

CHANUKAH WORKSHOP



SAMPLE KIT

Dear Rabbi/Instructor/Principal,

Thank you for your interest in the NJOP Chanukah Workshop. Since 1987, through its many innovative programs designed to educate unaffiliated and marginally affiliated Jews, the National Jewish Outreach Program has had the good fortune of reaching over one million North American Jews in thousands of locations and welcoming them into Jewish life. The Chanukah Workshop is a recently developed program designed to provide leaders and students with a stimulating, thought-provoking and interactive opportunity to explore this favorite of holidays.

The Chanukah Workshop has been designed in two formats so that it can be presented in different ways:

- A. Question Guide: Material Presented With Questions and Sources - But NO Answers
- B. Discussion Guide: Material Presented With Questions, Sources and Answers

Enclosed you will find a "Suggested Programs" sheet which offers suggestions of the best ways to use either or both formats. Of course, you are welcome to find your own creative uses for the program, and we hope that you will share your programming ideas with us so that Jews everywhere may benefit.

Again, thank you for participating in the Chanukah Workshop.

Sincerely,

Ephraim Z. Buchwald

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SUGGESTED PROGRAMS

WORKSHOP 1

Use the **Question Guide** for a "Round-Robin" Chanukah program. Split participants into chaburot (small groups) and assign each group a question. The groups will present their answers to those assembled, and everyone will have the opportunity to discuss the responses. (The organizer may want to hand out **Discussion Guide** to participants at the end of the program, or incorporate them into the program.)

SAMPLE

Use the **Discussion Guide** as a handout at a "participatory lecture." Many participants find it exciting and stimulating to be able to follow along with the sources. The instructor can expand upon the answers in the **Discussion Guide**, but, at the end of the day, students will have full explanations to take home with them.



PARTY

Use the **Question Guide** as a mailer announcing a Chanukah party or a pre-Chanukah workshop. Challenge members to create their own answers, and have them share their response at the program. Inform participants that the correct answers will be discussed or distributed.



PARENT-CHILD BONDING



FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN IN GRADES 5-12!

Send the **Discussion Guide** (with the answers) to the parents of older students. In school, the students will be given the **Question Guide** to take home. Parents will be encouraged to help their children answer the questions. (Enclosed, you will find a sample letter for parents).

Before You Begin...THE STORY OF CHANUKAH

In the year 199 B.C.E., the land of Israel was conquered by the Seleucids (Greeks who lived in Syria). The Syrian-Greeks pursued a policy of forced assimilation of the Jews. Torah study became a capital crime. If a parent was found to have circumcised an infant son, both the parent and child were put to death. The Greeks set up idols in the Jewish town squares, summoned the Jews to the square and forced them to worship the statue or sacrifice a pig before it. The Syrian-Greeks wanted the Jews to renounce their own heritage and to be like them, Hellenists. Their campaign against Judaism began slowly, but by 168 B.C.E. they had desecrated the Holy Temple, setting a statue of Zeus in the main plaza.

In the town of Modiin, west of Jerusalem, there lived a man named Mattitياهو (Mattithias). He was from the Hasmonean family, one of the branches of the priestly families. In 167 B.C.E., Syrian-greek soldiers came to Modiin and demanded that the Jews sacrifice a pig to one of their gods. Mattitياهو refused to allow this desecration and slew the heretic who had volunteered. Mattitياهو's sons joined him in his battle and attacked the soldiers. Mattitياهو and his sons won that small battle, but, heavily outnumbered by the incoming reinforcements, they were forced to flee Modiin and take refuge in the hills. Mattitياهو's sons, who continued the fight after his death, became known as the Maccabees.

Under the leadership of Judah the Maccabee, the Jews fought a guerrilla war to free their nation. In 165 B.C.E., the Maccabees finally succeeded in routing the vastly stronger Syrian-Greeks and took back the Temple. They were agonized to find that the Syrian-Greek soldiers had thoroughly desecrated the holy site. The Jews immediately set to work removing the idolatrous statues, scrubbing the altar, and performing the many tasks necessary to rededicate the Temple.

On the southern side of the sanctuary stood the grand, golden Menorah, but there was no oil with which to light it. As the Jews cleansed the Temple they searched for an unopened jar of pure oil. When all seemed lost, however, one last flask, with its seal still in tact, was found. The Jews rejoiced and hurried to light the Menorah and rededicate the Temple.

