



Content-Rich Learning Experiences for Hanukkah

- Host an “olive tasting” or “olive oil tasting” as a way to explore the significance of olives/olive oil during Hanukkah.
- Fry This: To remember the miracle of the oil on Hanukkah, we regularly fry potatoes into *latke* treats. Try frying these other snacks in oil after a quick dip in batter to create a new Hanukkah tradition: olives, brie, sandwich cookies, mini-muffins, mini PB&J sandwiches, banana, fresh ginger, strawberries, or cheesecake. This list is inspired by a one found on FoodNetwork.com; we omitted the *treif* on our list.
- In honor of the way the Jews cleaned up the synagogue after it was destroyed, form a *Synagogue Clean-up Crew*. Help out after large events or take on one area of the synagogue to be your classroom’s responsibility.
- Have a costume-required food debate: latkes vs. *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts), apple sauce vs. sour cream, or the traditional latke vs. hamantashen. Ask students to think about their preference ahead of time and dress as their favorite on the day of the debate.
- Create a dreidel or *hanukkiah* museum in your classroom. Ask students to bring in their dreidel(s) or *hannukiyot* to show to other students. Set up displays where students can describe where and when they received the items (emphasize personal histories). You might do a Google search for pictures of dreidels or *hannukiyot* to compare with student samples. Be sure to find an Israeli dreidel to compare the different lettering!
- Play games using the Hebrew letters found on the dreidel (Nun, Gimel, Hay, Shin). Have students look for these letters in their Hebrew names. How many times can students write the letters in 10 seconds? Write the letters in sand or in shaving cream. Try making the letters first where each student uses his/her own body to make the letter. Then, try again asking partners to create the letter with their bodies, then with 3 students, and so on. Can you make each letter with the whole class altogether?
- Play Hanukkah Twister. Write nun, gimel, hay, shin in each of the colors on a Twister game. When you call out a letter, students not only put their hand/foot on the correct letter, but also share the Hebrew word/English translation it represents.



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- Host a Battle of the Ballads. Ask students to sing their favorite Hanukkah songs in sing-off contest. Students can try using the traditional wording in new melodies or adding their own Hanukkah verses to traditional melodies. Record all the entries in the contest to create a very unique Hanukkah play list. Don't forget to share the songs with parents and/or the congregation!
- Discuss the origins of giving gelt and/or gifts with students. You can learn more at this link to [MyJewish Learning.com](http://MyJewishLearning.com). Did they know how these customs or traditions started? Knowing the history, does it change their view of receiving gifts? Are there any other traditions that their families do instead of giving gifts? As a class, generate ideas besides gift-giving that could be a part of family Hanukkah celebrations.
- Make 8 the number of the day in honor of the 8 Days of Hanukkah. What other things can students think of that come in sets of 8? Try doing 8 different mini-stations/activities (many other Hanukkah activities on JTeach.org can be adapted to use as stations). Can students do an activity of your choosing 8 minutes in a row? Invite 8 mystery guests to visit over the course of class time. When the clock hits the 8's (e.g., 9:08, 9:18, 9:28, etc.) ask everyone to pause in their work and spin around once like a dreidel or melt like a candle.
- Practice the correct way to light the *hannukiah* by making a "human *hannukiah*" out of students. One student can be the *shamash* and the other students "melt" in the order in which the *shamash* "lights" them. The correct way to light a *hannukiah* can be found [here](#).
- Ask students to bring in stuffed animal elephants to re-create the parade of elephants that carried King Antiochus's soldiers to battle against the Maccabees. Use the opportunity to discuss the difference in size and experience of the 2 sides and the reason(s) why the Maccabees fought so hard to win the battle and thus their religious freedom. More activities emphasizing religious freedom can be found on JTeach.org.