



THE CHANUKKAH GUEST

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Old Bear, teased from hibernation by the smell of latkes, comes to Bubba Brayna's cottage. Thinking her guest is the rabbi in a lovely fur coat, Bubba gives Old Bear a warm welcome and all the latkes he can eat.

Chanukkah* provides us with much symbolism, one example being the eight candles we light, a reminder of the scant amount of oil that lasted eight days in the rededicated Temple's eternal light. For many of us, the lights of *Chanukkah* also helps dispel the dark and cold of long winter nights. In *The Chanukkah Guest*, even Bubba's difficulty with her vision can be seen as related to light versus darkness. Enter the great bear of this holiday tale, pulled from the shadows of his winter sleep by the fragrance of Bubba's latkes. This story lends itself to sharing many thoughts with children, such as:

- In what ways is light important to us?
- What sources of light do you know? Consider making a list, including sun, moon, stars, light bulbs, candles, etc.
- Why have the Jewish customs of the *Chanukkah* menorah lasted for so many centuries?
- What can we learn from Bubba and the "light" that the bear brings to her life?
- In what ways can *Chanukkah* bring us closer to the people we love? brings to her life?

THE DREIDEL

Chanukkah provides appealing activities for children of all ages, one of which is playing *dreidel*, a four-sided spinning top. Hebrew letters on the four sides of the dreidel are the nun, gimel, hay, and shin, standing for the words "*Nes gadol haya sham*"—"A great miracle happened there." In Israel, the *dreidel's* shin is replaced by pe for the word "*po*," meaning "here"—since in Israel one would say, "A great miracle happened here." *Dreidel* can be played with any number of items, such as peanuts, candy, or pennies. Directions are readily available on the Internet. Legend has it that during the reign of King Antiochus IV, Jews met in secret to study Torah and kept a top at hand; if discovered, the assembled Jews could pretend to be playing *dreidel*.

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

