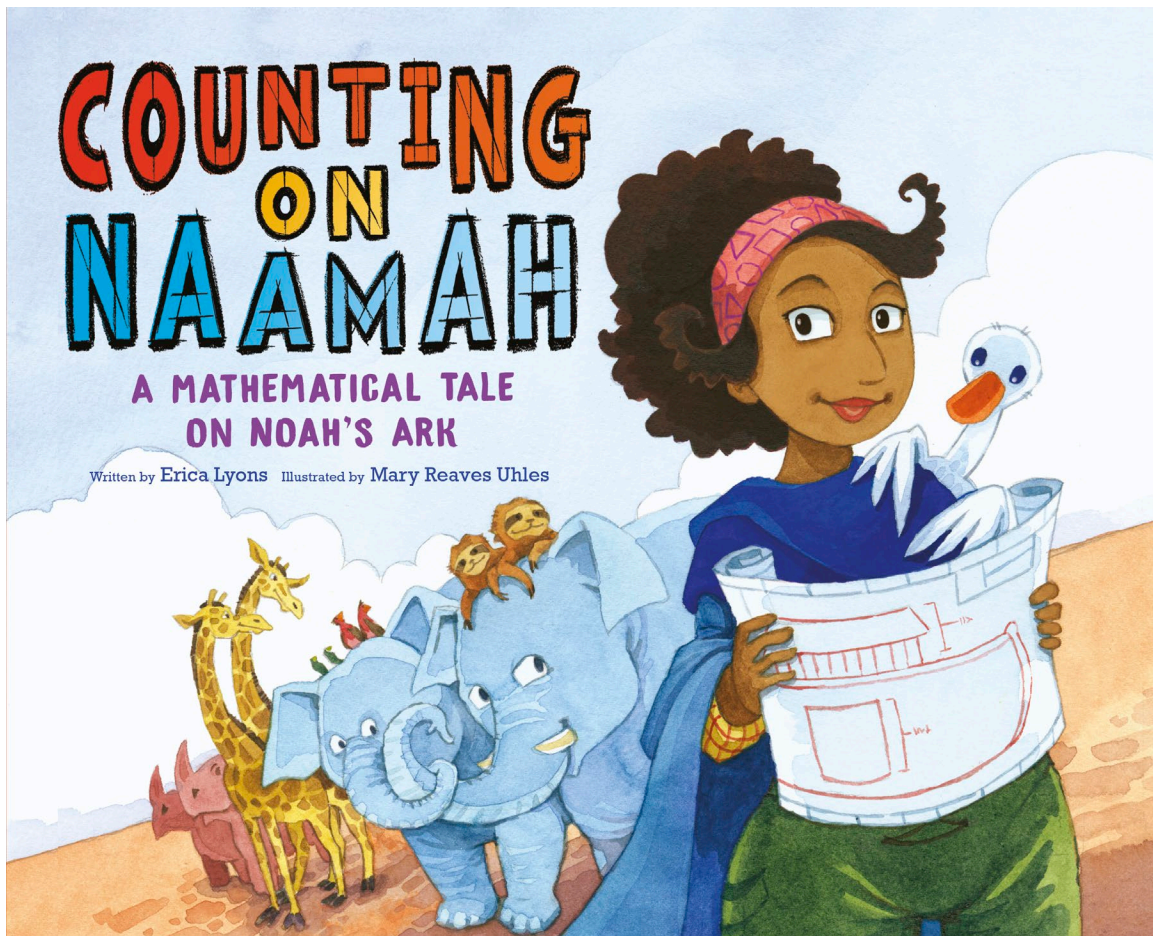


A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL Teacher's Guide for
Counting on Naamah:
A Mathematical Tale on Noah's Ark

written by Erica Lyons
illustrated by Mary Reaves Uhles



Counting on Naamah Text © Erica Lyons 2023 Illustrations © Mary Reaves Uhles;
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Praise for *Counting on Naamah*

“a clever... tale that focuses on Naamah, Noah’s wife, and her talents as a mathematician.”

–Jewish Books for Kids

Story Summary

Rosie Revere Engineer meets Noah's Ark!

What if Naamah, Noah's wife, was actually a math and engineering whiz?

Watch Naamah from the time she is a baby and a young girl, show off her talent for math and engineering, creating Biblical inventions like you've never seen before!



As a young woman, Naamah meets Noah (who liked numbers, especially in multiples of two). Naamah and Noah make a pair that can't be divided.

But then God tells Noah to build an ark. Everyone thinks that Noah was responsible for the ark, but **COUNTING ON NAAMAH** tells a different story.

Noah does the basic building. But who's in charge of the food, the animal room arrangements and everything else?

Naamah, of course!

And when the ark sets sail and the animals get restless, Naamah comes up with a solution no one could have imagined—a **DECK-athlon!**

Enjoy this fun, zany, and girl-powered take on the traditional Noah's Ark story!

About the Author



With five children and two cats, Erica Lyons sometimes feels like she's living on the ark. On land, she's the chair of the Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society and is the Hong Kong Delegate to World Jewish Congress. She's also the founder/director of PJ Library Hong Kong and the author of several books for children.

