

## Natural Places to Incorporate *Judy Led the Way* in Jewish Educational Programs

By Rabbi Jeffrey Schein

The rich thing about stories is that they can function in so many different ways. There is always the beauty of the story itself, the “just so” quality of the story that Rudyard Kipling references. The story can also, however, be a platform for exploring issues beyond the story embedded in the curricula of most of our Jewish schools. I think *Judy Led the Way* works beautifully at both of these levels. Here are four suggestions for utilizing *Judy Led the Way* in relation to four different curricular niches and age groups.

### 3rd-5th Graders: Jewish Heroes and Heroines

- This suggestion may be particularly valuable to use in congregations with connections to Reconstructing Judaism.
- Read *Judy Led the Way* alongside [A Child's Biography of Mordecai Kaplan](#) by Rabbi Lewis Eron.
- What similarities and differences do you see between Father and Daughter in these two stories?

### 5th-7th Graders: The Jewish Life Cycle

- This is, in some ways, the most obvious curricular niche. The institution of the *bat mitzvah* evolved over time and the book tells the story of aspects of that critical development. The story could open dialogues across the generations in a congregation.
- Invite each prospective *bat mitzvah* in your congregation to read the book to an older woman in the community. Then the prospective *bat mitzvah* could record that woman’s memories of becoming *bat mitzvah* or of not having become *bat mitzvah*.
- Judith Kaplan Eisenstein’s story reminding us that Jewish Peoplehood must embrace women if Judaism is to thrive in the 21st century. *Judy Led the Way* is a wonderful resource to incorporate in service of the great narrative of our people.

## 6th-8th Graders: American Jewish History

- The Kaplan Center's [Celebration of Judy Led the Way](#) includes a slideshow by Rabbi Sasso of what was going on in the Jewish world as the early 20th-century Jewish communities wrestled with issues of modernity.
- Any number of 2-3 minute segments of the PowerPoint narrated by Rabbi Sasso could launch interesting discussions.

## 8th-12th Graders: Comparative Judaism

- Near the end of Rabbi Sasso's presentation, we see Judith's musical creativity at work. But Judy didn't just inject music into "Judaism." Judy's musical skills actually "reconstructed Judaism" in the process.
- Judy's English lyrics to the traditional Yiddish song, *Hanukah, Oy Hanukah*, exemplify this concept.
- **A handout with which to teach about Judy's English lyrics reconstructed what English-speaking Jews understand themselves to be celebrating when they sing *Hanukah, O Hanukah* each year.**

The literal translation of the second stanza of the Yiddish song would be:

*Come quickly, children and light the Hanukah candles.*

*Say Al Ha-nissim and praise God for the miracles.*

*And we will dance together in a circle!*

*Say Al-Ha-nissim, praising God for the miracles and we will dance together in a circle.*

**Judith's non-literal translation is:**

*And while we are playing, the candles are burning bright.*

*One for each night, they shed a sweet light, to remind us of days long ago.*

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- In a parallel way, Sandy Brusin's retelling of the *Hanukah* story, [Who Can Remember?](#) transvalues the notion of "miracle." **Comparing the two could yield rich discussions.**

# Hanukah, O Hanukah English lyrics by Dr. Judith Kaplan Eisenstein

English version	Yiddish version	Yiddish <u>transliteration</u>	Yiddish literal translation
<p>(Oh), Hanukah, Oh Hanukah Come light the menorah Let's have a party We'll all dance the <u>horah</u> Gather 'round the table, we'll give you a treat <u>Dreidels</u> (or "<u>sevivon</u>") to play with, and latkes (or "levivot") to eat</p>	<p>חנוכה אוי חנוכה א יום-טוב א שיינער א לוסטיקער א פריילעכער נישט דא נאך אזוינער אלע נאכט מיט דריידלעך שפילן מיר, פרישע הייסע לאַטקעס, עסן אָן אַ שיעור.</p>	<p>(Oy), <i>Khanike oy Khanike</i> <i>A yontef a sheyner,</i> <i>A lustiker a freylekher</i> <i>Nisht do nokh azoyner</i> <i>Ale nakht</i> <i>mit <u>dreydlekh</u> shpiln mir,</i> <i>Frishe heyse latkes, esn on a shir.</i></p>	<p>(Oh), Chanukah, Oh Chanukah A beautiful celebration. Such a cheerful and happy one, There is none like it. Every night with the <u>dreidels</u> we will play, Fresh, hot latkes we will eat endlessly.</p>
<p>And while we are playing The candles are burning bright (or low<sup>23</sup>) One for each night, they shed a sweet light To remind us of years (or days) long ago One for each night, they shed a sweet light To remind us of years (or days) long ago.</p>	<p>געשווינדער, צינדט קינדער די חנוכה ליכטלעך אָן, זאָגט על-הניסים, לויבט גאָט פֿאַר די נסים, און לאַמיר אַלע טאַנצען אין קאָן. זאָגט על-הניסים, לויבט גאָט פֿאַר די נסים, און לאַמיר אַלע טאַנצען אין קאָן.</p>	<p><i>Geshvinder, tsindt kinder</i> <i>Di Khanike likhtlekh on,</i> <i>Zogt "Al Hanisim", loybt</i> <i>Got far di nisim,</i> <i>Un lomir ale tantsn in kon.</i> <i>Zogt "Al Hanisim", loybt</i> <i>Got far di nisim,</i> <i>Un lomir ale tantsn in kon.</i></p>	<p>Come quickly children Light the Chanukah candles Say "<u>Al HaNissim</u>", praise God for the miracles, And we will all dance together in a circle! Say "Al HaNissim", praise God for the miracles, And we will all dance together in a circle!</p>

1. What strikes you as the major difference between the traditional version and Dr. Eisenstein's version?
2. Which words and phrases of the original Yiddish version did Dr. Eisenstein translate directly into English? Is the English version more special because it has so much in common with the original version?
3. What phrases from the Yiddish version did Dr. Eisenstein leave out of the English version? Why do you think she decided not to keep those ideas in her version?
4. What new words, phrases, and ideas did Dr. Eisenstein add to the English version of Hanukah O Hanukah? How do you think those additions impact the meaning and power of the song?
5. How do you feel about the changes Dr. Eisenstein made when she wrote her version? Would you have made the same choices? Why or why not?
6. Do you sing this song at Hanukah? Do you know if it was part of your parents' or grandparents' Hanukah tradition? Does hearing or singing Hanukah Oh Hanukah evoke a spiritual or emotional response for you?
7. How does it feel to know that Judy Kaplan - the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan and the first girl to become *bat mitzvah* in the United States - grew up to create a song that is such an important part of so many Hanukah celebrations?