Only one jar of oil...It would take at least another week for a fresh jar of pure olive oil to be prepared. The Jews were in a quandary. Do they light the Menorah and allow it to fizzle out while waiting for more oil, or do they wait and use the oil the day before the new oil will arrive, in order to maintain a continuous flame? Not wanting to postpone performing the mitzvah, they decided to light the Menorah--and the miracle of Chanukah occurred. Despite the small quantity of oil, THE MENORAH REMAINED LIT FOR THE ENTIRE EIGHT DAYS, announcing to the world that G-d's presence had returned to the Temple.

For further details on the story of Chanukah, Chanukah heroines, Chanukah "how-tos" and explanations, please visit www.njop.org's Chanukah site.

Question 1

Why is Chanukah celebrated for eight days? After all, if, as we are taught, the Maccabees found sufficient olive oil in the Holy Temple to light the Menorah for one day, but it lasted for eight, then the miracle was really only seven days long!

S A M P L E

Source 1-1

Talmud Shabbat 21b

What is [the miracle of] Chanukah? Our rabbis taught: the eight days of Chanukah begin on the 25th of Kislev. On these days it is forbidden to deliver eulogies and to fast. For when the Greeks entered the Holy Temple, they defiled all the oils they found there. And when the Hasmoneans (Maccabees) gained the upper hand and defeated them, they searched and found only one jar of oil stamped with the seal of the High Priest. But the oil in the jug was enough for only one day's lighting. Yet a miracle happened and it lasted for eight days. The following year, [the Hasmoneans and the Sanhedrin] established and rendered [these eight days] permanent festival days with respect to the recital of Hallel (songs of praise) and Thanksgiving.



“And from that one remaining flask”

Source 1-2

Ma’Oz Tzur

*Greeks gathered against me,
then in the days of the Hasmoneans
They breached the walls of my towers,
and the defiled all the oils,
And from that one remaining of the flasks,
a miracle was wrought for the roses,
Men of insight - eight days
they established for song and jubilation*

Question 4

Ask a Jewish child to name their favorite holiday and, more often than not, the answer you'll hear is Chanukah. Beyond the more recent development of abundant gift giving, **why is Chanukah such a child-centered holiday?**

Answer

It is no coincidence that Chanukah (חנוכה) shares the same root as the Hebrew word *chinuch* (חינוך), which means education. From the giving of gifts to the game of dreidel, many Chanukah customs stem from the legacy of the educational zeal of the Jews.

Source 4-1

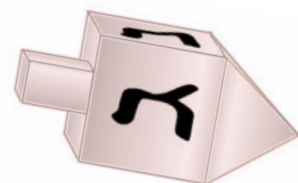
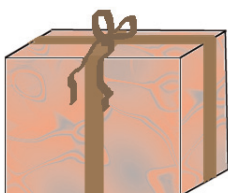
Talmud Shabbat 23b and Rashi

אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: בְּנֵי דְגוּיִין לִיָּהּ בּוֹנִים תְּלִמְדֵי דְרַבִּינָאן
Rabbi Huna said: "He who is diligent in the Chanukah lights...will have children
who are scholars."
שְׁנָאמַר, כִּי גַר מְצֻקָה וְתוֹנָה אֹר.
S A M P L E

Rashi: as it says "A mitzvah (commandment) is a lamp, and Torah is light" (Proverbs 6:23)."

The Talmud, in Shabbat 23b, teaches that one who is diligent in lighting Chanukah candles will have children who are scholars. In fact, the desire for children to grow into scholars was one of the motivations for the custom of giving Chanukah *gelt* (which, under modern influence, has been turned into Chanukah presents).

What is the connection between Chanukah lights, intelligent children and *gelt*? As discussed in the answer to Question 3, publicizing the miracle of Chanukah is so important that a pauper is required to borrow or sell his cloak in order to be able to buy oil. It soon became customary for people to give a little money (*gelt*) to the poor so that they would not be embarrassed or forced to ask for assistance. Because the idea of "being diligent in the lighting of the Chanukah lights" is a primary consideration in both giving to the poor and meriting wise children, it became the custom to give children a bit of *gelt* as a reward for studying. Children who showed mastery of the laws and customs of the holiday, or who were diligent in their studies, were rewarded with a shiny coin. Over time, the simple giving of *gelt* (coins or presents) itself, became a Chanukah custom.



Continued on next page in actual workshop

