

Tzedakah

G'milut Chassadim

Family bonding

Family history

Craft

1. Family History Night. invite family to come over for candle lighting. Ask each person to come prepared to share one story about someone in "the family" who is no longer alive or able to share their own story.

2. One night have a personal or family check in with

4. Israel Night. This is where everyone brings a clipping, item or idea about the modern Maccabees and their state: Israel. The clippings would be about both amazing and challenging things that are going on in Israel or about Israel. Let each person present what they brought and figure out a way to bless it after a thorough discussion.

5. On one of the nights of Hanukkah open all of the tzedakah boxes in the house and count the money in preparation for giving to a worthy cause.

6. On another night of Hanukkah decide which important causes to send the money to.

7. Bring light into someone's life. Find a shelter for battered woman, or homeless persons or elders (etc.) and bring your menorah over there for lighting.

Books

Games/cards

Family

Not every gift needs to fit inside a gift box or bag. Take the family out for a movie of their choice or a game of miniature golf. Call it the gift of togetherness.

4th Night: Family party!

5th Night: Replenish.

Construction paper running low? Markers are dry? It's the perfect time to restock the art supplies!

7th Night: Creative Practicality.

My kids are packrats. This year I'm trying to teach them the art of keeping only their favorite projects and other junk, I mean memories, which is why each of the kids will receive a plastic box with their name and the word "memories" on the cover.

8th Night: Giving Back.

At the end of Hanukkah we discuss where we want to donate money and time as a family in the upcoming fiscal year. It's also a great night for siblings to exchange presents and to give something to Mom and Dad (maybe using the art supplies they got earlier in the week).

1) "My grandma gave me my great-grandma's apple pie recipe."

Yes, food is love. Bake [Hanukkah cookies](#) with the grandkids. Create an edible menorah. Make a soup together and write down the recipe for future generations. They will remember it.

2) "My grandma gave me a locket with a picture of her and my grandpa from their wedding."

Go through your drawers and your old jewelry box. Or better yet, let them go through the drawers with you. Do you have a [necklace](#) from a long ago trip to Israel? A colorful scarf or tie ready to go? A picture of your grandchildren's mom or dad when they were your grandchild's current age? Your old stuff can become precious treasures to your grandchildren.

3) "The gift of Jewish tradition. I remember us lighting candles together."

Don't underestimate the value of this one. Buy ([or create](#)) Jewish ritual objects for the grandchildren Or [pass on to the kids](#) one you've used over the years. Then have fun being Jewish together. Have a special treat, a song, a tradition that you share.

4) "My Bubbe on my mom's side taught me about being selfless and volunteering. She gave to others and made you want to be a better person."

OK, you can be this grandparent, too. Find a way to [volunteer](#) with your grandchildren. Go to the grocery store and let the kids pick out groceries to bring to a soup kitchen or shelter. Do a craft project together to knit/bake/create something (blankets, dolls, brownies) to bring to a hospital or nursing home. Start a Grandparent-Grandchild Tzedakah Club where you and your grandchild become partners in giving.

6) "My grandpa used to read all of my essays for school—the gift of education."

[Books are special](#). Even today. Even though kids may prefer electronic stimulation to old-fashioned books. But books are made more enticing when you read them together. Try starting a grandparent-grandchild book club. Take your grandchild to a bookstore (do they still exist in your neighborhood?). Buy them some of your favorite books from when you were a kid.

Chanukah Presence

Yes, that is "presence" and not "presents."

While gifts are wonderful, there is nothing better than celebrating Chanukah with friends and family. If your Jewish friends invite you, go and enjoy. Learn about the holiday and experience it with people you care about.

Like most other festive holidays, it is made richer when people get together and enjoy the unique traditions. Telling the Chanukah story and welcoming guests is something Jewish families like to do. In fact, the more the merrier makes a better holiday party.

Go on a trip: When I was growing up, my parents took our family on a trip every year as a Hanukkah present. I remember these wonderful vacations with my siblings much better than I remember the Barbie dolls I received to add to my collection. Travel doesn't have to be expensive; even a day trip to a local park or a museum can be memorable. If you live in an area with different ethnic communities, a trip to Chinatown or Little Italy, for example, can make a fun "travel" day. Hanukkah is a perfect time, too, for a trip to a local Jewish museum or cultural site.

Plan an event: Taking your kids to a movie, play, or sporting event of their choice can be a bonding experience and give kids something to look forward to and remember well beyond the holiday's end. Round out the

day by having your kids pick their favorite place for lunch or dinner, and end with some delicious sufganiyot and a game of dreidel at home.

□ **Subscribe to a magazine:** Since the advent of email and text messaging, kids rarely get mail anymore. A gift subscription to a magazine that relates to one of their interests will give them something to look forward to in the mailbox every month. Don't forget, we are the people of the book!

□ **Encourage hobbies:** If your kid is the arts-and-crafts type, set aside time for a craft night. Try one of these [Hanukkah craft ideas!](#) If your child is a budding chef, make latkes together by choosing from one of our favorite [latkes recipes](#). If your kid is an aspiring actor, put together a skit about the Maccabees, and perform it at a family Hanukkah party. Get other ideas from these [Shalom Sesame videos](#).

□ **Engage in tikkun olam (repair of the world):** Spend an afternoon volunteering together at a local shelter, bringing cheer to home-bound seniors, or sorting through last year's toys to donate to those who are less fortunate. These activities not only will teach kids the importance of giving back and helping others, but also will help them learn by example.

□ **Give tzedakah (charity):** It's important—and Jewish!—to teach kids that the best gift is the one you give to others. Make sure to carve out time and money to show them how to give to charity. Decide upon a cause that's dear to your family, or consider participating in [Eighth Night for Ethan](#), a fundraiser that encourages families to forgo gifts on the eighth night of Hanukkah and, instead, donate to a fund to help Ethan Kadish, who suffered a traumatic brain injury when he was struck by lightning at Jewish summer camp in 2013. Discuss with your kids what kinds of charities matter to them and how much to give so that they feel a sense of ownership and pride when giving tzedakah. - See more at: <http://www.reformjudaism.org/eight-experiential-hanukkah-gifts-teach-kids-about-jewish-values#sthash.b5izAags.dpuf>