



Fun Resources for Teaching Chanukah



5 KEY FACTS ABOUT CHANUKAH

1 Around the year 167 BCE, the ruler of the Assyrian kingdom, Antiochus, sought to pull Jews away from Judaism so that all his subjects in his vast empire—which included the Land of Israel—would share the same Greek Hellenist culture. He marched into Jerusalem, vandalized the Temple, erected an idol on the altar, and desecrated its holiness with the blood of swine. Decreeing that studying Torah, observing the Sabbath, and circumcising Jewish boys were punishable by death, he sent Assyrian overseers and soldiers to villages throughout Judea to enforce the edicts and force Jews to engage in idol worship, and during this period, many of the Jews began to assimilate, taking on Greek names and marrying non-Jews. When the Assyrian soldiers reached Modi'in they demanded that the local leader and elder, Matityahu the Kohen, be an example to his people by sacrificing a pig on a portable pagan altar. He refused and killed not only the Hellenized Jew who stepped forward to do the Assyrian's bidding, but also the king's representative, Apelles, in order to enable him and his sons to escape. Matityahu and his five sons (Jonathan, Simon, Judah, Eleazar, and Yochanan) fled to the hills and caves of the wooded Judean wilderness. Within a few months of this incident, Matityahu died and he left instructions that this third son, Judah who was known as 'the Maccabee' (literally, 'the hammer' because he and his brothers were said to strike hammer blows against their enemies) lead the fight. Over a period of three years Judah, his brothers and his followers were able to overcome the military superiority of Antiochus' army and on the 25th Kislev 164 BCE the Maccabees regained control of the Temple.

2 On this day, the 25th Kislev, they held a 'Chanukat Habayit' (lit. dedication of the Temple) with proper sacrifice, rekindling of the menorah, and eight days of celebration and praise to God. When it came time to re-light the menorah, they searched the entire Temple, but only one small jar of oil bearing the pure seal of the High Priest could be found. Miraculously, the small jar of oil burned for eight days, until a new supply of oil could be brought. From then on, Jews have observed a holiday for eight days in honor of this historic victory and the miracle of the oil.

3 On every night of Chanukah, Jews light their chanukiah in prominent positions – ideally by a window or door and facing a public area – (for פרסומי ניסא in order to 'publicize the miracle of Chanukah'). While it would suffice to light just one candle each night, the custom developed to add a further candle each night so that by the eighth night of Chanukah, all eight candles are lit. Prior to lighting the candles, two blessings are recited ("She'asah Nissim", שעשה ניסים, and "Lehadlik ner shel Chanukah", להדליק נר של חנוכה, and on the first night of Chanukah, the additional blessing of "Shehecheyanu", שהחיינו, is recited. When the candles are lit, it is customary to sing the songs "Hanerot Hallalu", הנרות הללו, and "Maoz Tzur", מעוז צור.

4 There are numerous Chanukah customs. One of them is to play with a 'dreidel' which was used as a ruse when Torah was being taught after the decree of Antiochus. The dreidel is often labelled with the letters (נס-ג גדול-ה ה-היה) פ (פה)ש (שם) נ (נס). נ (נס): Nes (miracle), ג (גדול): Gadol (big), ה (היה): Haya (happened), פ (פה): Poh (here, if you are playing in Israel) or ש (שם): Sham (there, if you are playing outside of Israel.) Another custom is to eat foods made with oil, to recall the miracle of the oil.

5 On Chanukah, we sing Hallel (הלל) and add the prayer of "Al Hanissim", על הניסים, into our daily Amidah and Birkat Hamazon.





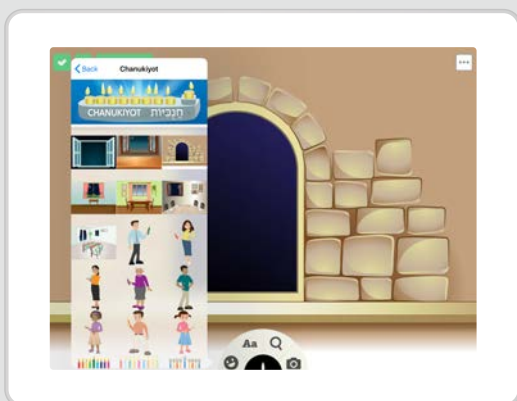
5 GREAT ACTIVITY IDEAS TO TEACH ABOUT CHANUKAH

The following ideas can be applied using either of Ji's creations tools: Ji Tap or Ji Studio. In Ji Tap, use the Chanukah creation packs and create interactive games; in Ji Studio, use the book templates and Chanukah collection to create books and posters.

1 Put the Candles in the Chanukiah

PREPARATION: Review the custom of adding a candle each night of Chanukah.

