In response to rising antisemitism in the United States and around the world, the Association of Jewish Libraries offers the Love Your Neighbor series of book lists, intended to provide children and their families with a greater understanding of the Jewish religion and its people. Books read in youth impact future outlooks, and it is our hope that meeting Jews on the page will inspire friendship when readers meet Jews in real life. This ninth list in the series offers historical and contemporary depictions of the eight-day festival of Hanukkah, a minor Jewish holiday that, due to its proximity to Christmas, is one of the most widely celebrated of the year. Read more about the significance of Hanukkah in this post from Storytime Solidarity. You can find the titles listed below in libraries, bookstores, and online. The entire Love Your Neighbor series of book lists can be found at JewishLibraries.org/Love_Your_Neighbor.

**Book List #9: Hanukkah**

**PICTURE BOOKS**

**The Story of Hanukkah** by David A. Adler, Holiday House 2012, ages 3-8 [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com)

The Maccabees, a band of Jewish rebels, miraculously defeated the army of King Antiochus to take back the Jerusalem temple from the Greeks. This book clearly explains the history of Hanukkah and provides an overview of modern celebratory customs. For a rollicking, rhyming retelling of this history, try **Maccabees!** By Tilda Balsley (Kar-Ben 2010, ages 4-10) [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com)

**Daddy Christmas and Hanukkah Mama** by Selina Alko, Knopf 2012, reissued 2023 by Dragonfly Books, ages 3-8, [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com)

An interfaith girl describes the mixture of seasonal celebrations that take place in her house. Approximately 42% of married Jews in the US have a non-Jewish spouse, so this representation is important. Combine with **Nonna’s Hanukkah Surprise** by Karen Fisman (Kar-Ben 2015, ages 4-9) [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com), for another loving interfaith family story.

**Engineer Ari and the Hanukkah Mishap** by Deborah Bodin Cohen, Kar-Ben 2011, ages 3-8, [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com)

Engineer Ari drives a train in pre-state Israel in the 1890s. One day, Ari’s caboose derails in Modi’in, home of the ancient Maccabees, when he stops for a camel on the tracks. The Bedouin camel owner befriends Ari and helps him celebrate Hanukkah. The story highlights the intertwined history of Hanukkah with the Israeli landscape, and the friendship that can exist between the diverse peoples there.

**Celebrate Hanukkah: With Light, Latkes, and Dreidels** by Deborah Heiligman, National Geographic Kids 2006, reissued 2016, ages 5-9, [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com)

Poetic text and striking photographs depict the significance of Hanukkah as it is observed in many lands. Part of the Holidays Around the World series.

**All-of-a-Kind Family Hanukkah** by Emily Jenkins, Schwartz & Wade 2018, ages 3-8, [buy](https://example.com) | [borrow](https://example.com)

Light the Menorah: A Hanukkah Handbook by Jacqueline Jules, Kar-Ben 2018, ages 4-adult, buy | borrow
This manual includes history, blessings, reflections, activities, songs, and recipes to enhance Hanukkah celebrations for Jewish families and their friends.

Eight Nights of Lights: A Celebration of Hanukkah by Leslie Kimmelman, HarperCollins 2023, ages 4-8, buy | borrow
Nine tiny candle-shaped books in a cardboard menorah folder follow the family fun of a biracial Jewish girl celebrating the holiday with her diverse community. A nice example of representation of the approximately 20% of American Jews who are non-white.

Hanukkah at Valley Forge by Stephen Krensky, Dutton 2006, ages 5-10, buy | borrow
A Jewish soldier tells George Washington the miraculous story of how a ragtag army of Jewish soldiers defeated a much larger force of powerful Greeks, providing just the kind of inspiration the General needs. Based on a true story, this book reminds readers that Jews have always been a part of American society. Winner of the Sydney Taylor Book Award.

The Mexican Dreidel by Linda Elovitz Marshall & Ilan Stavans, Kar-Ben 2023, ages 4-8, buy | borrow
Danielito celebrates Janucá at Bobe’s house, adding his dreidel to the neighborhood game of trampós (Mexican tops) and sharing Hanukkah with non-Jewish amigos. Great representation for the Latinx Jewish community.

