

Oh Hanukkiyah! Oh Hanukkiyah!

Topic

Hanukkah, Mitzvot and Middot

Grade Level(s)

1st – 5th

Big Ideas

Publicizing great deeds or events can be a way to take pride in one's actions and inspire others to action or to change their perceptions for the positive.

Learning Targets

Students will:

1. Understand the difference between a hanukkiyah and the menorah that was lit in the *Beit Hamikdash*
2. Learn that *pirsumei nissa*, publicizing the Hanukkah miracle, is traditionally part of the ritual of Hanukkah candles
3. Consider how they can publicize the good things that they, themselves, do

Materials / Technology Needed

- Several hanukkiyot or [images](#) of hanukkiyot
- [Image](#) of the Menorah from the *Beit Hamikdash*
- Video about the miracle of Hanukkah (try [one](#) of [these examples](#) or look for one that is more appropriate for the community)
- Large poster board, sticky notes, and writing utensils

Prepare in Advance

The poster board will be used to recognize the good things that learners observe others doing. Write "You Are Miraculous" at the top of the poster. Draw an image of a hanukkiyah (or cut and paste one) by the header as well.

Relevant Vocabulary

חֲנֻכָּה (<i>Hanukkah</i>)	The Holiday of Hanukkah (literally: dedication, consecration)
חֲנֻכְיָה (<i>Hanukkiyah</i>)	Lamp with 9 branches for lighting on Hanukkah (also called a Hanukkah menorah)
מְנוֹרָה (<i>Menorah</i>)	Biblically, the lamp with 7 branches lit daily in the <i>Beit Hamikdash</i> In modern Hebrew, a lamp or a light fixture
בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ (<i>Beit Hamikdash</i>)	The Temple
פְּרֻסְמֵי הַנִּסָּה (<i>Pirsum Haneis</i>)	Publicizing the Miracle (Hebrew)
פְּרֻסְמֵי נִיסָא (<i>Pirsumei Nissa</i>)	Publicizing the Miracle (Aramaic)
מִשְׁכָּן (<i>Mishkan</i>)	The Tabernacle
שְׁמוֹת (<i>Shemot</i>)	The Book of Exodus
מְלָכִים א' (<i>Melachim Aleph</i>)	The First Book of Kings

Oh Hanukkiyah! Oh Hanukkiyah!

Background for Teachers

What is a menorah? According to the details given in the Tanakh, it is a seven-branched candelabra that was lit on a daily basis in the *mishkan* ([Shemot 25:31 – 40](#)) and, later, in the *Beit Hamikdash* ([Melachim 1 7:49](#)). In modern Hebrew, the word also refers to a general lamp or light fixture. And many refer to the nine-branched candelabra that is lit on Hanukkah as *the* menorah.

While it is correct to refer to the Hanukkah lamp as a menorah, the Hanukkah menorah also is more specifically called a hanukkiyah, referring to the holiday itself; and the name Hanukkah refers to the rededication of the *Beit Hamikdash* after the small Maccabean army defeated the powerful Seleucid Greeks ([1 Maccabees 4:36 – 59](#)).

The lighting of the hanukkiyah is meant to remind us of the Hanukkah miracle, and traditionally one places their hanukkiyah in a place where others can see it for the sake of *pirsumei nissa*. Thus, many people place their hanukkiyah outside their doors or in their windows so that passers-by can see the lit candles and think about what happened when the Maccabees defeated the Seleucids.*

*What the miracle of Hanukkah was has been debated for centuries. To explore that subject in more depth, check out [“Why Eight Lights?”](#)

Description of Activities

1. Set up hanukkiyot around the room. Invite learners to walk around and examine “the lamps.” Learners should notice what is similar about them: that they all have nine places for lighting candles.
 - a. If learners show enough interest, ask them which lamp they like best and what they like about it.
2. Show learners the image of the Menorah. Ask them what is similar and what is different between the Menorah and the other lamps around the room (i.e. the hanukkiyot). Learners should identify that:
 - a. Both the hanukkiyot and the Menorah are used for lighting candles.
 - b. Each hanukkiyah has space for nine candles while the Menorah has space for seven.
 - c. Each hanukkiyah has at least one spot for a candle (the *shamash*, which lights the other candles) that is not in line with the rest of the spots while the Menorah is completely in line.
3. Explain that the one with seven spots for flames is the Menorah that was lit on a daily basis in the *Beit Hamikdash* while the ones with nine spots are called a hanukkiyah, also known as a Hanukkah menorah, which is lit on a nightly basis during Hanukkah.

Oh Hanukkiyah! Oh Hanukkiyah!

- a. It might be worth pointing out that all of the branches of the Menorah were lit on a daily basis in contrast to the hanukkiyah, which has one additional flame each night of Hanukkah.
4. Ask: What is the connection between the Menorah from the *Beit Hamikdash* and the hanukkiyah?
 - a. Take some suggestions. If learners do not do so themselves, point out that the lights of the hanukkiyah commemorate the Hanukkah miracle.
 - b. Tell the story of the miracle. This can also be done by showing a video about Hanukkah.
5. Explain that one of the important aspects of Hanukkah is *pirsumei nissa*, publicizing the miracle of the holiday.
 - a. Note that it is not necessary to specify what the miracle is as it could be understood as the oil lasting eight days, the victory of the small-in-numbers Jewish people over the large-in-numbers Seleucid Greeks, etc.
6. Learners engage in *pirsumei nissa*:
 - a. Learners will place the hanukkiyot that they observed at the beginning of the activity in a spot where people would be able to see the flames burning if the hanukkiyot were lit.
 - i. Divide learners into pairs or larger groups depending on the number of hanukkiyot available.
 - ii. Explain that each pair or group will place their hanukkiyah in a place where they can do *pirsumei nissa*. [This could be in the classroom or outside the classroom depending on the needs of the class.]
 - iii. Point out that safety takes priority over publicizing the miracle, so one should not put the hanukkiyah in a dangerous place in order to do *pirsumei nissa*.
 - iv. After each hanukkiyah has been placed, groups explain why they chose their respective locations for their hanukkiyot. What works for that location? What could be difficult about that location?
 - b. Ask: Where can they place their hanukkiyot at home in order to publicize the miracle of the holiday? What works for that location? What could be difficult about that location?
 - c. Why is it important to publicize the miracle of Hanukkah? Why might it be important to publicize important events or good actions in general?
 - i. This is an open-ended question that is meant to generate discussion. Some possible talking points include the pride that one feels about the events, how others might be spurred to action by learning about the events, and how others might react positively to good actions.

Oh Hanukkiyah! Oh Hanukkiyah!

7. Ask what things they do that would be good to publicize. Lead discussion to good deeds as opposed to great feats of athletic prowess, culinary greatness, etc.
8. Show learners the poster board and explain that they will have the opportunity to publicize the good things they do on a daily basis.
 - a. The poster will be hung where others can see it.
 - b. Learners will anonymously write down on sticky notes the good things that their classmates, friends, etc. do so that others can learn from these actions and be inspired by them. This could include people who might not otherwise get recognized such as the maintenance staff. The sticky notes will go on the poster board.
 - c. If some people are not being recognized, make sure to recognize them yourself or to point out their positive actions so that others are motivated to recognize them.
 - d. **Tech Option:** More advanced classes can create a podcast (audio or video) that publicizes the good things being done in the community.
9. Party Option: Every couple of months, take the opportunity to celebrate the good things that people have done. This can be done with treats. (Make sure to account for allergies and other food concerns.) Include at least one thing made with (or in) olive oil to emphasize the connection to Hanukkah.

Differentiation Options

Knowing that students learn in a variety of ways and modalities, the following options are provided to adjust the above lesson to meet the unique needs of your learners.

For learners who need more assistance

- Learners count the total number of candles used over eight nights of Hanukkah.
- Learners design a hanukkiyah of their liking.

For learners who need extension opportunities

- Learners design methods to protect candles from weather outside.
- Learners explore the school building to identify locations where school events should be advertised for everyone to see.