

# Lighting the Hanukkah Candles



**1** Once the sun has set (unless it's Friday), light the shamash first. The shamash is what you will be using to light the other candles, so you should never light the other candles before it.

Say the first blessing over the candles (recited on each night of Hanukkah).

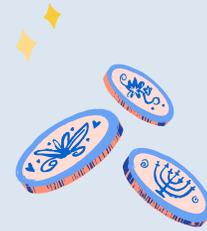
*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam,  
asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.*

Blessed are You, O Lord Our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to kindle the lights of Chanukah.

**3** Recite the second blessing (recited each night of Hanukkah).

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam,  
she'asah nisim l'avoteinu, b'yamim haheim bazman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe,  
Who made miracles for our forefathers in those days at this time.



On the first night, say the Shehecheyanu

(special blessing for the first time ever or that year that you do a specific ritual).

*Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam, shehekheyanu, v'kiyamanu vehegianu lazman hazeh.*

Blessed are You, O Lord Our God, Ruler of the Universe,  
who has kept us alive, sustained us and brought us to this season.

**5** Use the shamash to light the candle/s, going from left to right depending on the night. In other words, light the newest candle first, then light the preceding candles.

Then place the shamash back into the menorah and you're all set! You can place your menorah in a window or another part of your house.





# Playing Dreidel



נ      ג      ה      ש  
nun    gimel    hei    shin

A dreidel is marked with four Hebrew letters: Nun, Gimel, Hei and Shin. These letters stand for the Hebrew phrase "Nes Gadol Hayah Sham", a great miracle happened there, referring to the miracle of the oil. The letters also stand for the Yiddish words nit (nothing), gantz (all), halb (half) and shtell (put), which are the rules of the game!

There are some variations in the way people play the game,  
but here's the way we learned it!

**1** Everyone puts in one coin into the center pot.

Take turns spinning the dreidel. If it's your turn and your dreidel spin lands on **Nun**, nothing happens; if it lands on **Gimel** (or, as we called it as kids, "gimme!"), you get the whole pot; on **Hei**, you get half of the pot; and on **Shin**, you put one coin in.

**3** If the pot becomes empty, everybody puts one in. Keep playing until one person has everything. Then redivide it (and play again) ... because nobody likes a poor winner!



By Dr. Sharon Pollin, find resources, games and more at [shaarietorah.org/hanukkah](http://shaarietorah.org/hanukkah)





# 8 nights, 8 actions



Hanukkah – what’s not to love? And, what if our connection and love grew even more. Congregation Shaarie Torah wants to take Hanukkah to the next level. So, we decided to create lists of actions that could be performed on each night in addition the lighting of the candles and singing songs. We hope you will consider adopting some (or all) of these activities to help make your Hanukkah even better.

We hope you'll join us for our 8 nights of lighting the candles on zoom with a different host from our community each night. To find zoom links and information, visit [shaarietorah.org/hanukkah](https://shaarietorah.org/hanukkah).

## 1st NIGHT: ACTION #1

## THE OIL MIRACLE

According to the Hanukkah story, a small amount of oil lasted eight days, a miracle. Talk about ways we can make sure we are doing our part to ensure that our world’s limited resources last?

Think about ways in which your family can “go green.”

Resources for tools and ideas: i. [coastalrootsfarm.org/tools](https://coastalrootsfarm.org/tools)

ii. [hazon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Greening-Hanukkah-2020-Final-1.pdf](https://hazon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Greening-Hanukkah-2020-Final-1.pdf)

## 2nd NIGHT: ACTION #2

## SHARING STORIES

Read a Hanukkah story aloud each night. You may want to check out **The Spotted Pony**, by Eric A. Kimmel, a wonderful collection of Jewish folk tales to read aloud each night of Hanukkah. Some are funny, some are sad, and all of them appeal to both kids and adults. Also, consider donating children’s books to a local hospital or donate books of all ages to a local homeless shelter. Check out Positive Charge PDX's Compassion is Lit Project: [positivechargepdx.org/compassion-is-lit](https://positivechargepdx.org/compassion-is-lit)

## 3rd NIGHT: ACTION #3

## WHAT IS POVERTY?

Devote one night of Hanukkah to learning about the problem of poverty. Donate the value of the gifts (or the gifts themselves) that you would otherwise exchange on that night to organizations that assist the poor. Think about supporting of Rose Haven – a NW Portland neighbor who operates a day shelter for women and children. Find out more on their website: [rosehaven.org/helping/donate-supplies](https://rosehaven.org/helping/donate-supplies)



# 8 nights, 8 actions



## 4th NIGHT: ACTION #4

## ISRAEL FROM ALL SIDES

Everyone brings a clipping, item or idea about the modern Maccabees and the state of Israel. The clippings could be about both amazing and challenging things that are going on in Israel or about Israel. Let each person present what they brought. Try the Jerusalem post for kids: [jpost.com/tags/children](http://jpost.com/tags/children)

## 5th NIGHT: ACTION #5

## A TZEDAKAH PLAN

Talk about how and why you give. You might open all of the tzedakah boxes in the house and count the money. Have every person suggest a cause they believe needs funding and then decide which important causes to send the money to. You might also talk about your annual giving and share why you give where you do. And, you might begin a conversation about planned giving ensuring that your values and priorities continue on in perpetuity. Check out these two resources:  
i. [myjewishlearning.com/article/tzedakah-for-kids](http://myjewishlearning.com/article/tzedakah-for-kids) ii. [ojcf.org/create-a-jewish-legacy/life-legacy](http://ojcf.org/create-a-jewish-legacy/life-legacy)

