

Hanukkah @Home

A Jewish LearningWorks Guide for Families with Young Children



The Jewish LearningWorks @Home Guides are designed to enrich your family's experience of the holidays. They empower parents with stories, rituals, "how to" information, traditions, projects, activities, values, resources and more.

Happy Hanukkah!


JewishLearningWorks

The Hanukkah Story

Hanukkah or *Chanukah*, no matter how you spell it, is a fun and joyous time for children and adults alike! It is a meaningful holiday that celebrates light, miracles, religious freedom, and standing up for one's beliefs.

Over 2,000 years ago, the Jews living in Judea were ruled by a Syrian king named *Antiochus*. He ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods and give up practicing Judaism. He outlawed Jewish traditions such as studying *Torah* and celebrating *Shabbat*. Many Jews were angry because they wanted the freedom to make their own religious choices.

Syrian soldiers went to the village of *Modi'in* and ordered Mattathias, who was the head of the *Hasmonean* family and the *kohen* (priest) of Modi'in, to make sacrifices to the Greek gods. Mattathias refused. He took his five sons and fled to the hills and caves of the Judean wilderness. This family of Hasmoneans became known as the *Maccabees* and they led a revolt against the Syrian Greeks. After Mattathias passed away, his son Judah led the uprising with the help of his brothers and the other Jews who joined their struggle. After three years of fighting, on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of *Kislev* in the year 165 BCE, the Maccabees and their forces drove the Greeks out of Jerusalem.

The Holy Temple was a special place where Jews worshipped. The Greeks had wrecked it badly but the Jews cleaned and restored it to its former beauty. Inside the Holy Temple there was a *menorah* (an oil lamp with seven branches) that always stayed lit, day and night. The soldiers had extinguished the flame and ruined the menorah's precious oil. Only a single flask of pure oil was found, enough to light the menorah for one day. Miraculously, the menorah stayed lit for eight days, enough time for more oil to be made and brought to the Temple.

The holiday of Hanukkah, which comes from the Hebrew word "to dedicate," is a celebration of the miracle of the oil and the rededication of the Holy Temple after the Maccabees' hard won victory.

Pronunciation Guide

Hanukkah: (CHA-new-kuh) begins with the guttural sound made by the Hebrew letter *Chet*, as in *Chutzpah* and *L'Chayim*.

Antiochus: (Anne-Tee-OH-Kus)

Kohen: (Koe-HAYN)

Maccabee: (MAC-Uh-Bee)

Modi'in: (Moe-Dee-EEN)

Menorah: (Meh-NOR-Uh)

Hanukkah's Central Themes

Freedom:

The Hanukkah story demonstrates the importance of standing up for one's right to be different.

The Few over the Many:

Hanukkah celebrates the small band of Jews (who had few weapons and little military training) and their triumph over the mighty Syrian army.

Jewish Identity:

The Hasmoneans and their followers fought to preserve their religious traditions and cherished way of life.



Hanukkah Rituals & Traditions

Lighting a Menorah

Unlike the one in the Holy Temple, we light a menorah (also called a *hanukkiah*) that has nine branches. Eight of them remind us of the miracle of the oil and the ninth is a helper candle, called a *shamash*, that lights the others. It is customary to publicly honor the miracle by placing the menorah near a window so that it can be seen from the street.

On the first night of Hanukkah, we place one candle on the far right side of the menorah. We light the shamash, recite all three blessings, and then light the candle. We add a candle each night and light them from left to right after reciting the first two blessings.

For an animated video demonstrating how to light a menorah, we recommend <http://tinyurl.com/ng6kqcz>.

First Blessing

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Asher Kidshanu b'Mitzvotav v'Tzivanu Lehadlik Ner Shel Chanukah.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
Who makes us holy with Your mitzvot and commands us to light the Hanukkah candles.

Second Blessing

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, שעשה נסים לאבותינו, בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, ShehAsah Nissim la'Avoteinu baYamim haHem baZman haZeh.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, for the miracles
that You performed for our ancestors in those days at this season.

