

# Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a happy midwinter festival celebrated by the Jewish people. The holiday is honored for eight days beginning on the twenty-fifth day of the Hebrew month of Kislev falling within the months of November or December. Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabbes over the Syrians in 165 B.C.

The Jews of Palestine, under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, successfully fought a war against King Antiochus. The King had forced all of his subjects to practice the religion of Greece. Jews were denied their religious freedom. During this time, Palestine was under Syrian-Greek rule. When the Maccabbes returned to their temple previously occupied by the Greeks, they found only enough sacred oil to light the holy menorah for one day. By divine miracle, however, the lamp continued to burn for eight days. In celebration, the event was called the "Festival of Lights."

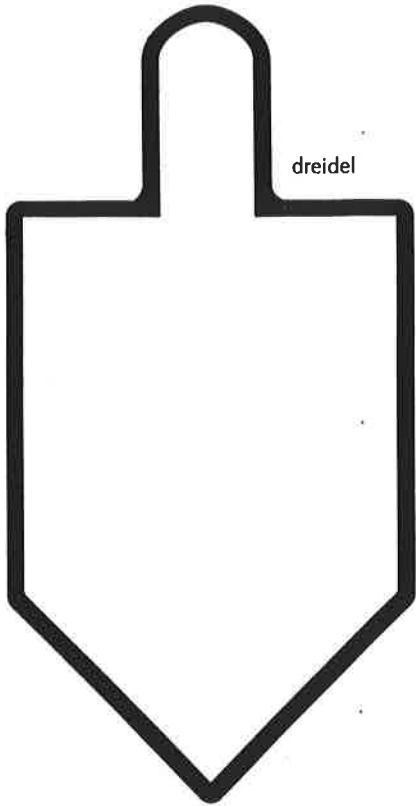
Today, Jewish families celebrate this event by lighting a special candelabra called a menorah. The holiday begins the first day by lighting the first candle at sundown on the twenty-fourth of Kislev. A "servant" candle called Shammash is also lighted each night and is used to light the other candles. Each evening an additional candle is burned until all eight candles are burning together. At this time, family members say blessings of thanks to God.

After lighting the Menorah, games are played and gifts exchanged by the family. Children especially like the holiday of Hanukkah. The ancient game using a four sided top known as the dreydl is played and traditional holiday goodies such as "latkes," potato pancakes are served. The custom of gift giving is also very special and has been included in Hanukkah celebrations for centuries.

## The Dreydl

A dreydl is a special four sided top. The Hebrew letters N, G, H, and S are written on the sides of the top. These letters stand for the words Nes, Gadol, Haya and Sham, which mean "a great miracle happened." Long ago, Jewish people were forbidden to come together and pray. In order to practice their religion they pretended to play games with this little top. Here is how to play a game with the dreydl.

