

Sharing Our Light: Hanukkah Mini-Guide with Ezra's Story

For families, classrooms, and community spaces (age 8+)

Purpose & Frame (read or adapt)

Use Ezra's story as a Hanukkah ritual to talk about identity, light, and belonging—especially for Jews of Color and mixed-heritage families. You can say: "Hanukkah is about bringing light into dark places and making our stories visible. Ezra's story shows how someone who knows who he is can share his light with curiosity and love, even when others make assumptions. Tonight we'll watch his story and share a bit of our own light." Time needed: 10–20 minutes, plus the 2–3 minute video.

1. **Gentle Group Agreements** (30 seconds) Post or say 2–3 simple agreements: "We speak from our own experience."

"We listen to understand, not to judge."

"What people share stays here; what we learn can travel." (This creates psychological safety and helps everyone relax enough to actually learn.)

2. **Watch the Video** Play [Ezra's video](#) once. If you have time, invite people to notice one moment that felt like "light" to them (a look, a sentence, a scene). 4. Discussion Prompts (pick 2–3) You can do "Think → Pair → Share" to make it safer: 30 seconds quiet thinking

2–3 minutes in pairs

a few voices in the whole group

A. Light & Identity Where do you see Ezra's "light" in the video?

What helps him stay confident about who he is, even when others don't get it?

B. Assumptions & Seeing Clearly In the classroom scene, what did the teacher assume about Ezra's family?

How might that feel for him? What's a better question the teacher could ask instead?

C. Hanukkah & Our Stories Hanukkah puts light in the window so it can be seen. What parts of your story feel like candles, bright but sometimes misunderstood?

Who helped you believe that your story belongs in the menorah of the Jewish people?

For younger kids, you can simplify: “What makes Ezra shine?” “When has someone guessed wrong about you?” “Who helps you feel you belong in our family / community?” 5. Simple Activity: “Hanukkah of Lights” Goal: Connect Hanukkah candles to the different “lights” each person carries (identity, story, gift). Steps (5–10 minutes): Quiet think (1 min): Think of one ‘light’ you carry—a story, a tradition, a talent, or part of your identity that you’re proud of.

Share in a circle (3–8 min): Go around. Each person says, in one sentence:

“My light is... [example: Shabbat songs from my grandma / speaking Spanish and Hebrew / being Black and Jewish / making people laugh / asking good questions].”

Connect to candles (1–2 min): As you light (or look at) the Hanukkah candles, say:

“Just like these candles, each of our lights matters. Together they make more light, especially when we see all the different colors and stories.”

Optional: Write or draw each “light” on a small paper flame and place them around the hanukkah. 6. Closing Question or Blessing (1–2 minutes) Choose one: “What is one small way you can make more room for someone else’s light this Hanukkah?”

“Who will you be extra curious about, so they don’t have to ‘prove’ they belong?”

You can close with: “May the lights of Hanukkah help us see each other more clearly, like Ezra learned to share his story. May every kind of Jewish family, and every kind of Jewish body and story, feel welcome in our light.”

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