

'A Visit to Eli's Home'

Begin by recalling what Eli and Muireann saw when they went to Salma's house: her mum and gran wearing the hijab, and the way the family prayed '*Bismillah*'. Tell the children that you will now tell them what happened when the children went to Eli's home.

A Visit to Eli's Home



The next day Salma's Mum collected Muireann from her apartment block and dropped both children off at Eli's house.

The two girls went up to the door, rang the doorbell and waited for a reply. Nobody came. They rang again, but still no reply. 'Let's give it one last chance,' said Muireann, as she pushed the doorbell. Still, there was no reply. Then they noticed the knocker on the door, so they banged that loudly. Almost immediately, Eli answered the door.

'Finally, you're here!' said Eli, smiling.

'Why didn't you answer the doorbell?' asked Muireann.

'The doorbell? What doorbell? We don't have a doorbell!' said Eli.

'Yes you do, there it is! And we rang it three times!' said Salma.

Eli laughed. 'That's not a doorbell! That's a *Mezuzah*!'

'Oh' said the girls as they blushed. They hadn't a clue what a *Mezuzah* was but they were too embarrassed to ask.

Eli brought the girls inside to the kitchen and his mum and dad welcomed them to their home.



Then they went out to the garden. The first thing the girls spotted was the kennel and curled up inside the kennel was the most beautiful puppy you

could imagine. Her name was DD. When she heard the sound of the children DD ran from her bed and jumped excitedly around the garden.

'So why did you call the puppy DD?' asked Salma. Eli ran back into the house and emerged with a photo album.



He pointed to a photograph of two children.

'David and Dina, my cousins in Galway,' he said. Muireann and Salma stared at him

blankly.

'David and Dina... D and D ... DD! Ah, now I get it!' said Salma.

'What are you wearing on your head in this photograph, Eli?' asked Muireann, pointing to another photograph on the same page. Eli explained that it was a *kippah* which is a cap that the men in his family sometimes wear. Eli pointed out that his Dad, his uncle and David were all wearing kippahs too.

Then Muireann remembered what happened at the door when they had arrived.



'Eli,' she asked.

'What's a *Mezuzah*?'

'The *Mezuzah* is like a little box which holds a prayer called the *Shema*.'

Eli answered. It's the very first prayer that I learned. It goes like this:

'Israel, remember this! The Lord – and Lord alone – is our God. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength'.'

Just then, Eli's parents called the children to come in for lunch. Before they ate, Eli's dad said a prayer over the food. It started, '*Baruch atah adoni elhoenu*'.* After the meal was eaten, the children went back into the garden to play with DD.

Having read the story, check for understanding using questions such as, 'What happened at the front door when the girls arrived at Eli's house?' Then dig deeper using these or similar questions:

- What is the name of the cap that Eli and the men in his family wear? Do you know anyone who wears a *kippah*?

- Eli said that the *Shema* was the very first prayer that he learned. What was the first prayer that you learned? Who taught it to you?
- Where was the *Mezuzah* hung? Do you have any objects hanging in your home to remind you and your family about God? Tell us about them.