



Read the PJ Library Book

Hanukkah! (3's)

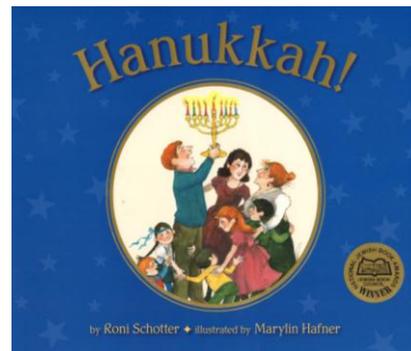
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Synopsis

This book beautifully combines poetry and prose to give us a view of one family's celebration of Hanukkah. The family shares the fun of the holiday as well as all of the preparations, amidst an atmosphere of joy and love. The detailed illustrations add to the feeling of boisterous celebration. Grandma, parents, and children sing, light candles, eat traditional foods, and make gifts for one another, while younger brother Sam tries to teach baby Moe to say "Hanukkah!"



Discuss the Jewish values and vocabulary with one another

From generation to generation - *L'Dor va-Dor* - לדור ודור

Family - *Mishpacha* - משפחה

Acts of loving kindness - *Gemilut chasadim* - גמילות חסדים

From generation to generation – L'Dor va-Dor. The concept of passing tradition “L'dor va dor,” from generation to generation is so fundamental to Judaism, that its words are recited as a core part of our liturgy. This central prayer, the *Kedusha*, (from the Hebrew word *kadosh*, meaning holy) is said three times a day and signifies the endurance of faith and the continuity of the Jewish people. We gain strength and knowledge from the generations before us, and we commit to passing on the tradition after us. Each generation is like a link in a chain, making its own unique contributions to the collected lore of Jewish culture. This is often physically represented at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service, as a grandparent takes a Torah scroll from its sacred cabinet, and passes it first to the child's parent who then passes it to the child. What role does each of us, teacher and student, play in this chain of transmission?

[For more about “L'Dor va-Dor” please read the *Beni's Family Treasury* Resource Guide.]

Family – Mishpacha. Jewish life revolves around the family, and all of rabbinic literature teaches that family is a core Jewish value. The Torah provides a framework, and the Talmud (lit: “learning” - an ancient text that details Jewish law) fleshes out many of the obligations of family members to one another. According to the Ten Commandments children must “honor” (Ex. 20:12) and “revere” (Lev. 19:3) their parents. The Talmud explains that “honor” signifies a child’s obligation to feed and clothe their parents, and “revere” refers to less tangible actions such as not sitting in a parent’s chair or interrupting their conversation. Parents in turn are required to show respect to their children. “A man should spend less than his means on food, up to his means on clothes, beyond his means in honoring wife and children because they are dependent on him.” (Hullin 84b) The family members in *Hanukkah!* show a great deal of respect to one another. How do we foster this habit in the children in our care?



Acts of loving kindness – Gemilut chasadim. *Pirkei Avot*, often translated as Ethics of our ancestors, is an ancient text that focuses on human relationships – to oneself, with fellow humans, and with God. “The world stands on three things: on Torah, on *avodah* (service to God and community), and on acts of loving kindness.” [Pirkei Avot 1:2] How does the adjective “loving” affect the idea of kindness? Twelfth century scholar Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Maimonides or RaMBaM, says that loving kindness means we go beyond monetary help and use our entire being. Irving Bunim, 20th c. philanthropist and scholar, adds that loving-kindness is reciprocal – though you are helping others, you are benefitting from the mitzvah you do.

Imagine your community living these Jewish values.

How would your classroom change?
How will families be involved?

In the Classroom / Centers

- ✧ From generation to generation: In this book the older siblings work with the younger children to prepare for the holiday. Perhaps an older class would do an **art project** with your students, while you might prepare a **song or finger-play** for your class to sing with the “babies.”
- ✧ From generation to generation: Play a passing game with ritual objects during **morning meeting**, making sure to repeat the name of the object with the game.
- ✧ Family: There are many ways your classroom can represent the families of your children. Ask for empty food boxes to stock the **kitchen**, allowing children to “cook” comfort foods. Families might send in a favorite musical CD to share in the **listening center**. Framed family photos on an **accessible shelf** show children their family is always with them.
- ✧ Acts of loving kindness: Add acts of loving kindness into the **job chart** until kindness becomes a habit. Jobs might include the boo-boo brigade that helps you gets bandages or ice when a (minor) injury occurs in the classroom, or a photo-finder when a child is upset and needs to “see” her family. Make it part of classroom routine to carry a friend’s mat for **morning meeting** or set another’s place for **snack**; make a **group phone call** to say “*refuah sheleima*” (get well soon) when a classmate is out sick.



Bridging Home and School

Latke cook-off

Cooking shows are all the rage, so host a “Best Chef, Latke” TV show at your school. Invite your families to participate. Family members can cook, emcee, taste, and judge alongside school and synagogue leadership. You might read *Hanukkah!* aloud and sing Hanukkah songs while the latkes are sizzling. Have plenty of extra latkes on hand for everyone to eat. Film short segments of this family fun to post on your website for anyone who could not attend.

Family Hanukkah Chain

Paper and foam chains aren’t just for Sukkot! Send strips of foam sheets home to each family. Ask that each family member write their name on a strip along with something they learned from a parent, grandparent, sibling, or any older family member. Encourage families to send photos with their links. As you and the children assemble the chain in school, talk about what families have passed from generation to generation. Hang photos from the chain to decorate your classroom and hallway.



Family Engagement at Home

Loving Kindness Hanukkah Gifts

Help families dedicate one night of Hanukkah to doing acts of kindness for others. Prepare the children by discussing with them how helping others can make you feel good. Send some fun ideas home such as baking cookies for a neighbor, bringing Mom a cushion for her feet, or singing Hanukkah songs via Skype to a long-distance relative. Ask for families’ contributions to your classroom “Acts of Loving Kindness” book.

Share your stories and experiences with everyone.

What happened?

How can the learning go deeper?

Tell us a story... of kindness.

Collect stories of kindness from home and from school. Each story could be its own mini-book. For example: *Our classroom is constantly on the lookout for opportunities to do acts of loving kindness. This week we tip-toed into Rabbi Ellen’s office and left her a surprise Hanukkah card. [Picture of children carrying card] We giggled when we thought about how delighted and happy she would be. Sure enough, Rabbi Ellen came to tell us how wonderful she felt when she saw our card. We feel wonderful, too. [Picture of Rabbi and children]*

Then share with all of us on our private Facebook group page! <http://pjfor.me/pjgts-facebook>

More resources and websites for inspiration

Hanukkah basics <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday7.htm>

Acts of kindness for kids <http://www.foundthemarbles.com/2012/02/acts-of-kindness-for-kids/>

Kindness and empathy in the classroom <http://www.sproutonline.com/kindnesscounts>