Shehechyanu (1st night only)

ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגשמו לזמן הזה.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Shehecheyanu v'Kiy'manu v'Higi'anu laZman haZeh.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe,
Who has given us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this time.

For audio recordings of the blessings, we recommend:

The first blessing

<http://tinyurl.com/o6nk826>

The second blessing

<http://tinyurl.com/o6tqg7d>

Shehechyanu (1st night only)

<http://tinyurl.com/qc59rqg>



Playing Dreidel

How to Play

All players start with an equal number of game pieces (at least 10). Chocolate coins (called *gelt*), pennies, nuts or any other small objects can be used. Each round of the game begins with every player putting one game piece into the center, “the pot.” Players take turns spinning the dreidel. When it stops spinning, look at the letter facing up and use the key below to complete your turn.

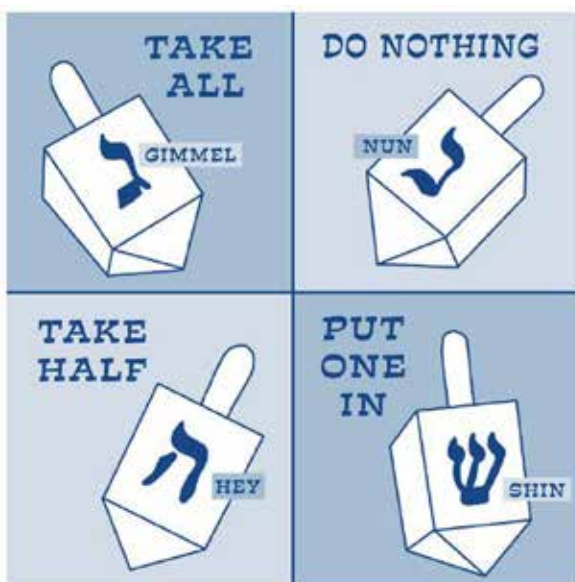
When the pot is empty or has only a single game piece left, every player puts one in the pot. When a player loses all of his/her pieces, that player is “out” for the rest of the game. The last player with game pieces is the winner. If the game needs to end before that happens, the player with the most pieces is the winner.

Check out game instructions in this Sesame Street dreidel video: <http://tinyurl.com/9lx47n>.



A dreidel is a four-sided top with one Hebrew letter on each side. **In Israel**, the letters on a dreidel are *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hey*, *Peh*. They are the first letters in the phrase “*Nes Gadol Haya Po*” which means “A Great Miracle Happened Here.”

Outside of Israel, the letters are *Nun*, *Gimmel*, *Hey*, *Shin*. They are the first letters in the phrase “*Nes Gadol Haya Sham*” which means “A Great Miracle Happened There.”



Special Hanukkah Foods

On Hanukkah, we are reminded of the miracle of the oil by eating foods such as *latkes* (LOT-Kuz) or potato pancakes and *sufganiyot* (Soof-Gah-Nee-OAT) or jelly donuts.

Classic Potato Latkes (10-12)

Ingredients:

2 cups peeled and shredded potatoes
1 tablespoon grated onion
3 eggs, beaten
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup peanut oil for frying

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the shredded potatoes in a cheesecloth and wring, extracting as much moisture as possible.
2. In a medium bowl stir the potatoes, onion, eggs, flour and salt together.
3. In a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat, heat the oil until hot. Place large spoonfuls of the potato mixture into the hot oil, pressing them down to form 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick patties. Brown on one side, turn and brown on the other. Let drain on paper towels. Serve hot with sour cream and/or applesauce, if desired.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/hanukkahlatkes>



Sufganiyot (40)

Ingredients:

2 (1/4 ounce) envelopes dry yeast	2 eggs
1/4 cup warm water	6 tablespoons butter
1 1/2 cups lukewarm milk or soymilk	5 cups flour
3/4 cup sugar	oil, for deep frying
1 teaspoon salt	1 (13 1/2 ounce) jar strawberry jelly
	confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

