HANUKKAH HIPPITY-HOP

Hanukkah Basics (Ages 2-5)

Hanukkah is a joyful Jewish holiday that lasts eight nights. Families light candles in a special candle holder called a menorah (or hanukkiah), eat yummy foods fried in oil, play games, sing songs, and celebrate a miracle from long ago.

Q: How many nights is Hanukkah?
A: Eight nights!

Q: What is a menorah?
A: A special candle holder with nine spots — eight for each night of Hanukkah, plus one for the shamash (the helper candle used to light the others). On the first night, we light the shamash plus one candle. Each night, we light one more candle until all eight are lit, along with the shamash.

Q: What are some traditional Hanukkah foods?
A: Foods fried in oil, like latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts).

Q: Why do we eat foods fried in oil?
A: The oil reminds us of the Hanukkah miracle, when a small amount of oil kept the Temple lamp burning for eight days.

Q: Who were the Maccabees?
A: A brave group of Jewish fighters who fought to protect the Temple and make sure Jews could pray freely.

Q: What game do we play on Hanukkah?
A: We spin a top called a dreidel and sometimes win chocolate coins called gelt.

Vocabulary

- **Menorah** (meh-NO-rah) / Hanukkiah (hah-noo-KEE-yah) — special candle holder
- **Shamash** (SHAH-mash) — helper candle
- **Latke** (LOT-kuh) — fried potato pancake
- **Sufganiyot** (soof-gah-nee-OHT) — jelly doughnuts
- **Dreidel** (DRAY-dle) — a spinning top you can play with
- **Gelt** (gelt) — chocolate coins

Tip for Grown-Ups: Make learning fun! Count candles together, march like a Maccabee, or spin like a dreidel. Kids learn best when they can move and play!