

# Religious School...education and enrichment

## Hanukkah – Tell it over and over again

Hanukkah is a holiday that has undergone many changes since the tragedy during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century BCE. We all know the original story: Antiochus and the Syrian-Greeks desecrated the Temple and Judah Maccabee and his brothers lead a successful revolt against the Syrian-Greek army. Judah organized the cleaning and rededication of the Temple, but only one jar of pure and kosher oil could be found. Since it would take eight days to retrieve more oil, they burned the one jar in the meantime. The miracle was that the oil burned for all eight days and God's presence in that place was great. Here is where we get the 9 branched Hanukkah Menorah. Today Hanukkah celebrations are infused with fried delicacies (sufganiyot from Israel and latkes from everywhere) presents for our children, family and loved ones, dreidel games, chocolate gelt, community celebrations and more.

I keep coming back to the miracle. All Jewish holidays are infused with God in one way or another. Have we modernized Hanukkah so much that we forget to remember what the holiday is really all about? How many times have you forgotten to light the Hanukkah but still made a point to give or receive gifts? The Festival of Lights is all about the candles. The Maccabees had the courage to light their commitment. We take the time to place the light of God in our lives. Candles act as a lighthouse to lead us back to the things important to all of us.

This Hanukkah remember the importance of the candles. Take some time with your family to watch them burn.

- Think of the other important times we light candles (Shabbat, Holidays, Yahrzeits, etc.) and what those candles mean to our people.
- Notice all of the light and warmth that is given off. How can we put the same light and warmth back into the world?
- Gaze into the flame and imagine what you want for the future of Judaism. All of our dreams and hopes can be found inside those candles.

I wish you and your families a שמח חנוכה (Happy Hanukkah) and hope to light candles with you sometime during the holiday.

**JASON**