



## **Hanukkah Information Sheet**

Hanukkah celebrates the Maccabees' rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after its defilement under the rule of the Seleucid Greeks in 164 BCE. According to rabbinic tradition, the holiday also commemorates the miracle of the oil: one day's supply of oil for the Temple's menorah lasted eight days. People have many different perspectives about what Hanukkah celebrates: religious freedom; a triumph of tradition over assimilation; God helping a small group of ill-armed Jews to defeat a strong and powerful army; an opportunity for festivity during the darkest time of the year, the winter solstice.

Hanukkah lasts eight days, though the reasons for the eight-day length are debated. According to rabbinic tradition, the eight days commemorate the time that one-day's-worth of oil lit the menorah in the Temple. Other sources indicate that the first Hanukkah celebration was a delayed Sukkot celebration, and Sukkot traditionally lasts eight days. Still others connect the rededication of the Temple to the length of other dedication ceremonies.



## **Ritual Brainstorming Sheet**

Part 1: Read the Hanukkah Information Sheet. What stands out or what do you notice about Hanukkah? Write some of those themes or items below:

Part 2: As a team, you will create a ritual that commemorates Hanukkah. A ritual is a religious ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a designated order. The ritual can be done in public or in the privacy of one's home.

The ritual must also:

\_\_\_ Be something that everyone can do (meaning it cannot be very expensive or physically difficult to do).

\_\_\_ Reflect the themes of Hanukkah in some way.

Part 3: As a team, develop your ritual. Write the steps of the ritual in order. Use a separate piece of paper if necessary. [If this activity is taking place on Shabbat in a community that does not write on Shabbat, discuss the steps of the ritual but do not write them down]