Chanukah Candle Lighting Themes

Contributed by Custom & Craft
Source:

Chanukah isn't the only winter holiday that uses candles to bring more light to a dark time of the year. People celebrate the African American holiday of Kwanzaa by lighting candles in a *kinara* for seven nights. Each night of Kwanzaa has a theme, including unity, self-determination, purpose and faith.

While Chanukah doesn't connect each night to a theme, here's some to explore as you're lighting your menorah.

**Or (Light)** - This year, the darkness of the winter feels especially foreboding. The glowing Chanukah candles have the power to comfort and give us hope for brighter days.

**Ge'ulah (Liberation)** - In the Chanukah story, the Maccabees revolt against the religious oppression of the Syrian Greeks. Following this summer's conversations on race, Chanukah gives us an opportunity to revisit what liberation from oppression means today.

**Nadivut (Generosity)** - With many of our neighbors in need, we might skip a night of gift-giving and instead focus on generosity. And it ties into Kwanzaa's third principle of Ujima.

**Nisim (Miracles)** - During Chanukah, we thank the Divine for the miracles performed on behalf of our ancestors. Our ancestors played an active role, and we too have the innate power to create miracles.

**Cherut (Freedom)** - Just as some Hellenistic Jews assimilated Greek customs into their Jewish lives, we have the freedom to choose an expression of Judaism that feels most authentic to us.
**Simcha (Joy)** - Put on your yarmulke, it’s time to (really) celebrate Chanukah. Decorate, listen to music and enjoy delicious fried foods. Rather than making latkes, I like buying fried chicken and jalebi, fried South Asian sweets that are easily found in my neighborhood.

**Chanukah (Dedication)** - On Rosh Hashanah, we set our intentions for the new year. If you need a refresh, Chanukah, which means dedication, is a perfect time to revisit and recommit.

**Emunah (Faith)** - Connecting with Kwanzaa’s final night, faith is a big part of Chanukah. The Maccabees had faith, even when they could not reach the Temple. And we too have faith that soon we’ll be able to gather again, safely.