



Hannah and her Seven Sons, A Play

Submitted by: *Shoshi K Bilavsky*

Subject Area: Holiday, Torah/Talmud, Chanukah

Target Age Group: 3rd - 5th Grade

Abstract:

Teach about Chanukah main idea: message of freedom through a play or a puppet show.

Lesson Plan Guideline:

Understanding Chanukah's theme of freedom requires active involvement. Through a play based on a story from the Talmud and the Maccabees book, we can bring the students to relate to the Israelites / Jewish people stragel at that pirid of time.

Lesson 1:

Background Information: This story is a heroic story about a Jewish mother and her seven sons that took place in Israel. The land was conquered by Greece, governing by Caesar Antiochus Epiphanies the 4th. The Caesar forbids the Israelite to observe their religion." The king sends letters by the hands of messengers to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah that they should practice customs foreign to the land, and that they should cease the whole – burnt - offering, and sacrifices and drink offering of the sanctuary, and that they should profane the Shabbat and feasts, and pollute the sanctuary, and those who had been sanctified; that should build high place, and sacred groves, and shrines for idols, and that the should sacrifice swine and other unclean animals and that they should leave their sons uncircumcised , and make themselves abominable by means of everything that was unclean and profane, so that they might forget the law , and change all traditional ordinances. "And however should not act according to the words of the king should die." (Maccabees 1, 1:44-50)

Hanna and her sons demonstrate devotion to their belief, faith by refusing to bow to the idol- Zeus at the Temple in Jerusalem. According the Talmud (Talmud



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Bavli, Mascot Gitin 57, and the Maccabees book B' chapter 7) Hannah's and her sons responds to the new rules, inspired the Maccabees and the Jewish people to rebel against the Caesar and his edicts.

"... And according to the decree, they put to death the woman who had circumcised her children ..." (1 Maccabees 1:60-62)

Discussion:

What was the purpose of the decrees? Do you think Antiochus' actions were effective for his purposes?

A literature of martyrdom grow up about that period (like the story of Hannah) what do you think it reflects?

Lesson 2:

Study concepts: Freedom, edicts, revolt, **Maccabees**, Caesar, 10 commandants, Talmud, Maccabees book, self sacrifice, sanctify, *Kiddush Hshem* קידוש ה' –martyr –sufferer for a cause, Hellenism- מתיוונים *mityvnm*

- Bring to the class about 5 books that deal with this period in History and few dictionaries, (borrow from the Hasfriaah at the BJCC).
- Dived the class to 3-5 groups; each group will research few of the concepts; each group will teach the concept they explore.
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Question for research:

1. Define the words (Freedom, edicts, revolt, **Maccabees**, Caesar, 10 commandants, Talmud, Maccabees book, self sacrifice, sanctify, *Kiddush Hshem* קידוש ה' –martyr –sufferer for a cause, Hellenism– מתיוונים *mityvnm*)
2. How each of the wards connected to Chanukah?
3. Who was Antiochus?
4. What exactly were the Maccabees, and Hellenists and who were they?
5. Why do you think the Hellenists were unable to convince the rest of the Jewish people of their point of view?
6. What is the overall significance of the rededication for Judah's the Maccabee time and for all time (even today there is no Temple or Temple service)?



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Lesson 3:

Introducing the play, look at Torah and the chapters and verses that are included in the play

Bible; Torah geography;

1. Find the chapters and the verses (Exodus; 20; 2 ;20:3 ; 22;19; 34;14; Deuteronomy; 6;4 ; 4:39;

2. Discuss the meaning of each of the verses and how they related to faith and the theme of Chanukah?

3. Read in Hebrew and English.

Lesson 4:

If you are choosing to do a puppet show; art; prepare the puppets: Hanna, Storyteller, Antiochus, Soldier, Hannah, Son 1, Son 2, and Son 3 – option one. Option two: you can have up to 7 sons, according to the original story

Materials needed:

For the puppet show; Stick puppets or hand puppets dressed up as the Chanukah characters, puppet stage, and script.

