

"Hanukkah Celebration"

The Festival of Lights

December 12

LESSON INTENTION

Hanukkah means "dedication" so today we intend to re-dedicate ourselves to the expressing our Christ light in the highest way possible.

History

Hanukkah, which means "dedication" and is also referred to as "The Festival of Lights", is a Jewish festival which begins on the Hebrew date of the 25th of Kislev and lasts eight days, through the 2nd of Tevet. This year, that corresponds to November 30th through December 7th. Hannukah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees (led by Judah) over the Hellenistic Syrians in a revolt that took place around 165 BCE.

The victory in itself was considered a miracle, but Jewish legend gives an additional explanation for Hanukkah rituals, explained below. Once the Temple Mount in Jerusalem had been reclaimed, the Temple had to be rededicated. According to legend, only one jar of sacramental oil was found, enough for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, thus the eight days of Hanukkah.

It is traditional to eat foods fried in oil during Hanukkah. Some common foods are potato latkes and "sufganiot" (jelly doughnuts).

נס גדול היה פה

Another tradition is to play the "dreidel" game. A dreidel (or "sivivon") is a four-sided

top. On each side is a different Hebrew letter: נ (nun), ג (gimel), ה (heh) and פ (peh), corresponding to the words in the sentence "nes gadol haya po" ("A great miracle happened here"). Of course, the miracle happened in Israel, so outside of

Israel, the letter פ (peh) is replaced by ש (shin) for "nes gadol haya sham" ("A great miracle happened there"). The dreidel is used for a gambling game in which each letter represents a different amount of money (or whatever...) won or lost.

Another common Hanukkah practice is giving gifts or "gelt" (money) to children. In Hebrew, "gelt" is called "d'mei Hanukkah".

In Israel, Hanukkah is a very festive time. Schools are out for a week and there are lots of parties and special events around the country. We sing Hanukkah songs (like the one playing in the background), eat lots of fattening food and have lots of fun!

The Menorah

On each night of Hanukkah, the menorah is lit to commemorate a miracle which occurred after the Jews proclaimed victory over the Syrian armies in 165 B.C.E. When Jews came to rededicate the Temple—which had been defiled by the Syrians—they found only one small flask of oil with which to light the menorah. This flask contained only enough oil for one day, yet the lamp burned for eight days (by which time a fresh supply of oil was obtained).

On the first night of Hanukkah, one light is lit. On each successive night a light is added until the eighth night, when all the lights are lit. The addition of light recalls the greatness and growth of the miracle. Candles are placed in the menorah from right to left, but lit from left to right. The highest candle, known as the Shamash or "servant", is used to light the other candles. Blessings are recited each night before the lights are kindled.

- In ancient times, olive oil was used in Hanukkah menorahs. Over time, colorful candles were substituted.
- In Israel, the Hanukkah menorah is called the Hanukiyah
- Menorahs come in all shapes and sizes. The only requirement is that the flames are separated enough so that they will not look too big and resemble a pagan bonfire.
- Ancient menorahs were made of clay. They consisted of small, pearl shaped vessels, each with its own wick, which were arranged side-by-side.
- Today's menorah, which stands on a base from which the branches sprout, resembles the holy Temple's menorah and started to appear towards the end of the Middle Ages.

How to Light a Menorah

1. WHAT TO LIGHT: Buy or make a Chanukah Menorah. The Menorah should have eight candle holders in a row and a separate candle holder for the "Shamash." The Shamash candle is used to light the other eight candles since it is forbidden to use the Chanukah lights for any purpose other than viewing.

2. WHERE TO LIGHT: To best publicize the miracle, the Menorah is ideally lit outside the doorway of your house, on the left side when entering. If this is not practical, then the Menorah should be lit in a window facing the public thoroughfare. If the Menorah cannot be lit by the window, it may be lit inside the house on a table, which at least fulfills the mitzvah of "publicizing the miracle" for members of the household.

3. WHEN TO LIGHT: The Menorah should preferably be lit immediately at nightfall. If necessary, however, the Menorah can be lit late into the night. It is best to wait until all members of the household are present to light the Menorah. The Menorah should remain lit for at least 30 minutes after nightfall. On Friday afternoon, the Menorah should be lit before sundown.

4. HOW TO LIGHT ON THE FIRST NIGHT: On the first night, place one candle in the Menorah's far right (as you face the Menorah) candle holder. Another candle is placed for the Shamash (helper candle). Say the below blessings and then light the candle using the Shamash candle.

