



# HANUKKAH: A COUNTING BOOK

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Count the number of candles lighted each night of Hanukkah in English, Hebrew and Yiddish!

## THE STORY OF HANUKKAH

The story of *Hanukkah* recounts the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Syria in 165 BCE. Resisting the Greeks who had forbidden the practice of Judaism, the small but brave Maccabean army remained steadfast in its commitment to preserve Jewish life and in its refusal to surrender religious freedom. With a single flask of oil, the Maccabees “re-dedicated” the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and were astonished when the oil miraculously lasted for eight days.

There are many customs and traditions that help us recall this story of courage, but one enables us to fulfill the *mitzvah* (good deed or commandment) of *pirsum hanes*, publicizing the miracle of *Hanukkah*. When a *hanukkiah* (*Hanukkah* menorah) is lit each holiday night and placed proudly in the window of a Jewish home, it not only symbolizes the privilege to express our religious freedom, but also represents the pride that exists in the heart of the Jewish people.

The celebration of *Hanukkah* is intrinsically tied to the Jewish value of *yachson*, the expression of pride in our collective ancestry. The varying customs, traditions and languages of the Jewish people create an interwoven thread, marking our journey from slavery to autonomy and from oppression to freedom. What aspects of Judaism are you most proud of? How can you find ways to express that pride as a family

## USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Utilize the bold graphics, die-cut candles and numbers that appear on each page to introduce your children to counting in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Articulate the numbers presented and encourage your little ones to try counting to eight in each language! You may want to consider incorporating a set of numbers into a melody, sung to a familiar tune of your choice. Walk through the vibrant pictures, pausing to explore the many components of the *Hanukkah* story and introducing some of the symbols associated with this holiday: for example, a *dreidel* is a four-sided top used for a children’s holiday game, while *latkes* (potato pancakes) and jelly doughnuts are foods often eaten during *Hanukkah* and fried in oil, symbolic of the oil in the temple lamp.

Using cups and wooden craft spoons, construct a nine-branched *hanukkiah* that will be safe for little hands. Place eight plastic cups upside down on a flat surface and adhere with child-safe glue. You can stack one atop another for the *shamash* (the helper candle) and place it anywhere along the row of cups. Cut a small slit on the bottom of each cup to insert the wooden spoon and, using non-toxic paint or markers, create the image of dancing flames. As each night of *Hanukkah* progresses, your child can light the menorah! These wooden spoons also serve as wonderful counting tools for your child to use as you read this story. This is also a great time for your entire family to get up and dance!