

CHANNUKAH PROGRAM IDEAS

From your friends at USY

This year, Channukah (no matter how you spell it in English letters) will fall over winter break in most places. While you may not see your teens and youth during this time, you can still utilize Channukah to do some great programming leading up to winter break. Channukah is also a great time to bring community together. This can be a time when you can bring your entire youth department together for a party and have a variety of activities along with separate programming for each of the USY age levels. To help get your creativity going, we have developed a list of some helpful program ideas that can be adapted to all three of our various USY age levels from 3rd-12th along with a brief description of each program. You can use these Channukah program idea starters in conjunction with our canva program templates to help you advertise these programs to your youth community. For additional help with any of these programs or assistance in coming up with other creative ideas that work for your synagogue please reach out directly to USY's Director of Chapter Outreach & Initiatives, Marc Sender, msender@uscj.org.

B'Shalom,

USY Staff Team

CHANNUKAH PROGRAM

STARTERS

DOUGHNUT (SUGFANIYOT) DECORATING

This one is pretty straight forward. You can use any type of plain donuts, though jelly filled will be the preferred. Gather your participants a variety of frosting, sprinkles, icing, chocolate chips, and more. You can do this in a single activity or have multiple rounds with different themes like Israel, musicals, sports, etc...

DREIDEL BATTLES

1. Pair up participants
2. Give each pair a dreidel and each participant a set amount of gelt
3. Have those participants play dreidel until one participant has no gelt left
4. After that, the participant with no gelt left starts cheering on the participant who won and follows them to the next battle (like the rock paper scissors battle).
5. This continues until you have only one dreidel champion left.

EDIBLE CHANNUKAH

This program will not only be delicious for participants but also help collect food for a local food pantry. Theme the entire program around food. Encourage all participants to bring non-perishable food to donate as a collection. At the program, have a variety of candy, cookies, and other sweets and then challenge participants to create various channukah items out of the food (dreidel, channukiyah, candle, maccabee, etc.). You can add a twist to this with a gallery walk or a judged competition.

IRON CHEF - LATKE EDITION

This one you take over the synagogue kitchen for. The secret ingredient for this Iron Chef battle will be potatoes. Have the participants work in small teams (2 to 4 people) and create a delicious entree with a latke included in some way. If you cannot use the synagogue kitchen, you can do this on portable electric skillets. This is a great time to have some older teens paired with some younger youth in each group.

GELT TREASURE HUNT

Whether just inside your building (if you are in a cold weather area) or outside as well, hide pieces of gelt or treasure all around. You can have this be a complete free for all where they simply hunt around or you can add clues to different areas. Really lean into the treasure hunt with bags to gather and you can even dress up in old time clothes like you are searching for buried treasure. Have a prize for the team that finds the most treasure.

LEGO CHANNUKIYAH

1. Provide random legos in assorted piles.
2. Have the kids work in pairs to build a channukiyah out of legos.
3. Remind participants what a channukiyah looks like and must include
4. You can add in a fun element with yellow legos to "light" candles at the end on each lego channukiyah