

LIGHTING THE WAY: LESSONS FROM RABBI SACKS



VALUE

FAITHFULNESS & TRUST

Emunah

Hanukkah is about more than miracles. It's about spirit, struggle, and the enduring power of faith. In this session, we explore the value of *emunah*, faithfulness and trust, through the teachings of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory. His short, powerful Hanukkah videos offer eight distinct windows into how light, hope, and resilience can guide us. Through reflection, conversation, and meaningful takeaways, we'll discover how to bring this light into our homes and lives.

TIMELINE: 90 MIN

BEGIN WITH INTENTION | 5 MIN

OPENING | 10 MIN

NOT BY MIGHT | 15 MIN

LIGHTING THE WAY | 35 MIN

BRING YOUR LEARNING HOME | 5 MIN

REKINDLING *EMUNAH* | 15 MIN

END WITH MEANING | 5 MIN



WHO FACILITATES THE SESSION

This session is designed for **participants** to take an active role. The facilitator's role is to create a reflective and engaging environment by:

- **Welcoming** the group and **reading** the opening paragraph to frame the session.
- **Explaining** the structure of the session, including the use of the **Rabbi Sacks Hanukkah Cards**.
- **Introducing** and **guiding** each activity and offering **clear instructions**.
- Holding space for **closing reflection** and helping participants connect the session to their lives beyond the room.

Facilitators don't need to be experts, just present guides, prepared, and open to where the conversation leads.



MATERIALS

- Index cards
- Scissors (1 pair for every 2-4 participants)
- Markers or pens
- Large bowl
- AV set up for video



FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Before the session, **review all eight Rabbi Sacks Hanukkah Cards**. Familiarize yourself with the video titles and quotes, and watch at least two of the videos. **(We encourage you to watch all eight. They're short!)** Remind participants to bring their journal and a pen. Ensure that the video is ready for playback during the session.

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| <p>PART I BEGIN WITH INTENTION</p>  <p>5 MIN</p> | <p>Looking for ways to start your session with purpose?</p> <p>Turn to the Universal Guide on p. 4 for simple, meaningful ideas to open your gathering with presence, connection, and shared energy.</p> |
| <p>PART II OPENING</p>  <p>10 MIN</p> | <p>This is a session about the light we carry, and what it means, especially during Hanukkah, to keep that light alive.</p> <p>Hanukkah is a festival of resilience, of rekindling what feels lost, and of being steadfast even in the darkest times. At its core, Hanukkah is about <i>emunah</i>, faithfulness and trust, not as something that is fixed or easy, but as something we return to, spark by spark.</p> <p>Take a moment to reflect:</p> <p>What word best describes your current relationship to trust in a Adonai, an elevating Presence of love, strength, and support? (Examples might include: rebuilding, flickering, steady, searching). Write that word on an index card.</p> <p>Place your card in a central Hanukkah-inspired bowl, labeled <i>EMUNAH</i>.</p> <p>Throughout this session, inspired by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks’ 8 Thoughts for 8 Nights, we’ll explore how <i>emunah</i> is kindled and re-kindled, sometimes burning bright, sometimes a faint glow, always shared, always renewed.</p> |
| <p>PART III NOT BY MIGHT</p>  <p>15 MIN</p>  <p>Scan the QR code to watch the video “Inspired by Faith, We Can Change the World”</p> | <p>After watching the video, move to one of three designated corners of the room based on which idea resonates most for you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Emunah</i> as Strength – The Jewish spirit that longs for freedom and is prepared to fight for it. 2. <i>Small But Mighty</i> – The few can triumph over the many. 3. <i>Spiritual Courage</i> – Our fuel was not oil, but holy boldness. <p>In your group, explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does this expression of <i>emunah</i> speak to you right now? <p>Share a moment in your life when you have experienced the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1, <i>Emunah</i> as Strength: Took a stand without the tools or support you thought you needed. • Group 2, <i>Small But Mighty</i>: Kept going even when the odds felt stacked against you. • Group 3, <i>Spiritual Courage</i>: Drew strength from within, from someone close to you, or from a sense of something beyond yourself. |

PART IV

LIGHTING THE WAY



35 MIN

Step 1: Cut out your deck of Rabbi Sacks Hanukkah Cards.

5 MIN

Each card highlights one of his 8 Hanukkah teachings, with the video title, a powerful one-line quote, and a reflection prompt. While we won't watch every video today, each one is short and accessible, perfect for sharing at home with your family.

Find a quiet spot in the room with your cards and journal.

Step 2: Choose and Reflect

10 MIN

Participants silently review all 8 cards on the following page and choose one that speaks most to their experience of *emunah* (faithfulness/ trust) this year.

They will then reflect and write in response to that card's prompt.

Step 3: Small Group Sharing

15 MIN

Divide into small groups of three to four participants. In each group, each person shares which card they chose, why they chose it, and as much of their reflection as they feel comfortable.

