

Grades 6-8 Day School Program

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Educator Background Information/ Knowledge

The #ShineALight Campaign

The #ShineALight Campaign is a national initiative to create a collective light of celebration spreading the Jewish joy of Chanukah. Sponsored by two NY-based funders and the UJA-Federation of NY, the campaign is designed as a counter-expression to antisemitism and other messages of hate acts towards Jews and Israel. The Jewish Education Project is a proud content partner of the #ShineALight Campaign and is delighted to provide these materials to Jewish educators. We encourage you to utilize this education content in the weeks leading up to and through Chanukah (this year and in the future), and if applicable, at other times of the year.

Educator Lesson Notes:

This lesson is written as one complete lesson, but it can also be done as a station rotation if you are working with several grades or many students. Additionally, many of the activities can be done as stand-alone activities or mix and match. If you would like additional content to choose from, we recommend utilizing the Shine A Light Grades 6-8 Congregational Program lesson, which includes the full debate between Hillel and Shammai on how to light the Chanukiah, science experiments on bending and converging light, a craft project to be shared with those living in Jewish group home settings or participating in adult day care programs, and a fun glow-in-the-dark dance party. You may also want to utilize the activities in the Grades 6-8 Additional Education Content guide, which focuses on a Design Challenge inspired by Amanda Gorman's quote from The Hill We Climb poem: "There is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it."

Educators should know:

This lesson contains some references to *hiddur hamitzvah*. If this is not a concept your students are familiar with, you will want to be prepared to teach a little bit about this. This is an [article](#) you can read ahead of time, or share with them.

Supplies can be found under each activity, and a comprehensive supply list is at the end of the document.



Social Media

If your social media and safety policy allow, please join the national #ShineALight Campaign by sharing photos and videos on a variety of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok), and let the world know what you and your learners did today to inspire and celebrate the light of Jewish joy. Encourage teens with social media accounts to share images from today and their Chanukah celebrations using this hashtag.



Prep & Activity Time

Approximate Prep Time: 20-30 minutes

Approximate Total Activity Time: 45-120 minutes

Lesson Flow:

Warm-Up/Set Induction (5-8 minutes)

Learning Activity One - What is the Mitzvah of Lighting a Chanukiah? (12-20 minutes):

Learning Activity Two - Visit a Virtual Chanukiyot Exhibit (8-15 minutes)

Learning Activity Three - Materials and Styles of Chanukiyot (5-8 minutes)

Learning Activity Four - Create Your Own Chanukiah (between 10-60 minutes)

Conclusion/Wrap-Up (5-10 minutes)

Educator Activity Guide



Warm-Up/Set-Induction/Arrival Activity: (5-8 minutes)

1. Discuss family traditions for lighting Chanukiyot.
 - a. Do students have one per family, one per person?
 - b. Do people in their family receive a Chanukiah at a certain important moment in their lives? (Birth, B'nai Mitzvah, etc.)
 - c. Are any of their family Chanukiyot passed down from other family members?
 - d. Are any of their family Chanukiyot crafted by them or a member of their family?
 - e. Do any of their family Chanukiyot have a special story attached to it?
 - f. Where do they light their Chanukiah? (In a window, an entry way, etc.)
 - g. What do their Chanukiyot look like? What are they made out of? Do they encapsulate a theme (i.e. sports, Disney, video games, etc)?



Learning Activity One: What is the Mitzvah of Lighting a Chanukiah?

(12-20 minutes)

Copies of One Chanukiah, Two Chanukiah, Red Chanukiah, Blue Chanukiah - Reference A, double-sided, one per student (follows on page 7)

Pens, pencils, one per student

1. Share that although now many people have the custom of lighting one Chanukiah per person, that was not always the case. Let them know they are going to go into small groups and read about what the Rabbis of the Talmud believed was the correct number of Chanukiyot per household, as well as the correct number of candles to light each night.
2. Partner the students in chevruta or triads and have them read and discuss, One Chanukiah, Two Chanukiah, Red Chanukiah, Blue Chanukiah - Reference A (follows on page 7).
3. After about 8-12 minutes of group work, come back together into a larger group and have everyone share some of their discussion from the smaller groups.
 - a. What were some of your reactions to this text?
 - b. After reading this text, would you want to change your home Chanukiah lighting practices? Why or why not?
 - c. What does being a mehadrin have to do with increasing light and joy in ourselves and in the world?
 - d. Do you agree with Beit Hillel or Beit Shammai?
 - e. What does *hiddur hamitzvah* have to do with the mehadrin? And what does our discussion about your different kinds of Chanukiyot have to do with *hiddur hamitzvah*?
 - f. What might the mehadrin, *hiddur hamitzvah*, and increasing light have to do with how might want to display our Judaism to the world - not just during Chanukah but all year long?
 - g. How might Shining A Light on our Jewish joy, help dispel the darkness that comes with prejudice, antisemitism, and anti-Zionism?



