Discovering CHANUKKAH



A Christian Family Guide

Created by Janell Kremer

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Feast of Dedication

This Festival of Dedication observes the Divinely orchestrated victory of the Maccabees over Antiochus Epiphanes in 160 BCE. As Christians, this is an important day for us to remember, because it reminds us of God's faithfulness and loyal love to His chosen people. The spiritual climate of that day was rife with hostility, much like today. There were many Jews who had conformed to Hellenism, and lost their love for God. This celebration reminds us that when everything looks hopeless, there is a good chance of us all experiencing a miracle. Jesus is the light of the world, and He lives in each of us today. His salvation has come to all who believe, will you join in celebrating Him as God's light?

This guide is for the whole family. If you have wondered how a Christian can celebrate Chanukkah, this will give you ideas. There are activities for young kids to keep them engaged, instructions on how to light the menorah, and a recipe for some amazing Israeli doughnuts.

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Invitation to Celebrate

FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION

Chanukkah, also called the Festival of Lights, celebrates a miracle that God performed for the Jewish people. After they defeated Antiochus Epiphanes, the Maccabees cleaned the Temple in Jerusalem of pagan idols and re-lit the Menorah, which is a seven-branched candelabra. There was only enough oil to last for one day, but God made one jar of oil burn for eight days!

We celebrate a great miracle by lighting the Chanukkah, a special nine-branched Menorah. We also play the dreidel to remember this miracle in each generation. Yeshua (Jesus) celebrated Chanukkah with his disciples, as mentioned in John chapter ten.



JOHN 10:22-24

It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon’s Colonnade. The people surrounded him and asked, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

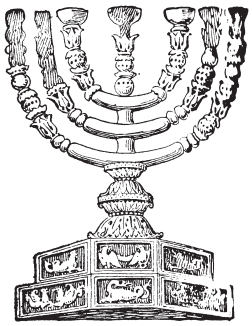
The Lamp of God

THE HOLY MENORAH

The word *menorah* is Hebrew for "lamp." The holy menorah was formed from one piece of pure beaten gold weighing nearly 100 pounds! It had seven branches (for the seven lamps). According to the Talmud, the menorah measured a little over 5 feet tall.

WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?

The menorah's light illuminated the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem until the Second Temple was destroyed by Titus, a Roman general.



Example of the original Menorah

A LOOK-A-LIKE?



Throughout Israel, from the mountains of Lebanon to the Sinai desert, a wild plant grows whose shape embodies the verses in Exodus that describes the menorah (see Exodus 25:31-40). It is a member of the salvia plant group, which includes peppermint, spearmint, and sage. This particular plant is called the Moriah.

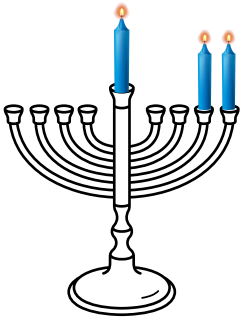
Lighting the Menorah

HOW TO LIGHT THE MENORAH

On the first night, one light is lit. Each night after that, you light one more candle. By the eighth night, eight lights are burning. Place the candles on the right and light them from the left, starting with the newest candle.



1ST NIGHT



2ND NIGHT



3RD NIGHT



4TH NIGHT



5TH NIGHT



6TH NIGHT



7TH NIGHT



8TH NIGHT

THE SERVANT CANDLE



The shamash (servant) candle lights all the other candles. The shamash candle holder is usually higher than the others and in the middle of the menorah. As you light the candle, recite the blessings (the shehecheyanu blessing is said only on the first night).

Light your candles after dark but early enough in the evening for the neighbors to see them (see Matthew 5:15).

THE CALL TO SERVE



Yeshuah (Jesus) described Himself as a servant, when He said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (see Mark 10:45). Jesus Christ modeled servanthood when He came to dwell among us as a human. He became a servant when He obeyed God's will, and He demonstrated how to be a servant when He washed the feet of His disciples. During Chanukkah, look for ways to serve others around you, for this honors Yeshua.

The Chanukkah Blessings

THE FIRST BLESSING

Recite the first blessing outloud together:

Praised are you, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who makes us holy through commandments and commands us to light the Chanukkah candles.