5. FIRST BLESSING TO RECITE: Borukh Ato Adoynoy Eloyheynu Melekh Ho-oylom Asher Kiddeshonu Be-mitsvoysov Ve-tsivonu Lehadlik Neyr Shel khanuko. Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah.

6. SECOND BLESSING TO RECITE: Borukh Ato Adoynoy Eloyheynu Melekh Ho-oylom She-oso Nissim La-avoseynu Ba-yyomim Ho-heym Ba-zzman Ha-zze. Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season.

7. THIRD BLESSING TO RECITE (ONLY ON THE FIRST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH): Borukh Ato Adoynoy Eloyheynu Melekh Ho-oylom She-hekheyonu Ve-kiymonu Ve-higgi'onu La-zzman Ha-zze. Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive, and has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this time.

8. HOW TO LIGHT ON THE SECOND THROUGH EIGHTH NIGHT: The second night, place two candles in the Menorah's far right (as you face the Menorah) candle holders. Another candle is placed for the Shamash (helper candle). Say the first two blessings above and then light the candles using the Shamash candle. Light the left-most candle first and then light in order, from left to right. Follow this procedure for each night of Hanukkah.

Tips:

- ♥ Allow each child to light their own Chanukah menorah; even three and four-year-olds can light candles with help. Each child loves to light their own Menorah. Line the table on which the menorahs stand with aluminum foil. It is really beautiful to have a group of Menorahs all lit together, especially on the eighth night.
- ♥ Sing Maoz Tzur and other Chanukah songs together after lighting the Menorah.
- ♥ Play the dreidel game together after lighting the Menorah.
- ♥ Eat Hanukkah food, like latkas and donuts, together after lighting the Menorah.
- ♥ Invite relatives and friends to light the Menorah with you, and celebrate together with Hanukkah songs, games and food.

The Celebration

Share the Story

Unless you are Jewish yourself, what is being celebrated during Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, may be a bit of a mystery.

This eight-day observance recounts a miracle. It took place during the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem after the Jews kicked out an occupying army from the city in 165 BC.

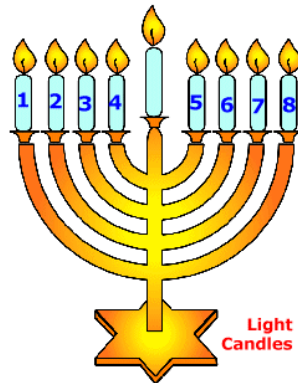
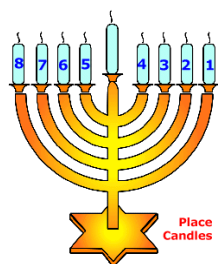
One of the first things the Jews wanted to do was to purify and restore the temple. There was a snag in the proceedings, however. They discovered they had very little oil to light the Menorah, the candelabrum that stood in the temple. The relighting of the Menorah, which traditionally burned day and night fueled by a special oil, was a critical part of the rededication.

Searching the temple, they could find only one flagon of pure oil, barely enough to keep the Menorah lit for one evening.

Ceremonial laws specified that only olive oil of the very highest quality be used. Its purity was vital.

The dedication had to go forward. The Jews knew that they had no option other than to trust in God and hope for the best. At the end of that first day, when their supply should have been exhausted, the Menorah did not go out. It kept burning, on and on, and that little amount of oil kept the Menorah lit, not just for one evening, but for all eight nights until new oil fit for use in the temple was ready.

Naturally, the Jews were astonished, and took it as a sign that God was with them. The lighting of the Menorah in Jewish homes during the eight nights of Hanukkah commemorates this miracle of lights!



Lighting the Candles

1. Gather together your family and anyone else who happens to be home.
2. Light the Shamash candle and hold it in your right hand (that's your left hand for you lefties out there).
3. While standing, recite the following two blessings:
Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light.

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

On the first night of Chanukah (or if for some reason you didn't light the Menorah on

the first night, then the first time you light the Menorah), you should add the following blessing:

Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

4. Kindle the candles and place the Shamash candle back in its place. Many people light the first candle and then allow their children to light the remaining ones. (Still others will purchase Menorahs for their children, so they can light their own Menorah!)

5. Say (or sing) the Haneirot Halalu and/or Maoz Tzur.

6. It is customary to linger around the candles for a half hour (aside for Friday afternoon when everyone runs to the Synagogue for the Kabbalat **Shabbat** services). This is the perfect time to share some Chanukah stories with your family, enjoy a dreidel game and indulge in some hot latkes!

Creative Expression

The Dreidel Game

Materials: Dreidels and candy pieces.