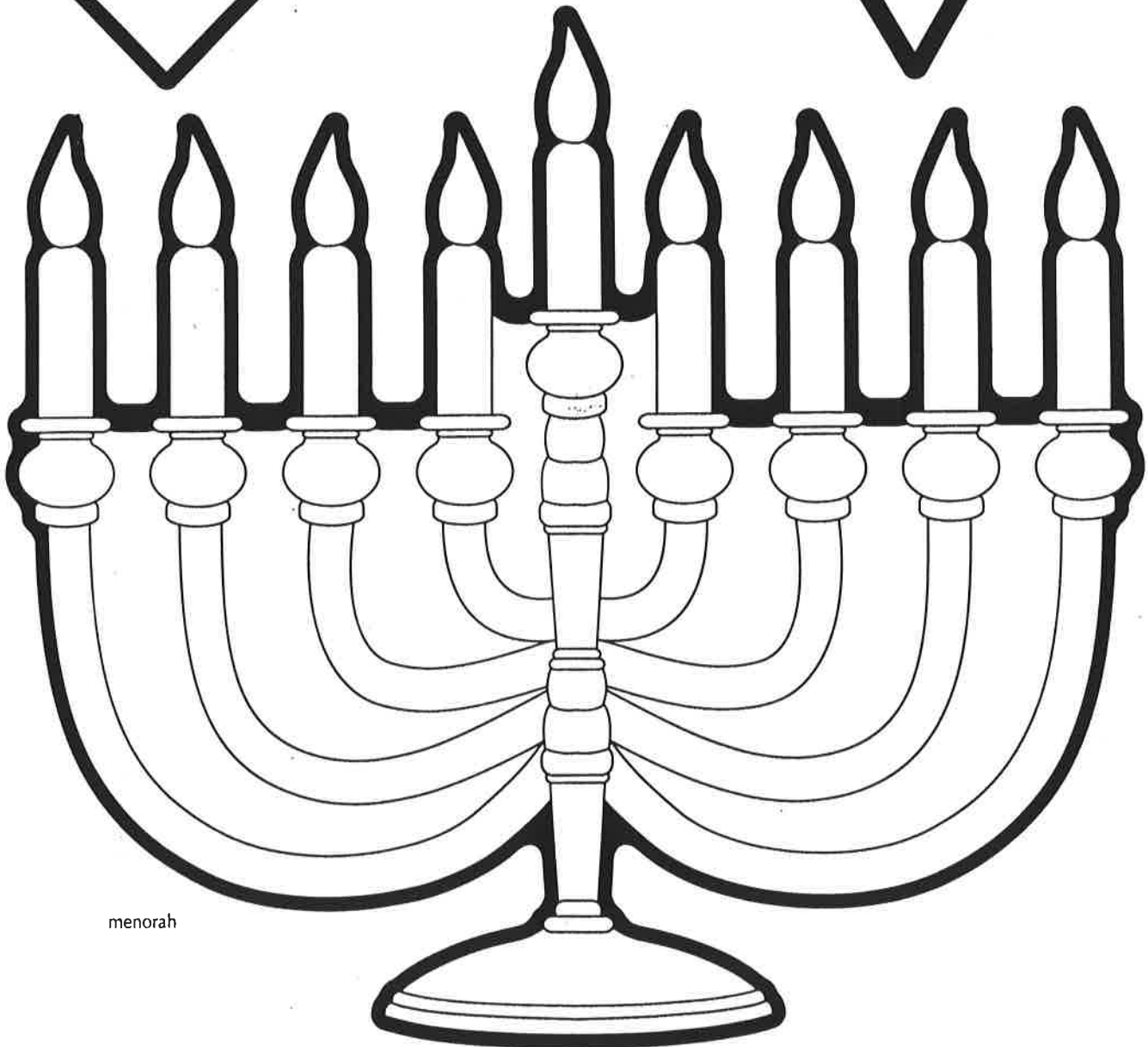
Assemble the dreydl pattern on page 100 according to the directions. Give ten dried beans to each player and place an empty bowl in the center of the table. Before each turn, every player must put a bean in the bowl. The players take turns spinning the top. If the letter "N" turns up the player wins no beans; if "G" turns up he wins all the beans in the bowl; if "H" turns up he wins half the beans in the bowl and if "S" turns up he must put one bean in the bowl. The game continues until one player has won all the beans.



