

MINNESOTA

STORYTIME

Title: *The Borrowed Hanukkah Latkes*

Author: Linda Glaser

Illustrator: Nancy Cote

Publisher and Copyright Date: Albert Whitman, 1997

Connection to Minnesota: Minnesota author

Summary: This is a story about a girl named Rachel who finds a way to include her elderly neighbor in her family's Hanukkah celebration.

Suggested ages: 4-6, 7-10

- Tips for Reading:**
- Be expressive. When Mama "smacks her forehead," you can smack your own forehead. When Mrs. Greenberg shakes her finger, you can shake your finger.
 - As you get to the pages with the menorah (a candleholder that holds 8 candles for the 8 nights of Hanukkah plus a taller "leader" candle used for lighting the other candles) and the dreidel (a top that has 4 Hebrew letters for playing a game of chance), point these out and explain them to the children.
 - Let the children end the refrain: "You have a heart of gold but you're as stubborn as ____." (an ox)

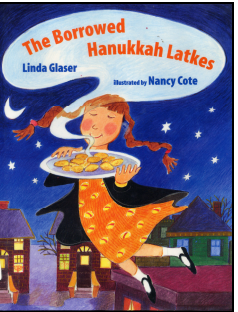
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Questions before reading:

- What is Hanukkah? (It's a winter holiday called "The Festival of Lights.")
- Who celebrates Hanukkah? (Jewish people)
- What are latkes? (Potato pancakes fried in oil until golden brown)
- Have you ever helped a grownup cook? What did you do?
- How does it feel at your house when guests are about to come for a holiday meal?
- Do you know anyone who lives alone?

To Introduce this story say:

This story takes place during a Jewish holiday called Hanukkah. But it's really not a story *about* Hanukkah; it's a story about friendship.



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Questions

After Reading:

- Why do you think Mrs. Greenberg didn't want to go to Rachel's house?
- Why did Rachel want her to come?
- How do you think it feels to be alone during a holiday?
- How might it feel to be included in someone's holiday celebration?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Art:

- Make a holiday card for someone you care about to let them know you are thinking of them during the holidays.

Culture:

- Research the traditions and cultures that use lights and candles for a holiday in winter.

Language:

- In this story, the literary device of personification is used. That is giving human traits to objects. For instance, Rachel's house always looked like "it was still in its pajamas and needed to brush its hair yet." Find other places in the story when personification was used. Can you make up some other personifications for how your bedroom looks?

Science:

- Light a candle, or turn the lights off and on in the room, and talk about why light is so important in the wintertime. Talk about how December has the shortest days and longest nights. It's the darkest time of year. Talk about why so many traditions use lights and candles in the winter.

Other:

- Follow the recipe in the book and make latkes.

Suggestions for English

Language Learners:

- In the story, Mrs. Greenberg says, "Your mama has enough tumult without me." The word "tumult" is a Yiddish word. Yiddish is a language that was spoken by many Jews from Eastern Europe who came to the United States as immigrants. Some Yiddish words and expressions that they used are now part of the English language. Are there any words from your culture or language that are now part of English? Are there any words or expressions that you think *should* become part of the English language?

Related Books:

- *The Chanukkah Guest* by Eric Kimmel, illustrated by Giora Carmi (Holiday House, 1988)
- *Latkes and Applesauce: A Hanukkah Story* by Fran Manushkin, illustrated by Robin Spowart (Scholastic, 1990)
- *Papa's Latkes* by Michelle Edwards, illustrated by Stacey Schuett (Candlewick, 2004)

Key Words: