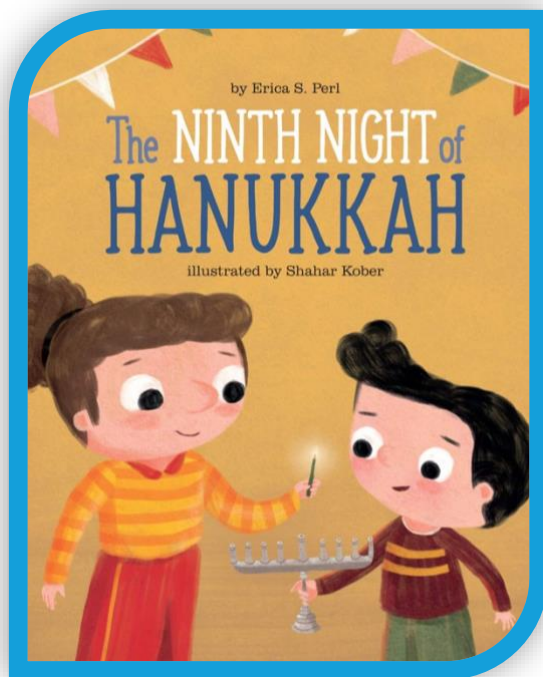




Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



The Ninth Night of Hanukkah

Erica S. Perl (Author), Shahar Kober (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1454940883

Publisher: HarperCollins

Year Published: 2020

Age Range: 3-7

Book Themes

Hanukkah, Holidays, Diversity, Neighbors

About the Book

It's Hanukkah, and Max and Rachel are excited to light the menorah in their family's new apartment. But unfortunately, their Hanukkah box is missing. So now they have no menorah, candles, dreidels, or, well, anything! Luckily, their neighbors are happy to help, offering thoughtful and often humorous stand-in items each night. And then, just as Hanukkah is about to end, Max and Rachel, inspired by the shamash ("helper") candle, have a brilliant idea: they're going to celebrate the Ninth Night of Hanukkah as a way to say thanks to everyone who's helped them!

Hanukkah-Related Words

Dreidel: A four-sided spinning top, each side marked with a different Hebrew letter, played during Hanukkah.

Gelt: Money; on Hanukkah, many people give children chocolate gelt, chocolate coins wrapped in gold or silver foil.

Latkes: Potato pancakes often served during Hanukkah; the oil they are fried in symbolizes the oil that miraculously provided light for eight days.

Menorah: A special candleholder; a Hanukkah menorah has nine candlesticks, one for each night of the festival plus an extra one to light the others.

Shamash: The "helper" candle that is used to light the other lights, usually set apart from the other candles.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a conversation that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?
- What did you learn about Hanukkah by reading the book?
- How do Rachel and Max feel when they can't find their Hanukkah items?
- How do you think you might feel if you weren't able to celebrate a holiday the way you usually do?
- How do the family's neighbors help them celebrate Hanukkah? Have you ever helped or been helped by your neighbors?
- How are the neighbor's different than Rachel, Max and their family? How are they similar?
- Have you ever had to improvise (to make or create something by using whatever is available) with a holiday or other tradition? How so?
- How do you think Hanukkah will be different for Rachel and Max next year?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?
- What is the overall message of the book?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. Hanukkah and Holidays

Talk with your child about what they learned about Hanukkah by reading the book. Elicit some of the Hanukkah traditions that the family in the book celebrates (e.g., lighting candles, exchanging presents, eating latkes and sofganivot [jelly doughnuts], playing dreidel, singing, etc.) and how those

traditions have to be changed somewhat because the family don't have their Hanukkah things, since they just moved. Together you can read the Author's Note in the back of the book on page 32 to learn more about Hanukkah. Explain that **Hanukkah** is a holiday celebrated by Jewish people and celebrates the victory of the Jewish people over another group of people who were treating them unjustly. Hanukkah is often called the "Festival of Lights" because it is celebrated with the lighting of the Hanukkah menorah (also called a hanukkiyah) for eight nights, commemorating a miracle that happened during this time, where just one day's supply of oil allowed the menorah in the Temple to remain lit for eight days.