dreidel

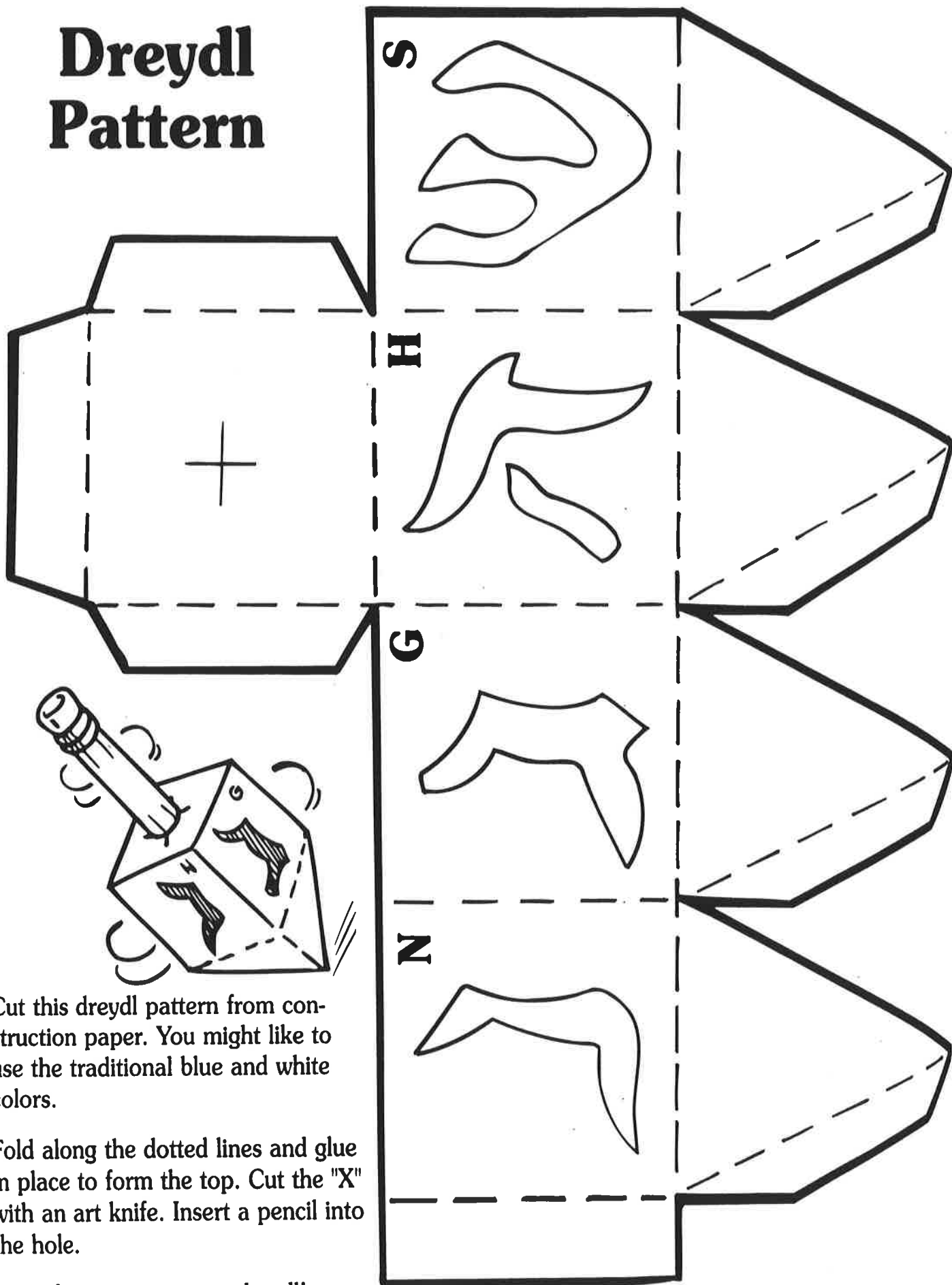


Star of David



menorah

# Dreydl Pattern



Cut this dreydl pattern from construction paper. You might like to use the traditional blue and white colors.

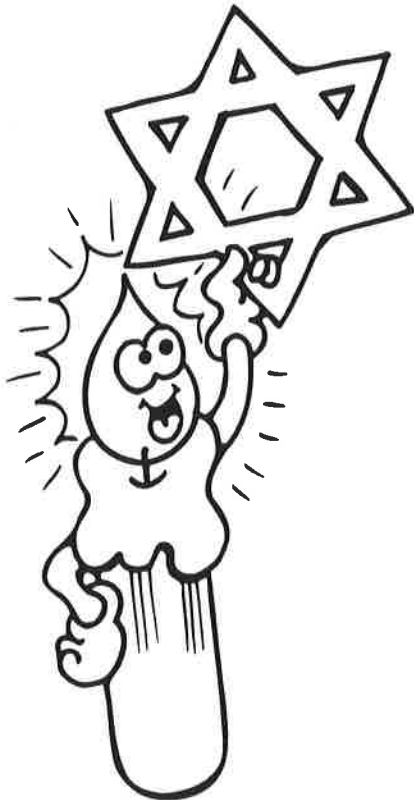
Fold along the dotted lines and glue in place to form the top. Cut the "X" with an art knife. Insert a pencil into the hole.

Have fun spinning your dreydl!

