



Grades 6-8 Thanksgiving Shamash Family Activity

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The #ShineALight Initiative

The #ShineALight Initiative is a national project to create a collective light of celebration spreading the Jewish joy of Chanukah and the beautiful traditions we honor in our homes with our families.

Sponsored in part by the UJA-Federation of New York, the initiative is designed as a counter-expression to antisemitism and other messages of hate acts towards Jews and Israel. The #ShineALight Initiative is leveraging education, community partnerships, workplace engagement, and advocacy among Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

The Jewish Education Project is a proud content partner of the #ShineALight Initiative and is delighted to provide these free materials to parents and other caring adults. We encourage you to utilize this education content in the week leading up to and through Chanukah (this year and in the future), and if applicable, at other times of the year.

Parent/Adult Background Information

See Chanukah Word Index below and familiarize yourself with the terms. Throughout all of the games in the activity, if someone doesn't remember what one of these words means, or if it is a new concept for your family, spend a few minutes talking about it.

If you prefer, narrow down the Word Index by choosing the words that you feel best fit your family. You might specifically choose words you think everyone will know or maybe you want to add in several new terms for your family to learn. You can choose to use these in English, Hebrew or Yiddish.

[There are few items on the supply list included below that you may need/want to purchase.]



Social Media: If you are comfortable, we would love for you to spread the joy your family is experiencing while participating in this activity. Please take photos and/or videos and share them to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

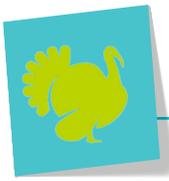


Prep Time: 10 minutes

Activity Time: 10-60 minutes

Supplies

- *Copy of the Chanukah Word Index (handout at end)*
- *Visual Telephone*
Paper/pens/pencils
- *Stack It Up*
Penny pouches with 25 pennies in each, one for each player
- *Charades*
Small note cards/pens/pencils
Basket/hat/bucket/bowl
- *How Many Can You Name*
Plain paper/pens/pencils
- *Chanukah Story Creation*
No supplies



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Activity Instructions

- Here are a few fun games you can play as a family to warm up for your upcoming Chanukah celebration. You can either choose the games you think your family would most enjoy, or work best with the number of people you have playing, or you could play them all as a fun family game night. While this activity is designed for pre-Chanukah, you can certainly play the games throughout the week of Chanukah as well.
- These games are also an opportunity to remind or teach your family about some of the major themes and ideas of Chanukah. Include additional family members or friends who may be celebrating Thanksgiving/Chanukah weekend with you.

Visual Telephone

1. Take a piece of paper and write down a word from the list.
2. Pass the paper to the next person.
3. That person reads the word to him/herself and draws a picture of the word. Then they fold over the paper so that only the picture can be seen.
4. The third person, seeing only the picture, has to guess what the word is and write it down.
5. Then they fold over the drawing and pass the page along.
6. The fourth person now has to draw the word that the third person guessed.
7. This continues until everyone has a turn and then the original word is revealed.
8. You can start a paper with a different word and start it in the middle of your circle so that there is not too much wait time for those “at the end.”
9. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

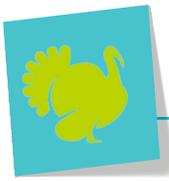
Stack it Up

There is a tradition to give gelt, money, on Chanukah. Some people give gelt as a Chanukah gift, others play dreidel with it. The pennies represent gelt. This activity is best done on a hardwood floor or a flat table surface.

1. Each player is given a Penny Pouch.
2. Players must move 25 pennies into a single stack in under a minute using only one hand (the number of pennies can be increased for older children and adults as desired).
3. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

Charades

1. Make note cards using words on the Chanukah Word Index.
2. Put the cards into a basket, hat or other receptacle.
3. Split your family into two teams or play as one large group.
4. Have the first person choose a card to act out while the rest of the team has to guess what it is that they are acting out.
5. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.



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Activity Instructions, continued

How Many Can You Name

1. Split into teams (teams can be as small as one player for a small family or as big as four players for larger gatherings).
2. Give each team a piece of paper and a writing instrument.
3. Instruct them to take a piece of paper and fold it into four sections and number each section.
4. Then ask one of the questions below and each team has one minute (time it) to write down as many answers to the question as they can in the designated section on their paper.
 - a. How many ways can you spell Chanukah?
 - b. How many Chanukah foods can you name?
 - c. How many Chanukah related words in Hebrew and Yiddish can you name?
 - d. How many Chanukah miracles can you name?
 - e. How many themes related to Chanukah can you name?
 - f. What are some of your favorite Chanukah activities?
 - g. How many Chanukah songs can you name?
- 5 Repeat this four times.
6. At the end of the four rounds, share the answers with each other for each round, one at a time. Whichever team has the most answers wins that round (the group can judge if a questionable answer will count)
7. You can play as many four-round games as you wish.
8. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

Chanukah Story Creation

1. Make up a family Chanukah story. Start by sharing one sentence and each family member adds one additional sentence. Continue through all the family members 2-3 times until you have a complete story.

