



**ECE  
STEAM Activities**  
Target Age: 3-5  
Created by Dr. Robyn Faintich



### 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 through Chanukah (this year and in the future), and if applicable, at other times of the year.

## DISPEL THE DARKNESS.

### Chanukah, Hanukkah, Channukkah?

The Jewish Education Project materials all use the spelling, “Chanukah.” However, when we reference the names of outside content, products, songs, videos, etc. we utilize the spelling that the original organization/author/artist/company uses.



**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.

Questions? Please contact Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath, Ed.D at [svinokor-meinrath@jewishedproject.org](mailto:svinokor-meinrath@jewishedproject.org), Senior Director of Knowledge, Ideas, and Learning at The Jewish Education Project.



### Firefly Light

Creator: Dr. Robyn Faintich

#### Parent/Adult Background Information/Knowledge:

In an ancient Talmudic debate, two schools of scholars, Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, debated the correct way to light a Chanukah menorah (Chanukiah). Beit Shammai said that we should start with a full menorah of candles and decrease by one each night, while Beit Hillel argued that we should start with one and increase our light each night. In Talmud Shabbat 21b:6, it states Beit Hillel's reasoning for the increase of light: "One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade. Therefore, if the objective is to have the number of lights correspond to the number of days, there is no alternative to increasing their number with the passing of each day."

This activity is based on the idea of shining light, spreading light, observing light and increasing light.

There are few items on the Supply List (above the Activity Instructions) that you may want to prepare or purchase.



**Approximate Prep Time:** 5 minutes plus supply purchase

**Approximate Activity Time:** 20-30 minutes

#### Activity Flow

Read a story/watch it on video

Two crafts illustrating the story

Experiment with flashlights and the illustrations

Reflect on the experiment

#### Supplies

- Eric Carle's *The Very Lonely Firefly Board Book*
- Optional: watch this [video reading of the book](#)
- Black scratch paper ([example here](#))
- Black construction paper ([example here](#))
- Colored pencils
- A dark room for viewing.
- Flashlights of different sizes and light strength (at least two)



#### Activity Instructions

1. Read the Eric Carle book [The Very Lonely Firefly](#) or [watch the video](#).
2. Ask your child(ren) to recall all the different lights the Firefly saw in the story.
3. Give your child(ren) the black scratch paper and included scratch instrument. Have them illustrate one aspect of the story using this method.
4. Ask them to share with you why they chose that scene and what they depicted.
5. Give your child(ren) the black construction paper and colored pencils. Have them illustrate one aspect of the story using this method.
6. Ask them to share with you why they chose that scene and what they depicted.
7. Have the child predict what they might see on their two illustrations if you turned out the lights in the room.



### Firefly Light

#### Activity Instructions, continued



8. Experiment:
  - a. Turn off the lights in a dark room and see if there is any image from their drawings you can see.
  - b. Give them one of the flashlights and have them experiment with shining it from different distances or heights onto their drawings and observe what they see.
  - c. Repeat it with the other flashlight(s).
  - d. Compare and contrast what reflects from the light, what they can see, what stands out.
9. Back in a lit space, talk about the experience and what they liked about the experiment.
10. Share with them that Chanukah is also called “The Festival of Lights” and how fireflies and other lights are just one way to think about light in the world around us.
11. Don’t forget to take photos and/or videos and share them to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.



### Light the Lights

Creator: Dr. Robyn Faintich

#### Parent/Adult Background Information/Knowledge:

Content in this activity is adapted from *Head Start on Holidays: Jewish Programs for Preschoolers and their Parents*. It is also found in the *Chanukah Activities as the ECE Night Four Activity*.

In an ancient Talmudic debate, two schools of scholars, Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, debated on the correct way to light a Chanukah menorah (Chanukiah). Beit Shammai said that we should start with a full menorah of candles and decrease by one each night, while Beit Hillel argued that we should start with one and increase our light each night. In Talmud Shabbat 21b:6, it states Beit Hillel's reasoning for the increase of light: "One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade. Therefore, if the objective is to have the number of lights correspond to the number of days, there is no alternative to increasing their number with the passing of each day."

This activity is based on the idea of shining light, spreading light, observing light and increasing light.

You will have an option to make an olive oil candle. [Here is one easy method](#).

There are few items on the Supply List (above the Activity Instructions) that you may want to purchase or prepare ahead of time.