Ji Tap Activity



- Select Ji Tap **Chanukiyot Creation Pack**.
- Choose a background, if you would like one.
- Scroll down and choose a chanukiah.
- Then scroll down even further and select candle stickers.
- Duplicate this screen 9 times – 1 menu screen and then a screen for each day of Chanukah.
- On the menu screen, using the text tool, add in numbers 1-8. Create a **Soundboard** activity, where you trace the hotspot over each number and then jump to the chanukiah for that day.
- On each day's page, place the candles on the chanukiah to reflect the correct day of Chanukah.

Ji Studio Activity



- Select Ji Studio **Chanukah Collection**.
- From the **Background** or **Stickers**, choose a chanukiah.
- Then again from **Stickers > Chanukiyot**, place the candles on the chanukiah to reflect the correct day of Chanukah.



4 Your complete toolkit for Chanukah

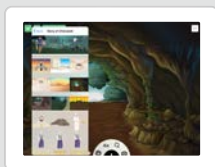
2 Tell the Chanukah Story

PREPARATION: Review the Chanukah story and break it down into four parts:

- 1) The decree against Jewish practice
- 2) The fight of the Maccabees
- 3) The dedication of the Temple
- 4) The celebration of Chanukah today

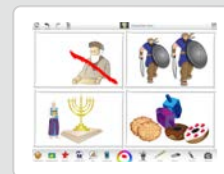
Ji Tap Activity

- Select Ji Tap **Story of Chanukah Creation Pack**.
- Create a new screen with each stage of the story. Use the stickers and backgrounds to illustrate each screen.
- Use the **Say Something** activity and tell the story for each screen.



Ji Studio Activity

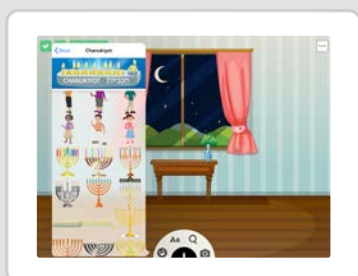
- Select Ji Studio **Chanukah Collection**.
- Select **Background** and choose the comic strip with 4 frames.
- Using the images available in all the sticker collections to tell the Chanukah Story.
- From **Characters > Themed**, insert a picture of a Rabbi studying Torah. Lock the picture so that you will be able to draw on top of the image.
- Using the **Tool Wheel**, select any red tool and add it to My tools. Draw a red line through the comic frame with the rabbi, to show that Jews were not allowed to study Torah.
- From **Stickers > Maccabees**, insert pictures of Maccabee soldiers, as well as a picture of the Golden Menorah from the Temple.
- Insert pictures of Chanukah customs today from **Stickers > Customs**.



3 Place the Chanukiah by the Window

PREPARATION: Explain to students that it is customary to place the chanukiah in prominent positions – ideally by a window or door and facing a public area – for פְּרִסוּמֵי נֶסָא (in order to ‘publicize the miracle of Chanukah’).

Ji Tap Activity



- Select Ji Tap **Chanukiyot Creation Pack**.
- Select a background including an open window.
- Create an **Ask a Question** activity, where the question is along the lines of ‘Where should we place the chanukiah?’ Trace the answer area around your window.
- Duplicate the slide and delete the activity. Now, place a chanukiah by the window.
- Create a **Say Something** activity, explaining why the answer is correct.

Ji Studio Activity

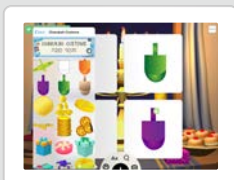
- Select Ji Studio **Chanukah Collection**.
- Select a **Background** including an open window.
- Add a heading by selecting a **Sticker > Labels** with the words פְּרִסוּמֵי נֶסָא.
- Place a chanukiah by the window.



5 Your complete toolkit for Chanukah

4 The Letters on the Dreidel

PREPARATION: Review the meaning of the letters on the dreidel.



Ji Tap Activity

- Select **Teacher's Pack: Choose a Layout** and select a layout with 4 sections.
- Select **Ji Tap Chanukah Customs Creation Pack**, and select a background.
- In each frame, place a sticker of an empty dreidel, then scroll down and find the letters נ-ג-ה-פֿ-שׁ to place on each dreidel.
- Select the **Soundboard** activity and make each letter a hotspot. In each hotspot, record the meaning of each letter. For example, on the dreidel with Nun, record "Nun stands for Nes, which means 'miracle'". Label with the meaning of each letter (e.g. נס-גדול-היה-פהֿ-שם). You can find stickers for these words at the end of the **Chanukah Customs Creation Pack**.
- When you play the game together, your child can tap on each letter to hear the explanation.



