



HOLIDAY ENHANCEMENT GUIDE

CHANUKAH

Created by Honeycomb

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INTRODUCTION

Why Holidays?

In order to develop a culture of life-long giving, it's important to find ways to weave philanthropy into rituals and traditions that young people will continue participating in long after they graduate from high school. Creating opportunities that connect learnings from Jewish youth philanthropy with holiday practices and traditions promotes a deeper understanding of the values that permeate these programs and encourages teen participants to be leaders in the future.

Why Chanukah?

With eight days and nights, Chanukah offers many chances to come together as families, peers, and as a larger community. In organizations with robust programming, there are most often Chanukah parties and candle lighting gatherings already on the calendar. These are perfect occasions to enhance what's happening with learning and experiences around giving.

How to Use This Guide

This guide offers two different approaches to Chanukah and Jewish youth philanthropy.

The first section includes resources for enhancing your ongoing philanthropy program with the values, themes, and traditions of the holiday. We have provided text studies and activities that will pair perfectly with the curriculum you are using. The resources that we have provided here can also be used as a stand-alone program for participants to have initial exposure to Jewish youth philanthropy through the lens of Chanukah, and can act as an excellent tool for program recruitment.

The second section of this guide presents ways to partner with your community, offering ways for a larger audience to gain insight into grantmaking opportunities through their holiday experiences. This section shares opportunities for participants in your program to stretch their leadership skills in the wider community and to think strategically about how best to position philanthropy in relation to the holiday.





Chanukah Themes

Light - אור (Or)



In the northern hemisphere, Chanukah falls during the darkest time of the year. With the ritual of lighting a Chanukah menorah/*chanukiah*, we are actively participating in bringing more light into a time of darkness. When we do this, it almost feels like we are compelling the world towards the winter solstice, towards the time when we gain a little bit of sunlight every day; an indication that spring is on its way. We can think about this more broadly, and apply this concept to the knowledge that the more good we do in the world, the “brighter” the world becomes.

Miracles and Wonder - נִסִּים וְנִיפְלְאוֹת (Nisim V'niflaot)



Central to the history and story of Chanukah are the wonder of the oil in the destroyed temple lasting for eight days and the miracle of the small troop of Maccabees overtaking the large Assyrian army. In our contemporary lives, we often overlook daily miracles. Chanukah is a reminder to search for and acknowledge the miracles and wonder all around us.

Dedication - לְחִנוּךְ (Lachanoch)



The Hebrew word Chanukah literally means “to dedicate”. Living in a secular world where we are inundated with so many competing values, this time of year is a perfect opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the principles that guide our commitment to Judaism (however this shows up for you personally!).



INCLUDING CHANUKAH IN YOUR JEWISH YOUTH PHILANTHROPY PROGRAM

Bring the values, themes, and traditions of the holiday into your already existing program.

ACTIVITY: LIGHT

What is it?

A text study exploring the theme of light.

When you might use this activity?

If your group is already gathering in the weeks leading up to Chanukah, insert this text study as your first activity for the session.

What resources do you need?

Chanukah Text Study: Part 1 handout (page 13) and Chanukah Text Study: Part 2 handout (page 14), or [slide deck](#) if needed for smartboard or online learning (slides 2-5)

Instructions:

1. After your ice breaker activity, or early in your session, explain to your participants that you will be exploring a text study.
2. Distribute the Chanukah Text Study: Part 1 handout (page 13) or project the text study on the [slide deck](#) (slides 2-4). **Note:** you can either tell the participants that the text includes the traditional Chanukah blessings, or you can leave it as a surprise.
3. Ask one of the participants to read the text aloud and then discuss the prompt questions on the sheet.
4. Divide the group into partners or small groups and instruct them to read Chanukah Text Study: Part 2 (page 14) or on the [slide deck](#) (slide 5), in their groups and then proceed with the questions on the sheet.
5. Invite the group back together and discuss all/some of the following questions:
 - What was it like doing text study in the large group vs. small?
 - Which experience did you prefer and why?
 - What do you think the benefits are of learning one way vs. the other way? Does one method help you clarify your thoughts?
 - How do those experiences connect to the exercises we've been doing around consensus building?
 - What connections did you notice between the two texts?
 - Was one of them easier to explore than the other?





ACTIVITY: MIRACLES AND WONDER

What is it?