1. Sprinkle yeast over warm water and let stand five minutes or until foamy.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the yeast mixture, milk, sugar, salt, eggs, butter and two cups flour. Mix for a few minutes at low speed.
3. Beat in remaining flour, 1/2 cup at a time, until the dough no longer sticks to the bowl. Knead for about five minutes or until smooth and elastic.
4. Place the dough in a greased bowl and cover. Let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about an hour or a bit longer.
5. Turn the dough onto a floured surface and gently roll out to 1/2-inch thickness. Cut into circles. Let rise again until doubled in bulk.
6. Heat 4 cups of oil in a deep fryer or large pot to 350°. Carefully slide donuts into hot oil using a wide spatula. Turn the doughnuts over as they rise to the surface. Donuts are ready when golden brown.
7. Fill with 1 T jelly using a pastry injector, or by cutting a small slit in the side of the donuts and inserting the jelly with a baby spoon. Close tightly; roll in confectioners' sugar.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/nsmrcmj>

Hanukkah Activities & Crafts

Easy Edible Dreidels

You will need:

- Marshmallows
- Pretzel Sticks
- Frosting
- Hershey's Kisses
- Food-safe marker

(or food coloring with tiny brush)



INSTRUCTIONS

Break off a piece of pretzel stick and slide it into one end of marshmallow. This will be the dreidel's handle. Dab a bit of frosting "glue" onto the other end of the marshmallow. Place the flat side of a kiss on the frosting. Write Nun, Gimmel, Hey and Shin on the sides of the marshmallow, in order from right to left.

Source: <http://tinyurl.com/qyzfv3r>

Dreidel Activity

Dreidels remind us of the miracles of Hanukkah. Let's make our own dreidels and share miraculous experiences from our lives.

You will need:

- A blank dreidel (we recommend wood from Etsy.com)
- Paint, markers and other decorations
- Optional: a traditional dreidel to use for demonstration



Birthday Candle Menorah

You will need:

- 9 small candle holders (we recommend using metal nuts from a hardware store)
- Colorful air drying clay
- Acrylic paints and brushes
- Birthday candles (44 for all 8 nights)



INSTRUCTIONS

Form the clay into a rectangle about 6 inches long and 3/4 inch tall and wide. Make a small square cube and put it on top of the rectangle, in the center. Press the candleholders into the clay, one in the small cube and four on either side. When the clay has hardened, paint your menorah with the acrylic paints. Put your candles in the holders.

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the Hanukkah story together. Ask one other: Which miracle speaks to you the most - the miracle of the oil or the miracle of the military victory?

Think of an experience that felt like a miracle (or precious gift) in your own life.

Describe it in four words.

Examples:









My First Home Run - MFHR

I Learned to Bike - ILTB

I Made New Friends - IMNF

Write the letters on the dreidel where the Hebrew letters are usually located. Share your 4-word stories with each other.

More Hanukkah Activities

-  Get into the spirit! Hang Hanukkah decorations in your kitchen or dining room or near the place where you will light your menorah(s).
-  Make a CD or playlist of popular Hanukkah songs and play it in your car or at home. Traditional and contemporary Hanukkah songs are available on iTunes and Spotify. Printable songsheets are available at: www.hebrewsongs.com/chanukah.htm.
-  Create a mini menorah out of Legos or out of food. Use a graham cracker for the base and carrot sticks for candles with cream cheese to hold them together and bits of cheese for flames. The possibilities for a food menorah are endless!
-  Declare a different theme for each night of Hanukkah such as Board Games Night, Arts & Crafts Night, *Tzedakah* (charitable giving) Night, Charades Night, Skype with Relatives Night, DIY Gift Night - get creative. Have a meeting before Hanukkah to create excitement and plan out themes that allow every family member to contribute.
-  Make homemade costumes and act out the Hanukkah story. Try a version with a modern twist or use funny accents.
-  Have a Hanukkah Heroes dinner party and ask each guest to share a story about bravery or standing up for beliefs.
-  As a family, brainstorm ways you can bring light/joy into the lives of others. For example, offer to light candles with Jewish residents of a local home for the elderly. Raise money for an organization that helps the homeless. Donate clothes, food, coats and other items to those in need.
-  Check Pinterest for crafts, recipes and other ideas: <http://tinyurl.com/nr7g6es>.