Together talk about holidays your family celebrates (winter or any holidays), what you do during these holidays and what traditions you have. You can also explain that not everyone from one religious or cultural group celebrates the same holidays or in the same way. Explain that there are families who do not celebrate holidays at all, and that may include yours. Therefore, it's important to explain to your child not to assume people celebrate holidays or celebrate holidays in the same way. You can also talk with them about the importance of learning about the holidays, culture and identity of others. In addition, ask questions and talk about how sometimes certain holidays are acknowledged in school/community more than others, usually those of the dominant culture. You can ask questions such as: *What holidays do you talk about in school? Does your teacher talk about the holidays we celebrate? Do we get days off for our holidays? How does it feel when the holidays that are important to us are not discussed at all? What can we do about that?*

2. People, Identity and Culture

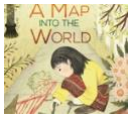
Discuss with your child what we learn about people, identity and culture through the book. Explain that Rachel, Max and their family are Jewish; being Jewish is their religion and part of their culture. With your child, talk about what "culture" means. You can define **culture** as the patterns of daily life that can be seen in language, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, beliefs/values, communication style, music, clothing and more that a group of people share. Explain that these aspects of culture can (but not always) be handed down from one generation to the next through family, relatives and ancestors. Culture can also come from the place where your family and ancestors live or are from. Explain that culture also can include one's region of the country, whether you live in a city, suburban or rural setting, one's family traditions including how you celebrate holidays, religion, etc. Elicit what they learned from reading the book about the family's culture (i.e., celebrating Hanukkah, food, traditions). Talk with your child about the aspects of culture that are important in your family. Explain how you would define your family's culture(s), and together identify what foods, holidays, customs, and other parts of daily life are important to your family. Your family may connect with more than one culture or may primarily connect with the predominant culture in your region." Talk with your child about what they know and don't know about their culture, what they may have found out about their culture from you (their parent), grandparents or other relatives, what more they want to know and the questions they have in order to learn more. Also emphasize the importance of learning about other people's culture, which helps us feel more connected to others and part of our diverse world.

3. The Importance of Neighbors

An important part of the book involves the role of neighbors in the family's lives. Ask your child what happens in the book related to neighbors and how they help Rachel, Max and their parents. Elicit how each of the neighbors provide something for the family to help them celebrate Hanukkah, an important holiday to their family and their culture/religion. Ask your child what neighbors are, and talk about the neighbors you know, those you don't know, and those you may want to get to know better. Some people value getting to know their neighbors, and some do not. When you live in close proximity with other people, there may be a tendency to help and rely on each other—to borrow a

needed item (as in the book), to help take care of a pet, to call or check in with safety concerns, etc. In the Author's Note in the back of the book, the author writes: "Like the shamash (the 'helper candle'), individual people have the power to spark change and brighten the lives of those around them." Talk about what this quote means to you, emphasizing how others have helped and brightened your lives and discuss how you can help others (neighbors, family, friends, classmates) and brighten their lives.

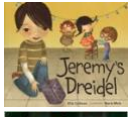
Other Books You May Like



A Map into the World by Kao Kalia Yang, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/a-map-into-the-world



Binny's Diwali by Thrity Umrigar, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/binnys-diwali



Jeremy's Dreidel by Ellie Gellman, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/jeremys-dreidel



Nathan Blows Out the Candles by Tami Lehman-Wilzig and Nicole Katzman, www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/nathan-blows-out-the-hanukkah-candles

ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on Latinx people, identity and culture and the importance of diverse books.

Websites

Books Matter: The Power of Children's Literature

www.adl.org/blog/books-matter-the-power-of-childrens-literature

Anyone who has ever read to or with a child—parent, family member, teacher or friend—knows books leave lasting impressions. This blog discusses how books have the power to instill empathy, affirm, teach, transport and inspire action.

Calendar of Observances

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/calendar-of-observances

Use this calendar of observances to increase your awareness and sensitivity about religious holidays, observances as well as ethnic and cultural festivities that may affect students, colleagues and neighbors in your community.

Considerations for Inclusive Holidays and Observances

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/considerations-for-inclusive-holidays-and-observances

Holiday celebrations are an excellent opportunity to provide a window into a culture or understand more about a group of people. Here are some important considerations when planning holiday observances in your classroom or school.

The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children. See "[How Can 'Looking at Lights' Promote Respect Among Children for Various Holidays, Celebrations and Traditions?](#)" and "[How Should I Respond When Children Notice Differences in Others?](#)"

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources.

Winter Holidays: December Dilemma or Teaching Opportunity?

www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/winter-holidays-december-dilemma-or-teaching-opportunity

December can be a fun and festive time of year, or it can make some students feel excluded and marginalized if not approached with respect and care. This resource provides considerations for school officials to ensure inclusivity and not give students the impression that one set of holidays or beliefs is more important or more acceptable than others.

Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

Jewish Culture & Antisemitism, [https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-5=1&tid\[189\]=189&tid\[190\]=190&tid\[191\]=191&tid\[192\]=192](https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-5=1&tid[189]=189&tid[190]=190&tid[191]=191&tid[192]=192)

People, Identity & Culture: Similarities & Differences, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[214\]=214](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[214]=214)