

# Spread the Light *Elementary*

On each evening of the Jewish festival Hanukkah, families use the helper candle on a menorah (Hebrew for “lamp”), to light one additional candle until all the candles are lit on the final night. This is why Hanukkah is sometimes called the “Festival of Light.” This lesson teaches young people about the story and celebration of Hanukkah through image analysis and reading. Then, students complete an art project to show all the ways they can spread their light like the shamash, the helper candle!

**Essential Question:** What is Hanukkah? How can I be a shamash?

## **Standards/Objectives:**

Washington, DC K-12 Social Studies Standards 2023 Standards:

- 1.1 Explain what constitutes a community and describe characteristics of different local and global communities
- 1.4 Describe ways in which groups of people in the same community can hold different beliefs and live their daily lives in different ways, while still working together toward shared goals.
- 3.38 Analyze how groups maintain their cultural heritage and how this heritage is manifested in the symbols, traditions and culture of Washington, DC.

C3 Framework

- D2.Civ.7.K-2. Apply civic virtues when participating in school settings.
- D2.Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others’ points of view about civic issues.
- D4.6.K-2 Identify ways to take action to help address local, regional, and global problems.

**Time Estimate:** 60-80 minutes

## **Resources:**

- [Spread the Light Slide Deck](#)
- 1 [capture sheet](#) per student (optional)
- Hanukkah book (recommendations below)
- Activity options: white printer paper, construction paper, markers, scissors, tape or glue OR markers and [coloring page](#)

## **Activities:**

1. Slide 2-4: Activate Prior Knowledge

Use the cues on the slide to help students explore this image and build background knowledge. After prompting student thinking, introduce vocabulary like Hanukkah, menorah, and shamash. Use slide 4 to set the agenda and objectives for the day.

**Differentiate:** Edit the cues to help structure students thinking. Use the capture sheet to practice notetaking for older students. Higher level thinkers may want to create their own cues with a thinking routine like [See – Think – Wonder](#). Other students might have success with more open-ended cues – counting the candles, guessing at her feelings, making a prediction for what’s going to happen next.

2. Slide 5: Background Knowledge

Below in Student Materials, there is a corresponding Cloze Notes page to help students digest this information. Edit as necessary to differentiate, adding or removing blanks and defined terms to create accessibility.

3. Slide 6: Read and Learn

Pick from the list of recommended books below to read to your class. While you read, pause to point out some of the traditions of Hanukkah – lighting the Menorah, playing dreidel, sharing songs and stories, and eating foods like latkes and chocolate gelt.

**Recommend Books:**

*Chanukah Lights Everywhere* by Michael J. Rosen

*Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins* by Eric Kimmel

*Meet the Latkes* by Alan Silberberg

\*\*All books are available at the DC Public Library

4. Slide 7-8: What is the shamash?

Use the prompts to point out that even though it's 8 nights and 1 candle per night, there's 9 candles. The tallest candle is called the Shamash, the helper candle, and it's lit first and used to light the other 8 candles day by day.

Shamash candles do not go out when used to light other candles – it does not dimmish you to help others! We can each be like the shamash and help each other share our light.

5. Slides 9-13: How can I be a shamash?

Use the slides to tell the story of the first National Menorah and show how sharing the matchbook and returning it with a presidential signature are acts of kindness.

After you share the example, use the white board, poster board, or easel paper to solicit and record ideas for how students share their light with others.

6. Slides 14-15: Activity Instructions

Distribute blank white paper, construction paper, rulers, scissors, and tape/glue.

Help students follow the instructions on the slides to make their own Menorah.

**Differentiate:** For more challenge – make this an interdisciplinary lesson by adding specific measures for each part of the project and ask students to use rulers to make and cut their candles to specific lengths. You could also challenge students to think about the way others help them and have them make candles for each other. For less accessibility – pre-cut the Menorah strips or use the Menorah coloring page below so there is no cutting and pasting.

7. Slide 16 – Wrap up

Encourage students to share their Menorahs with each other somehow. You could do a show and tell, Gallery walk, call on students to share, etc.

## Spread the Light – Capture Sheet

1. **Activate!** Look at the image (below or on the slides) and use the space below to answer the questions.




---



---



---



---



---



---



---



---

2. **What is Hanukkah?** Follow along and fill in the blanks as you learn.

H\_\_\_\_\_ is an 8-day J\_\_\_\_\_ festival celebrating an ancient miracle. Long ago, G\_\_\_\_\_ rulers didn't want Jewish people to be able to celebrate their Jewish religion. A group of Jewish warriors called the M\_\_\_\_\_ fought for their r\_\_\_\_\_. f\_\_\_\_\_. They wanted to be able to be Jewish without harassment or v\_\_\_\_\_ from the King. The Maccabees were able to defeat the King and gain their freedom, but the Jewish T\_\_\_\_\_ had nearly been destroyed. According to tradition, a very small amount of o\_\_\_\_\_ burned in the Temple's M\_\_\_\_\_ for 8 days, which was enough time to clean the Temple and make more oil. A m\_\_\_\_\_.! On each n\_\_\_\_\_ of Hanukkah, Jewish families light one more c\_\_\_\_\_ on the Menorah to remember the miracle of the oil and the Maccabees.

3. **Read and Learn! How do Jewish families celebrate Hanukkah?** As we read this book together, find details to help you answer this question!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

4. **How can I be a shamash?** Follow along and fill in the blanks as you learn.

In 1979, President C\_\_\_\_\_ lit the first National M\_\_\_\_\_ across the street from the White House to celebrate Hanukkah. The candles were p\_\_\_\_\_ from the wind inside a plexiglass box. The m\_\_\_\_\_ were too s\_\_\_\_\_ to light the candles, so a Secret Service Agent was sent to find l\_\_\_\_\_ matches. A nearby store, owned by a Jewish family, happened to have a specialty matchbox with 8- inch matches. The long matches were the perfect l\_\_\_\_\_ to reach inside the box and light the candles. President Carter s\_\_\_\_\_ the match box and gave it back to the store owners as a thank you.



## How am I a *shamash*?

1. Find the shamash and write your name on it.
2. On each candle, share a way you like to help your friends and family – how are you a helper?
3. Color in the rest of the menorah!