# Hanukkah Word Find

FIND THESE HANUKKAH WORDS:

MACCABBES, DREYDL, JEWISH, MENORAH, HANUKKAH,  
EIGHT, CANDLES, GIFTS, LATKES, FESTIVAL, LIGHT, FAMILY,  
SHAMMASH, PRAYERS



MATCH THESE FACTS ABOUT HANUKKAH

"FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS"

DREYDL

SPECIAL JEWISH CANDELABRA

MENORAH

THE NUMBER OF CANDLES

HANUKKAH

THE "SERVANT" CANDLE

JUDAS MACCABEUS

FOUR-SIDED TOP GAME

LATKES

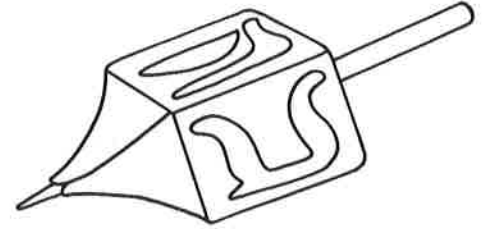
LEADER OF THE MACCABBES

SHAMMASH

POTATO PANCAKES

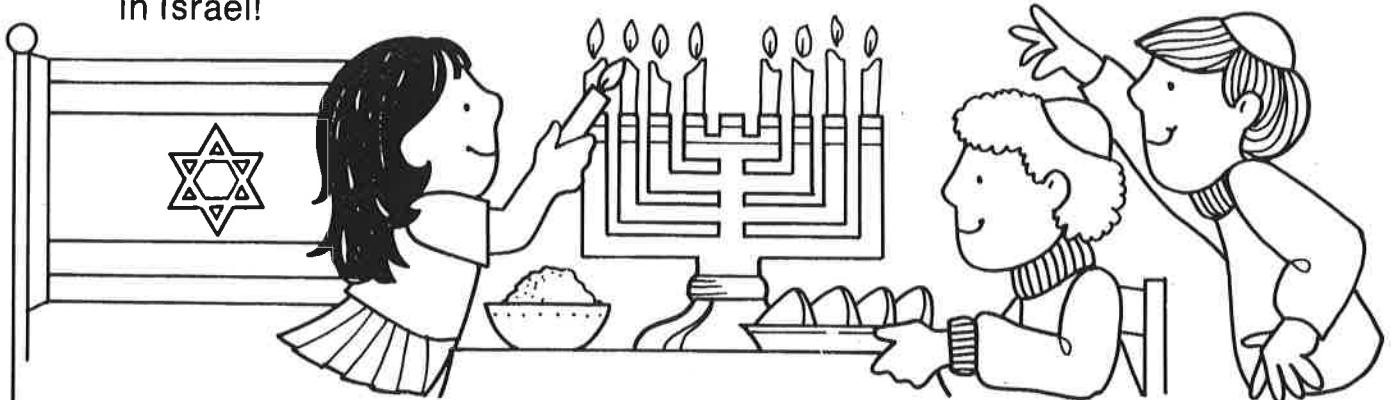
EIGHT

# Hanukkah in Israel



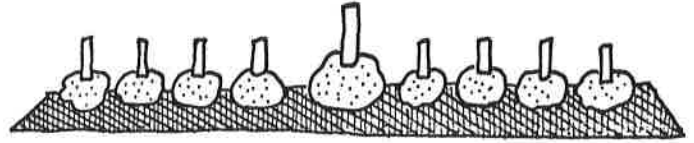
Narrators: A \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_

- A** Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and this is my friend \_\_\_\_\_.  
Come with us to celebrate Hanukkah in Israel.
- B** Hanukkah is called the Feast of Lights. It is celebrated in November or December by people of the Jewish faith.
- A** This holiday celebrates a time long, long ago when brave Jewish men won a battle for religious freedom.
- B** After the three-year battle, the soldiers returned to their temple to light the holy lamps. Alas! They found only enough oil to last one night!
- A** Then a miracle happened. The lamps continued to burn for eight days.
- B** Hanukkah lasts for eight days. Each night we light one more candle on the menorah, a special candle holder. We use a shamash, or extra candle, to light the other candles.
- A** After we light the menorah each evening, our family gives gifts to one another. We sing songs and play games, too.
- B** Have you seen a dreidel? A dreidel is a top with four sides. We spin the dreidel at Hanukkah parties.
- A** We decorate our homes for Hanukkah with blue and white stars and silver and gold dreidels.
- B** Our family enjoys eating a special food called latkes. They are round pancakes made from raw potatoes, fried to a golden brown.
- A** Let's play the dreidel game! You may spin first!
- B** Hanukkah is a joyful time! Come with us! You will like Hanukkah in Israel!



