

The Miracles of Intelligence

Dr. Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that learners approach content through a variety of modalities. Gardner asserts that the realization of different approaches to learning should empower learners to explore the world through multiple avenues. Use the following activities to celebrate Hanukkah in a variety of ways.



Logical / Mathematical

How Many Candles?—Count the total number of *neirots* needed to light one *hanukkiyah* for all of Hanukkah? Include a count both with and without the *shamash*. How many would you need if you started with eight and subtracted each day (as the School of Shammai wanted)? Some say that Hanukkah recalls the offerings made in the *Beit Hamikdash* during Sukkot. How many *neirots* would be necessary if they were equal to the number of bull offerings on Sukkot? (See [Bemidbar 29:12 – 39.](#))

I Know, I Know—Find a list of Maccabees. Sort the family members by their role and/or time period.

A Multiplicity of Miracles—Count the miracles in [Al Hanisim](#). If you were to start multiplying the miracles the same way that the Passover Plagues are multiplied at the sea in the [Haggadah](#), how many miracles would you have?

Ancient Currency, Modern Marvel—When the Hasmoneans took power, they began minting their own currency, called the *prutah*, which was worth two lepta (singular: lepton). Research to determine the value of a *prutah* in your own currency. How many *prutot* would you need in order to buy enough oil to light *neirots* *Hanukah* for eight nights?

The Themes and Phrases of Hanukkah

Beginning on the 25th of Kislev, Hanukkah is a post-biblical holiday rooted in the wars between the Seleucid Greeks (and their Hellenized Jewish followers) and the Maccabees (and their tradition-minded followers), which took place beginning in 167 BCE. Accounts differ as to whether the miracle celebrated on Hanukkah was a military one or a spiritual one, but the theme of divine intervention retains primacy.

נֵרוֹת/נְרוֹת	<i>Neir/Neirot</i>	Candle/Candles
נְרוֹת חֲנֻכָּה	<i>Neirot Hanukkah</i>	Hanukkah Candles
בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ	<i>Beit Hamikdash</i>	The Temple (in Jerusalem)
עַל הַנְּסִים	<i>Al Hanisim</i>	An addition to prayers during Hanukkah (lit. “For the miracles”)
חֲנֻכְיָה	<i>Hanukkiyah</i>	The nine-branched (one for the <i>shamash</i>) candelabra lit on Hanukkah
מְנוֹרָה	<i>Menorah</i>	The seven-branched candelabra lit in the <i>Beit Hamikdash</i>
סֻפְגָּנִיּוֹת	<i>Sufganiyot</i>	Donuts (mmm...)
הַדּוּר מִצְוָה	<i>Hiddur Mitzvah</i>	Making a <i>mitzvah</i> more beautiful



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Verbal / Linguistic

A Delicious Debate—It is a question that has been debated for millennia (or at least since 1946): Which is better: the latke or the hamantash? In the spirit of holiday fun, conduct your own [Latke Hamantash Debate](#). May the best holiday treat win!

Speech! Speech!—The word *חנכה* comes from the root (ח-נ-ח) meaning “dedicate.” Give the speech that you imagine might have been given at the rededication of the *Beit Hamikdash*. Give your speech a modern spin and livestream (or at least video) the event.

Pun in the Sun—Other [explanations](#) have also been given for the origin of the name of the holiday. Come up with your own Hanukkah puns and share them over the course of the eight nights.



Visual / Spatial

Mail Call—Modern postal services have celebrated Hanukkah with symbols from the holiday. [Explore some of the stamps and symbols](#) that have been used and then create your own design.

Rainbow of Fire—Use an oil-burning *hanukkiyah*. Before lighting the wick, add food coloring to the oil. How does the food coloring affect the oil? How does the food coloring affect the flame?

Make It Personal—*Hanukkiyot* come in many shapes and with different themes. Explore what makes a *hanukkiyah* kosher. Create your own personalized *hanukkiyah* to use when lighting *neirot*.

Enhance the Mitzvah—The concept of *Hiddur Mitzvah* is particularly prominent on Hanukkah. Beautify your Hanukkah celebrations with [homemade neirot](#) and with [3-D dreidel art](#).

A Day at the Museum—Curate a pop-up *hanukkiyah* museum. People bring in their *hanukkiyot* for display. Encourage participants to write brief museum-like descriptions. (Descriptions might include why the *hanukkiyot* are meaningful to their owners.) Viewers compare and contrast styles.



Musical / Rhythmic

Maoz Tzur and More—Sing Hanukkah songs. Write your own words to a traditional melody. Write your own music to traditional words. Feeling particularly ambitious? Write a whole new song.