Learning Activity Two: Visit a Virtual Chanukiyot Exhibit

(8-15 minutes)

Computer, laptop, projector, wifi, screen

Digital device/wifi for small groups of 2-4 students (unless implementing individually and then they each need access)

A copy of the museum worksheet - Reference B, one per group or one per person (follows on page 8)

Pens, pencils, one per group or one per person

Optional: Have students each bring in a Chanukiah and set up a museum in your classroom

1. Show on the projector, the home pages of each of the digital collections below and demonstrate how to navigate them.
2. Break the students up into groups of 2-4. Each group needs a copy of the worksheet - Reference B (follows on page 8), or this can be done individually.
3. Choose one, or both, of these Digital Exhibits. Look at the Chanukiyot and share some you love and some you don't.
 - a. Israel Museum in Jerusalem's exhibit titled "In the Palm of your Hand.' Look at Chanukiyot from around the world. A [clickable map](#) which showcases Chanukiyot from around the world in this exhibit.
 - b. The Jewish Museum in New York's extensive [Menorah Collection](#)
4. On the worksheet, the students will document two Chanukiyot they really like (love!) and one they dislike.
5. Bring the whole group back together and do some sharing:
 - a. Share one of the Chanukiyot they chose as one they really like and explain why they chose it. (Did anyone else/any other group also choose it? For the same reasons?)
 - b. Have a few groups/individuals share one Chanukiah they didn't like and explain why. (Did anyone else/any other group also dislike it? For the same reasons?)
 - c. What elements make you drawn to the ones you like?
 - d. What elements make you drawn to the ones you dislike?
 - e. Were there any Chanukiyot you saw that really surprised you? Why?
 - f. Do you think these Chanukiyot (all or some) helped enhance the mitzvah of lighting candles? Why or why not?
 - g. Is there a Chanukiah that you chose as a favorite that you think does the best job of Shining A Light on Jewish joy? Why or why not?
6. Classroom Museum Option 1: Set up a mini museum in your classroom by having each student bring one of their favorites from home. Then have all the students walk around the student curated mini-museum. Ask the students to notice themes that run through the class's examples
7. Classroom Museum Option 2: Set up a mini museum in your classroom by having each student bring up one of their favorite Chanukiah images on their laptop and set it up on their desk facing outward. Then have all the students walk around the student curated mini museum. Ask the students to notice themes that run through the class's choices.



Learning Activity Three: Materials and Styles of Chanukiyot

(5-8 minutes)

Computer, laptop, projector, wifi, screen

Notes to Educator: This part of the lesson is teacher-led from their computer/projector.

Load this Jamboard

Share:

1. As you saw, there are a wide variety of materials, styles and even shapes that artists have used to create chanukiyot. Sometimes it is to share a value such as this Chanukiah representing the freedom Jewish people find in the United States ([slide 2: Jamboard](#)). This menorah, made by Manfred Anson (1922-2012), an immigrant to the United States celebrates American and Jewish traditions.



Learning Activities, Continued

2. Other times a chanukiah might represent available materials, such as this Ice Chanukiah in Siberia, (slide 3: Jamboard).
3. And sometimes people create Hanukkiyot to express their current realities, such as these 2020 themed creations and this Covid Test Hanukiah. (Covid themed: slides 4-5: Jamboard)
4. Discuss:
 - If you were to make a Chanukiah that represents a value or something important to you, what would be the theme?
 - What materials would you use to create a Chanukiah if you had no limit on cost or resources?
 - What does including a value message or special materials in the creation of a Chanukiah have to do with *hiddur hamitzvah*? What about increasing joy?
5. Discuss:
 - How can we share our light?
 - How can we bend the light to pop people's isolation or sadness?
 - How can we bend the light to make sure we reveal our joy and the joy of Judaism with the world?
 - Do you think there is a connection between lighting Chanukah lights and the darkness of winter?



Learning Activity Four: Create Your Own Chanukiah

(10 - 60 minutes)

Notes to Educator: In this section, we offer an optional art project which students will give to (or you will mail/drop of) to a partner organization (i.e. a Jewish home for elderly, a Jewish co-living home for adults with developmental disabilities, a Jewish adult day care facility). You may want to choose ahead of time ONE of these options above and present it in #2 below, or you may want to have all (or multiple) of them available and let each student choose different supplies. You can have students do this individually, in pairs or small groups. You could also choose to turn this part into a Chanukiah design competition and have different staff or school guests serve as judges.

