

Lumins

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lumin8

loo-mi-nate

noun

The act of coming together for the purpose of enjoying and celebrating the 8 holy nights of Chanukah.

When my kids were little, Eli and I created CHALYMPICS. It was our way to bring laughter, energy, good vibes and quality time into the long, cozy nights of Chanukah. Over the years, my family has grown, you've all played along with us, and together we've built the sweetest tradition of fun, light, and connection.

As my family evolves, so do our needs. Not everyone is always home for lighting the menorah and keeping up with 7 (super competitive) CHALYMPIC games is not always possible. So this year, in addition to bringing you the beloved CHALYMPICS, I wanted to create something new!

An older, more mature version if you will. Something a little calmer, a little more focused, and totally customizable. A mix of games and creative activities designed to bring everyone together, no matter how many people you have around your table or what ages you're juggling.

Unlike CHALYMPICS, this isn't cumulative. You can pick and choose the ideas that work for you and plug them into the nights that make the most sense.

The goal of LUMIN8 is to take the guesswork out of "What should we do tonight?" and help you create intentional, joy filled, meaningful family time throughout all eight nights of Chanukah.

We worked hard to come up with a series of activities that are easy to execute, inexpensive, customizable and can help create a warm, loving environment to help nurture a night of togetherness with memories that will last forever.

Feel free to pick, choose and swap any activities you like. Move the days around to suit your families needs.



ACTIVITY 1

GAMAD V' ANAK

This is a classic. Place everyone's names in a bowl and each person picks a name. You then buy a present for the person you have chosen.

You can play this game a few ways:

1 Choose names in advance and then on the night of Chanukah gather together and trade.

2 Or you can make an outing of it...

Pack your people up and head to the mall, target or any store you choose. Give everyone a dollar amount and then choose names. Make a designated meeting space and time (say 45 minutes to shop by the entrance...) and everyone head out to hunt for gift for their assigned person.

Instead of buying games you can get creative and set up a crafts table in your house. Every one had to make a personalized craft for the person they have chosen.



ACTIVITY 2

PUZZLE PROJECT

I came up with this idea earlier this year when Chanie Nyman from Mishpacha magazine told me to come up with night activity for Chanukah!

Coming up with funnily style activities is second nature for me, but this year I wanted to find an activity that would actually PRODUCE something. Something tangible that can capture and hold onto to the memories of the night long after the candles burn out! And that's how this puzzle art project was born!

Each person decorates their own puzzle piece and at the end of the night, you put them all together to create a single family masterpiece that you can hang on the wall.

I love that the blank puzzle pieces are super affordable to buy and also easy enough to DIY if you prefer to that route. Make or order the pieces as big or small as you like, include as many people as you want and turn it into your own family stamp of creativity.

Purchase blank puzzle pieces

We've created Chanukah themed templates you can download for anyone who wants a head start or you can totally free style your own designs. You can choose to create one giant design over all the pieces and everyone decorate their own puzzle piece or just give every a blank piece and each person can do their own thing!

Our Puzzle Idea

I'd set up a buffet style craft table complete with Elmers glue, pompoms, pipe cleaners, colored paper, wash tape, markers and stickers (no glitter because hello, were still human) and stickers.

Of course no family gathering is complete with out food. Meatball bar is perfect for this because it can stay warm for hours and people can serve themselves as they please!

I also that thus is all things you can prepare in advance so once the fancy Chanukah party night rolls around all you have to do set the vibe, sit back and connect with the people you love!

Put on good music, set the lighting and let everyone draw, decorate, shmooz, and munch all at the same time. It's cozy, meaningful and something you'll cherish long after the night is over!



 lumins

ACTIVITY 3

CHALYMPICS NIGHT

Playing 7 nights of Chalymphics may not be in the cards for you this year but it would be very sad to go an entire Chanukah with out a single Chalymphics game. Especially the memory game which is where it really all began.

On this night you can pick and choose 1 or 2 (or as many as you like) games and play them all in one night!

JOIN CHALYMPICS



ACTIVITY 4

CHANUKAH STYLE ASSASINS: GREEK SOLDIER EDITION

A sneaky, hilarious party game for all ages.

I LOVE the game assassins!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Slips of paper
- Pens
- A bowl
- A group of players

HOW TO “ASSASSINATE” YOUR GREEK SOLDIER

Instead of a mitzvah, you eliminate them by getting them to do one funny, random, or totally ridiculous act — without them knowing it’s part of the game.

Choose ANY funny act you want (or make a group-approved list). **Some ideas:**

- Get them to say a random word like “latke,” “oil,” or “spatula.”
- Make them high-five you.
- Get them to spin in a circle.
- Convince them to sniff a random object.
- Ask them to balance something on their head for a second.
- Get them to moo, cluck, bark, or make ANY sound effect.
- Make them dance for 3 seconds.
- Get them to pick up a totally random item (“Can you hand me that potato?”).
- Convince them to do a fake “Greek soldier pose.”



