

The Festival of Lights: Understanding Hanukkah

Learning objective: To understand the significance, traditions, and historical origins of Hanukkah within the Jewish faith.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of Jewish traditions to provide detailed answers. Think about the symbolism behind the customs.

Ellie the elephant has been studying the history of Hanukkah. She knows that this festival commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. According to tradition, when the Jewish people returned to the Temple, they found only enough sacred oil to light the lamp for one day, yet it miraculously burned for eight full days and nights. Today, families celebrate this event by lighting the Hanukkah, playing games, and enjoying delicious foods fried in oil.

Word bank: Menorah · Hanukkah · Miracle · Maccabees · Oil · Dreidel · Gelt · Dedication · Latkes

1. Explain why the number eight is so significant during the festival of Hanukkah. Reference the historical 'miracle' in your answer. (3 marks)

2. Compare the lighting of the Hanukkah to the concept of 'dedication'. Why do you think this festival is often called the Festival of Dedication? (3 marks)

3. Max the monkey is calculating the cost of a celebration. If a box of chocolate gelt costs £2.50 and a bag of potatoes for latkes costs £1.25, how much would he spend in total? If he pays with a £5.00 note, how much change should he receive? (3 marks)

4. Justify why foods fried in oil, such as latkes or doughnuts, are traditional during Hanukkah. What is the symbolic connection? (2 marks)

5. Describe the rules of the game played with a dreidel. Why is this game a popular tradition for children during the eight days of Hanukkah? (2 marks)

6. What might happen if a family did not have a Hanukkah? Could they still celebrate the meaning of the festival? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a Hanukkah with all eight candles lit (plus the shamash candle). Surround your drawing with patterns that represent the 'miracle of the oil'.



Extension challenge: Research the historical figure Judah Maccabee. Write a short, poetic tribute from the perspective of Leo the lion, focusing on the bravery and resilience shown by the Maccabees during the struggle for religious freedom.