Family activity for 5th night of Chanukah.

When you might use this activity?

Parent programming, program orientation with parents present.
Note: This activity is best to do this AFTER they've already done the text-based activity on page 6.

What resources do you need?

An invitation or email to invite parents/other family members to the activity.

Instructions:

1. Invite the families of the participants in your program to join you for a session in advance of Chanukah.
2. During a session in October or November, introduce the idea of 5th night to your cohort.
3. Let the participants know that their families have been invited to join them for the next session, and it will be the teen's responsibility to teach about 5th night and lead their families in an activity. Empower the teens in your program to be leaders during this session.
4. Share the following with the participants: *"Fifth Night is a new-ish Jewish tradition of dedicating one of the nights of Chanukah to giving back instead of getting and giving gifts to your family and friends. Similar to the growing idea of Giving Tuesday, it acts as an antidote to the extreme consumerism of the winter holidays in the US. It is a opportunity to give to others."*
5. During the session with families, the teens will start by teaching what they've learned about 5th night, and that they will be working with their families to start creating a giving intention for the 5th night of Chanukah.
6. The teens will invite their families to participate in a short text study.
7. Tell the families that they recently looked at a few pieces of text that helped them better understand some of the themes of Chanukah, and that they'd like to share one of those pieces with their families during this session.





Instructions continued...

8. Pass out Chanukah Text Study: Part 1 (page 13) or display the [slide deck](#) (slides 2-4) and ask for volunteers to read the texts aloud.

9. Teen leaders say: *“We will focus on the elements of MIRACLES and WONDER in these pieces of text. Where are you seeing words that reflect those themes? What are some miracles that have occurred in your lives recently?”* (Some ideas: how special and miraculous it is for this group to be together like this; with everyone’s busy schedules it’s often difficult to find time to be with friends and family; how WONDERFUL it is that Jewish traditions have managed to sustain for so long, and to be passed along to us today; etc).

10. Within each family unit, make a giving goal for the 5th night of Chanukah. They can consider:
 - How to bring a sense of wonder to their gift/grant decision process?
 - How much money is the goal?
 - Do they want to give an amount equal to what they might spend on a gift?
 - Will families solicit donations from others or just give themselves?
 - What cause would they like to fund?
 - The *Shehecheyanu* prayer (slide 4) is often recited when you do something for the first time. If this is the first time you have granted as a family, how can saying the *Shehecheyanu* inspire you?





ACTIVITY: DEDICATION

What is it?

An art project for creating sacred space.

When you might use this activity?

As a “filter-in” activity, near the start of the program year, when you need a brain break, when you need to do something crafty, as part of the values clarification process.

What resources do you need?

Poster board, markers, paint, other arts and crafts materials of your choosing.

Ideas:



- You’ve dug into the WHAT and the WHY of the important work of Jewish youth philanthropy, but what about the WHERE? If you’re gathering together in an office building, a synagogue classroom, or someone’s living room, it’s probably not a space that was designed with your group specifically in mind. Using the theme of “dedication” that is central to Chanukah, you can literally “dedicate” your space with images, art, displays, or sculptures to help create ownership of the program space.
- Take time to create a collaborative piece of art that can be hung up and taken down when you use the space together.
- Use the image of the *Chanukiah*, with each branch representing each time your group meets. At the end of each session choose a word that represents that session and add it to the *Chanukiah*.
- Create a poster with your group’s mission statement, design symbols to represent the values that influence your mission to decorate it.
- When you display your art for the first time, consider having a type of “*Chanukat haBayit*” (“dedication of the home”) ceremony to re-dedicate the space to the important work of your group.
- Consider creating miniature versions of your piece of art for each individual member to bring home with them in between sessions as a reminder of what’s truly important and essential about your work.



INCLUDING PHILANTHROPY IN YOUR CHANUKAH CELEBRATIONS

Bring the benefits of participating in philanthropy to a wider audience through a holiday experience.

ACTIVITY: LIGHT

What is it?

Setting up a station at an already existing community Chanukah event.

What resources do you need?

Poster about your Jewish youth philanthropy program, games/trivia/candy materials.