Possible Sentence Starters:

- One cold and windy Chanukah night, while we were lighting the candles...
 - It was almost time to light the Chanukah candles on the first night of Chanukah when mom (or any family member) realized...
 - Do you remember the family Chanukah party, that unforgettable year, when ...
 - Suddenly in the middle of the family Chanukah party, there was a knock, a strange knock at the door...
2. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.

Extension Activities

- Use the Chanukah Word Index to imitate other games like Pictionary, Taboo, Matching, or Minute to Win It.
- Ask your children to choose the games to play, create all of the materials and have them run the family evening.
- Choose your favorite family game and see if you can create a Chanukah version.



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Chanukah Word Index

Some definitions can be found [here](#).

Al Hanissim

Al hanissim is a prayer sung on Chanukah about miracles.

Antiochus

King of the Syrian-Greeks during the time of the Chanukah story.

Beit Hillel

The study house of Hillel, or Rabbi Hillel who lived around 75 CE. Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai were involved in a famous dispute over how we should light the Chanukah candles.

Beit Shammai

The study house of Shammai, or Rabbi Shammai who lived around 75 CE. Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai were involved in a famous dispute over how we should light the Chanukah candles.

Chag Urim Sameach

This phrase means happy festival of lights and is used as a greeting throughout Chanukah.

Chanukiah

The Chanukiah is a Chanukah lamp. This is a special type of candelabra with nine candleholders, one for each night of Chanukah and one for the Shamash, or helper candle. The plural is Chanukiyot.

Dedication

Chanukah means dedication. It refers to the dedication, or rededication, of the Temple after the Syrian-Greeks had desecrated it.

Donuts

A fried food eaten on Chanukah to remember the miracle of the oil lasting. Sufganiyot in Hebrew.

Dreidel

The dreidel is a four-sided spinning top that is used to play a gambling game during Chanukah. Each side of the dreidel is marked with a letter in Hebrew: נ: nun, ג:gimel, ה:hey, and ש:shin which stand for Nes Gadol Haya Sham, a great miracle happened there. Dreidels in Israel have a פ:peh which replaces the shin. The peh stands for the Hebrew word "po" which means "here." Dreidel is originally a Yiddish word.

Eight

Represents the eight nights of Chanukah.

Gelt

Gelt is Chanukah money or chocolate pressed into the shape of coins and wrapped in gold foil with a menorah embossed on it. Gelt is given both as a Chanukah gift and as something to bet with during dreidel games.

Hallel

A series of prayers which are sung each day of Chanukah.

Hellenism

Study and imitation of Greek culture.

Judah the Maccabee

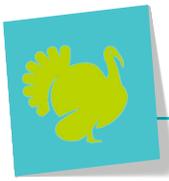
Leader of the Maccabees, a rebel Jewish group who defeated the Syrian-Greeks. Also referred to as Judah, the Hammer.

Kislev

Kislev is a Jewish month. Chanukah is celebrated starting on the 25th day of Kislev.

Latkes

Fried potato pancakes, eaten during Chanukah to remember the miracle of the oil. Latke is a Yiddish word.



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Chanukah Word Index, continued

Some definitions can be found [here](#).

Levivot

Hebrew word for potato pancakes (latkes).

Light

The miracle of the light lasting during the Chanukah story, as well as our commandment to share our light out into the world.

Menorah

Menorah means a lamp and traditionally refers to the candelabra that was in the Temple which had seven candles. A Chanukiah is a type of menorah with nine candles. Menorah has become a default term for a Chanukiah in many locations.

Miracle

Chanukah is all about miracles, specifically the miracle of a small amount of oil lasting eight days and the miracle of the defeat of the Syrian-Greeks by a small group of Jewish rebels.

Modi'in

The city the Maccabees lived in and the site of the beginning of the Chanukah battle.

Nes

Miracle in Hebrew.

Nes Gadol Haya Sham

Nes gadol haya sham is a phrase you will hear and see around a game of Dreidel, since the four letters on each of the dreidel's sides is the acronym for the phrase. It translates from Hebrew as a great miracle happened there. Though in Israel, the ש) shin is replaced by ש) peh, to change the phrase to mean a great miracle happened here.

Oil

The miracle of the small amount of pure oil found in the temple that burned for eight days until new oil could be found. Today we eat foods fried in oil on Chanukah to remember this miracle.

Persim haNes

Advertising the miracle. We are commanded to advertise the miracle of Chanukah. Many people do this by placing their Chanukiah in a window or doorway for passer-byers to see.

Shamash

The helper candle, the candle which we use to light the other candles. The shamash is traditionally higher or lower than the other candles on the Chanukiah.

Sufganiyot

Donuts in Hebrew.

Syrian-Greeks

The army that tried to conquer Israel, and the Jewish people during the time of the Chanukah story (160 B.C.E.)

Temple

The center of Jewish life, the holiest Jewish location and the location desecrated by the Syrian-Greeks during the time of the Chanukah story. Ah money or chocolate pressed into the shape of coins and wrapped in gold foil with a menorah embossed on it. Gelt is given both as a Chanukah gift and as something to bet with during dreidel games.