Hanukkah Media

Videos

Preschool

Shalom Sesame's Hanukkah Videos:
<http://m.shalomsesame.org/#chanukah>

Ages 6 and up

By Speakaboos: <http://tinyurl.com/q7rldn4>

Ages 10 and up

By G-dcast: <http://tinyurl.com/ocyqjat>



Pop Songs

The Maccabeats – *Candlelight – Hanukkah*
<http://tinyurl.com/2dwheky>

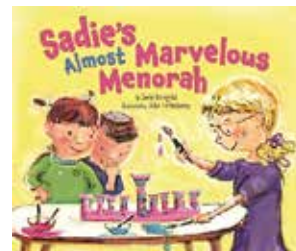
StandFour – *Eight Nights* <http://tinyurl.com/btv9bfj>

The Maccabeats – *All About That Neis*
<http://tinyurl.com/nj6vvae>

The Maccabeats – *Miracle – Matityahu*
<http://tinyurl.com/7ojryz8>

Fountainheads – *Light Up the Night*
<https://tinyurl.com/y744nglg>

Books



Preschool

Happy Hanukkah, Curious George, by H. A. Rey

Sammy Spider's First Hanukkah, by Sylvia A. Rouss

Sadie's Almost Marvelous Menorah,
by Jamie Korngold

Light the Candles: A Hanukkah Lift-the-Flap Book,
by Joan Holub and Lynne Avril Cravath

K-3rd Grade

Latkes, Latkes, Good to Eat: A Chanukah Story,
by Naomi Howland

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins,
by Eric A. Kimmel

The Hanukkah Mice, by Steven Kroll

Hanukkah Moon, by Deborah de Costa

The Best Hanukkah Ever,
by Barbara Diamond Goldin and Avi Katz

Festival of Lights: the Story of Hanukkah,
by Maida Silverman & Carolyn Ewing.

Maccabee!: The Story of Hanukkah,
by Tilda Balsley

Web Resources

BimBam's Hanukkah episode:

<https://tinyurl.com/y79l2mbj>

Reboot's Give Light :

<https://tinyurl.com/y9hcqjog>

PJ Library' Hanukkah Resources:

<https://tinyurl.com/ycr5jwbh>

Spotify Hanukkah Playlist:

<https://tinyurl.com/yicsd95qu>



Hanukkah Trusting In A New Beginning

by Rabbi Nathaniel Ezray, with Rabbi Barry Katz

Do you believe in the miracle of Hanukkah – that the oil lasted eight days? Most people hit a point in their lives when they doubt miracles. And if you believe in the concept of a literal miracle – you wonder where the miracles went, and why salvation didn't come at key times when it should have.

The concept of miracle is given a completely new perspective, however, examined through the interpretation of Rabbi David Hartman. Rabbi Hartman is a liberal Orthodox rabbi in Jerusalem, and he argues that we misunderstand the miracle. We think that the miracle is the oil lasting beyond when it should have burnt out. He gives a different explanation: "The miraculous feature [was] the community's willingness to light the lamp *even though there was not sufficient oil to keep the lamp burning long enough to complete the rededication of the temple*. The miracle was the community's willingness to begin a task without guarantee that they would complete it." Think about the implications of this message for many aspects of life!

Anyone who has ever sat in a Board of Directors meeting for any institution can picture the scene as the Jews discussed what to do with the small cruse of oil. Someone probably said, "Why light a flame which is bound to burn out before the Temple is dedicated? What message would that send to the people – the menorah was lit and then it went out?" Others no doubt chimed in with their opinions: "Let's get the house in order first, consolidate our military victory, produce a stock of oil and then move forward. Why initiate a process that we cannot complete?" or, "Let's compare ourselves to other military victories in our region, and after thorough analysis consider our options." According to Rabbi Hartman, "Those who went ahead and kindled the lamp ignored such 'voices of reason' and they availed themselves of the precious opportunities at hand. And the miracle of Chanukah occurred."

