

Creating Chanukah Memories

written by Yardena Slater

November 22, 2021



Making positive family memories gets us a lot of milage both with the kids and ourselves and it doesn't have to be anywhere near perfect or extravagant!

This week, a lot of us ladies are preparing for Chanukah while also juggling work, excited children, Chanukah pre-school parties (at least here in Israel) and the usual busy life. Tensions may rise, and overwhelm can make us freeze like a deer caught in headlights. So, I just wanted to remind us all that whether we have been able get t it all done or not, making positive family memories gets us a lot of milage both with the kids and ourselves and it doesn't have to be anywhere near perfect or extravagant!

Good memories leave us with a taste for more. This is so important because we don't want our kids or us for that matter, to feel negative in any way as a chag approaches. We want to always be looking forward to observing the next chag, and good memories play a big role in positively anticipating the observance of a chag and the mitzvos associated with it.

Growing up, both my parents worked full time but somehow my mother made sure we had a memorable Chanukah. Every night the menorahs were set up on a small, decorated table by the window. After lighting we would gather around the living room sofas and sing Chanukah songs, as my mother accompanied us on her accordion. There were always latkes to eat and presents to open. We usually hosted or went to at least one Chanukah party. Good times!

Good memories leave us with a taste for more. This is so important because we don't want our kids or us for that matter, to feel negative in any way as a chag approaches.

True, my childhood Chanukah may not have been very strong in the spiritual department, but it left my sisters and I with a very warm feeling and thanks to that feeling, we look forward to this chag and now observe it to a much higher degree than we did as children.

In our house, the kids decorate the door and windows the week leading up to Chanukah. We light candles, sing Chanukah songs to the accompaniment of my 19 year old playing the piano, and spend 30 minutes praying around the candles. Then, we have a few family traditions that we do: one night we'll host a Chanukah party and another night we'll attend the main family Chanukah party. Most nights we simply gather around the table and play memory or Chanukah trivia, followed by a festive meal with latkes of course. One night we'll give presents and then go out in search of extra fancy Chanukah doughnuts. After the doughnut fest, we drive around taking in the sight of all the

window-filled menorahs. Good times!



We light candles, eat doughnuts and sing Chanukah songs...

Obviously, the spiritual aspect and observance of any Jewish holiday is the most important part but let's not forget making warm and positive memories for our families. Whether it's special foods, songs, activities, presents or playing games, if it's going to get your family to warmly and excitedly anticipate future chagim, that is a very important component to observing the holidays and mitzvos with joy.

You can keep it simple. Plan ahead by writing it all down. Schedule your parties, plan your festive menu, get a new game to play as a family, plan an outdoor activity. Take this week to think things through, write your lists and plans out, as well as to go shopping.

Most of all, enjoy the process and especially your family – they are your ultimate blessing and having them around makes the holiday observance that much more meaningful, significant and joyful.

Wishing you a very happy, memory-filled, and spiritually

uplifting Chanukah!