



Hanukkah

The story of Hanukkah is the tale of the victory of the Jewish people led by the high priest Mattathias and his sons (the Maccabees), over the Syrian-Greek army in 167 BCE. The triumphant Maccabees then had to clean and restore the defiled Holy Temple. The final step in rededicating the Temple (the Hebrew word *hanukkah* means dedication) was relighting the *Ner Tamid*, the Eternal Lamp, for which pure olive oil was required. The one cruse of pure oil discovered lasted a miraculous eight

days, so the rabbis of ancient times declared Hanukkah “days for praise and thanksgiving” (Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 21). Part of the celebration famously includes foods cooked in oil, such as potato latkes or *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts).

The Sounds of Hanukkah

Sizzle! Flop! Splash! Teachers at a Philadelphia workshop noted the use of onomatopoeia in the book *The Runway Latkes*. This got everyone thinking of all of the sounds of Hanukkah, such as the singing of *brachot* (blessings) and songs, dreidels as they fall, Hanukkah gelt, and laughter at parties. Soundscape challenge: record a collection of these sounds (and more) with your students. Play it back, and see how many sounds you can identify.

Latke Bowling

Other teachers reading *The Runaway Latkes* got carried away with...latkes! “What if we stack pretend latkes and knock them down with matzoh balls?” The ideas are infinite!

The Yellow Comforter Tzedakah Project

Silicon Valley’s Hanukkah Tzedakah Project was off-the-charts successful. The project was based on the book *How Dalia Put a Big Yellow Comforter Inside a Tiny Blue Box: And Other Wonders of Tzedakah*.

How Many Books Can You Read?

“For Hanukkah we read ALL of the PJ Library Hanukkah books,” said Rachael Schwartz, ECE Director of the Beth Israel Preschool in Owings Mills, MD. The school truly celebrates Hanukkah as a Festival of Light. Classes made displays that involve electric lights, including a Lego *chanukiyah* (Hanukkah menorah). Families gathered one night of Hanukkah to see how the school had been transformed. Lighted displays lined the darkened hallways. Children were greeted with light stick bracelets, and families were encouraged to bring a flashlight to add to the light show.