The dreidel is a four-sided spinning top with a Hebrew letter inscribed on each side. In America the letters stand for "A Great Miracle Happened There". In Israel the letters mean "A Miracle Happened Here".

Here's How to play:

1. All players get an equal amount of pennies, chocolate coins (gelt), candies, raisins, or tokens.
2. All players put one token in the pot in the center.
3. The dreidel is a four sided spinning top with a different Hebrew letter on each side. Players take turns spinning the dreidel.
4. The player acts according to the letter which is facing up when the dreidel stops spinning.

5.  **nun:** player does nothing

6.  **gimel:** player takes all the tokens in the pot

7.  **hay:** player takes half of the tokens in the pot

8.  **shin:** player must put one token into the pot

9. The winner is the one with the most tokens.

Tips:

1. Remember that this 2000+ year old game was originally a way for Jews to hide their studying at a time when Torah study was prohibited. Remind your children that Chanukah is a celebration of religious freedom.
2. Include all family members. Two year olds and grandparents can spin and yell "gimel, gimel, gimel."
3. Video the game. This is an opportunity to capture on film the whole family sharing a special time together.

Food

Low-Fat Potato Latkas

** From "The (Almost) No-Fat Holiday Cookbook" by Bryan Clark Gorgon, The Book Publishing Company, 1995.*

9 medium russet potatoes -- peeled and grated
1 large onion -- peeled and grated
3/4 cup whole wheat flour
1/3 cup nutritional yeast
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon white pepper

Mix the onion and potato together well in a large bowl. Add the other ingredients and mix well. Cook latkas on a large, heavy non-stick or lightly oiled skillet or on a non-stick, electric pancake griddle. Place 1/4 cup of the potato mixture for each latka onto the preheated griddle or skillet.

Flatten into thin pancakes with a spatula. Cover them with lids or foil (or an inverted cookie sheet over the griddle) and cook until the bottoms are golden brown. Flip them over and cook, uncovered, until the second side is golden brown.

Serve hot with applesauce and tofu sour cream.

Chana Shimoni's Israeli Soofganiot

25 grams yeast	3 Tablespoons sugar
1 Tablespoon sugar	2 egg yolks
1 Tablespoon water	1 1/4 cups water and milk mixed
1 Tablespoon flour	together or all water (room
3 cups flour	temperature)
50 grams melted margarine	oil
dash salt	powdered sugar

Making the Dough:

Combine yeast, 1 T sugar, 1T water and 1 T flour in a bowl. Mix well, cover, and wait until it rises. In another bowl, mix flour, melted margarine, salt, sugar and egg yolks. Add yeast mixture to this and mix. Slowly add water/milk while stirring. When batter is smooth, cover the bowl with a towel and let it sit and rise.

Making the Doughnuts:

After the batter has risen, pour it onto a floured surface and roll it out. Use a glass with a small opening to cut out circles of the dough. Place a drop of jelly in the middle of each circle, and then cover with another circle of dough. Make sure that 2 circles attach well to form a closed ball with jelly in the middle. Cover the doughnuts with a towel and let rise.

Frying the Doughnuts:

Heat oil in a deep pot until very hot. Drop the doughnuts into the oil and fry on both sides until brown. Remove with a slotted spoon and sprinkle with powdered sugar.
Fresh is Best:

The soofganiot are only good fresh. After you make the dough, only fry a few at a time. Store the rest of the dough in the refrigerator.

Hanukkah Candy Dreidel

Source: The Children's Jewish Holiday Kitchen, Authored by Joan Nathan. Copyright by Schocken Books Inc.
Children will love to make their own edible dreidels.

1. Thread the toothpick through the marshmallow.
2. Add a Hershey's chocolate kiss to the end.
3. Spin and eat!

*A small piece from a licorice string can be used to make this totally edible and eliminate any hazards from the toothpick for little children.

Kugel

Sugar and spice noodle pudding

Try this easy recipe for a great Hanukkah treat. If you prepare the ingredients ahead of time it can be easily made as part of the lesson.

4 oz Medium egg noodles	2 T. Butter, melted	¼ cup raisins	1 ½ T. bread crumbs
2 eggs, beaten	1 apple grated	1/3 cup sugar	
		½ t. Cinnamon	

Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Boil the noodles in salted water for 8 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile, lightly grease six 8 oz. ramekins.

In a large bowl, mix the drained noodles, beaten eggs, melted butter, grated apple, raisins, sugar, and cinnamon until well combined.

Spoon the mixture into the ramekins, then sprinkle the bread crumbs on top.

Bake the noodles for 12 to 15 minutes, until they are golden brown and bubbling.