*Chag Sameach! (Happy Holidays!)*

*Let’s eat!*

*As the holiday celebrates a miracle related to oil, Jews tend to have fried foods at Hanukkah, particularly jelly-filled doughnuts known as sufganiyot (suef-gahn-ee-yoht) and potato pancakes known as latkes. There are also chocolate coins wrapped in foil that represent Hanukkah gelt.*

*(Day 1)*

*What is Hanukkah?*

*The holiday celebrates the Jews defeating Syrian-Greek oppressors who had tried forcing them to abandon their religion and adopt Greek culture. The story has it that, led by Judah Maccabee, they recaptured the holy temple in Jerusalem. Arriving there, they found only enough olive oil to light candles for one night. It lasted for eight nights.*

*The holiday celebrates the defeat of the oppressors and the miracle of the oil lasting eight nights. The oil has led to the holiday being referred to as "The Festival of Lights."*

*Feel free to check out the little board book* 😊

*(Day 2)*

*The Menorah, it’s lit! (Yikes…cringe)*

*Every evening at sundown, candles on a menorah (a candleholder with nine branches) are lit. The nine branches are for eight candles representing the eight days the oil lasted and one for a candle used to light the others.*

*The middle candle “Shamash” is lit first and is used to light the other candles from left to right. The candles are placed in the menorah from right to left, because Hebrew is read from right to left. The new candle is always lit first.*

*Today at sundown there should be 4 candles total in the menorah.*

*(Day 3)*

*What’s the deal with the calendar? Why doesn’t it land on the same day every year?*

*It actually does. It's just that it's the same day every year on the Hebrew calendar, which is a lunar calendar, as opposed to the solar, 365-day calendar.*

*Today is 27 Kislev 5782.*

*Fun Fact: Jews consider Hanukkah a minor holiday compared to celebrations such as Rosh Hashanah, which marks the new year, and Passover, which commemorates the escape from Egypt.*

*(Day 4)*

*Chanukkah? Hannukah? Hanukkah? How do you really spell it??*

*All are acceptable. The difference comes from the fact that the word is actually Hebrew and it can be written in English different ways depending on the translator.*

*To wish someone a Happy Hanukkah, say “Hanukkah Sameach!” (Happy Hanukkah) or simply “Chag Sameach!” (Happy Holiday). Or if you want to show off your Hebrew skills, say “Chag Urim Sameach!” (urim means “lights”). Yiddish: Gut yum tov.*

*The word Hanukkah is written חֲנֻכָּה‎ or חֲנוּכָּה‎ (Ḥănukā)*

*(Day 8)*

*Is gift giving a thing?*

*Now, particularly in the United States, there tends to be, but it is certainly not required. The gift-giving has evolved because of how close Hanukkah is to Christmas. There is also a tradition of giving money – gelt – to children so that they can give to charity.*

*Ner Shel Tzedakah “Nehr Shell Tseh-dah-kuh” (“candle of righteousness”) is a project in which families and individuals devote the 6th night of Chanukah to learning about the problem of poverty. They donate the value of the gifts (or the gifts themselves) that would otherwise be exchanged on that night to organizations that assist the poor, locally or globally. By making donations on the sixth night of Chanukah, you will help the candle of righteousness glow brightly for those in need.*

*(Day 6)*

*Do Jews gamble on Hanukkah?*

*Kind of. There is a game associated with Hanukkah that is played with a dreidel, a four-sided top with a different Jewish letter that is an acronym for "great miracle happened there." Every player gets pennies, chocolate coins or something similar. With each spin, depending on what letter the top lands on, the player either gets nothing from the pot (Nun: נ), gets half the pot (Hay: ה), gets the whole pot (Gimel: ג), or has to put a coin in the pot (Shin: ש).*

*Legend has it that when the ancient Greeks outlawed the study of Torah, Jews would outsmart them by playing with a spinning top – a popular gambling device – while learning Torah orally. That way if the Greeks were out to bust renegade Torah scholars, they would find a group of sinful “gamblers” instead and leave them alone. Not everyone believes that nifty tale, though.*

*(Day 7)*

*Candle Lighting Prayer*

*Before lighting the Chanukah candles, we thank G‑d for giving us this special mitzvah, and for the incredible Chanukah miracles:*

*בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר חֲנֻכָּה*

*בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בִּזְּמַן הַזֶּה*

*Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm ah-sher ki-deh-shah-noo beh-mitz-voh-tahv veh-tzee-vah-noo leh-hahd-lik nayr kha-noo-kah.*

*Bah-rookh ah-tah ah-doh-noi eh-loh-hay-noo meh-lekh hah-oh-lahm sheh-ah-sah nee-sim lah-ah-voh-tay-noo bah-yah-mim hah-haym biz-mahn hah-zeh.*

*Blessed are You, Lord our G‑d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light.*

*Blessed are You, Lord our G‑d, King of the universe, who performed miracles for our forefathers in those days, at this time.*

*(Day 3)*

*Christmas has carols, what about Hanukkah?*

*There is actually a grand tradition of Hanukkah music including "I Have a Little Dreidel" and "Hanukkah oh Hanukkah." There are some modern songs such as Adam Sandler's "The Hanukkah Song" and "Light One Candle" by Peter, Paul, and Mary.*

*I have a little dreidel*

**

*Hanukkah oh Hanukkah*

**

*The Hanukkah Song Adam Sandler*

**

*Light One Candle*

**

*(Day 5)*