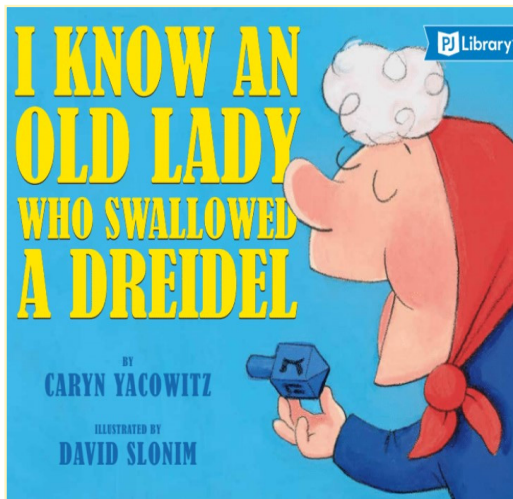


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{ **What's so funny about Chanukah?** }



HANDS ON!

Make Dreidel Cookies

If the Old Lady in this story ate this kind of dreidel, it's definitely not fatal – but it is delicious! If you don't have a dreidel-shaped cookie cutter, use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to create your dreidels.

Mix up a batter of your favorite sugar cookie dough. Roll it out, and cut out hearts with the heart-shaped cookie cutter.

Use a butter knife to cut the tops off the hearts, then slice off the sides. Your cookies will have straight sides and come to a point at the bottom.

Make indentations on the top so that you are left with a stem.

Roll out the excess dough that you've cut off – you might have enough to create another cookie or two. Decorate your cookies with frosting to form the Hebrew letters nun, gimel, hey, and shin, which stand for the Hebrew phrase nes gadol hayah sham – “a great miracle happened there.” Bake according to your recipe directions, and then eat (and swallow!). Enjoy!

Miracle of Miracles

The story of Chanukah (often spelled Hanukkah) is filled with miracles. First, a small group of Maccabee warriors rose up against the much larger Syrian-Greek army – and won. Then, upon reclaiming the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, they found a day's worth of oil. They used it to light the ritual menorah, and it burned for eight days – enough time to procure more oil. Another miracle! But why stop there? The very fact that Jewish culture and values have survived all these centuries later might feel like a miracle, too. And that a determined old lady can consume this much food!

Picture a Story

This book sneaks important, famous works of art into a clever twist on a folk song. It also sneaks in a lot of information about Chanukah! Funny thing is, we don't find a lot of art that depicts Chanukah. That's partly because for many centuries, many forms of art were discouraged in Jewish culture. One of the Ten Commandments, “Do not make graven images,” has sometimes been understood to include any figurative art. Maybe that's why Jewish culture has focused so much on storytelling instead. But we can have both – as this book proves. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/iknowanoldlady.

Delicious Dreidels

As the Jewish people have lived all around the world, classic Chanukah foods have been inspired by local communities. Jews of Ashkenazi (Eastern and Central European) descent often eat latkes (potato pancakes), while those of Sephardic (Spanish and Portuguese) background might be more likely to go for bimuelos, a type of fried dough. Modern Israelis have brought sufganiyot (jelly donuts) into the mix. What's the connecting link? They're all fried in oil, which reminds us of the miracle of the oil that burned for eight days in the Holy Temple. But nobody would ever try to fry a dreidel, the four-sided top that's used at Chanukah. Or would they?

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

LOOK at the first couple of pages in this story before the text begins. What do you notice? What hints do the opening pictures give you about this story?

WHAT Chanukah activities do you see the family taking part in? What does your family like to do during Chanukah?

WHAT'S the funniest thing you've ever eaten?