Ideas:

At a family-focused Chanukah event in your community, set up a booth that shares information about Jewish youth philanthropy through games and activities:

- Hang a large poster board that asks “What can your family do this year to bring more LIGHT into the community?”. Provide post it notes for families to share ideas.
- Bring different types of candles: Chanukah candles, birthday candles, Shabbat candles, *yahrzeit* (memorial) candles, *Havdalah* (end of Shabbat) candles; and other things that produce light: flashlights, glow sticks, etc. Include a poster that asks “which item do you think gives off the most light?”. Another poster can say “How can we give the most light in our community?” with the answer hidden under a piece of paper, which families can flip up to see says “THROUGH PHILANTHROPY”.
- Provide a flyer with information about how your group is raising funds and donating, make sure to include a website or QR code to learn more and to donate.
- Create a poll where families can drop a piece of gelt in a jar to choose which answer they think is right. Questions could be about how much money is raised around your cause, the percentage of the population that donates money, or other relevant statistics relating to your chosen Justice Issue.





ACTIVITY: MIRACLES AND WONDER

What is it?

Variation on the dreidel game to bring to youth programming in your local area.

What resources do you need?

20 dreidels, \$20 worth of change (all the same coins), Dreidel Rules handout (page 16) or the [slide deck](#) on slide 6-7.

Instructions:

1. Connect with a local Jewish after-school learning program (Hebrew School, Sunday School, etc.) to ask about coming in to share a fun activity for the students leading up to or during Chanukah. Start by reaching out to the synagogues, JCCs, and Jewish Day Schools in your area using the included letter template (page 15) copied/pasted into an email.
2. Once you've confirmed your visit, get your materials together. Bring 20 dreidels, \$20 worth of change (all the same coins), and enough of the "New Dreidel Rules" worksheet for each student.
3. Visit the classrooms as a group, or divide and conquer!
4. When you enter the classroom introduce yourselves and let them know about your youth philanthropy program.
5. Review the rules of the "traditional" dreidel game (page 16).
6. Break the students into small groups and play a few rounds this way.
7. Introduce the NEW rules of dreidel (page 16).
8. Break the students into NEW groups and play with the new rules. Play for a few minutes in one group and then the kids can mix up the groups to play another round.
9. Remind them to bring home the handout and include a QR code or website link for their families to be able to contribute more money to your fund.





ACTIVITY: DEDICATION

What is it?

Chanukah fundraising campaign.

What resources do you need?

This is all about **relationships**. Make connections with people you know in your community who could host your group at a gathering so that you can pitch your projects and solicit donations. Reach out using all of your social media platforms to gather a crowd for a virtual fundraiser. Send letters to everyone you know about your project.

Ideas:

If your group has already decided on their area of interest for funding this year, Chanukah is the perfect time to solicit donations from your community. Highlight how **dedicated** you are to your cause, and how that ties directly into one of the primary themes of Chanukah. The holiday also falls near the end of the secular year, which is a time that many individuals and organizations make generous gifts.



- Coordinate with the development department at your organization to ask about how you can be involved in an end of year giving campaign.
- Ask to present your projects at a live community gathering.
- Organize a letter writing campaign to members of the community.
- Host a Facebook Live/Instagram Live on your organization's social media platform to share details about your youth philanthropy program on one of the nights of Chanukah. Start with a virtual candle lighting and follow up with details of where you're focusing your giving and why.



HANDOUTS AND TEMPLATES

CHANUKAH TEXT STUDY: PART 1

Blessed are You, the Eternal, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments, and commanded us to kindle the lights of Chanukah.

*Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-he-nu Me-lech
ha-olam a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-
tav ve-tzi-va-nu le-had-lik ner shel
Cha-nu-kah.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה

Blessed are You, the Eternal, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days, at this time.

*Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-he-nu Me-lech
Ha-olam she-a-sa ni-sim la-avo-te-nu ba-
ya-mim ha-hem ba-zman ha-zeh.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּיָמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה

Blessed are You, the Eternal, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.

*Ba-ruch A-tah Ado-nai E-lo-he-nu Me-lech
Ha-olam she-heche-ya-nu ve-ki-yi-ma-nu
ve-higi-a-nu laz-man ha-zeh.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם שֶׁחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ
לְזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה

Discussion Questions:

- Do you recognize these pieces of text?
- What words jump out at you?
- Which words are repeated most frequently?
- Why do you think those words are included in these pieces of texts?
- Why do you think those words are repeated in these pieces of texts?
- Why do you think these prayers are recited at Chanukah?
- The “*Shehecheyanu*” is a prayer about new beginnings. When are some other times you could recite this blessing?

