HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS TITLES FOR FALL 2021

These titles are the Association of Jewish Libraries' picks for the best Jewish holiday children's books of Fall 2021.

In this energetically illustrated celebration of Shabbat, besneakered Bubbe and her expressive pooch, Bart, round up rogue matzoh balls magically careening around the room. Their preparatory frenzy settles into a calm family holiday, perfect for highlighting both the bustle and the quiet joy of Shabbat.

In this luminously illustrated picture book, General George Washington meets a Jewish soldier lighting Hanukkah candles and is inspired by the story of how a small band of Jewish fighters defeated a powerful army. This 2007 Sydney Taylor Book Award winner has been brought back into print with slightly revised text.

This sweet 2000 early reader has been charmingly reillustrated and the story has been revised to suit modern family life: grandpa cooks the latkes, and the child stays with her elders while her parents work. Anticipation builds until Hanukkah begins at nightfall, and with it an opportunity to celebrate with candles, latkes, dreidels, gifts, and more. This lovely, joyful celebration of the holiday is ideal for new readers and preschoolers alike.

White goofball Uncle Max and his brown-skinned niece and nephew are joined by their dog as they light candles, dip apples in honey, recite kiddush and motzi, attend services to hear the shofar, and enjoy cake to celebrate “the birthday of the world.” Hebrew words are translated and transliterated -- as are the dog’s woofs! Boyntonesque illustrations help to make this a sweet treat for the New Year.

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Structured as a simple counting text, this lovely board book features Badger and his pet hoopoe celebrating Hanukkah traditions, one per night. Vibrant cut paper illustrations follow the duo’s gentle holiday observance as readers practice colors and numbers along the way.

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Rhyming text with silly, sea-themed interjections like “tumbling tides!” convey a robot-shark’s sense of anxiety and plummeting energy, counting down from 10 to 1. He busily prepares to host Shabbat, when he’ll finally get to recharge physically (by plugging in his cord) and emotionally (by hosting friends). A cool underwater palette and expressive cartoon illustrations add to the book’s appeal.

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In a town full of Christmas decorations, the menorah in Isaac’s window stands out. When someone throws a rock through the window of his house, the whole town comes together, putting drawings of menorahs in their windows, too. This lovely picture book deals with the difficult topic of antisemitism beautifully, in an accessible and age appropriate way.

AJL’s Holiday Highlights judges are Robbin Friedman, children's librarian at the Chappaqua Library in Chappaqua, NY; Amy Lilien-Harper, professional children’s librarian; and Sylvie Shaffer, PreK-8 librarian at the Capitol Hill Day School in Washington, DC.

To learn more about the Association of Jewish Libraries, please visit [www.jewishlibraries.org](http://www.jewishlibraries.org). To learn more about Holiday Highlights, contact Heidi Rabinowitz, holidayhighlights@jewishlibraries.org