

Name _____

Celebrating Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a holiday that is celebrated by Jewish people. The neat thing about Hanukkah is that it is celebrated for eight days and eight nights. Hanukkah takes place in late November-December.



The story of where Hanukkah originated is interesting. A long time ago, Greek soldiers tried to make Jewish people worship Zeus. Jewish people did not believe in Zeus, and they wanted to fight to have freedom of religion. The Greek soldiers were very persistent in trying to get them to forget their Jewish traditions. They even forced the Jewish people to eat pig! Pig is an animal that is not eaten by Jewish people.

Many Jewish people ran up into the mountains. They were doing this in hopes to run away from the Greek soldiers. A bunch of the Jewish people got together in the mountains and they decided that they needed to do something. They all joined to fight off the Greek soldiers. They ended up winning the fight! Once they had finished getting back their land, they went to the temple of Jerusalem.

When they reached their temple, the Jewish citizens were shocked. Their temple had been used to do all sorts of things that were against their religion. The Greek people used their temple to worship idols, and even to kill a pig! The Jewish people were outraged. Even though their temple had been ruined, they still needed a place to worship. It was at that time that they decided they were going to have to purify the temple so that they can worship in there again.

The way that they would purify things would be to burn oil in a menorah for eight days. However, they only had enough oil to burn for one day. They began to burn the menorah anyway. That is when the miracle of Hanukkah happened. Even though they only had enough oil to burn for one day, the menorah kept burning for the whole 8 days!

Many Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah by burning their own menorahs. On the first day of Hanukkah, they burn only the first candle. On the second day, they burn two, and on the third day, they burn three. They keep repeating this until they have all eight candles burning on the last day. Some Jewish families celebrate this holiday like Christmas. On each of the eight days, they give their children a gift.



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Celebrating Hanukkah Free Response and Writing Activity

Write your answers in complete sentences.

1. Why were the Jewish people outraged? Use details from the story to support your answer.

2. How do Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah? Use at least two details from the story to support your answer.

3. What happened to the temple when the Jewish people ran into the mountains? Use details from the story to support your answer.

4. On the first day of Hanukkah, How many candles on the menorah are lit?