This is one of those messages that is easier to say than to do. Most of us, myself included, like to set things up first. We believe in planning; getting our ducks in a row. It's not prudent to leap before you look. Explaining the miracle of Chanukah as the wisdom of moving ahead even when we don't know the outcome makes us understand that sometimes you have to move forward – even if you're not totally ready.

Raising children is like that. It's a journey whose reality is usually different than the one we imagined. We certainly don't know the end of the story. Teaching is like that as well. Every time I teach I remind myself that nothing is dictating how things will work out for any individual child – and sometimes letting them run even when we may not think they're ready may be the best thing in the world we can do. Writing a song, starting a new relationship, building a community, carrying Judaism to the next generation – all are predicated on our willingness to start without any guarantee of where we will finish.

The audacity of Rabbi Hartman's position is that it defines part of the miracle of Chanukah as our willingness to step into the breach. The rabbis of the Talmud tried hard to sell a different Chanukah story, one ultimately focused on God's acts not those of the Maccabees. They chose a Haftarah for Shabbat Chanukah to reinforce their interpretation: Not by might and not by power, but by My Spirit alone says God. Rabbi Hartman's interpretation undoes some of the rabbis' work: miracles are generated by human agency; God comes in later.

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Over thirty years ago, as a high school student in Sacramento, I was learning about how hard it was for the Jews to leave the Soviet Union. We played a simulation game about how the Soviet bureaucracy and corruption punished anyone who dared apply to leave. Who would take such a risk? Yet in real life hundreds of thousands took that step. They applied to leave in the face of certain persecution, and in the process made their own miracles that we were privileged to witness. Many here were partners in that miracle – protesting at the Soviet embassy, supporting legislation that linked US economic support with emigration policy and traveling to the Soviet Union to support Soviet Jews. And we've watched the fruits of that miracle – as Soviet immigration changes the faces of both Israel and the American Jewish community.

Rabbi Hartman writes: "The Chanukah lights encourage one to trust human beginnings and to focus one's passions and efforts on whatever opportunities are available at the present moment.

One ought to pour infinite yearnings even into small vessels."

We all carry infinite yearnings – things that we want for ourselves, our families, our people, the world. But the problem with infinite yearnings, with big dreams and desires, is that any movement to actualize them can seem small, inconsequential, inadequate to the task.

I want better health – a big thing. Will 30 minutes of exercise really make any difference? I want to succeed in school. Can't I put off my studying for tomorrow?

The world is in such need of repair, or light. What difference can I really make?

One ought to pour infinite yearnings even into small vessels.

Nothing can contain fully the infinite yearnings we harbor. But the way to begin to address these yearnings is by doing something small. Now.

The Rambam writes of this in his consideration of the ways the Bible describes God. He says that when the Bible uses anthropomorphism (describing God as having an outstretched arm, as having regrets, as a warrior or a lover or a teacher) it is simply using the tools at its disposal, even though these descriptors mean very little if you really want to know God's essence. One cannot capture infinity in these small vessels of words – but they are the only way for us, as limited human beings, to approach such an overwhelming task.

When it comes to thinking about God, and contemplating our lives and responsibilities in the world, we are lucky if we feel that we have a day's worth of resources to address the challenges we face. Just like the Maccabees.

There was only enough to light for one day.

But still, we light.

Because, as Rabbi Hartman concludes:

Only lamps which are lit may continue to burn beyond their anticipated life span.

- 1. Have you ever taken a "leap of faith" and moved ahead without feeling totally ready?**
- 2. Is there something you've wanted to do but have yet to take the first step?**

Hanukkah Songs

Hanerot Halalu

Hanerot halalu, anu madlikin

Al hanisim v'al hanifla'ot

V'al hateshu'ot v'al hamilchamot

She'asita la'avoteinu

Bayamim hahem bazman hazeh.

These Hanukkah lights we kindle
For the miracles and wonders
The acts of rescue and the wars
That You performed for our ancestors
In those days, at this season.

Mi Yimalel

Mi yimalel g'vurot Yisrael

Otan mi yimne?

Hen b'chol do yakum ha'gibor

Go'el ha'am. Shma!