Whatever it is, it has to be something they don’t know is your mission.

SET UP

1 Write Names

Every player writes their name on a slip of paper and drops it into the bowl.

2 Draw a Target

Everyone picks one name (not your own). The person you draw is the Greek soldier you’re trying to “assassinate.”

3 Keep It Secret

Don’t reveal whose name you pulled. The secrecy is part of the chaos.

WHEN YOU SUCCEED

The moment they do the funny act, you whisper: **“The Greeks have fallen.”**

They are “out,” and they quietly hand you the name of their Greek soldier.

Now you inherit their target and continue the mission.

HOW TO WIN

Keep eliminating Greek soldiers one at a time. The last Maccabee standing wins.

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

Time limit: 30–60 minutes for maximum chaos.

Add roles: Shamash: can save one eliminated player.

Sneaky Greek: a secret saboteur who distracts and misdirects.

Add decoy props: Random objects scattered around the room to help your missions feel natural.

ACTIVITY 5

CHANUKAH APPRECIATION GARLAND

If you're looking for a meaningful (and beautiful!) way to bring more light into your home this Chanukah... this is it.

Grab a few ribbons, a handful of cards, and create your own Chanukah Appreciation Garland.

HERE'S HOW WE DO IT:

- 1 Everyone gets a stack of small cards and writes one nice thing about every person in the family.
- 2 Tie each card onto a long ribbon, one ribbon per card, and hang them together like a garland.
- 3 Then hang the whole thing up somewhere cozy and central.
- 4 You can read them all at once...**or make it a tradition:**

Every Shabbos of Chanukah, take one card off and read it aloud.

One little note of light at a time.

One moment of appreciation stretching into the rest of winter.

A simple activity that fills the house with warmth, connection, and just... so much light.



AVNEI DERECH: CHANUKAH ת-א EDITION

Aleph — א

Q: why is the name of the general that Yehudis beheaded?
A: אליפורנוס Elifornus

Bet — ב

Q: which part of Al-Hanissim do we say on Chanukah
A: בימי מתתיהו

Gimel — ג

Q: What letter on the dreidel means you win the whole pot?
A: גִּמְלָל

Dalet — ד

Q: Where do some people light the menorah?
A: דלת, door

Hey — ה

Q: What do we add to davening on Chanukah?
A: הלל

Vav — ו

Q: In the Chanukah story, what was discovered the tiny jar of...?
A: וַיִּמְצָא פֶּרֶךְ שֶׁמֶן!

Zayin — ז

Q: What kind of oil do we light candles on challah?
A: זית זך

Chet — ח

Q: Who were the brave family who fought for Torah and mitzvos?
A: חַשְׁמוֹנָאִים

Tet — ט

Q: what is one of the differences between the yevanim and the yehudim?
A: טמאים ביד טהורים

Yud — י

Q: what's the best maoz tzur
A: יסמין נקבצו אלי

Kaf — כ

Q: who lit the menorah in the Beis Hamikdash?
A: כהן גדול

Lamed — ל

Q: What do we eat on Chanukah?
A: simpler: לְבִיבוֹת (latkes!)

Me — מ

Q: Who fought the yevanim?
A: maccabim

Nun — נ

Q: what does the nun of the dreidel stand for?
A: נס

AVNEI DERECH: CHANUKAH ת-א EDITION

Samech — ס

Q: What do we play with on Chanukah?

A: סביבון

Ayin — ע

Q: In Al HaNissim, what do we thank Hashem for saving us from?

A: עולי יַנְיִים

Or simpler: עוגָה (as in donut—it's cute and works)

Peh — פ

Q: What did the Maccabim find in the Beis Hamikdash?

A: פֶּחַ שָׁמֶן

Tzadi — צ

Q: What is a possible time for lighting the Chanukah candles?

A: צאת הכוכבים

Kuf — ק

Q: Ha-neiros Hallalu?

A: קודש הם

Reish — ר

Q: what did the kohen Hagadol have on the bottom of his beged?

A: רימונים

Shin — ש

Q: what do we light the menorah with?

A: Shamash

Tav — ת

Q: why did the yevanim try to get the yehudim to forget?

A: תורה



ACTIVITY 7

DIY PIZZA BAR AND DONUT DECORATING NIGHT

One of my favorite ways to turn a random Chanukah night into something intentional, fun, and actually memorable is to set up a DIY Pizza Bar + Donut Decorating station. It's simple, it's interactive, it keeps everyone busy (in the best way), and it creates that magical mix of cozy chaos and real quality time that I love so much about this holiday.

Picture this: candles glowing, the house smelling like melted cheese and fried dough, kids rolling dough next to grandparents, friends laughing over which toppings count as “classic” and which ones are “absolutely not.” It's the vibes. Peak Chanukah vibes.