THE SECOND BLESSING

The second blessing expresses thanks for the miracle of deliverance:

Praised are you, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who did wondrous things for our ancestors in former times at this season.

THE THIRD BLESSING

This third blessing is chanted only on the first night:

Praised are You, Adonai, Our God, Sovereign of the universe, who keeps us alive, sustains us, and brought us to this occasion.

After reciting the blessings and lighting the candles, the following paragraphs should be recited:

These lights we kindle upon the miracles, the wonders, the salvations, and the battles, which you performed for our ancestors in those days at this season through your holy priests.

During all eight days of Chanukkah these lights are sacred, and we are not permitted to make ordinary use of them, but to look at them in order to express thanks and praise to your great Name for your miracles, your wonders, and your salvations.

REFLECTION

Our family reflects on the miracles that Jesus did every night of Chanukkah. From walking on water to healing a man born blind, there was nothing impossible for Jesus. Discuss together, as a family, what Jesus has done in your lives. What miracles have you seen? What does salvation mean? This is a beautiful time to point everyone back to the true light source, Jesus Christ.

Playing a Dreidel

WHY THE DREIDEL?

The dreidel, also known as sevivon, is a popular tradition during Chanukkah. We play dreidel to remember the two important miracles God performed for our ancestors. The first miracle was that God helped a small group of Jewish people defeat a powerful army. Secondly, the Lord caused one day's worth of oil to last for eight.

The letters on the Dreidel form an acronym that reminds of God's miracles. The Hebrew letters nun, gimmel, hei, shin, which appear on the dreidel in the Diaspora, stand for nes gadol haya sham–"a great miracle happened there,"

נ	ג	ה	ש
NUN	GIMEL	HEY	SHIN

while in Israel the dreidel says nun, gimmel, hey, pey, which means "a great miracle happened here."

נ	ג	ה	פ
NUN	GIMEL	HEY	PEY

HOW TO PLAY

Any number of people can take part in this great game. Each player begins the game with an equal number of game pieces (about 10-15) such as gelt (chocolate coins), pennies, nuts, chocolate chips, raisins, etc. At the beginning of each round, every participant puts one game piece into the center "pot." In addition, every time the pot is empty or has only one game piece left, every player should put one in the pot. Every time it's your turn, spin the dreidel once. Depending on the outcome, you give or get game pieces from the pot:

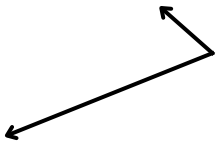
נ means "nisht" or "nothing" [Yiddish]
The player does nothing

ג means "gantz" or "everything" [Yiddish]
The player gets everything in the pot

ה means "halb" or "half" [Yiddish]
The player gets half of the pot*

ש means "shtel" or "put in" [Yiddish]

פ means "pay"



The player adds a game piece to the pot

If you find that you have no game pieces left, you are either "out" or may ask a fellow player for a "loan." When one person has won everything, that round of the game is over!

*(If there is an odd number of pieces in the pot, the player takes half of the total plus one).

Decorate The Menorah

Use the template below to design your menorah. You can use different colors to decorate the base, and then color your own candles.

Sufganiyot (Israeli Doughnuts)

INGREDIENTS



- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 package (1/4 ounce) active dry yeast
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1-1/2 to 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 teaspoons canola or peanut oil
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Oil for deep-fat frying
- 3/4 cup raspberry preserves
- Confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, mix the whole wheat flour, yeast, cloves and 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour. In a small saucepan, heat the water, honey and oil to 120°-130°. Add to dry ingredients; beat on medium speed for 2 minutes. Add egg and vanilla; beat 2 minutes longer. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough (dough will be sticky).
2. Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.
3. Punch down dough. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; roll dough to 1/4-in. thickness. Cut with a floured 2-in. biscuit cutter.
4. In an electric skillet or deep fryer, heat oil to 375°. Fry doughnuts, a few at a time, for 45 seconds on each side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels.
5. Cut a small hole in the tip of a pastry bag or in a corner of a resealable bag; insert a small tip. Fill bag with preserves.
6. With a small knife, pierce a hole into the side of each doughnut; fill with preserves. Dust with confectioners’ sugar. Serve warm.