## 6th NIGHT: ACTION #6

## SHABBAT SHALOM

Concentrate on enjoying the holiday's more traditional pleasures. Enjoy a great meal, tell stories, and play games. \*Remember to light Hanukkah Candles before your Shabbat Candles.\*

## 7th NIGHT: ACTION #7

## HANUKKAH PARTY TIME

Join us for a fun and lively night of all things Hanukkah! We'll light candles, make havdallah, sing songs, spin dreidels, eat latkes, and wear our favorite silly Hanukkah sweaters. Don't forget we'll light the Havdallah Candle before the Hanukkah candles! Register at [shaaritorah.org/hanukkah](http://shaaritorah.org/hanukkah)

## 8th NIGHT: ACTION #8

## SET SOME GOALS

Think of something you can do to become the best possible version of yourself, and then create a personal improvement goal. Make a copy and place it where you can see it. Take the original piece of paper, place it with/under your hanukkiah (menorah), read it next Hanukkah, and evaluate your progress. Check out these activities: [biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/5-fun-goal-setting-activities-children](http://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/5-fun-goal-setting-activities-children)

# a little drash

## What is this great miracle?



Each night as we light the Hanukkah candles, we say a blessing thanking God for the great miracles done for our ancestors – *she'asah nisim lavoteynu*– in those days at this time. We spin the dreidel, with its letters nun, gimel, hey and shin – a great miracle happened there. At every service during Hanukkah, we add the paragraph of Al Hanisim, for the miracles.

What is this great miracle? Any Jewish child will be able to tell the Talmudic story of the clean-up of the desecrated Temple, and the lighting of the menorah with only enough kosher oil to last for one day, and how God made a miracle, and the oil burned for eight days. However, the original sources do not mention anything about oil. The military victory of the Maccabees is discussed, along with a late celebration of the festival – Sukkot. There is no story of God miraculously changing the laws of nature by making the oil last much longer than it should have.

Hanukkah is a post Written-Torah festival. Hanukkah took place toward the end of the second Temple period and is unique in terms of the issues raised by diaspora as well as Oral Law. The first time the Talmud discusses the idea of a Rabbinic mitzvah is on the subject of making the b'rachot over the Hanukkah candles! It is the first mitzvah that is not a part of the written Torah. In the Talmud, only three lines are devoted to the military events of Hanukkah, while three pages detail when, where and how the Hanukkah lights should be lit. So, originally, the Hanukkah story was about totally natural events... perhaps unlikely, but natural. There was no story of God changing the laws of nature to make the oil burn longer than would be expected.

Does the holiday of Hanukkah invite us to reconsider our understanding of miracles, as well as the laws of nature, in a slightly different way? The Hebrew word *nes*, in addition to being translated as miracle, also means banner. A banner is something that catches our attention. It waves aloft in the breeze. It is designed to be noticed. Perhaps a miracle is something that can and does happen within the context of natural order. Perhaps it is also something in which we may find the hand of God, waving that banner. The Baal Shem Tov taught, “The world is full of wonder and miracles, but we take our hands, and cover our eyes and see nothing.” This Hanukkah, let us uncover our eyes and pay attention to the many miraculous banners waving before us. This Hanukkah teaches, may we look out at the world and see the hand of God. This Hanukkah, may we be able to say, “There are great miracles happening here!”

**Chag Chanukah Sameach – Wishing you and yours a very Happy Hanukkah!**

Dr. Sharon Pollin, *Education Director, Congregation Shaarie Torah*





## Fun for you and your family

### OUR RABBIS TEACH: A LITTLE LIGHT DISPELS MUCH DARKNESS

In Hebrew, Hanukkah means “rededication,” and the holiday commemorates the military victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian armies in 165 BCE and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem. Beginning in 167 BCE, the Jews of Judea rose up in revolt against the oppression of King Antiochus IV Epiphanes of the Seleucid Empire. The military leader of the first phase of the revolt was Judah the Maccabee, the eldest son of the priest Mattityahu (Mattathias). In the autumn of 164, Judah and his followers were able to capture the Temple in Jerusalem, which had been turned into a pagan shrine. They cleansed and rededicated it, and observed in an eight-day celebration patterned on Sukkot. Chanukah is also known as the Festival of Lights. Tradition has us placing the menorah in the window so that passersby may view the lights and be reminded of the miracles that took place so long ago.

### CHANUKAH FAMILY STORY TIME

There are soooo many wonderful Chanukah stories, ancient to modern and everything in between.  
Check out this list from Goodreads for an excellent selection!

[goodreads.com/list/show/28314.Picture\\_Books\\_for\\_Hanukkah\\_Chanukah](https://www.goodreads.com/list/show/28314.Picture_Books_for_Hanukkah_Chanukah)

#### YUMMY FOODS!

It is traditional to eat fried foods on Chanukkah because of the significance of oil to the holiday. Among Ashkenazic Jews, this usually includes Latkes (pronounced "lot-kuhs" or "lot-keys") depending on where your grandmother comes from. Sephardic Jews traditionally eat Sufganiot, jelly-filled donuts fried in oil.  
Also, yummy!!

#### NEED RECIPES?

Here are 54 from The Food Network to try for your celebrations!

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/holidays/holiday-central-hanukkah/favorite-hanukkah-recipes>