Ji Studio Activity

- Select Ji Studio **Chanukah Collection**.
- Select **Background** and choose the comic strip with 4 frames.
- In each frame, place a picture of an empty dreidel from **Stickers > Customs**.
- Using **Text > Aleph Bet Stickers**, choose the letters נ-ג-ה-פֿ-שׁ and place them on each dreidel.
- Above each picture, add a **Sticker > Label** with the meaning of each letter (e.g. נס-גדול-היה-פהֿ-שם).

5 The Chanukah Blessings

PREPARATION: Review the blessings recited when lighting the Chanukah candles.

Ji Tap Activity

- Select Ji Tap **Chanukiyot Creation Pack**.
- Your game will have three screens: one for each blessing. Repeat this process for each blessing:
 - o Choose a background and stickers of a chanukiah.
 - o Scroll down to the end of the **Chanukiyot Creation Pack** and select the first blessing.
 - o Create a **Say Something** activity and record yourself singing or saying the blessing.
- Alternatively, you can put all three blessings



on one screen, and create a **Soundboard** activity. The student will be able to tap a blessing and hear it sung.

Ji Studio Activity

- Select Ji Studio **Chanukah Collection**.
- Choose a **Background** of a chanukiah.
- From **Torah texts > Tefilot**, select the Chanukah blessings.
- Then, using the **Sound** recorder, students should record themselves reciting each of the Chanukah blessings. Place the **Sound** sticker next to the relevant blessing.





6 Your complete toolkit for Chanukah

My Menorah

Get ready for a fun-filled Chanukah! Set up your own menorah each day. Just spin the dreidel to get the color of your next candle. Then light the candles with the friendly menorah as your guide. Sing Chanukah songs together with your family and earn lots of Chanukah gelt and gifts.

Designed for Jewish children aged 3 to 5, "My Menorah" is a 3D, interactive, animated game that your young child will not only have fun with, but also acquire core skills such as numeracy, foundational Hebrew, ability to match color and sequence, learn new Chanukah songs and more!



[DOWNLOAD MY MENORAH](#)

Chanukah Games on Ji Tap



[My Grandparents Favorite Hanukiyah](#)

Ages 3-6

An interactive Chanukah story about lighting the Hanukiyah and the joy that it brings.



[Chanukah Quiz](#)

Ages 8-11

A quick quiz to review the facts about Chanukah. Careful – you've only got 3 lives!



[How to Light the Chanukia](#)

Ages 6-8

This is a step by step account of how to light the chanukia, complete with what you need and how to light correctly.

For more Chanukah games click [here](#).

Chanukah Blogs

Take a look at the blogs that we have relating to Chanukah. They are filled with inspiration and meaning and will leave you uplifted and wanting more!

Click [here](#) to read!





J-STEAM Resources for Chanukah



Activity: Sew a light-up Chanukah bag

Description: Sew a light-up bag which can be used to store Chanukah candles

Recommended age: Grades 5-8

Technology: Unplugged

Curriculum Links

Science/Technology: Creating circuits with LEDs and batteries.

Art: Designing the layout of the bag, sewing.

Jewish Studies: Chanukah. Can be adapted for other holidays.

Activity: Guess the day of Chanukah

Description: Use variables to create a game where the user guesses what day of Chanukah we are celebrating today

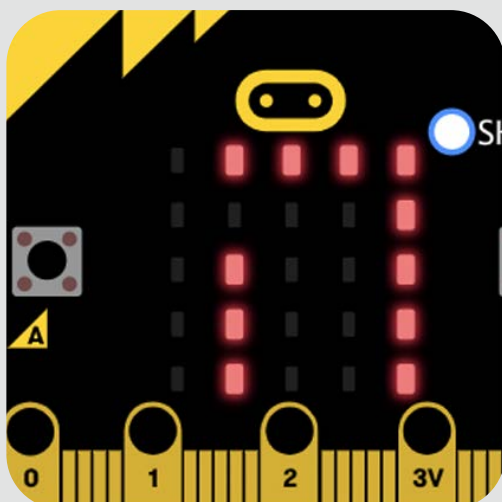
Recommended age: Grades 3-8

Technology: Scratch (software)

Curriculum Links

Coding: Students learn about conditionals, loops and events.

Jewish Studies: Links to Chanukah. Extend with discussion on the miracle of Chanukah and why we celebrate for eight days.



Activity: Dreidel Challenge

Description: Code your own dreidel and compete against friends

Recommended age: Grades 5-8

Technology: MakeCode (software), micro:bit (hardware)

Curriculum Links

Science/Technology: Networks and radio signals.

Coding: Variables.

Jewish Studies: Letters on the dreidel and what they mean. Links to Chanukah.



As a parent or teacher, you can also adapt any of the games you find on Ji Tap or create a new game using the intuitive interface. This can be a fun classroom or family activity that will contribute to your children's understanding of Jewish Studies, help them work in a team creatively, and allow for them to contribute to the ever growing online Jewish community.

Download Ji Tap and let the learning of Chanukah begin!

