

Chanukkah (Kislev 25)



The story of Chanukkah starts with the reign of Alexander the Great, a king who was kind to the Jewish people and allowed them to practice their religion. His successor, 100 years later, was King Antiochus who oppressed the Jews severely, not allowing them to practice their traditions, placing a Greek priest in the Temple in Jerusalem and also violating the Temple. Two Jewish groups opposed King Antiochus and joined forces in a revolt which was successful. After their victory, the Temple was rededicated. According to tradition, the candelabrum (menorah) in the Temple was to be re-lit but there was only enough oil to burn for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days, the time needed to prepare a fresh supply of oil for the menorah. An eight day festival was declared to commemorate this miracle.

The only religious observance related to this holiday is the lighting of candles in a candelabrum called a chanukiah.

At Shalom Village, there is a chanukiah on each table in the dining room. Each night before dinner the residents place a candle in the chanukiah, starting at the far right, and light it using the servant candle. Blessings are said at this time. Each night one more candle is added to the chanukiah until the eighth night, when there are eight candles in the chanukiah.

It is also traditional to eat fried foods on Chanukkah because of the significance of oil to the holiday. At Shalom we make and serve Latkes (potato pancakes) at meals and also at our Chanukkah party. You can be sure that there are no calories in this delicious treat!