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## **Worksheet 2: Celebrating Hanukah**

### **The Story of Hanukah**

Hanukah is an eight-day holiday celebrated by Jewish people around the world. It takes place in November or December each year. The date is determined by the Hebrew calendar.

Hanukah celebrates events that took place in Judea over 2,000 years ago. Judea is now called Israel. A Syrian king tried to force Jewish people to reject their religion. After many battles, a small Jewish army defeated the King's army.

After the victory, the Jewish people went to the temple to clean and reclaim it. When they lit the oil lamp, there was only enough oil for one day. Then a miracle happened. This tiny amount of oil stayed lit for eight days.

Hanukah is known as the Festival of Lights. Jews celebrate Hanukah to mark the victory over the Syrians. It lasts for eight days to celebrate the miracle of the oil.

### **The Celebration of Hanukah**

Hanukah is often celebrated at home among family and friends. Candles are lit in a *menorah* or candleholder. The menorah holds eight candles in a row. One candle is lit the first night of Hanukah, two the second night, and so on for eight nights. Blessings and songs are sung each night. It is a tradition to give gifts or coins to family and friends each night.

### **A Hanukah Tradition**

Children often play a game with a top called a dreidel. Hebrew letters, one on each side, stand for the words "A great miracle happened there." The dreidel is a four-sided top. Copy the pattern onto paper or thin cardboard to make it stronger. Color the four sides of the dreidel with the four symbols. Cut out the pattern and glue the flaps to form a top. Push a straw or stick through the square on the top of the dreidel until it touches the bottom point.

The game can be played with any number of people. Each player needs 20 markers. These can be small candies, raisins, or nuts. Before each turn, every player places two markers in the center. Players take turns spinning the dreidel. Depending on what symbol is on top when the dreidel stops, do the following:

- [symbol] nun – do nothing
- [symbol] gimel – take everything
- [symbol] hay – take half
- [symbol] shin – put one in

You win by getting all the markers.