**CHANUKAH TEXT STUDY: PART 2****Shabbat 21b:5**

The Sages taught [...]: The basic mitzvah of Chanukah is each day to have a light kindled by a person, the head of the household, for himself and his household. And the mehadrin, i.e., those who are meticulous in the performance of mitzvot, kindle a light for each and every one in the household. And [...] adjust the number of lights daily. Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree as to the nature of that adjustment. Beit Shammai say: On the first day one kindles eight lights and, from there on, gradually decreases the number of lights until, on the last day of Chanukah, he kindles one light. And Beit Hillel say: On the first day one kindles one light, and from there on, gradually increases the number of lights until, on the last day, he kindles eight lights.

שבת כ"א ב:ה'

תָּנּוּ רַבָּנָן: מִצְוֹת חֲנוּכָּה, גַּר אִישׁ
וּבֵיתוֹ. וְהַמְהַדְרִין, גַּר לְכֹל אֶחָד
וְאֶחָד. וְהַמְהַדְרִין מִן הַמְהַדְרִין,
בֵּית שְׁמַאי אוֹמְרִים: יוֹם רֵאשׁוֹן
מִדְּלִיק שְׁמֹנֶה, מִכָּאן וְאֵילָךְ
פּוֹחֶת וְהוֹלֵךְ. וּבֵית הִלֵּל אוֹמְרִים:
יוֹם רֵאשׁוֹן מִדְּלִיק אַחַת, מִכָּאן
וְאֵילָךְ מוֹסִיף וְהוֹלֵךְ.

Discussion Questions:

- Who do you agree with, Hillel or Shammai? Why?
- Would you compare your Jewish youth philanthropy work more with Hillel's approach or Shammai's approach? Why?
- How might this metaphor of creating or diminishing light relate to the larger ideas of philanthropy?
- Are there other images you can think of that connect to this piece of text?



OUTREACH LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear ***[School Director or Classroom Teacher]***,

I'm ***[YOUR NAME]*** a ***[X]***th grader at ***[NAME OF YOUR SCHOOL]***. I'm part of a Jewish youth philanthropy program through ***[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]***. This year at Chanukah we would love the opportunity to come and volunteer in your school to teach students about Jewish youth philanthropy with a fun "spin" on the traditional dreidel game. Our version of the game encourages young people and their families to talk about what's important to them and how they can work together to support causes that can really make a difference in the world.

Please let us know some times that we could set up a phone call or a Zoom to talk more about the program and to get a date and time on the calendar to come and visit your school.

After our visit, we would love to share a note to the families of the children we spend time with about our visit. We can also send out the resource information that we will be using during our classroom visit.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

[YOUR NAME]

[YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS]

[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]



DREIDEL RULES HANDOUT


Traditional Rules


Supplies:


- Dreidel
- At least 10 tokens per player (tokens can be any small item — dried beans, chocolate coins, pennies, etc.)

Set Up:

1. Distribute the tokens evenly among the players.
2. Arrange yourselves in a circle.
3. Have each player put one of their tokens into the center — the “pot.”
4. Now take turns spinning the dreidel.
5. When it lands, the letter facing up will tell the player what to do:

 **Nun:** Nothing. Don't take from or add to the pot.

 **Gimel:** All. Take all of the tokens from the pot.

 **Hay:** Half out. Take half of the tokens from the pot.


 **Shin:** One in. Add one token to the pot.





Anytime the pot is emptied, each player puts one token back in before the next person spins. As players run out of tokens, they're out — and the last person remaining is the winner!


New Rules

In this version of the game, instead of trying to win the most coins or candy, each Hebrew letter will spark a question for participants to answer:

 **Nun:** What comes to mind when you think about having “none”? What have you done to help someone who had very little?

 **Gimel:** Are there certain things you have a lot more of than other people? (material items, skills or talents, etc.) How does it feel to know that you have a lot more of something than someone else?

 **Hay:** Is it better to give half of what you have than nothing at all? Why?
Is it better to give half of what you have than EVERYTHING you have? Why?

 **Shin:** What does it feel like to “put one in”? To give something small? Are there ways you could give differently? What could that look like?



MY NOTES

Multiple horizontal lines for taking notes.



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