

Nonna's Hanukkah Surprise

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{ **What brings us together?** }

This Little Light of Mine

Rachel loves going to Nonna's house, but since Nonna isn't Jewish, Rachel's concerned that Hanukkah won't get any attention. Turns out Nonna understands how important Jewish traditions are to her granddaughter, even if she doesn't share them. When Rachel tells Nonna about the holiday, she focuses not on the miracles or the fried foods, but on the light – lighting one more candle each night until eight candles of the menorah are burning brightly. It makes sense to Nonna: When we let our uniqueness shine through, the light just grows and grows and grows. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/nonnashanukkahsurprise.

HANDS ON!

Turn Something Old into Something New

Nonna has lots of empty perfume bottles just waiting for a new life as a menorah. That's putting the Jewish value of *bal tashchit*, or not wasting, into action. Don't worry if you don't have any perfume bottles hanging around. With a little creativity and a lot of super-duper glue, you can make a menorah out of . . .

Tealight holders

Leftover nuts and bolts

Old spice jars

Metal bottle caps

Whatever you use, make sure to create places for each of the eight nights, plus a separate place for the *shammash* (the "helper" that is used to light the other candles). The more creative and unique it is, the better. Happy Hanukkah!

Girl Power

Rachel is sure that "if she'd lived in the days of Antiochus, she would have been a Maccabee, too." That's why Rachel's new menorah, with nine Maccabee girls, is so perfect. Every kid – and grownup – knows how frustrated Rachel feels when she realizes she has misplaced her menorah, but Nonna swoops in to save the day: "Tell me about the menorah, bella. Then I'm going to make you feel better." The Jewish value of *l'dor vador* (Hebrew for "from generation to generation") often refers to the generational transfer of traditions, but in this case what's being passed down is pure love. Talk about a real-life wonder woman!

Mix It Up

Rachel's family, like many, is a mix of backgrounds and faiths. When Nonna creates an improvised menorah, she makes Rachel feel better – and she also captures the spirit of mixed families, where everyone has something to contribute. Nonna uses "super-duper glue" and empty perfume bottles to add her own personal touch (or personal scent?) to Rachel's menorah, turning the holiday into a truly shared family experience. Call it another Hanukkah miracle.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

TAKE a look at the illustrations. What do you think Rachel is feeling on each page? What makes you think that?

RACHEL tells Nonna all about her menorah. If you were trying to explain Hanukkah to someone, what would you tell them?

HAVE you ever misplaced something that meant a lot to you? How did you feel? What did you do?

HOW is Rachel's family similar to yours? How is it different?