

# Chanukah Activities

## How to Play Dreidel: The Traditional Game, Plus a New Spin (Courtesy of URJ Website)



### Materials

“Gambling pieces” (plastic chips, pennies, small candies, buttons, peanuts in the shell, etc. may be used) for each player

A dreidel for the group.

### Directions

Distribute an equal number of gambling pieces to each player. Begin play by having each of the players ante up one or two pieces into a common pot. Take turns spinning the dreidel and taking the actions determined by the letter you spin:

*Nun*: The player takes nothing.

*Gimel*: The player takes all.

*Hey*: The player takes half.

*Shin*: The player puts in.



The winner is the person who collects all the gambling pieces.

## A New Spin for Your Family

### Materials

Eight (8) sheets of construction paper or copy paper  
Scissors  
Markers, pens or crayons

### Directions

Cut a large dreidel shape from each of the eight sheets of construction paper.



Write one of these discussion starters (or your own eight discussion starters) on the dreidels so that each dreidel has a different discussion starter on it:

Togetherness is part of our family when...

Sharing is part of our family when...

Loving is part of our family when...

Fun is part of our family when...

Celebration is part of our family when...

Mitzvot are part of our family when...

Learning is part of our family when...

Tradition is a part of our family when...

Draw eight blank lines below each discussion starter.

Together with your family, come up with eight answers for one of the discussion starters on the first night of Hanukkah. Choose one family member to record the answers on that dreidel. When you're finished, add the dreidel to your Hanukkah decorations. Use a different discussion starter dreidel (and a different family member to record the answers) for each of the subsequent nights of the holiday.

You may also try playing the dreidel game with a charitable twist: Everyone puts some money in the kitty, and the winner gets to choose where to donate it.

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(adapted from URJ website)

Chanukah offers wonderful opportunities to spend time with those we love. In that spirit, here are some ideas for Chanukah gifts that will provide meaningful family experiences and memories for years to come:

**Go on a trip:** Travel doesn't have to be expensive; even a day trip to a local park, museum, or to a local Jewish museum or cultural site.



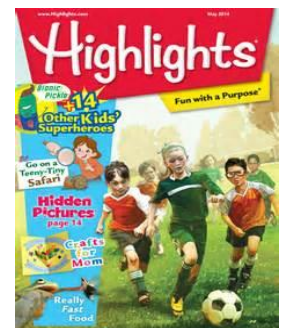
**Plan an event:** Taking your children to a movie, play, or sporting event of choice can be a bonding experience that provides something to look forward to and remember well beyond the holiday's end. Round out the day by having them pick their favorite place for lunch or dinner.

**Buy a family membership:** Memberships to museums, zoos, JCCs, and other local attractions and organizations are a great way for families to learn and play together on a regular basis throughout the year.

**Take a class:** Education is the gift that keeps giving. Gifting a child a class in one of his or her favorite hobbies, such as dance, karate, sports, art, or music, is an excellent way to encourage interests beyond school.



**Subscribe to a magazine:** Since the advent of email and text messaging, children rarely get mail anymore. A gift subscription to a magazine that relates to one of their interests will give them something to look forward to in the mailbox every month.



**Encourage hobbies:** If your child is the arts-and-crafts type, set aside time for a craft night. Make a special Chanukah craft or craft of your child's choice. If your child is a budding chef, make one of the "Kids's Cooking" Chanukah recipes together. If your child is an aspiring actor, put together a skit about the Maccabees, and perform it at a family Chanukah party.



**Engage in *tikkun olam* (repair of the world):** Spend an afternoon volunteering together at a local shelter, bringing cheer to home-bound seniors, or sorting through last year's toys to donate to those who are less fortunate. These activities not only will teach children the importance of giving back and helping others, but also will help them learn by example.



**Give *tzedakah* (charity):** It's important—and Jewish—to teach children that the best gift is the one you give to others. Make sure to carve out time and money to show them how to give to charity. Decide upon a cause that's dear to your family. Consider to forgo gifts on the eighth night of Chanukah and, instead, donate to a charity that is meaningful to your family. Discuss with your children what kinds of charities matter to them and how much to give so that they feel a sense of ownership and pride when giving *tzedakah*.