Step 3: Carry It Forward

5 MIN

Choose one card you didn't focus on today but want to return to at home. Place it on top of your deck. When you light Hanukkah candles, take one night to read this card aloud at your table. Let it spark a conversation with your partner, your kids, your friends, or just yourself.



Rabbi Sacks Hanukkah Cards: Eight Thoughts for Eight Nights

1

INSPIRED BY SPIRIT, WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

“The Maccabees had neither weapons nor numbers. But they had a double portion of the Jewish spirit.”

What part of the Jewish spirit do you want to carry forward or pass on to someone else?

2

THE THIRD MIRACLE

“Though the Temple was destroyed, Jewish hope was not destroyed.”

What’s one area of your life where you’ve chosen to hold on to hope against the odds?

3

INSIDE/OUTSIDE

“A little light drives out much darkness.”

Where do you feel called to bring light, either within yourself or into the world around you?

4

THE FIRST CLASH OF CIVILISATIONS

“Ancient Israel gave the world the idea of hope.”

Who models or inspires hope for you? How?

5

HANUKKAH IN OUR TIME

“Though tyranny exists, freedom, with God’s help, will always win the final battle.”

What freedom, internal or external, do you feel most grateful for this Hanukkah?

6

THE LIGHT OF WAR AND THE LIGHT OF PEACE

“In Judaism, the light of peace takes precedence over the light of war.”

What is one small step you can take to bring peace into your home, relationships, or inner life?

7

THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT NEVER DIES

“The miracle of the first night was that of faith itself, the belief that something would remain with which to begin again.”

Think of a time when everything felt broken. What small thing (person, idea, or act) helped you begin again?

8

LIGHT ANOTHER LIGHT

“When it comes to spiritual goods...the more I share, the more I have.”

Whose light can you help kindle this Hanukkah?

**PART V
BRING YOUR
LEARNING
HOME**



5 MIN

- **Young kids:** Draw a candle for each family member and name the unique light they bring.
- **Teens & Young Adults:** Watch one or more of the videos together, and reflect: When have you had to trust your inner light even when you felt uncertain?
- **Partner:** Light a candle for your relationship. As it burns, share one way you've learned to trust each other more deeply this year.
- **Extended family/ friends:** Share one of Rabbi Sacks' teachings with a personal reflection. Start a Hanukkah group chat of light.

**PART VI
REKINDLING
EMUNAH**



10 MIN

Invite everyone to gather around the central bowl labeled *EMUNAH*, where they placed their index cards at the start of the session.

At the beginning of our time together, each of you placed a word in this bowl that reflected **your relationship to trust in a Adonai, an elevating Presence of love, strength, and support**. Now, as we close, you'll each draw a word, not your own, but one from someone else in this circle.

Everyone should take a turn stepping forward and drawing a word from the bowl. After everyone has a card, continue:

As you hold this word, someone else's reflection on faithfulness & trust, consider its relationship to your own. **The flame of *emunah* is passed, kindled, and rekindled, sometimes by our own strength, and sometimes by the faith of others.** May the word you hold now remind you that *emunah*, like light, is something that changes over time, and something we build together. Our ancestors didn't wait for perfect conditions to light the Hanukkah menorah. They lit what they had, with what they could gather. May we do the same with our trust, our relationships, and the light we bring to the world.

PART VII

END WITH MEANING



5 MIN

Head back to the Universal Guide on p. 4 for thoughtful ways to close your gathering with reflection, gratitude, and a sense of shared purpose.

Continue the Journey



Continue growing your skills as a Jewish communal leader through the **Momentum Fellowship**, an opportunity for listening, learning, mentorship, and meaningful leadership development.



Join Charlie Harary's Yomm journey *Unlocking Greatness* to explore how *emunah* can begin from within when we unlock what's possible through faith and action.



Hanukkah is a time to transform darkness into light. In the Yomm journey *Lead Like a Mensch*, Michal Oshman invites us to move from fear to purpose, anchored in faith, resilience, and the strength to keep going.



Check out the *Celebrate the Year* section's pages about Hanukkah for more activities and blessings in *Soul Full: Gateways to Jewish Prayer*, or gift the full 11-chapter book to someone this season.



About Our Content Collaborator

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, of blessed memory, was a unique leader in the Jewish world, and far beyond. His voice was one of moral clarity and intellectual depth, for religious and secular audiences alike. His teachings and books continue to inspire hundreds of thousands of individuals throughout the world. At the core of his philosophy was a Judaism engaged with the world. Through his writings, countless public engagements and the way he lived his life, he sought to demonstrate how the best of Western thought could enhance Judaism, and how Jewish values could help to repair the many fractures in our society and world. After Rabbi Sacks' untimely passing on 7 November 2020, *The Rabbi Sacks Legacy* was established with a mission to perpetuate the timeless and universal wisdom of Rabbi Sacks as a teacher of Torah, a moral voice, and a leader of leaders.

