**Skills this book supports:**
- Relating the story to children's own experiences
- Sequencing & follow up activities
- Reading with expression & enthusiasm
- Developing knowledge about the world
- Asking good questions
- Reading pattern books
- Following children's lead–interests
- Making actions, rhythm, & rhyme

**Something From Nothing** is adapted from an old Jewish folktale. It has wonderful illustrations, including a separate story with little mice underneath. This is a classic “Pattern Book”, and your children will be chiming in with you in no time! This book presents several opportunities to learn something about another culture.

And if you want more ideas, read below:

1. Look at the front cover. Talk about grandfathers, or what is around the grandfather’s neck (show them a measuring tape if you have one handy). You could also talk about cultural customs like the Jewish kippah (or yarmulke, or kappel, or skull cap) that males (and sometimes females) wear on their heads. In some Jewish cultures, a man covers his head all of the time (“Let’s see if all of the males cover their heads all of the time in *this* book!”), and in other cultures, he only wears a kippah during special ceremonies. They can be made from any material. Look at all of the brightly coloured kippot in this picture:

   ![Kippot](image)

   This book presents the perfect opportunity to look up something online to find out more information about different people, places, or things in our world. Remember that knowledge brings pleasure, and eases fear. You may also want to teach your children not to believe everything that they see or read online, on TV, or in the media.

   *Point out the symbol on the cover and mention that this book won an award.

2. Read the title page inside and comment on the title – “What? How can you make something from nothing? Do you know what nothing is?” (Cup your hands together and ask your children what you are holding). Mention the author/illustrator (Phoebe Gilman is both the author and illustrator, and she is Canadian).

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Look for this and other Literacy Tips at [www.les.ca](http://www.les.ca) (click on Early Literacy Specialist)
3. Comment on this picture. “It looks like this grandfather is sewing something. Does your grandfather sew? Ooohh! What do you see here at the very bottom of this page?” Talk about how the material is falling through the cracks in the floor.

4. On page 2 and 3, read with expression and enthusiasm in your voice. Make your voice go up and down in tone and get a rhythm going. Read slowly. Ask: “Do you have something that you love as much as Joseph loves his blanket?” (a soother, a stuffed animal, etc.). Comment on what the mice are doing at the bottom of the page. And **WAIT for them to answer!** It takes children **time** to think about what they want to say.

5. On page 4 and 5, when it says ‘took the blanket and turned it ‘round and ‘round’, pretend to turn a blanket ‘round and ‘round in the air. When it says ‘snip, snip, snip’, pretend to ‘snip, snip, snip’ in the air with your fingers. When the needle flies ‘in and out and in and out’, pretend to make a needle go up and down with your thumb and finger. On the last line, really make your voice hang on the word ‘make’ (i.e.: maaaaaaaaake…). Talk about the house that Joseph lives in and who lives there. Talk about what his parents are doing and about what the mice are doing. Ask them if Joseph’s house looks like their house.

6. Comment on how talented Joseph’s grandfather is to make a coat for Joseph out of the material from his old worn out blanket. Ask your children how they think Joseph feels (happy, grateful). Uh oh! Ask your children what they think Joseph will do now that his jacket is worn out. Remember the mice!

7. On page 8 & 9, repeat the same actions as above. Repeat the last word ‘make’ as above. Ask: “What do you think Joseph’s grandfather makes out of the coat?” Comment on the pictures (what is his father giving his mother? Why? What is his grandmother knitting? Why? What is happening with the mice? Wow! Look at the geese running down the street. Do you have geese running down your street?

8. On page 10 & 11, continue with the same enthusiastic expression in your voice. Ask: “How do you think Joseph is feeling now?” and “What do you think he’ll do?”

9. On page 12 & 13, repeat the same actions, and ask what they think his grandfather will make from the vest. There is SO much to talk about in this picture! Keep relating this to your children’s lives.

10. On page 14 & 15, repeat the same strategies as above, and talk about what is the same and what is different in their lives. Remember the little mice!

11. On page 16-25, repeat as above. Talk about Joseph’s feelings, and look carefully at the mice!

12. On the last three pages, talk about Joseph’s sad feelings, and how he writes a story to help him with his feelings, & how he DID make **something from nothing**!