

FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS · GRADES 2–4

Hanukkah

The Jewish Festival of Lights

Quick facts

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| What | An 8-day Jewish festival celebrating an ancient miracle of light. |
| When | Late November or December (based on the Hebrew calendar). |
| How long | 8 nights. |
| Greeting | 'Happy Hanukkah' or 'Chag Sameach' (joyful festival). |

The story

Over 2,000 years ago, Jewish people in Israel reclaimed their temple after a long battle. They wanted to light the menorah (a special candle holder) but only had enough oil for one night. Miraculously, the oil burned for EIGHT nights — long enough to make more. Hanukkah celebrates that miracle every year.

How families celebrate

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Lighting the menorah</p> <p>Each night, one more candle is added until all 8 are lit. The 9th candle (the shamash) is used to light the others.</p> | <p>Dreidel game</p> <p>Children spin a four-sided top called a dreidel. Each side has a Hebrew letter. The letters stand for 'a great miracle happened there'.</p> |
| <p>Latkes and sufganiyot</p> <p>Foods cooked in OIL — potato pancakes (latkes) and jelly donuts (sufganiyot) — to remember the oil miracle.</p> | <p>Gelt and gifts</p> <p>Children get chocolate coins (gelt) or small gifts each night.</p> |

