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## HANDS ON!

In this story, the grown-ups do a lot of the cooking and prepping, but the kids play big roles, too. Get everyone involved in your family's Hanukkah festivities:

**Make latkes together.** Frying foods in hot oil may be best left to parents, but mixing up batter? Kids can handle that! Pull together the ingredients from your favorite latke recipe, then get ready for the whole house to smell delicious (for days).

**Decorate the house.** The most beautiful Hanukkah decoration is your menorah, of course – but there's no need to stop there. Handmade posters and banners help get guests in a festive mood, and making them adds to the anticipation.

**Make a dreidel.** Sam shapes his from clay in this story, but you can also try making one out of cardboard, an egg carton, or even a marshmallow on a toothpick! As long as it has four sides and it spins, you're all set for a rousing game of dreidel.

For ideas to add more fun to your family's Hanukkah, visit [pjlibrary.org/hanukkah](http://pjlibrary.org/hanukkah).

## Jewish Concepts

Hanukkah commemorates a miraculous time in Jewish history. Back in the second century BCE, in the land that is now Israel, a small group of Jews called the Maccabees fought against the far larger Syrian-Greek army – and won! When the Jews reclaimed their Holy Temple, they discovered there was only enough oil to relight the ritual menorah for one day. Miraculously, that small amount of oil burned eight whole days, just long enough for the Jews to procure more oil.

Arriving at or near the winter solstice, Hanukkah offers a welcome bit of light at the darkest time of the year. The central ritual of the holiday is lighting Hanukkah candles, which are a symbol of persistence and faith in the midst of challenging times. When families gather together to light their menorahs, they remember how the Maccabees never gave up their struggle. The small flames of the Hanukkah candles are a tiny, bright reminder to keep hope alive.

Families also celebrate Hanukkah by eating! Foods fried in oil like *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (donuts) are reminders of the oil in the Hanukkah story. Playing *dreidel* is another classic Hanukkah activity. The Hebrew letters on a dreidel stand for “*nes gadol haya sham*” – a great miracle happened there. Happy Hanukkah!