

Hanukkah: Jewish Festival of Lights

November 28-December 6, 2021

Hanukkah, Hebrew for "dedication," is the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah begins on the eve of Kislev 25 and continues for eight days. On the civil calendar, it generally coincides with the month of December.

History of Hanukkah

In the second century BCE, the Holy Land was ruled by the Seleucids (Syrian-Greeks), who tried to force the people of Israel to accept Greek culture and beliefs instead of mitzvah observance and belief in God. Against all odds, a small band of faithful but poorly armed Jews, led by Judah the Maccabee, defeated one of the mightiest armies on earth, drove the Greeks from the land, reclaimed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it to the service of God.

When they sought to light the Temple's Menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), they found only a single cruse of olive oil that had escaped contamination by the Greeks. Unbelievably, they lit the menorah, and the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days until new oil could be prepared under conditions of ritual purity. The sages established the festival of Hanukkah to commemorate this miracle.

Menorah Lighting

At the heart of the festival is the nightly menorah lighting. The menorah holds nine flames, one of which is the shamash (attendant), used to kindle the other eight lights. On the first night, only one flame is lit. On the second night, an additional flame is lit. By the eighth night of Hanukkah, all eight lights are kindled.

A menorah is lit in every household by everyone in the household and is placed in a doorway or window. The menorah is also lit in synagogues and other public places. In recent years, thousands of large menorahs have been displayed in front of city halls, legislative buildings, and malls and parks worldwide.

Local Hanukkah Celebrations

There are many ways to celebrate Hanukkah. This year, the [Jewish Federation of Cincinnati](#) will be hosting the following events and activities:

- [Hanukkah at Fountain Square](#): An outdoor menorah lighting, ice skating, and bumper cars on Fountain Square to celebrate the end of Hanukkah
- [Hanukkah Live Puppet Show: The Hidden Latke](#): A live performance of The Hidden Latke, performed by Astoria, Queens' WonderSparks Puppet Company

At TriHealth, we respect all people, differences and spiritual heritages. In honoring this core value and for those who will be celebrating, have a Happy Hanukkah!