For the play: children will dress up as the ancient Greeks – toga and as the ancient Jewish/ Hebrew, using bathrobes and head coverings, etc.

Lesson 5: Auditions: Explain to your peers and teacher why you would like a certain role; student will choose the character that they wish to play, prepare to present their characters before the teacher and the class, like an audition. The teacher will choose the best student for each character.

Lesson 6: Rehearsals (3-5 classes)

Lesson 7: Perform, recommended for Chanukah party with parents.



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Hannah and Her Seven Sons – A Play Based on the story from the Talmud;
Gitin 57;

עיבוד על פי גיטין נ"ז : איכה רבה א': איכה רבה ש"ב

Option 1:

Characters:

Storyteller, King Antiochus, Soldier, Hannah, Son 1, Son 2, and Son 3

Script

Storyteller: Long ago King Antiochus the 4th, was king over many lands he was a king of the Greek /Syrian empire. He was known as Antiochus Epiphanies (the God of Manifest) by his friend, Antiochus Epiphanies (the Madman), by the Maccabees Antiochus Harasha (the Wicked) When he came to Jerusalem he said ...

Caesar Antiochus: I am now the king in this land- Israel . Here is my god Zeus. I want all the people to bow down to my god. Forget your god, no one can see your God anyway

Storyteller: The people of the land were afraid.

In Jerusalem: Hannah is talking with her 7 sons;

Son 1: Imma ; what can we do?

Son 2: Imma : We are Jews. We have one God.

Son 3: Imma we cannot bow to Zeus.

Hannah: Yes, my sons. You are right. Jews cannot bow to any idol of stone. But...my dear sons if we not going to do what the King Antiochus is asking us ... oy vey – Bed new for us... maybe we should pretend...

Son 1: we cannot pretend, the idol is in the holy Temple , בית המקדש,



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Son 2: If other Jews will see us bow to the idol, they will think it's OK to do so and they might follow us, no it's not good.

Son 3: We should not be afraid; we should trust God and fight for our faith,

Storyteller: The King Antiochus commanded all the people to come and bow down to the idol, Zeus.

Soldier: Hanna come to King Antiochus, it's your turn to show loyalty to Caesar Antiochus.

King Antiochus: Come one, come all and bow to the great god, Zeus.

Hannah: My sons, we must go before the King. Please do what you think in your heart it right.

King Antiochus: Please bring in Hanna's first son: Bow down to our god Zeus.

Son 1: I am a Jew. In our Torah it written: I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. (Exodus ;20;2)

אֲנִי כִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי הָיִתְּ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: לֹא-יְהִיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, עַל-פְּנֵי.

My G-d has told me not to bow down to man or idol.

King Antiochus: You will bow down or... else! Take him away soldiers! Bring in the next son.

- Hanna is crying every time the King asks to bring one of her sons

Son 2: I cannot bow down to a stone. It says in our Torah "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20;3)

לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל, וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה, אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל, וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת--וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם, מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ.

King Antiochus: Take him away, soldiers! Those hardheaded Jews, who they



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think they are ... I'm so angry ... they have such a chutzpa... מ'אוצפה I'm the King
... I have under my command million of people ... They must do what I say
...bring the third son

Son 3: His Grace: I respect your religion, I did not try to convince you to believe in what I believe, Did I ? Why you're forcing me to believe in your God? I cannot bow to your idol, because it's written in our Torah: "For thou shalt bow down to no other god; for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God ;(Exodus 34;14)

כי ל'א תשתחווה, לאל אחר: כי ה' קנא שמו, אל קנא הוא.

King Antiochus: I'm the great king; my god is the real one ... all of the other nations believes in my God, why you need to be different? What is wrong with you Jewish people? Oy ... They are so stubborn ... to stand up for freedom ... what they are thinking ... I'm the King and only what I think is right

Storyteller: And so each of Hannah's sons came before the King. None of them would bow down to the idol. At last the **youngest son** came to the King.

