The Festival of Lights: Understanding Hanukkah

Learning objective: I can explain the historical origins, traditions, and significance of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah.

About 15 minutes. Grown-up tip: Use these cards to quiz each other; if your child gets one wrong, read the back together and discuss the history behind it.

Read the front of each flashcard to test your knowledge. Flip it over to reveal the answer. Example: Front: What is the Menorah? | Answer: A nine-branched candelabra used during Hanukkah.

What is the primary reason Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah?	To commemorate the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem and the miracle of the oil.
What is the name of the nine-branched candelabra used during Hanukkah?	The Hanukkiah (or Menorah).
Why is oil central to the story of Hanukkah?	A small jar of oil that should have lasted one day miraculously burned for eight days.
How many candles are lit on the final night of Hanukkah?	Eight (plus the shamash).
What is the 'shamash' candle used for?	It is the 'helper' candle used to light all the other candles.
What is a dreidel?	A four-sided spinning top used in a traditional Hanukkah game.
What are the four Hebrew letters on a dreidel?	Nun, Gimel, Hey, and Shin (representing 'a great miracle happened there').
What is 'Gelt' in the context of Hanukkah celebrations?	Chocolate coins wrapped in gold or silver foil.
Why do families often eat foods fried in oil, like latkes?	To remember the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days.
Who were the Maccabees?	A group of Jewish warriors who fought to reclaim and rededicate the Temple.

In which season does Hanukkah usually occur?	What does the word 'Hanukkah' actually mean in Hebrew?
Winter (specifically late November or December).	Dedication.