



Happy Hanukkah!

*Materials: candle, long reach barrel lighter

Cooler weather and longer nights signals wintertime and INEVITABLE thoughts of the holidays! Special foods, songs, gifts, and decorations are familiar holiday staples. But at the heart of the holidays lies the TRADITIONS and CUSTOMS we observe some of which are steeped in a rich and ancient history. HANUKKAH also known as “the festival of lights” is a Jewish celebration observed over eight days and celebrated with nightly prayers and a lighting of the MENORAH (i.e. CANDELABRA). And let’s not forget the yummy foods and sweets, but we’ll learn more about that later!



Fully lit menorah *Michele Westmorland*

Spell: TRADITIONS

Spell: ANCIENT

Spell: SWEETS

What Jewish celebration are we talking about today? HANUKKAH

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Hanukkah is also known as what? THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

A menorah is also known as a _____? CANDELABRA

Name one holiday staple that was mentioned. SPECIAL FOODS/SONGS/GIFTS/DECORATIONS

Over how many days is Hanukkah observed? 8

The nightly celebration includes doing what? SAYING PRAYERS AND LIGHTING A MENORAH

What's a holiday staple that you particularly enjoy?

The History of Hanukkah

In Hebrew, Hanukkah means “DEDICATION” and it begins on the 25th of KISLEV which on the Hebrew calendar happens in November or December. To learn more about Hanukkah we must go back thousands of years in Jewish history to some rather turbulent times. Around 200 BCE JUDEA, also known as the Land of ISRAEL, was under the control of a king named ANTIOCHUS III, the SELEUCID king (Seleucid meaning a member from the Greek dynasty ruling SYRIA at that time.) Now this particular king allowed the Jewish people to practice their religion, but his son, Antiochus IV proved not to be as BENEVOLENT.

Spell: HEBREW

Spell: CALENDAR

Spell: HISTORY

The word Hanukkah in Hebrew means what? DEDICATION

Judea is also known as the Land of _____? ISRAEL

What was the name of the first king who was in control of Israel? ANTIOCHUS III (THE THIRD)

Around what year are we talking about here? 200 BCE

What did Antiochus III allow? ALLOWED JEWISH PEOPLE TO PRACTICE THEIR RELIGION

Seleucid refers to what? A GREEK DYNASTY RULING SYRIA

In your own words, what does benevolent mean? KIND/COMPASSIONATE/TOLERANT

VAKT: Look at the map below. Point to Israel.

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PERSECUTION and religious oppression followed under the REIGN of Antiochus IV. According to ancient sources, he ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods, essentially outlawing their religion, and desecrated (i.e. violated, destroyed) the city’s holy TEMPLE by erecting an altar to ZEUS and sacrificing pigs within its sacred walls. Thousands were massacred during his reign. But these dark and brutal times were not to last as a rebellion broke out led by a Jewish priest named MATTATHIAS and his five sons in what would be known as the MACCABEAN REVOLT.

Spell: WORSHIP

Spell: RELIGION

Spell: ERECTING

What gods did Antiochus IV order the Jews to worship? GREEK

Antiochus IV desecrated the city’s holy temple by erecting an altar to who? ZEUS

The rebellion led by Mattathias would be known as. THE MACCABEAN REVOLT

What does it mean to oppress? TO KEEP SOMEONE INFERIOR OR TO MAKE THEM SUBSERVIENT

What is another word for desecrated? VIOLATED or DESTROYED

Historically, what other group or people have been oppressed and why?

In 166 B.C., Mattathias died and so his son JUDAH MACCABEE also known as “the Hammer” took charge of the small band of poorly armed but faithful Jews. Within two years and against UNIMAGINABLE odds, the Jews defeated one of the mightiest armies at that time and drove the SYRIAN-GREEK oppressors out of the city of JERUSALEM. Hailed as a “miraculous victory” Judah went on to lead his followers to reclaim the holy temple in Jerusalem by rebuilding the altar and lighting its menorah. The menorah was a gold candelabrum with seven branches representing KNOWLEDGE and CREATION, and was supposed to be kept lit.

Spell: FAITHFUL

Spell: ARMIES

Spell: CITY

Judah Maccabee was also known as. THE HAMMER

He defeated the Syrian-Greek oppressors and drove them out of which city? JERUSALEM

What precious metal was the holy temple’s candelabrum made from? GOLD

How many branches does the gold candelabrum have? 7

What do the seven branches represent? KNOWLEDGE and CREATION

Why was the Maccabean Revolt considered miraculous?