I like to keep it as easy and as beautiful as possible — because if we're doing this, we're doing this right

MAKING THE MOST DELICIOUS PIZZA

YOU WILL NEED

- Pre-made pizza dough (or store-bought mini crusts if you want zero drama)
- Sauce: marinara, pesto, and maybe a fun garlic-oil option
- Cheese: mozzarella, shredded cheddar, feta, fresh mozz balls
- Toppings: roasted veggies, olives, caramelized onions, mushrooms, pepperoni-style “facon,” jalapeños, fresh basil
- A few sheet pans lined with parchment
- Olive oil + spices for brushing



HOW TO SET IT UP

Lay everything out buffet-style at the center of the table so people can build their dream pizza combinations. Little bowls, bright colors, lots of options. Keep the oven preheated so pizzas are in and out quickly — the fast turnaround keeps the energy high and the little kids happy.

Everyone assembles, you bake, and suddenly the whole room is eating together like one big, cozy family.



DIY PIZZA BAR AND DONUT DECORATING NIGHT

DONUT DECORATING; SWEET CHAOS (THE GOOD KIND)

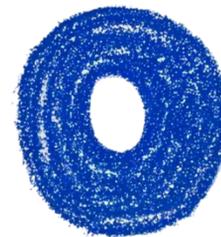
YOU WILL NEED

- Plain donuts — homemade, bakery-bought, or even mini ones
- Glazes in squeeze bottles: vanilla, chocolate, maple
- Bowls of toppings: sprinkles, crushed cookies, mini chocolate chips, toasted coconut, cinnamon sugar
- Wax paper sheets for decorating
- Wet wipes (trust me)

HOW TO SET IT UP

Give everyone their own little decorating station. Kids get to go wild, adults pretend they're "just helping the kids," and suddenly the whole table is a rainbow of decorated donuts.

It's playful, it's hands-on, and everyone walks away with something they're proud of... even if it's covered in 400 sprinkles.



ACTIVITY 8



SET UP YOUR OWN CHALLAH DIY PHOTO BOOTH

Nothing brings out the magic of Chanukah like capturing the glow, the gelt, the games, and the sufganiyot. A DIY Chanukah Photo Booth is the perfect way to take your party, family night, or community event to the next level — and it's so easy to set up!

YOU WILL NEED

- A phone or camera
- Any smartphone works, just clean the lens and turn on portrait mode for that soft, dreamy challah glow.
- You can also buy an inexpensive polaroid like camera and use that. Just make sure to buy enough film to last the night!

LIGHTING THAT FEELS LIKE CHANUKAH

- Natural daylight works beautifully.
- For nighttime, add warm-tone lights (lamps, ring lights, fairy lights) to mimic menorah warmth.
- Avoid overhead lighting — aim lights from the sides for a soft, magical vibe.

PROPS

Make your photos fun and thematic:

- Dreidels (wooden, glitter, jumbo — anything!)
- Chocolate gelt
- Menorah cutouts
- Happy Chanukah
- Candles (real or battery-operated)
- Sufganiyot + donuts on sticks
- Blue + white scarves
- Foam flames (for kids to “hold”)
- Mini olive-oil bottles
- Foil balloons that say “LIGHT,” “LATKE,” or “CHANUKAH”

BACKGROUND IDEAS

Choose a backdrop that glows and lets all the props pop:

Solid color:

Blue, silver, or gold curtain, sheet, or fabric.

Fairy Lights Wall:

String fairy lights on a blank wall for instant magic.

Gelt Garland:

Hang chocolate gelt from ribbons for a fun backdrop.

Posterboard Glow:

Foam boards in white, silver, or glitter blue — perfect for clean, bright photos.



ACTIVITY 8



SET UP YOUR OWN CHALLAH DIY PHOTO BOOTH



Candlelight Corner:

A table with (safe) candles, a menorah, and a pile of dreidels gives a cozy “Chanukah night” vibe.

Parchment-paper chic:

Tape large sheet of parchment — simple, clean, bakery-style.

Balloon Arch:

Blue/white/silver balloon arch = instant party.

Foam boards:

Inexpensive white, black, or pastel-colored boards from any craft store instantly elevate photos. Great for flat-lays.

HOW TO USE YOUR PHOTO BOOTH



- Capture kids spinning dreidels mid-air.
- Take close-ups of sufganiyot fillings oozing out.
- Pose with candles or a cardboard “flame” crown.
- Take a family “Menorah Glow Portrait.”
- Do a “before/after lighting the candles” photo.
- Hold up signs like “More Light. Less Oil Spills.” or “Nes Gadol Haya Po.”



FINAL TOUCH

Print a little sign to place in the booth:

“Strike a LIGHT Pose!”

“SPIN, SMILE, REPEAT.”

Fabric drape:

A tablecloth, textured throw, linen napkin, or even a curtain panel makes a beautiful backdrop.



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