



Hanukkah Lights

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Synopsis

This board book celebrates the exciting holiday of Hanukkah -- with latkes to eat, dreidels to spin, and presents to give and receive.

Jewish Concepts

Young children, like all human beings, are fascinated by light – a nightlight in the bedroom, candles on Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath), or flashlights lighting the way on a stormy night when the electricity fails. That’s partly why Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is so captivating for little ones. The eight days of Hanukkah remind us of a small band of Jewish soldiers, the Maccabees, who fought against the harsh rule of King Antiochus around 168 CE. After a long struggle, the Maccabees regained control of the holy Temple, which had been ransacked by the king’s army. The Maccabees wanted to bring light back into that sacred space, but they had only one day’s worth of oil to burn. According to legend, that small amount of oil burned for eight days, long enough to prepare new oil: a miracle!

In the days leading up to Hanukkah, point out to your children various sources of light: the sun, moon, stars, candles, flashlights, electric lights, you name it. You can also place *hanukkiot* (plural of *hanukkiah*, Hebrew for “Hanukkah menorah”) around the house. Point out the *shamash* (the “servant” candle), the ninth candle of the hanukkiah that serves to light the others. When the first night of Hanukkah arrives, the image of a lighted hanukkiah will be familiar, and its light will be a welcome beacon at the darkest time of the year.