

ALL-OF-A-KIND FAMILY HANUKKAH

By Emily Jenkins & Paul O. Zelinsky

ABOUT THE BOOK

In 1912 on New York City's Lower East Side, a family prepares to celebrate the first night of Hanukkah. Gertie, the youngest of five girls, is told that she can't help prepare the meal because the oil is too hot and the kitchen tools too sharp for a four-year-old. She becomes so upset that Mama sends her to the bedroom until the family is ready for the celebration. Papa comes home and hears about Gertie's bad day. He coaxes her out of her hiding place under the bed and tells her that she is old enough for the most important job of all. This heartwarming story about the family in Sydney Taylor's classic All-of-a-Kind Family series is about family love and tradition.

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Ask students to share what they know about the meaning of Hanukkah and how it is celebrated. To clarify their understanding, read aloud the short explanation of Hanukkah that the author provides at the end of the book. If you have access to YouTube, share "The Story of Hanukkah": [youtube.com/watch?v=7tws_uMAEOs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tws_uMAEOs). Then have students write a paragraph about the two miracles celebrated at Hanukkah.

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 1-3.2.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

Have students study the cover art. What is the clue that the family has already celebrated the first night of Hanukkah? Have the class describe the family. Why do they think they are called an All-of-a-Kind family? Who do they think is the main character?

Ask students to look closely at the title page of the book. In what season is the book set? What else does the illustrator reveal about the setting?

Show the class the first double-page spread. Ask them to describe Henry Street. What are the people doing? Study the windows of the apartment building. Which families are ready for Hanukkah? Which character is Gertie, and which is her sister Sarah? Why does the illustrator make them larger than the other people in the illustration?

The second double-page spread gives more information about Gertie. She knows they eat latkes, potato pancakes, on Hanukkah, but she doesn't remember how they taste. What does this say about Gertie's age? What is Gertie feeling as she is pulling Sarah toward home? Artists use lines to move readers' eyes in a certain direction. How do Gertie's left foot and left hand lead the readers' eyes to the next page of the story? Have the class discuss why the people on the left and the dog on the right are partly off the pages.

The next double-page spread has four frames. Ask the students how they know that Gertie is pleading with Sarah in the first frame. What does she want? Have them explain what is happening in the other three frames.

Ask the students to discuss the activity in the kitchen of the All-of-a-Kind family. What is Gertie feeling as she watches her mother and sisters? How is Charlotte willing to allow Gertie to help? Have them describe the illustration of Mother. How do her facial expression and hand gesture reveal alarm?

Gertie still wants to help. What do Mama's hands say when Gertie shows interest in grating the potatoes and chopping the onions? Which girl is Henny? Why is she making a face? Where is Gertie on this page?

Ella says she can help her, but Mama intervenes again. What does Gertie do next? How does the illustrator show Gertie's temper tantrum? The illustrator paints the picture as though he is looking down on Gertie. How does this put more emphasis on her tantrum? Ask the students to explain what her mother and sisters are thinking. Which two sisters look the most astonished? Which looks sad?

Show the class the illustration where Mama is pulling Gertie by the hand. Where is she taking her? Why do you think the illustration is pointing to the left? Explain why Gertie hides under the bed. What is she feeling?

Have students study the next double-page spread, with Gertie hidden in the bedroom and her mother and sisters in the kitchen. Contrast the two scenes. Ask them to explain why the sisters are so joyous. Now that the food is prepared, what kitchen job might Gertie be old enough to do?

Papa learns that Gertie has had a bad day, and he offers her a gingersnap. Where is Papa in this illustration? Why does the illustrator only show his hand? How do you know that Mama has forgiven Gertie for her tantrum?

How does Gertie have the best job of all? What is she feeling when she is lighting the first candle of Hanukkah with Papa?

Ask students to explain the following: "The latkes taste of history and freedom, of love and crispy potato."

The last page is a window that allows readers to gaze into the family's home. How does this illustration reveal family love? Why is Gertie looking at the candle? What is Papa doing?

Texture in illustration makes the reader feel as though they can touch an object. How does the illustrator use texture to create snow? Have the class examine the illustration where Mama is holding Gertie and they are looking at the skillet on the stove. How is texture used to convey the hot oil? Note other illustrations where readers may feel they can actually touch the object.

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Reading Literature: Comprehension & Collaboration RL. 1-3.1, RL. 1-3.3; Craft & Structure RL. 2-3.5; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas RL 1-3.7; Language: Convention of Standard English L. 1-3.1; Speaking & Listening: Comprehension & Collaboration SL. 1-3.1; Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas 1-3.4.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

In the first kitchen scene, the girls are helping Mama make latkes. The text reveals the ages of the girls. Ask students to calculate the difference in the ages of the sisters. How much older is Ella than Gertie? At what age might Gertie be asked to help with the latkes?

Correlates to CCSS in Mathematics: Operations & Algebraic Thinking: Math. Content 1-3.0 A1.

A *theme* is the meaning of a book. Have students write a paragraph that shows how love and family is the central theme of *All-of-a-Kind Family Hanukkah*.

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 1-3.1.

Ask students to consider information they learned about Hanukkah in the Pre-Reading Activity. Then have them write one sentence that explains why Hanukkah is also called the Festival of Lights.

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Writing: Text Types & Purposes W. 1-3.2.

The illustrator describes Gertie as someone with "passionate nature." Ask the class to define *passionate*. The illustrator uses bold lines to depict Gertie. Try drawing her with thin lines. Allow the class to discuss how the thin lines change Gertie's personality.

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Speaking & Listening: Comprehension &

Collaboration SL. 1-3.1; Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 1-3.4.

Some families sing songs during Hanukkah. Have students listen to “Oh Chanukah, Oh Chanukah!” on the following website: chabad.org/multimedia/media_cdo/aid/769318/jewish/Oh-Chanukah-Oh-Chanukah.htm. Then play the song again, and ask the students to sing along. Discuss the lyrics. How do they express the meaning of Hanukkah?

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 1-3.4.

Children are encouraged to make charitable gifts or provide a service during the eight days of Hanukkah. Ask students to think of a service the All-of-a Kind family might provide on Henry Street. Have them draw a picture of the family as they provide the service.

Correlates to CCSS in English Language Standards in Speaking & Listening: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas SL. 1-3.5.

BONUS ACTIVITY

Have students play the dreidel game. Directions are on the following website: myjewishlearning.com/article/how-to-play-dreidel/. They can also sing “I Have a Little Dreidel” with the performer on the following website: chabad.org/multimedia/media_cdo/aid/797123/jewish/Dreidel-Song.htm.

VOCABULARY/USE OF LANGUAGE

Review the glossary at the end of the book so that students may better understand the Yiddish words as the story is read. Encourage students to jot down unfamiliar words and try to define them, taking clues from context. Such words may include *tenement*, *shreds*, *biss*, *spit*, and *clamors*.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

tenement.org/about.html

The official website of the Tenement Museum in New York City.

reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays/hanukkah/kid-friendly-version-hanukkah-story

The site provides a child-friendly version of the story of Hanukkah.

<http://forgotten-ny.com/2014/03/henry-street-lower-east-side/>

This site provides information and pictures of Henry Street on New York City’s Lower East Side.