Dear Santa, Love, Rachel Rosenstein by Amanda Peet, Doubleday 2015, ages 4-8, buy | borrow
Like many Jews surrounded by sparkly Christmas cheer, Rachel feels left out. She tries to secretly celebrate Christmas, but is sad when Santa doesn’t respond to her letter. Meeting other non-Christians at a Chinese restaurant helps give her some perspective, in this book that showcases a common minority experience.

The Ninth Night of Hanukkah by Erica S. Perl, Union Square Kids 2020, ages 3-8, buy | borrow
Max and Rachel can’t find their Hanukkah supplies among the moving boxes in their new house, so their diverse non-Jewish neighbors step in to lend a hand. Inspired by the “helper” candle on the menorah and the helpfulness of their new friends, the family invents a tradition, adding a ninth night to this eight-night holiday to thank everyone who’s helped them. A lovely story of community solidarity.

The Latke Who Couldn’t Stop Screaming: A Christmas Story by Lemony Snicket, McSweeney’s 2007, reissued 2023, ages 5-adult, buy | borrow
Snicket’s signature wry storytelling brings us an animate latke (Hanukkah potato pancake) whose frustration with being misunderstood humorously echoes the experience of Jews living as a tiny minority in a majority-Christian society. It’s also surprisingly educational!

Hanukkah Upside Down by Elissa Brent Weissman, Abrams 2023, ages 4-8, buy | borrow
Lyrical text and clever illustrations introduce us to Jewish cousins in New York and New Zealand who use digital communications to share their wintertime / summertime holiday fun. A good reminder that December holidays are also celebrated in warm weather.

Red and Green and Blue and White by Lee Wind, Levine Querido 2021, ages 5-10, buy | borrow
In a town full of Christmas decorations, the menorah in Isaac’s window stands out. When someone throws a rock through the window, the whole town comes together, putting drawings of menorahs in their windows, too. This lovely picture book deals with the difficult topic of antisemitism and beautifully demonstrates allyship, in an accessible and age appropriate way.

MIDDLE GRADE & YOUNG ADULT

Dreidels on the Brain by Joel Ben Izzy, Dial 2016, ages 9-12, buy | borrow
Nerdy aspiring magician Joel contends with a crush, a magic show, family ailments, and being the only Jew in school in this hilarious and heartfelt 1970s historical novel that takes place during Hanukkah.

Alexandra’s Scroll: The Story of the First Hanukkah by Miriam Chaikin, Holt 2022, ages 9-12, buy | borrow
In the time of the Maccabees, Alexandra turns scribe and records the events of Jerusalem in 165 BCE. She shares everyday happenings, the rebellion against the Greeks, and the miracle of the oil that burns for eight nights in the very first celebration of Hanukkah. Fascinating historical fiction.
Sam I Am by Ilene Cooper, Scholastic 2006, ages 9-12, buy | borrow
Sam’s interfaith household is tense after the dog knocks over the Hanukkah bush/Christmas tree. His parents have never quite figured out how to navigate their differing religions, so Sam turns to God for answers. An interesting spiritual quest that represents a not uncommon issue among interfaith families.

Shield of the Maccabees by Eric A. Kimmel, Apples & Honey 2021, ages 8-12, buy | borrow
In this graphic novel set during the time of the Maccabees in ancient Israel, a young Jewish boy forges an unlikely friendship with a Greek neighbor.

Eight Nights of Flirting by Hannah Reynolds, Putnam 2022, ages 12+, buy | borrow
This cozy YA Hanukkah rom-com features Sephardic Jewish Shira who arranges flirting lessons with non-Jewish former crush Tyler, and inevitably ends up with him. This book was named to the AJL Fall 2022 Holiday Highlights list. For another cute Hanukkah rom-com with a bookstore focus (and with two Jewish leads), try Recommended for You by Laura Silverman (Margaret K. McElderry 2021, ages 12+) buy | borrow

HANUKKAH CHILDREN’S BOOK BINGO

Enjoy this BINGO game from The Book of Life Podcast, which will help you expand your Hanukkah reading.

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The Love Your Neighbor series of book lists was created by the Association of Jewish Libraries to grow young readers’ understanding of the Jewish religion and its people.

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