The Hanukkah “Miracle”

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When the Maccabees were ready to light the menorah, they found only one small flask of OLIVE OIL. We can imagine the worry that must have ENSUED because this was only enough oil to keep the menorah burning for a single day. But regardless, the Maccabees went ahead and lit the menorah and to their astonishment, it continued to burn for the next EIGHT nights! This MIRACULOUS event prompted the yearly festival which is still COMMEMORATED thousands of years later by lighting a menorah for the eight days of Hanukkah.

Spell: LIGHT

Spell: MIRACULOUS

Spell: FLASK

The Maccabees wanted to light the _____? MENORAH

What kind of oil was found in the flask? OLIVE

What is another word for miraculous? AMAZING/ASTONISHING/EXTRAORDINARY

How does lighting the menorah during Hanukkah commemorate the miraculous event that took place thousands of years ago?

How many nights did the menorah end up burning for? 8

What is something that has happened recently that you would like to commemorate and why?

Hanukkah Traditions

Each holiday night after SUNDOWN, a candle is added to the menorah and lit with the ninth candle called the SHAMASH or “helper.” Blessings are said during this ritual and the menorah is typically displayed in a window as a reminder to others passing by of the MIRACLE that occurred so many years ago. Along with observing traditions, celebrations are in order and what better way to celebrate than by eating delicious foods such as LATKES (i.e. potato pancakes) and sweet jam-filled donuts called a SUFGANIYOT which are especially popular! Playing DREIDEL, a four-sided spinning top game which also has ancient roots and exchanging gifts are also popular customs!



[Sufganiyot \(Jelly Donuts\) | Recipes | Kosher.com](#)

Spell: SUNDOWN

Spell: WINDOW

Spell: RITUAL

What is added to the menorah each holiday night after sundown? A CANDLE

The ninth candle or Shamash is also known as the _____? HELPER

A SUFGANIYOT is a jam-filled what _____? DONUT

Name one traditional food eaten around Hanukkah. LATKES/POTATO PANCAKES/SUFGANIYOTS/DONUTS

Why is the menorah placed in a window? TO REMIND OTHERS OF THE MIRACLE THAT HAPPENED LONG AGO

Is there a particular food that you like to eat during the holidays?

VAKT: Watch this video of how to light a menorah (2.59). Practice lighting a candle and blowing it out!

[How to Light the Hanukkah Menorah - Bing video](#)

As we approach this EXTRAORDINARY holiday season, it may help to remind ourselves that traditions are much more than just commemorating a significant event. If we pause and really think about it, observing traditions like lighting a

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menorah or putting up decorations BINDS us to one another. Simply knowing that others share in our customs and traditions both warms the heart and UNITES us. This holiday season, take a moment to really think about the traditions you observe and reach out (yes, even VIRTUALLY) to those you care about most and find out how they're choosing to observe this holiday season. Just having a conversation about how or why someone came to observe a particular custom or tradition can bring us much closer together than we may realize!

Spell: SEASON

Spell: OBSERVE

Spell: REMIND

Knowing that others share in our customs and traditions warms the _____?
HEART

What does it mean to commemorate something or someone? TO RECALL OR REMEMBER BY SHOWING RESPECT

What is another word for extraordinary? REMARKABLE/INCREDIBLE

Name another U.S. holiday that commemorates a significant event or people.

VETERANS DAY/MEMORIAL DAY/MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY/INDEPENDENCE DAY

Is there a particular food that you like to eat during the holidays?

VAKT: Watch Adam Sandler's funny twist on traditional holidays songs! (3.30)

[\(7\) Weekend Update: Adam Sandler on Hanukkah - SNL - YouTube](#)

Creative Writing Prompt:

What special traditions do you observe in your home during the holidays?

If you could create a new tradition this holiday season, describe what that might look and with whom you would share it with?

References:

[Hanukkah - HISTORY](#)

[What Is Hanukkah? - Info you need about Chanukah - Chanukah - Hanukkah \(chabad.org\)](#)

[Chanukah / Hanukkah • Torah.org](#)

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[Debbie Spengler](#) finds many of her Glimmers when she's supporting spellers during an S2C session, when beating her family at the board game Clue, & during early morning walks with her dog Luna!

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