

The Maccabees & the Hanukkah Story Skit

You will need 2 student volunteers: 1) King Antiochus and 2) Judah the Maccabee. Divide the rest of the students into the Syrian-Greek army and the Maccabees; they can sit on opposite sides until their time to participate.

Props:

- crown for King Antiochus
- idol (doll)
- menorah
- robes for participants to wear

NARRATOR: More than 2000 years ago the land of Israel was part of the Syrian-Greek Empire, ruled by Syrian kings. King Antiochus came to power. He wanted his kingdom to have one religion and culture and did not want the Jews to practice their religion.

KING ANTIOCHUS: I don't like the Jews and their religion! I want them to follow my religion! They must worship my pagan gods! I'm going to make new rules for all Jews: there will be no more rest on Shabbat, no more going to the Temple, no more studying the Torah, no more circumcision! I'm going to destroy their Temple and make them feel really bad! *(Pretend to put an idol on the altar)*. Men, go to all the villages in Judea and make sure everyone obeys my laws! *(Have the students selected as the Syrian-Greek army run around the room, wagging their fingers at the Maccabee students)*

NARRATOR: Some Jews resisted these laws. But King Antiochus and his men were very strong. There was a special place in the hills of Judea where some Jews went to stay safe and to fight against the Syrian-Greeks. Judah Maccabee became their leader. His followers were known as the Maccabees.

JUDAH THE MACCABEE: I don't like what King Antiochus is doing! We need to be able to pray and follow our own religion! We need to fight against King Antiochus and his men!

NARRATOR: So the Maccabees fought and fought. (*Maccabees roar at the Syrian-Greek army*) And even though the Syrian-Greeks were greater in number and equipment, the Maccabees defeated them. (*Syrian-Greek army scream ahhhh! and run away*)

JUDAH THE MACCABEE: We won! We won! Now let's return to Jerusalem and liberate it!

NARRATOR: The Maccabees went to Jerusalem. They entered the Temple and cleaned it and cleared it of all idols. They built a new altar and dedicated it on the 25th of the month of Kislev. The golden menorah had been stolen but they built a new one. But when they went to light it, they only had enough olive oil to light for one day.

JUDAH THE MACCABEE: Oh no, we don't have enough oil to keep our menorah lit! It will take 8 days to make new oil.

NARRATOR: By a miracle of G-d, the oil burned for 8 nights until the new oil was ready. The Jews thanked G-d for this miracle of light and their safety! Every year during Hanukkah, Jews light menorahs, called Hanukkiahs, for eight days to remember the miracles that happened long ago. Now we celebrate this holiday by lighting our Hanukkiahs and eating foods fried in oil, like latkes and donuts, to remember the miracle of the oil. We also play dreidel to remember the great miracle that happened there so long ago.