



Grades K-2 Pre-Holiday Activity

Hakarot Hatov: Recognizing the AWESome

Created by Debra Siroka



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

The Jewish value of *hakarot hatov* is translated as “recognizing the good.” It means something beyond gratitude, more like appreciating the good and AWESome people and things in the world. There is a tradition in Judaism to say 100 blessings every day. There are blessings before and after we eat, blessings for holidays, blessings for our bodies working the way they should, and even blessings for seeing things in nature like rainbows or tasting a food for the first time. A Jewish blessing begins with the words *Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam* (Blessed are you God, Sovereign of the Universe). The rest of the blessing changes depending on what or whom we are blessing. When we welcome Shabbat with candles, we recite a blessing. When we say the *shehecheyanu* to recognize a significant occasion, that is also a blessing. Some also say a blessing both before and after we eat.

The word AWE describes a feeling of reverential respect mixed with fear or wonder. When we see something beautiful or experience something powerful or connect deeply with another person-those are all moments of AWE. The word AWESome means impressive, it can be something that causes amazement or even something that creates fear. In Judaism, we often refer to miracles as AWESome. We describe God as AWESome. Nature or even another person can be AWESome.

Blessings help us to understand and value what is important. They help us take time to acknowledge that our daily experiences in the world are not routine, but are worthy of blessing.

[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: 5 minutes to gather supplies

Activity Time: 20 minutes



Grades K-2 Pre-Holiday Activity

Supplies

- 5X8" white index Cards
- Blessings handout, see page 3
- Crayons/pencils/pens/markers/colored pencils
- Binder rings (hole punch) or index card holder



Activity Instructions

1. Have each member of the family brainstorm and share at least three things in their life that are AWESome (rain, mom and dad, pets, yummy food, favorite book, etc.).
2. Ask the child(ren), where do you know the phrase "*Baruch Ata Adonai?*" [If they don't know it, or are struggling, you can explain that these words start all the blessing prayers in Judaism and it means "Blessed are you God."]
3. Ask them what it might mean to say "*Baruch Ata Adonai*/Blessed are you God" for things we find to be AWESome.
4. Give each member of the family three index cards and access to the crayons, pencils, pens, markers and/or colored pencils.
5. Have each person create at least three Blessings Cards acknowledging the things that are AWESome to them (you may want the Blessing Handout below printed for everyone to share).
 - a. On each card, write the blessing (in Hebrew or English, or both) using the Blessing Formula suggested on the handout. (Parents: you may want to have your child dictate the blessing and write it on their behalf.)
 - b. Draw an illustration that goes with it.
6. Once everyone has created their blessing cards, collect them in the card holder or on a ring. Keep them someplace where everyone can access them and recite a blessing together when appropriate.
7. On Thanksgiving and during Chanukah, you could offer for your guests to create their own AWESome blessing cards to your collection.
8. Keep adding to the blessing cards. As kids grow, their idea of AWESome changes and grows with them!
9. Don't forget to upload photos and/or videos of this activity to your social media platforms using the hashtag #ShineALight.



Blessings Handout

Blessing Formula:

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haOlam...

Blessed are You Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe...

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Sample Blessings:

Blessed are You Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe, for bringing me my new kitty.

Blessed are You Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe, for tasting this delicious latke.

Blessed are You Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe, for a beautiful rainbow.

Blessed are You Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe, for my teachers.

Blessed are You Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe, for learning to tie my shoes.

AWESome Ideas:

There is no limit on when we recognize the AWESome in our lives. Below are some examples of Jewish blessings.

The blessing formula works to highlight and acknowledge the good all around us.

- Before/after eating
- Food and drink (various blessings depending on the type of food/beverage)
- Holidays
- Shabbat
- Life cycle events
- Seeing the ocean
- Flowers and herbs
- Trees blossoming for the first time that year
- Perfume/spices
- Experiencing a wonder
- Seeing an important or significant person
- Something new (clothes, home, etc)
- Recovery from being sick



Our friends at PJ Library have developed [a list of blessings](#) to use every day.