**Approximate Prep Time:** 7-10 minutes (plus optional time if wanting purchase items)

**Approximate Activity Time:** 25-40 minutes

#### Supplies

- Candles of various sizes and shapes with appropriate candle holders/drip plates. Some ideas to consider: scented small candle, tea lights, plain Shabbat candles, fancy Shabbat candles, tapers, votives, Havdalah candle(s), yahrtzeit candle, beeswax candles, soy candles, wax candles, square candles, round candles, tall pillar candles, birthday candles, Chanukah candles, etc.
- Matches (adults only!)
- Optional: small glass jar, 100% pure cotton balls, olive oil, lighter/long match



#### Activity Instructions

1. Take your child on a scavenger hunt around the house looking for all the sources of light. Have them describe the light to you that the source emits (warm, bright, dull, steady, flickering, hot, colored, etc.). Don't forget hidden sources of light such as flashlights, under counters, attic lights, night lights, camping lanterns, fireplaces/firepits, etc.
2. Discuss:
  - Which light made you feel the happiest? Why?
  - Which place in the home was the darkest? What was the light like in that place?
  - What could we do to increase light in that room? (Do you want to permanently adjust it in some way?)
3. Set up on a safe table a full candle display (unlit).
4. See if your child can tell you which lights are "Jewish" and which lights are "regular." Ask them what they know about the Jewish lights.
  - Explain that each time we use a Jewish light we either say a blessing (bracha) or acknowledge something specific (like a yahrtzeit candle).
  - Explain that another name for Chanukah is the "Festival of Lights." Ask them to tell you how many lights are on the Chanukah menorah (Chanukiah) by the end of Chanukah.



## ECE STEAM Activities

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### Light the Lights

#### Activity Instructions, continued



5. Ask your child to figure out different ways to sort all of the candles on the table. You can repeat this activity several times with different methods (size, shape, color, material, religious/not-religious, smell, etc.) doesn't know the meaning behind some of the specific candles, take time to explain those.)
6. Ask your child to predict which candle(s) will look the prettiest lit to them. Why, what makes them predict that?
7. Go ahead and light the candles (and if not all of them, the ones your child has predicted the prettiest).
8. Evaluate their prediction. And discuss:
  - What about those candles makes their light more special?
  - Are the flames the same or different on those candles?
  - Does the decorative nature of the candle make the entire light prettier? Why or why not?
  - Which candle would you most like to receive as a gift?
9. Explain that in our scavenger hunt and candle museum today, we saw lights run by a variety of different sources: batteries, electricity, wax, wick and match. In the time of the Maccabees, they used oil to light their candles and their lamps.
  - Ask your child which source of light they liked seeing the best during this activity.
  - Conclude: We must always be safe when using electricity and candles. But we can use the light they shed to help celebrate, help keep us warm, help light a room, or help us remember (yahrzeit).
10. Optional: you can make your own oil candle as a family.
11. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.



### Flashlights with Flare

Creator: Dr. Robyn Faintich

#### Parent/Adult Background Information/Knowledge:

In an ancient Talmudic debate, two schools of scholars, Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, debated on the correct way to light a Chanukah menorah (Chanukiah). Beit Shammai said that we should start with a full menorah of candles and decrease by one each night, while Beit Hillel argued that we should start with one and increase our light each night. In Talmud Shabbat 21b:6, it states Beit Hillel's reasoning for the increase of light: "One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade. Therefore, if the objective is to have the number of lights correspond to the number of days, there is no alternative to increasing their number with the passing of each day."

This activity is based on the idea of shining light, spreading light, observing light and increasing light.

There are few items on the Supply List (above the Activity Instructions) that you may want to purchase or prepare ahead of time.



**Approximate Prep Time:** 5 minutes plus supply purchase

**Approximate Activity Time:** 10-20 minutes

#### Activity Flow

Make covers for flashlights

Experiment with different covers

Reflect on experiment

#### Supplies

- Construction Paper pre-cut into large circles
- Hole punch (shape varieties encouraged)
- Scissors (child-safety recommended)
- Flashlight at least 1.5-2" Diameter (one per person)
- Rubber Band (one per person)



#### Activity Instructions

1. Children are given circles of construction paper that fit over the top of their flashlights with a small edge around it (you will secure it later with a rubber band)
2. They can choose hole punches and/or scissors to make openings in the paper
3. Secure their paper over the flashlight with a rubber band
4. Have them showcase their light design in a dim/dark room against a wall or ceiling.
5. If other family members have made a "Flashlight with Flare" have them showcase their light designs.
6. Children can alter their designs a few times to compare/contrast how they look or start over and create new designs as well as compare/contrast the light designs of different family members.
7. Discuss:
  - a. What shaped holes gave off the most light? the least light?
  - b. Did the shape of the hole change the shape of the light shining on the wall? How?
  - c. Did you like to look at the lights that had more holes in their covers or less holes? Why?
  - d. How is shining our inner light (joy, happiness, kindness) through our unique bodies like the way the light of flashlights shined through the different cutouts in our papers?
8. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.