



HANUKKAH LIGHTS

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This board book celebrates the exciting holiday of Hanukkah—with latkes to eat, dreidels to spin, and presents to give and receive.

In *Hanukkah Lights*, each of the candles shown in the menorah is vivid and cheerful, appearing almost as if in wrapping paper. Take advantage of your children's natural attraction to all things vibrant and colorful by creating a simple menorah from paper or cardboard and encouraging your little ones to tear small pieces of bright or shiny paper, helping them tape or paste the "flames" in the area at the top of each candle. These scraps might come from, for example, holiday cards or pages of old magazines. You might show the progression of the holiday by "lighting" one flame each evening.

Hanukkah Lights depicts the giving and receiving presents during the holiday. Many American Jewish families have adopted the custom of giving gifts at *Hanukkah*, probably because the celebration often coincides with the Christmas season. Gift-giving, of course, is not the reason for *Hanukkah*; making presents just one of a number of anticipated aspects of the holiday is a gift in itself. As your children get older, designating each night for a family activity is a way of elevating the season to one of greater significance: one evening may be for inviting friends and neighbors to a dance party, another for a make-your-own pizza dinner, and yet another for visiting and candle-lighting with Jewish seniors at a local nursing home.

LIGHTING CANDLES

The joyous holiday of freedom, *Hanukkah*, begins on the 25th of the Hebrew month of *Kislev* (falling between late November

and December). The lighting of a nine-branched menorah, the *hanukkiah*, is a treasured Jewish tradition. On the first night, one candle is lit from a helper candle, the *shamash*. As *Hanukkah Lights* shows, an additional candle is added each night. While candles are placed in the *hanukkiah* from right to left, they are lit from left to right, the newest candle always being lit first.

PLAYING DREIDEL

A popular game during *Hanukkah* is *dreidel*, played with a 4-sided top with a different Hebrew letter on each side. The letters (*nun, gimmel, hay, shin*) represent the first letter of each word in *Nes gadol haya sham* (A great miracle happened there), a reference to the oil in the rededicated lights which lasted for eight days following the retaking of the holy Temple from the Syrians in 165 B.C.E.

LATKES AND GELT

In recognition of oil's importance in the rededication of the Temple, it is traditional during *Hanukkah* to eat foods fried in oil. The most familiar *Hanukkah* delicacy is *latkes*—potato pancakes. *Hanukkah gelt*, chocolate coins wrapped in foil, are also holiday favorites.

* The transliterated word *Hanukkah* can be spelled in many different ways—including *Chanukkah, Channukah, Chanuka*, etc. Pj