

# Hanukkah and Christmas


## What's the Difference?

The month of December is an exciting one. For many people, it is the celebration of their faith. Christmas is a Christian celebration. December 25<sup>th</sup> represents the birth of baby Jesus. For Christians, this is an important holiday. The Bible story tells of a baby called Jesus who was born in a manger. A manger is a feeding container for cows and other animals. Why was a baby in a manger? The Bible, an important book for Christians, tells us that there was no other place for Mary and Joseph to go. The inn was full and Joseph had to find a place somewhere for his wife to rest. The baby was coming! He took her to a stable. Inside were animals and soft hay. After Jesus was born, he had visitors from far away that came to see him. These visitors were wise men who had followed a bright star in the sky. Jesus was to be the savior of all mankind! The wise men brought Jesus gifts. They gave them to his mother. Today, Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus by sharing gifts on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The legend of Santa Claus started a long time ago in the country of Turkey. There was a man named St. Nickolas. He was loved by all the people for doing miracles for children. Over time, story tellers and poets turned St. Nicolas, the man, into the Santa Claus, the legend. The custom of Christmas is that Santa brings gifts to children just like the wise men brought gifts for Jesus. A special tradition at Christmas is hanging stockings by the fire place on Christmas Eve to be filled with presents. Evergreen trees are brought into the house and decorated with lights. There are many special foods eaten during Christmas. Christmas is a major holiday for Christians.


Hanukkah is a Jewish celebration. The word Hanukkah means dedication. Other people refer to it as the festival of lights. Hanukkah is a special festival reminding the Jewish people what happened many years ago when the Romans were in charge. This was a time when Romans did not allow the Jewish people to celebrate their faith like they wanted to. When the Jewish people defeated the Romans, they were able to worship in their temple once more. Hanukkah celebrates the Jewish victory over the Roman Empire. It is a festival that lasts 8 days. The date always changes depending on the Jewish calendar. Hanukkah might start in November, or it might start in December. Hanukkah begins when someone lights the first candle on a special candle holder called a menorah. There are nine candles. Each night, a new candle is lit at sundown. The candles are to remain burning for a half hour after they were lit. The ninth candle is higher than the other eight. It is used only as a helper candle that lights all the others. The ninth candle is called a Shamash. A blessing is said during the lighting of the candles. The menorah is kept in a window. This is to remind everyone of how the Jewish people defeated the Romans. Some Jewish families exchange small gifts each night. This is a newer practice and not necessary. One Jewish custom is to play with spinning tops called dreidels. There are special foods eaten during Hanukkah. Potato pancakes are fried in oil as well as jam filled donuts. Hanukkah is a minor holiday for the Jewish people.


Use these symbols to mark the text during your first read.

  
Important

  
Question

  
Interesting

  
Vocabulary

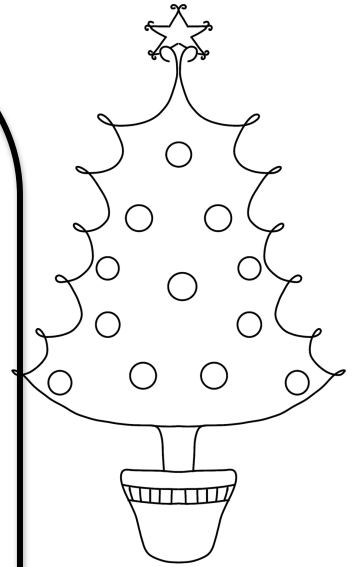
  
Connection

# Compare and Contrast

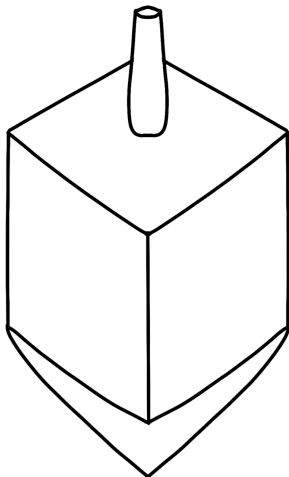
Day 1

Read the passage, Hanukkah and Christmas: What's the Difference?  
Then, fill out the graphic organizer to compare and contrast the holidays using information from the text.

Christmas



Both



Hanukkah

# Vocabulary

Day 2

Reread the passage, Hanukkah and Christmas: What's the Difference?  
Circle at least three key vocabulary words and fill in each section below.

Word: \_\_\_\_\_

What I Think it Means: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What it Really Means: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My Own Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Word: \_\_\_\_\_

What I Think it Means: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What it Really Means: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My Own Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Word: \_\_\_\_\_

What I Think it Means: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What it Really Means: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My Own Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Comprehension

Day 3

Reread the passage, Hanukkah and Christmas: What's the Difference?  
Use the evidence from the text to answer the following questions.

1. What is the main idea of this passage? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify four details that support the main idea.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. How does this text connect to the theme of family? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the author's purpose for writing this text? How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What did you learn after reading this passage? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Make connections to the text:

- Text-To-Self \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Text-To-Text \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Text-To-World \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Non-Fiction Notes

Day 4

Reread the passage, Hanukkah and Christmas: What's the Difference?  
Use the note-taking sheet to record important pieces of information from the text.

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Important Words or Phrases

Facts I Learned

Questions I Still Have

Things I Found Most Interesting