## HANUKKAH MENORAHS

Let the children make menorahs for your Hanukkah celebration. For bases cut 12- by 2-inch strips out of heavy cardboard and paint them dark blue or cover them with dark blue construction paper. Give the children large lumps of playdough and sprinkle gold glitter on a tabletop. Let the children work the glitter into the dough. Then have them each use their playdough to make eight 1-inch balls and one 2-inch ball. Show them how to line up the nine balls on their cardboard bases with the largest ball in the



center. When they have finished, give them each nine white birthday candles (with the wicks cut off) to stand upright in their menorahs.

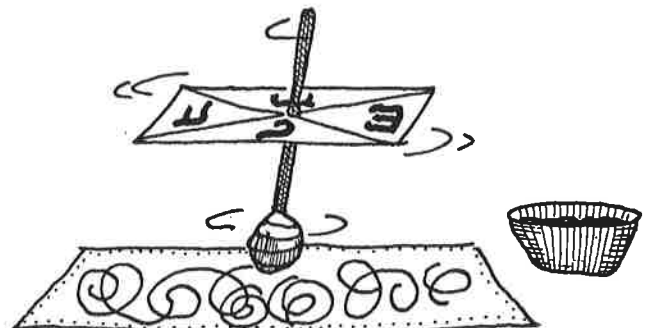
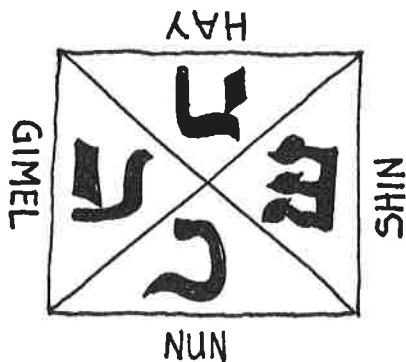
**Caution:** The candles in the menorahs are not to be lighted.

## PAINTING WITH DREIDELS

Make a "dreidel" for each child by cutting a 2-inch square out of a file folder. Using a ruler, draw two diagonal lines across the square from corner to corner and write the Hebrew letters *nun*, *gimel*, *hay* and *shin* in the four sections (see illustration). Use a large needle to poke a hole in the center of the square where the lines intersect. Remove the cotton from one end of a Q-Tip and insert the Q-Tip halfway through the hole. Adjust the square so that it is perpendicular to the Q-Tip and squeeze drops of glue around

the hole to hold the square in place. When the glue has dried, set out the dreidels along with sheets of white construction paper and shallow containers of blue tempera paint. Let the children practice spinning their dreidels with their fingers on a flat surface. Then let them dip the cotton ends of their dreidels into the paint and spin them on their papers to create swirling designs.

**Variation:** Set out more than one color of paint and make dreidels to use for each separate color.



## CANDLE CLOCK

Try this candle activity during your Hanukkah celebration to help the children visualize the concept of time. Place two candles that are the same length in candle holders. Burn one candle for 30 minutes. Measure the difference in length between the two candles. Then use that measurement to mark lines down the side of the unburned candle. Set the first candle aside and light the marked candle while the children watch.

Explain that when the candle burns down to the first line, 30 minutes will have gone by; when it burns down to the second line, another 30 minutes (or 60 minutes) will have gone by, etc. Then let the children periodically check the candle as it burns.

**Caution:** Activities that involve lighted candles require adult supervision at all times.

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**MOVEMENT**

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## FIVE LITTLE DREIDELS

Cut five large dreidel shapes out of construction paper or tagboard. Then let the children take turns holding the shapes and acting out the movements as you recite the poem below.

Five little dreidels spinning in a row.  
The first one spun, oh, so slow.  
The second one went round and round.  
The third one fell down on the ground.  
The fourth one spun like a happy top.  
The fifth one said, "I'll never stop!"  
Five little dreidels — look and see,  
Spinning at Hanukkah for you and me.

**Marjorie Debowy**  
**Stony Brook, NY**



## HANUKKAH CANDLES

For this flannelboard game cut a nine-holed Hanukkah menorah shape out of brown felt, nine candle shapes out of white or blue felt and nine candle flame shapes out of yellow felt. Place the menorah with the nine candles standing in it on the flannelboard. Put a flame shape on top of the middle candle. Explain that with a real menorah the candle in the center (the shamash) would be used to light the other candles. Then let the children take turns placing flame shapes on the

eight remaining candles as you read the poem below. Remove all the flames after each verse so that the next child can “light” the appropriate number of candles.

**Variation:** If desired, leave the menorah on the flannelboard throughout Hanukkah and let the children “light” the appropriate number of candles each day.



Eight little candles in a row,  
Waiting to join the holiday glow.

The first night we light candle number one.  
Hanukkah time has now begun.

The second night we light candles one and two.  
Hanukkah's here — there's lots to do.

The third night we light all up to three.  
Hanukkah's here — there's lots to see.

The fourth night we light all up to four,  
which now a part of the Hanukkah lore.

The fifth night we light all up to five,  
Helping our Hanukkah come alive.

The sixth night we light all up to six.  
Happy candles — happy wicks.

The seventh night we light all up to seven.  
The glow of each candle reaches to heaven.

The eighth night we light all up to eight.  
Hanukkah's here — let's celebrate!

**Jean Warren**



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## MUSIC

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### EIGHT LITTLE CANDLES

**Sung to:** "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Eight little candles in a row,  
Waiting to join the holiday glow.  
We will light them one by one,  
Until all eight have joined the fun.  
Eight little candles burning bright,  
Filling the world with holiday light.

Jean Warren

### I'M A LITTLE DREIDEL

**Sung to:** "I'm a Little Teapot"

I'm a little dreidel (*dray-dul*)  
Made of clay.  
Spin me around  
When you want to play.  
When I fall down, if you don't win,  
Just pick me up and spin again!

Adapted Traditional

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## SNACKS

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### CHEESE LATKES

Make cheese latkes for the children to enjoy at Hanukkah time. Use a blender to combine 3 eggs,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk, 1 cup cottage cheese and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt. Add 1 cup flour and blend again. Spoon the batter into a hot greased frying pan to

make 3-inch rounds. Fry on both sides until golden brown. Drain on paper towels, then serve warm with sour cream, yogurt or applesauce (see recipe below). Makes 18 latkes.

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### APPLESAUCE

Let the children help quarter, core and peel 3 to 4 sweet apples. Cut the quarter pieces in half and place them in a saucepan with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water. Sprinkle on  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cinnamon, then simmer for about 20 minutes or until tender. Let the children mash the cooked apples with a potato masher or whirl the apples in a blender. Serve with cheese latkes. Makes 6 small servings.



## DREIDEL SPINNING GAME

Let the children try this version of the traditional Hanukkah dreidel game. Make a dreidel by following the directions given in the activity "Painting With Dreidels" on p. 111. Label the four sections on the dreidel "0," "All," " $\frac{1}{2}$ " and "1." Have the children sit on the floor in a circle and give each child ten dried beans. Have everyone put one or two beans into the pot (a bowl placed in the center of the circle). Then let one child

begin by spinning the dreidel. If it lands on "0," the child gets nothing; if it lands on "All," the child gets the whole pot; if it lands on " $\frac{1}{2}$ ," the child gets half the pot; if it lands on "1," the child must add one bean to the pot. Continue playing, having everyone put one or two beans into the pot before each child's turn. The player who ends up with the highest number of beans at the end of the game wins.

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## STAR OF DAVID NUMBER GAME

Make a Star of David number matching game for the children to play at Hanukkah time. To make ten stars, cut twenty 4-inch triangles out of heavy paper or tagboard. Make each six-pointed star by placing one triangle point up and gluing another triangle point down on top of it. Use a felt-tip marker to number five of the stars from 1 to 5 and to draw corresponding numbers of dots on the other five stars. Then mix up the stars and let the children take turns finding the matching pairs.

**Valerie Bielsker  
Lenexa, KS**