About the Illustrator



Mary Reaves Uhles has illustrated *Let's Pop, Pop, Popcorn!*; *A Tuba Christmas*; *The Twelve Days of Christmas in Tennessee*; *The Little Kids' Table*; the Choose Your Own Adventure Series, *Beyond the Grave*; and the poetry collection *Kooky Crumbs* by Poet Laureate J. Patrick Lewis. Twice awarded the Grand Prize for Illustration from the SCBWI Midsouth Conference and a finalist in the 2014 Bologna Book Fair Gallery in Bologna, Italy, Mary serves as Illustrator Coordinator for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She lives with her family in Nashville, Tennessee. Find her at www.maryuhles.com

**POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS
FOR DAY SCHOOLS, SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOLS &
SUNDAY SCHOOLS:**

Read the picture book, **COUNTING ON NAAMAH: A MATHEMATICAL TALE ON NOAH'S ARK**, to your students before introducing the following challenges.

Note: Please choose whichever challenges work best for your students' grade and abilities.

WHAT IS A MIDRASH?:

Read the author's note at the back of the book discussing what a midrash is. Discuss how a midrash fills in the missing parts of a story from the Torah (Five Books of Moses).

Read the English text of the Noah story with your class. Notice how many details are missing. Especially about the unnamed, Mrs. Noah.

Older grades might enjoy an excerpt about the creation of **COUNTING ON NAAMAH** from this excellent article by the author, *Picture Books as Feminist Midrash* on the Jewish Book Council site: <https://www.jewishbookcouncil.org/pb-daily/picture-books-as-feminist-midrash>

Any grade could enjoy reading a Torah story with many "blank spaces" and filling in the blanks with their own imaginations.

(Please note: Intergalactic Afikoman's book, **DIJ- DO IT JEWISH!: USE YOUR JEWISH CREATIVITY** by Barbara Bietz and illustrated by Daria Grinevich contains an excellent chapter on making midrash.)

TORAH MATH & ENGINEERING CHALLENGES

INCLUDING...

HOW OLD WAS NOAH ANYWAY? (And why does he look so different)

Comparing COUNTING ON NAAMAH to one or more traditional Noah's ark picture books could be interesting to students.

Discuss how Noah looks in these other versions of the story—likely with a white beard and white hair and biblical robes.

Compare this to Mary Reaves Uhles red-headed Noah.

You can tell your students that scholars think that Noah was around 500 years old when he built the ark and he died at around the age of 950.

So Noah was actually in the **prime** of his life when he built the ark and just around **middle age**. So the book's wonderful illustrator, Mary, drew him this way!

HOW LONG WERE NAAMAH AND NOAH ON THE ARK?

How long did Noah and his family actually spend on the ark?

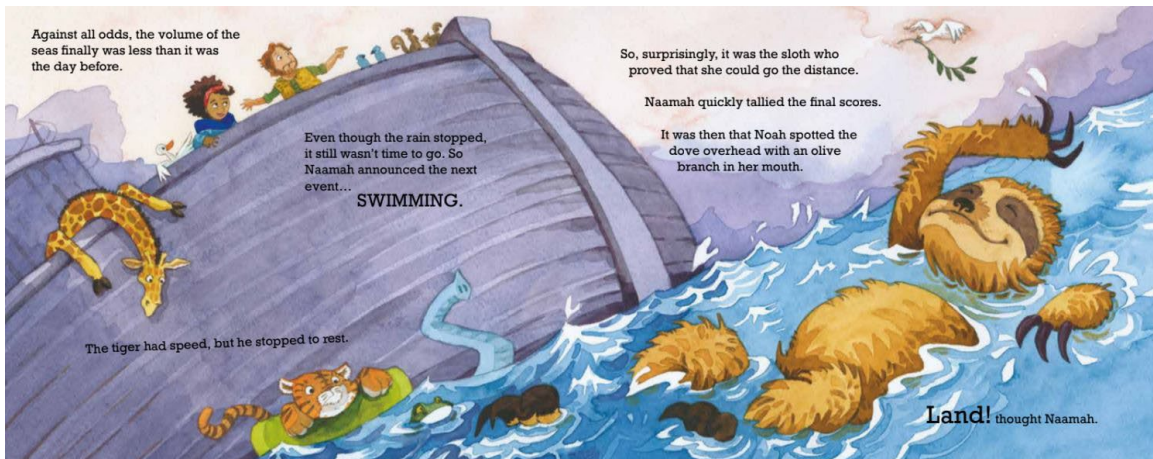
While the traditional answer is 40 days and nights, they actually spent much longer than that.

Reading through the Torah story and calculating (or investigating with Google) can provide some very interesting answers.

NAAMAH AND THE LEGO ARK?

You can give your students the fun challenge of building their own ark out of Legos (or another building material).

Since COUNTING ON NAAMAH has such a strong emphasis on math and engineering, you can challenge students who want to build their own ark to scale (and perhaps even include blueprints to scale on graph paper!).



HOW MANY ANIMALS WERE ON THE ARK?

Another math topic that could be interesting to discuss with students is how many of each kind of animal were actually on the ark.

Again, you can go back to an English translation of the Torah text of Noah for details, but the most interesting part is that not all animals went on two by two (despite the songs we like to sing!).

For kosher animals, there were 14- 7 female and 7 male.

This can lead to some interesting math problems for older kids as they figure out which animals were kosher and which weren't and how many total animals might have been on the ark.