Options:

- *Digital animation app/portal and device for each student to access*
 - *Construction paper, markers, colored pencils, pencils, paint, magazines, tissue paper, glue, scissors*
 - *Modeling clay of various colors*
 - *Upcycle materials: boxes, containers, bottles, buttons, hardware parts, old shirts, etc. and hot glue guns*
1. Explain: Now that you have seen so many different types of Chanukiyot, it's your turn to make your own.
 2. Here are some options for creating your Chanukiyot:
 - a. You may make a drawing or use a digital animation app to create your Chanukiah.
 - b. Use objects you have in your school, collect a lot of different things for students to use. If you have a maker space that is a great resource.
 - c. Have students bring in recycled material (boxes, containers, bottles, etc.) to build with.
 - d. Make a Chanukiah out of food or those made from food (slide 6: Jamboard).
 - e. Use clay, paints, or other art supplies.
 3. As students finish their creations, pair them up (or in triads or foursomes) to share with each other what they made, and the meaning behind it.



Conclusion/Wrap-Up (5-10 minutes):

1. Discuss:

- As you think ahead to Chanukah (or as you think about Chanukah tonight), and you think about what you learned today, how might it add to your joy and meaning?
- What will you share with your family about what you learned today and how might that impact their Chanukah joy and celebration?
- How might sharing increased joy and Jewish pride with your non-Jewish friends and community members help them to understand your holiday and your on-going internal light?

2. Instruct the students to take home their new art and share with their family what they learned today.

Comprehensive Supply List

Learning Activity One: What is the Mitzvah of Lighting a Chanukiah?

- *Copies of One Chanukiah, Two Chanukiah, Red Chanukiah, Blue Chanukiah - Reference A, double-sided, one per student (follows on page 7)*
- *Pens, pencils, one per student*

Learning Activity Two: Visit a Virtual Chanukiyot Exhibit

- *Computer, laptop, projector, wifi, screen*
- *Digital device/wifi for small groups of 2-4 students (unless implementing individually and then they each need access)*
- *A copy of the museum worksheet - Reference B, one per group or one per person (follows on page 8)*
- *Pens, pencils, one per group or one per person*
- *Optional: Have students each bring in a Chanukiah and set up a museum in your classroom*

Learning Activity Three: Materials and Styles of Chanukiyot

- *Computer, laptop, projector, wifi, screen*

Learning Activity Four: Create Your Own Chanukiah

Options:

- *Digital animation app/portal and device for each student to access*
- *Construction paper, markers, colored pencils, pencils, paint, magazines, tissue paper, glue, scissors*
- *Modeling clay of various colors*
- *Upcycle materials: boxes, containers, bottles, buttons, hardware parts, old shirts, etc. and hot glue guns*

One Chanukiah, Two Chanukiah Red Chanukiah, Blue Chanukiah

Read: Read the braita below to see what the Rabbi's thought the correct number of Chanukiayot was per household.

שבת כ"א ב:ה

תנו רבנן: מצות חנוכה, גר איש וביתו. והמהדרין, גר לכל אחד ואחד. והמהדרין מן המהדרין, בית שמאי אומרים: יום ראשון מדליק ששמה, מקאן ואילך פוחת והולך. ובית הלל אומרים: יום ראשון מדליק אחת, מקאן ואילך מוסיף והולך.



Shabbat 21b:5

Babylonian Talmud, c. 700 CE

The Sages taught: The basic *mitzvah* of Chanukah is that each evening a light is kindled by a person and their household. And the *mehadrin*, i.e., those who want to add to the performance of mitzvot, kindle a light for each and every one in the household. And the most committed change how many candles per night. 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 Chanukkah, they kindle one light. 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, they kindle eight lights.

1. What did the Rabbis think was the standard, basic number of Chanukiayot each household needed?
2. Why would someone want to be mehadrin in doing a mitzvah?
3. What was surprising about what the most committed did?
4. Is it interesting/odd to see that a normal custom in modern standards was considered almost extravagant when these texts were written? Why or why not?
5. According to this text, the “best” version of the original מצוה is common for many of us already. Given that, what are ways that we can extend and beautify the מצוה even more?

Visit a Chanukiyot Exhibit

Choose one, or both, of these Digital Exhibits. Look at the Chanukiyot.
Share some you love and some you don't.

- **Israel Museum in Jerusalem's** exhibit titled "In the Palm of your Hand".
Look at Chanukiyot from around the world.
A [clickable map](#) which showcases Chanukiyot from around the world in this exhibit.
- **The Jewish Museum in New York's** extensive [Menorah Collection](#)

**Share two Chanukiyot you love and one you dislike.
Paste in a picture of the Chanukiah and explain why.**

I love this one!

Photo:

Share details like title/date/location:

Why did you choose this one?

I love this one!

Photo

Share details like title/date/location:

Why did you choose this one?

I dislike this one!

Photo

Share details like title/date/location:

Why did you choose this one?