



# Monthly Featured Book

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Monthly Featured Book:** 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 educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

## Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas

Pamela Ehrenberg (Author) and Anjan Sarkar (Illustrator)

Sadie's family has both Jewish and Indian background, so at Hanukkah instead of latkes, her family celebrates with tasty Indian dosas. To her brother's distress, little Sadie won't stop climbing on everything both at home and at the Indian grocery store, even while preparing the dosas. As the family puts the finishing touches on their holiday preparations, they accidentally get locked out of the house. Sadie and her climbing skills just may be exactly what is needed to save the day.

ISBN: 978-0374304447

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Year Published: 2017

Age Range: 4-8



## Book Themes

People, Identity and Culture, Jewish Identity, Indian/AAPI Identity, Hanukkah, Holidays, Multicultural Identity

## Key Words

Discuss and define the words below with students prior to reading the book. Rather than focus on students' retention of all the words, make sure they understand the words enough to follow the story and remind students of the words' meanings as they come up in the book. You can also post the words and point out when they appear in the story. For definitions that are differentiated for young children, see ADL's [Education Glossary Terms](#).

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|---------------|-----------------|----------|
| ■ absolutely  | ■ Hanukkah      | ■ tawa   |
| ■ amma-amma   | ■ Hebrew school | ■ temple |
| ■ audience    | ■ Indian market | ■ tune   |
| ■ boosted     | ■ insisted      |          |
| ■ combination | ■ menorah       |          |
| ■ dal         | ■ pulverize     |          |
| ■ dosas       | ■ pyramid       |          |
| ■ dreidel     | ■ sambar        |          |

## Discussion Questions

Before reading the book aloud, ask some or all of these pre-reading questions:

- Looking at the cover of the book, what do you think is happening?
- Who and what do you see?
- What do you think the book will be about?

As you read the book aloud, ask a few discussion questions periodically throughout reading to check for comprehension and keep the students engaged. Below are some sample questions that correlate to specific page numbers:

- Who is Amma-Amma? (Page 5)
- What are some of the ingredients in the dosas? (Page 14)
- What happens to the door? (Page 21)

After reading the book aloud, engage students in a discussion by asking some or all of the following discussion questions:

- What happens in the story?
- Why does Sadie's brother not want her to help the family make the dosas?
- When the boy says he's never seen anyone from Hebrew School at the Indian market, and no one from the Indian market bringing their kids to Hebrew School, what does he mean by that?
- What are the different cultures that the family belongs to?
- Why do you think the family makes dosas instead of potato latkes (latkes are the "typical" food made during Hanukkah)? Why are the dosas important to the family?
- The first two lines of the dreidel song, which people sometimes sing on Hanukkah, are, "I have a little dreidel, I made it out of clay." Instead, Sadie's brother sings, "I had a little dosa; I made it out of dal." Why does he change the words? Why do you think her brother singing this song helped Sadie stop climbing in places she shouldn't be climbing?
- The boy says, "Making Indian food that my mom ate as a kid for a Jewish holiday that my dad grew up with—that was a lucky combination." What does he mean that it's a "lucky combination?" How does the family combine different parts of their identity for their Hanukkah celebration?
- What holidays and traditions does your family celebrate? Does your family combine different parts of your identity or culture? If so, how?
- What does the line, "our whole house smelled like Hanukkah" mean? Has your house ever smelled like a holiday? Which one and how did it smell like that holiday?
- What happens when the family gets locked out of their house? How is Sadie's climbing helpful in this situation?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What do you think the author is trying to say to her readers?
- How did you feel when the book ends?
- Why do you think the author included recipes at the back of the book? If you wrote a book about your favorite holiday, what recipes would you include?

## Extension Activities

Below are activities for students that can extend learning from the book.

