

# Chanukah/Hanukah/Hannukah Crafts For The Family

by Eileen Chadis Wood

We can't agree on how to spell the holiday in English, but we all seem to agree on what are Chanukah crafts: clay dreidels... clay menorahs... wooden dreidels.. wooden menorahs...

But there has to be more! Don't get me wrong. My family has made many wooden and clay Chanukah crafts. We have treasured them for years. But there are so many more ideas out there for projects to do with your family as part of your celebrations.

We are so lucky that even the non-crafty can find things to do. You can go to stores and buy nice ready-made too. With the age of computers and the world wide web, it is getting incredible. Computer programs now have Jewish/Chanukah clip art to use for your creations. Many sites are online with just a "click" on a search engine. Lately even on the world wide web, non-Jewish sites are scrambling to add Jewish holiday crafts to their sites.

Chanukah celebrations have changed from the days of going to stores and finding neither holiday decorations for the house nor books to use. When everyone only made simple crafts out of popsicle sticks, like Jewish stars to hang from a window. Or made posters of menorahs for the walls.

Now many Jewish and department stores sell incredible banners and tinsel decorations. The question now is not where can you find any, but how much is too much? Too Christmas-like.

I remember the shock my family from Chelsea had when first visiting my Cousins Natalie and Edward Lemberg's Malden house. Twenty plus years ago, Eddie made a painted wooden 5-foot-high standing Star of David with lights on each point. It stood near their window, for all to see. Decorated with their two children's crafts. Long before decorating for Sukkot became so mainstream, his star was their answer to making something their kids could show to friends with pride. It became their tradition and it is there now for their granddaughter. A great family tradition!

So start your own tradition or add to your collections. For example: annual dreidels or a menorah for each member of the family.

Some craft suggestions:

- Have each child make a dreidel each year and sign and date it.
- Use different materials or techniques each year. Sculpey Polymer Clay is our new favorite for dreidels. We have made mini ones and hung them from chains for necklaces. We made a huge one by using a base of aluminum foil to lighten it and then covered it with polymer clay. Sculpey is baked in your own oven and can be simple or look like tiles by decorating your projects with clay "canes".

- For the advanced clay project, make face canes to represent each family member.
- For the beginner, buy already made canes to decorate your dreidel.
- Also, for either the advanced or beginner clay project, buy some Chanukah rubber stamps and stamp the clay on each side to decorate before you put on the letters.

Some newer Chanukah crafts:

- How about beaded dreidel key chains, backpack pulls, beaded earrings? Many stores carry plastic pony beads in many sizes and colors and glass e beads. They sell them to make beadie animals. But you can make Jewish designs of your own. Use large beads for key chains; small glass beads can be woven with wire for dreidel earrings.
- Beaded dreidel beadies can be made with Glow in the Dark Beads or with Magic Color-Changing beads for a special treat.
- Little fancier? Add a Shin (easy letter to add to the pattern) in the beadie pattern.
- Beads can be woven with ribbon, plastic lacing, etc. for these projects and to make stained glass, like suncatchers, to hang in your windows. Patterns come in all sizes for dreidels and even for menorah designs.

Let's not forget Menorahs:

- Sculpey clay can also be used for making a menorah. Just remember to use either a glass cup for oil or metal/aluminum foil between the candle and the menorah, so the wax won't stick to the Sculpey or drip too much.
- For a new tradition, make a menorah that is shaped like nine different people. One for each member of the family and if needed add grandparents, aunts, uncles, family pets, whatever you need to make eight figures. I suggest you make the Shamash something neutral since it is "taller" and "bigger" than the rest. You don't want hurt family feelings.

Or want a real easy craft?

Roll beeswax sheets to make Chanukah candles.

- Sheets can be cut into small rectangles in whatever length you want.
- Place thin bleached cotton wick (wire core gets too hot and the candle would really burn fast) at edge and roll tight.
- Done!

Want to be fancier?

- Cut sheet into right triangle for spiral tapered candle.
- Place in front of you like a right triangle.

- Lay wick along bottom.
- Gently but firmly roll. (You don't want many air bubbles.)
- Done!

Not really crafty but want to make something? There are great craft kits online and in catalogs for many Chanukah crafts.

Just remember, have fun and build your own tradition.

*Eileen Chadis Wood, a Chelsea native, lives in Newport News, Virginia. She currently works on two web sites, her award-winning [Eileen's Camp Crafts and Other Fun Things!](#) and [Chadis Crafts and Kippot](#). She can be reached by email at [eileen@chadiscrafts.com](mailto:eileen@chadiscrafts.com).*