

Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah

For centuries the Jewish people have lit Hanukkah candles to remember the miracle of the Maccabees' victory over the Greeks and the regaining of control of Jerusalem. This special 8-day celebration commemorates the rededication of the Temple and the miracle of the oil that burnt for 8 days in the Temple Menorah. The miracle victory over Israel's enemy and the miracle provision of the oil has always demonstrated that Hanukkah is a season of miracles for your life, for your family, your finances and more.

The Hebrew word for Hanukkah means "to dedicate" and is referred to in John 10:22 as the Feast of Dedication. It's considered a fitting time to re-dedicate your life to God and to His purposes. Known also as the Festival of Lights, we believe that God will light your world this season with wisdom and revelation knowledge as you become a light to the world through kindness, compassion and good deeds.

The Hanukkah Menorah is also called a Chanukiah and is an 8 candle menorah plus the center candle holder, called the "Shamash." The Shamash candle is also called the "servant candle" and is used to light the other 8 candles. Ancient tradition calls this center branch the "eternal flame" and represents the Messiah.

Display your Menorah just inside the doorway of your house, on the left side when entering and visible to street. If this is not practical, place the menorah in a window where all who pass by can see its light. The Menorah should be lit as the sun goes down. If necessary, however, it can be lit later into the night. It's best to have all family members present to share in this special event. On Shabbat, the Menorah should be lit before sundown and then the lighting of the Sabbath candles.

This year the first Hanukkah candle is lit on **Thursday, December 7, 2023**. Candle lighting is each evening at sunset through the evening of **Thursday, December 14, 2023**. (44 candles total are needed.)

Lighting Instructions:

On the first night, place one candle in the Menorah's far right candle holder (as you face the Menorah). Another candle is placed as the Shamash (middle stem). Light the Shamash Candle and say the three blessings below. Then light the first candle using the Shamash candle. Replace the Shamash in its holder and let both candles glow until they burn themselves out.

First Blessing: *"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the lights of Hanukkah"*

Second Blessing: *"Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who wrought miracles for our fathers in days of old, at this season."*

Third Blessing: *"Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who gave us life and kept us and delivered us to this time."* (first night of Hanukkah only)

The second night, place two candles in the Menorah's far right candle holders (as you face the Menorah). Another candle is placed for the Shamash. For the rest of Hanukkah say only the first two blessings and then light each candle using the Shamash candle. Always light the candles from left to right using the Shamash candle. Follow this process for each night of Hanukkah.

Continue with three candles on the third night in the same manner and continue each night until, on the eighth night, all eight candles are burning brightly (nine, including the Shamash). On each night, repeat the first two blessings quoted above.

Remember the candles are placed in the Menorah from right to left but they are lit from left to right. If you miss one night it's alright; just come back the next day and light the specific number of candles scheduled for that evening. Keep in mind Hanukkah is meant to be a joyous celebration of faith and an opportunity for God's miracle power, provision and promises to be released upon you and all of your loved ones.

Happy Hanukkah and May God Use You to Be a Light to The World!