



# 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 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.



## Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas

Pamela Ehrenberg (Author) and Anjan Sarkar (Illustrator)

Age Range: 4-8

Year Published: 2017

### Book Themes

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

## About the Book

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.

## Conversation Starters

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

- What happens in the story?

- Why is Sadie's brother annoyed by Sadie's climbing everywhere? Have you ever felt this way about something a sibling does?
- What holiday are Sadie and her family celebrating? What are some of the ways they celebrate?
- What did you learn about Hanukkah by reading the book? What else do you want to know about Hanukkah?
- Sadie's brother 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 parts of the book could you relate to or connect with?
- What holidays does our family celebrate? What are our traditions and do we combine different parts of our identity or culture. If so, how?
- In the end, how do Sadie's climbing skills "come in handy?"
- How did you feel as you were reading the book?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What is the message in the story? .

## Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

### 1. What is Hanukkah?

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, eating something like latkes, in this case dosas, playing dreidel, singing, celebrating with family, etc.). Explain 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, celebrating 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.

During Hanukkah, many families eat potato latkes, which are cooked in oil, symbolic of the oil that lasted eight days. Elicit that the family in the makes dosas instead of latkes because they are Indian and want to include an aspect of this part of their culture—and dosas are also cooked in oil. To learn more about Hanukkah together, here are some resources: [My Jewish Learning](#), [PJ Library](#), [Kids Britannica](#) and [Fact Monster](#).

### 2. Holidays We Celebrate

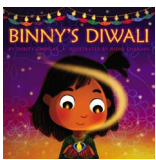
With your child, talk about holidays your family celebrates (either winter holidays or others), what you do during these holidays and what traditions you have. You can also explain that not everyone from one religious or cultural group celebrates the same holidays or in the same way. In the book, because Sadie and her family are Jewish and Indian, they decide to make dosas, an Indian food, instead of potato latkes. You can talk with your child about why holidays are important to you (e.g., bringing family together, highlighting and connecting with your culture, having fun, etc.) and ask why holidays are important to them. Also explain that there are families who do not celebrate holidays at all, and that may include yours. Therefore, it's important to explain why 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 more than others, usually those of the dominant culture. To talk about this more, ask questions like: *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?*

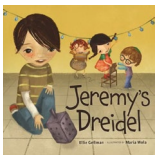
### 3. What is Culture and Multicultural?

Ask your child how Sadie and her family identify in terms of their culture (they are Jewish and Indian/South Asian). 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 Sadie and her family’s culture and remind them (i.e., celebrating Hanukkah, making dosas, singing the dreidel song, shopping at the Indian Market). If they don’t bring it up, explain/elicite 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). Explain that when people or families belong to more than one culture, this is called “multicultural.” Share the ways in which your family may identify with more than one culture or with other families you know (extended family, neighbors, friends, etc.). 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. 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.

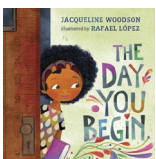
## Other Books You Might Like



Binny's Diwali <https://www.adl.org/binnys-diwali>



Jeremy's Dreidel <https://www.adl.org/jeremys-dreidel>



The Day You Begin <https://www.adl.org/day-you-begin>



The Ninth Night of Hanukkah <https://www.adl.org/ninth-night-hanukkah>

## ADL Additional Resources

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

- 9 Ideas for Teaching Jewish American Heritage Month <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/9-ideas-teaching-jewish-american-heritage-month>
- Calendar of Observances <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/calendar-observances>
- Children's Books About Jewish Culture and Antisemitism <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1581>
- Children's Books about People who are Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1626>
- Early Childhood Frequently Asked Questions <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner>
- How Can I Help Children Appreciate Diversity? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/how-can-i-help-children-appreciate-diversity>
- Shine a Light <https://www.adl.org/shinealight>
- Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk>
- Who Am I? Identity Poems <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/who-am-i-identity-poems>
- Winter Holidays: December Dilemma or Teaching Opportunity? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/winter-holidays-december-dilemma-or-teaching-opportunity>