Frying Beats—While someone is frying food, close your eyes and listen to the sounds that the food makes. What does the crackle of the oil sound like? What rhythm comes from the noises?

The Hills of Jerusalem Are Alive—Research what instruments were played in the *Beit Hamikdash* and how they were used at the time of the Maccabees. Recreate the sounds of these instruments. Do the same for instruments used in battle during that time period.

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Body / Kinesthetic

So Fresh So Clean—In honor of the Maccabees' actions, clean your classroom, your school, and/or your room. Why do you think the Maccabees went through such an arduous process to clean the *Beit Hamikdash*?

O Hanukkah! O Hanukkah!—Have a party. All dance the hora.

All Fall Down—Play dreidel with a human dreidel. Tape a letter from the dreidel to each of your sides. Spin around until you become dizzy and fall down. The result is whichever letter is facing up when you fall.

A Sporting Chance—Greek soldiers wore heavy armor (up to 60 lbs.) while the Maccabees wore very light armor, if any at all. Put on heavy, protective sports equipment (e.g. catcher's gear, hockey goalie pads and helmet, fencing clothing) and try moving around. Then try moving with light accoutrements. What is the advantage of each? What about the terrain in Israel might have been advantageous to the Maccabees?



Naturalistic

Fry 'em Up—Try different vegetables to make latkes. Have a taste test. Try them with sour cream and apple sauce (but not at the same time). Try other dipping options too. You can even try frying the latkes in different oils. Want a sweeter fried treat? Make *sufganiyot* and try different fillings.

Cave Dwellings—At first, the Maccabees and their followers hid in caves. Find a cave (or other outdoor hiding spot) near you. Imagine what it might be like to hide for many years.

Can You See the Light?—Check how much daylight there is on each day of Hanukkah. What do you notice? Why might Hanukkah fall during this time of year? (See [Tractate Avodah Zarah 8a](#) for a *Midrash* on the subject.)

A Burning Question—Compare and contrast the burning properties of different types of wax *neirot*. Do the same with wax *neirot* and oil *neirot*. Which gives the brightest flame? Which burns longest? Which burns fastest?

Oil's Well That Ends Well—Hanukkah foods are traditionally fried in oil. Delve into the dietary properties of frying. What is the healthiest oil to cook in? What are the benefits and disadvantages of frying, baking, and steaming? What would be the healthiest way to make a potato pancake? What is the crispiest?



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Interpersonal

It's a Miracle—The second *berachah* for lighting *neiroi* refers to God making “miracles for our ancestors in those days.” Speak to a grandparent/grandfriend about a miracle they have experienced in their own life.

A Very Valuable Book—[Create a book](#) that emphasizes values connected to Hanukkah. With family, explore these values over the course of the eight nights.

All That Glitters Is Good—Giving *gelt* to students (and originally to teachers) on Hanukkah is an age-old tradition. In the spirit of giving, start a community clothing/food drive.

A Helping Hand—The *shamash* is different from the other *neiroi* because it is a helper *neir*. What will you do to be like the *shamash* and help others? Write out a plan to help yourself follow through.



Intrapersonal

Be a Maccabee—Imagine that you are Judah Maccabee. How would you react to human rights violations today? Create a [Prezi](#) to demonstrate how you would go about it.

Do You Mind?—Create a [mind map](#) about Hanukkah. Use Popplet or an online resource to make it.

Go Public—*Neiroi Hanukkah* are meant to be seen in order to publicize the miracle of Hanukkah. Make a plan to incorporate being Jewish into your daily, public life.

Make Your Skills Shine—*Neiroi Hanukkah* are meant for enjoyment but not for using their light (e.g. no using the light to read or to draw). This contrasts with personal traits that might lie hidden but should be used. Identify a personal skill or talent that lies hidden and endeavor to use it.



Existential

Isn't Israel a Bit Wet to Be Outside This Time of Year?—There is evidence that Hanukkah was a late celebration of Sukkot. How are the two holidays similar? How are they different? Make a Venn Diagram to show their commonalities and differences.

It's a Miracle Doc—What is a miracle? Explore that question while [creating a documentary](#) about miracles in your own life.

Growing Up—Hanukkah became a major holiday in modern Israel because of its themes of a threatened minority overcoming a regional superpower. Explore how Israel's role in the region has evolved over time and what it means to no longer see yourself as the little guy.

Major Publicity—Hanukkah is treated as a major holiday in the United States when, in truth, it is traditionally a minor holiday. Create a campaign to help another favorite minor holiday go viral.