### 1. Impactful and Memorable Scenes

Ask students: *What part or scene from the book did you find memorable, impactful or interesting?* With students, brainstorm a list of scenes from the book that students found impactful, important or memorable (e.g., when the family goes to the Little India Market, when Sadie climbs on the coconut milk cans, when the family cooks the dosas, when Sadie's brother sings, "I had a little dosa; I made it out of dal," when the family gets locked out of the house, when Sadie climbs through the window to get in the house and open the door, when the family lights the Menorah candles). After compiling a list of scenes, have each student select a scene that they find memorable, impactful or interesting. Then have them turn and talk with someone sitting nearby and share the part they chose and explain why they chose it. Based on their selected scene, have students draw a picture of that scene. For students who are able to write, invite them to also write words or sentences that describe the scene or words the characters are saying. For students not yet writing, you can write the words for them. Create a new book with all of the students' drawings together.

### 2. What is Hanukkah?

In the book, Saide and her family celebrate Hanukkah. Ask students: *What did you already know about Hanukkah? What did you learn about Hanukkah traditions by reading the book (e.g., lighting candles, eating something like latkes, in this case dosas, singing the dreidel song, celebrating with family, etc.)?* If they don't already know, explain to students that Hanukkah is a holiday celebrated by Jewish people and marks the victory of the Jewish people over another group of people who were treating them unfairly and 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, symbolizing 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. Explain/ elicit from student that Sadie and her family are Jewish and Indian (from India) and therefore, they combine some of their Indian traditions with their Jewish traditions, like going to the Indian market and making dosas instead of potato latkes. Ask students: *Does your family celebrate holidays and if so, what holidays do they celebrate? What are some of the things you do during those holidays?* Elicit from students the traditions are part of those holidays which may include family activities, food, games, gift giving, songs, stories, etc. Invite students to talk with their parents/family members about their holiday traditions. You can also have students learn more about Hanukkah, the origin of the holiday and how different people celebrate it by engaging them in a research project. Here are some online resources they can begin with from [My Jewish Learning](#), [PJ Library](#), [Kids Britannica](#) and [Fact Monster](#).

### 3. My Culture and Being Multicultural

Ask students: *What is culture?* Elicit/explain that culture is "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 the parts of culture are often (but not always) handed down from family or community members or from one generation to the next. Culture can also come from the place where the person's 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, your family traditions including how you celebrate holidays, your religion, other parts of your identity, etc. Then ask: *As you read the book, what did you learn about the family's culture?* Elicit that the family in the story identifies with more than one culture. They are Jewish and Indian/South Asian. One of the ways they celebrate Hanukkah is by including their Indian culture, making dosas instead of latkes (latkes are typically made during Hanukkah). When people or families belong to more than one culture, this is

called “multicultural.” Multicultural means Including many different cultures. After this discussion, have students create their own culture flags or banners. They can use construction paper to create the flag (or banner) shapes and then draw pictures (or use photos), symbols or words that reflect aspects of the culture(s) with which they identify. Emphasize again that they and their family can belong to one, two or several cultural groups. This activity can also be done by having students talk with their family members first about aspects of their culture(s) and then bringing that information to school for inclusion into the culture flags.

## ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and other educational resources on holidays, Hanukkah, diversity, and identity.

### Curriculum Resources

9 Ideas for Teaching Jewish American Heritage Month <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/9-ideas-teaching-jewish-american-heritage-month>

Diverse Books Matter <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/diverse-books-matter>

Who Am I? Identity Poems <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/who-am-i-identity-poems>

### Websites

Calendar of Observances <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/calendar-observances>

How Can I Plan Inclusive Holiday Celebrations? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/how-can-i-plan-inclusive-holiday-celebrations>

How Can “Looking at Lights” Promote Respect Among Children for Various Holidays, Celebrations and Traditions? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/how-can-looking-lights-promote-respect-among-children-various>

Shine a Light <https://www.adl.org/shinealight>

Winter Holidays: December Dilemma or Teaching Opportunity? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/winter-holidays-december-dilemma-or-teaching-opportunity>

### Children's Books

Jewish Culture and Antisemitism <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1581>

People Identity and Culture: AAPI People <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1626>