



## A Dreidel in Time

written by  
**Marcia Berneger**

illustrated by  
**Beatriz Castro**

**{ How do you connect with the past? }**

### Being “Here”

Around most of the world, dreidels have the Hebrew letters nun, gimmel, hey, and shin, which stand for nes gadol haya sham, “a great miracle happened there.” On Israeli dreidels, the letter peh replaces shin to stand for “nes gadol haya po” — “a great miracle happened here.” And just like Devorah and Benjamin, we can actually go to the “here” where the Hanukkah story happened. Modi’in is now a large and lively city in Israel. We can literally walk in the Maccabees’ footsteps through caves they hid in and canyons where they ambushed their enemies. We can also visit the site of the ancient Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where that small jug of oil miraculously lasted for eight days. To learn more, visit [pjlibrary.org/dreidelintime](http://pjlibrary.org/dreidelintime).

### HANDS ON!

#### Make a Grateful Dreidel Mosaic

This craft gives you a chance to think about all of your “everythings” — things you can be grateful for. Looking at it will be like spinning a gimmel every time!

Supplies:

Colorful construction paper

Clear contact paper

Scissors

Marker

Cut out a large dreidel shape from the construction paper. Cut out the middle of the shape to create a frame. Stick the shape onto contact paper and set aside. Cut out many small squares of construction paper in different colors. Write something you are grateful for on each one. Stick the squares onto the contact paper in the center of the dreidel shape to create a mosaic look. Lay another piece of contact paper on top to seal it. Put it on your wall to remind you of the “everythings” you have in your life.

### Part of the Story

When we connect with our heritage, we see ourselves as part of the story. Devorah and Benjamin literally become part of the Hanukkah story, but there are other ways to do it. We can choose to adopt the Passover perspective that “in every generation we should see ourselves as if we personally came out of Egypt” and apply it to Hanukkah — envisioning ourselves fighting in the trenches with the Maccabees for the freedom to live out our most sacred beliefs and traditions. And when we light the Hanukkah candles, eat latkes and play dreidel, we are evidence of the Maccabees’ victory.

### Grateful for Everything

Landing on gimmel brings Benjamin and Devorah back home. In the game of dreidel, “gimmel means you get everything” — and by this point in the story, the children realize they really do have everything: a wonderful home and family, a warm holiday celebration, and the joy of being able to give as well as receive. Sometimes being taken out of our comfort zone enables us to return with deeper gratitude for what we had all along. We can all use a reminder to open our eyes and appreciate “everything” we have.

### TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

**HOW** might this story have been different if Benjamin hadn’t helped the Maccabees make a battle plan? Or if Devorah hadn’t found the last unbroken jar of oil?

**HOW** do Devorah and Benjamin’s feelings about Hanukkah change as a result of their adventures? Which parts of Hanukkah feel important to you?

**HOW** do Devorah and Benjamin help the Maccabees defeat Antiochus, the king who refused to let the Jewish people practice their religion? Can you describe some injustices that exist in today’s world?