Bayamim hahem bazman hazeh

Maccabi moshi'a u'fodeh

Uv'yameinu kol Am Yisrael

Yi'tached yakum v'yiga'el.

Who can retell the things that befell us,
Who can count them?
In every age, a hero or sage came to our aid.
Hark!
In days of yore in Israel's ancient land,
Brave Maccabees led the faithful band.
But now all Israel must as one arise,
Redeem itself through deed and sacrifice.

Maoz Tsur

Rock of Ages

Rock of Ages, let our song

Praise Your saving power.

You amidst the raging foes

Were our sheltering tower.

Furious they assailed us

But Your help availed us.

And Your word broke their sword

When our own strength failed us.

Ma'oz tsur yeshu'ati

Lecha na'eh leshabe'ach

Tikon beit tefilati

V'sham todah neza'be'ach

Le'et tachin matbe'ach

Mitsar ham'na be'ach

Az egmor b'shir mizmor

Chanukat hamizbe'ach.

הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ אֲנוּ מַדְלִיקִין,

הַנֵּרוֹת הַלָּלוּ אֲנוּ מַדְלִיקִין,

עַל הַנִּסִּים וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת

וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַמִּלְחָמוֹת

שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ

בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

מִי יִמַּלֵּל גִּבּוּרֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל,

אוֹתָן מִי יִמְנֶה?

הֵן בְּכָל דּוֹר יָקוּם הַגִּבּוֹר גּוֹאֵל הָעָם.

שִׁמְעֵ!

בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה

מִכַּפֵּי מוֹשִׁיעַ וּפּוֹדֶה,

וּבְיָמֵינוּ כָּל עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל

יִתְאַחַד, יָקוּם וַיִּגְאֹל.

מַעֲזַז צוּר יְשׁוּעָתִי, לָךְ נִאֶה לְשַׁבַּח

תִּכּוֹן בֵּית תְּפִלָּתִי, וְשָׁם תּוֹדָה נִזְבַּח.

לַעֲת תִּכְיוּ מִטְבַּח מִצָּר הַמִּנְבַּח.

אֲזִ אֶגְמֹר בְּשִׁיר מִזְמוֹר חֲנֻכַּת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.

More Hanukkah Songs

Sevimon Sov Sov Sov

Dreidel Spin Spin Spin

סביבון סב סב סב, חג טוב.
חג טוב, סביבון סב סב סב.
חג שמחה הוא לעם נס גדול הנה שמחה
נס גדול הנה שמחה חג שמחה הוא לעם.

Sevimon sov sov sov
Chanukah hu chag tov
Chanukah hu chag tov
Sevimon sov sov sov
Chag simcha hu la'am
Nes gadol haya sham
Nes gadol haya sham
Chag simcha hu la'am.

Dreidel spin spin spin
Hanukkah is a nice holiday
Hanukkah is a nice holiday
Dreidel spin spin spin
It's a joyous holiday for the nation
A great miracle happened there
A great miracle happened there
It's a joyous holiday for the people.



Yemei Ha'Hanukkah

Oh Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah

ימי החג הטוב, חג טוב,
בגיל ובשמחה ממלאים את לבנו,
לילה יום סביבוננו יסב,
ספגניות נאכל כם לרב.
האירו, הדליקו נרות חג טוב רבים!
על הנסים ועל הנקלות
אשר חוללו המכבים.

Yemei ha'Chanukah
Chanukat mikdashenu
B'Gil uV'simcha memal'im et libenu
Laila vayom s'vivenu yisov
Sufganiyot nuchal bam larov
Ha'iru had'liku
Nerot Chanukah rabim
Al hanisim v'al hanifla'ot
Asher cholelu haMaccabim.

Oh Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah
Come light the Menorah
Let's have a party
We'll all dance the Hora
Gather around the table I'll give you a treat
Sevimon to play with and latkes to eat
And while we are playing
The candles are burning low
One for each night
They shed a sweet light
To remind us of days long ago.

Interested in receiving future @Home guides? email Kesher@jewishlearningworks.org

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