Hanukkah: The Festival of Lights with Max and Ellie

Learning objective: To understand the historical origins of Hanukkah and the significance of the traditions observed by Jewish families today.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of the festival of Hanukkah to provide detailed answers. Remember to show your working for any calculations involving money.

Max the monkey and Ellie the elephant are learning about Hanukkah. They discovered that this festival remembers the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. When the Maccabees returned to the Temple, they only had enough pure oil to light the lamp for one day, but it miraculously burned for eight full days. Today, families light a special nine-branched candlestick, play games, and share traditional foods cooked in oil, like latkes.

Word bank: Menorah · Hanukkiah · Maccabees · Temple · Miracle · Dreidel · Gelt · Oil

1. Max is counting the branches on a Hanukkiah. Why does a Hanukkiah have nine branches when the miracle only lasted for eight days? (2 marks)

2. Ellie is learning about the history of Hanukkah. Explain why the Jewish people were fighting to rededicate the Temple in Jerusalem. (2 marks)

3. Many children play with a dreidel during Hanukkah. Identify the four Hebrew letters found on a dreidel and explain what they represent in the phrase 'A great miracle happened there'. (2 marks)

4. Max wants to buy chocolate coins (gelt) for his friends. A bag of chocolate coins costs £1.25. If he buys 4 bags for his friends, how much will he spend in total? Show your calculation. (2 marks)

5. Why do families traditionally eat foods fried in oil, such as latkes or doughnuts, during the eight days of Hanukkah? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw a beautiful Hanukkiah with all nine candles lit. Make sure to include patterns on the base inspired by Zara the zebra's favourite designs.

Extension challenge: Research another festival of light from a different religion or culture. Write a short paragraph comparing one similarity and one difference between that festival and Hanukkah.