King Antiochus: Listen to me. You do not need to bow to the idol. I will drop my ring and you will pick it up. My people will think that you bowed to the idol.

Young son(7) : Great King, I Respect you , I really do , But try to understand my position : if you a human king , think that is very important that people will show respect for you, can you imagine How it's important to show respect to the world creator. I'm sorry, do what you want? , but I cannot bow to Zeus. Zeus is only a stone and not the toe God.

King Antiochus: I am the King of the land. You must obey me or... Take him away soldiers! They are so brave those Jews ... they have such a strong faith in their bizarre god ... they have principles ... they are willing to fight for the right of the freedom of religion ... I wonder if my people will do the same??? Ha???

Storyteller: And so the story of Hannah's brave sons who would not bow down to the idol was told in all the land. Even today we remember their courage and retell the story of their bravery. There are special traditions associating women with Chanukah miracle and the woman involvement of a woman in the redemption.

All actors are bowing



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Option 2:

Characters:

Storyteller, King Antiochus, 2 Soldiers, Hannah, Son 1, Son 2, Son 3, Son 4, Son 5, Son 6, Son 7- the youngest son

Hanna is crying every time the King is asking to bring one of her sons

Storyteller: Long ago King Antiochus the 4th was king over many lands he was a king of the Greek /Syrian empire. He was known as Antiochus Epiphanies (the God of Manifest) by his friend, Antiochus Epilates (the Madman) , by the Maccabees Antiochus Harasha (the Wicked) When he came to Jerusalem he said ...

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Son 2: I cannot bow down to a stone. It says in our Torah "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exodus 20;3)

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King Antiochus: Take him away, soldiers! Those hardheaded Jews, who they think they are ... I'm so angry ... they have such a chutzpa... וְאִנּוֹכִי הַמֶּלֶךְ ... I have under my command million of people ... They must do what I say ...bring the third son

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כי ל' א תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, לְאֵל אֲחֵר: כִּי ה' קַנָּא שְׁמוֹ, אֵל קַנָּא הוּא.

King Antiochus: I'm the great king; my god is the real one ... all of the other nations believes in my God, why you need to be different? What is wrong with you Jewish people? Oy ... They are so stubborn ... to stand up for freedom ... what they are thinking ... I'm the King and only what I think is right

Antiochus - : Soldiers! Bring in Hanna's fourth son: Bow down to our god Zeus.
Son 4- Great King, it written in our holy Torah: "He that sacrificeth unto the gods, save unto the LORD only, shall be utterly destroyed." (Exudes 22;19) , זָבַח לְאֵל הַיָּם, יִחָרֵם--בְּלִתִּי לֵה', לְבַדּוֹ.

Sorry! My G-d will be so up happy, and I really wish to obey to my G-d.
Antiochus: Soldiers – Take him a way and bring in the fifth son to me, it's seems they are teaching me their Torah all the time. Bring in the next son, I wander what excuse this one will have?

Son 5: Comes in

Antiochus: Bow to the greatest idol ever – Zeus

Son 5: No! I will not "**Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one-**"

"שְׁמַע, יִשְׂרָאֵל: ה' אֵל הַיְיֹוָה, ה' אֶחָד" Deuteronomy 6;4

Antiochus: Is it also from your Torah? Take him away.... I have to sophisticate with those sons... I need to think ... I'm so angry ... they have such a strong faith ... what I have being asking just bow down to a different god then theirs ... why they refuse to change and be like us Greeks ? Bring the next son -

Soldiers: Son Number six come in!

Antiochus: Bow down to my god. (I hope he is not going to tell me another story from his Torah)

Son 6: You are such a great King – may I ask you a question?

Antiochus: Yes ... Yes... go ahead but bow down to my idol, he is great also



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Son 6: Why you care if we bow to your idol? Why it's so important to you, we're such a small nation and you have so many nations under your command who are following your religion? Why?

Antiochus: Bow down - Now! Because I'm the King! You should know by now; if I believe in Zeus, you should all believe in my god, I'm always right! Right

Son 6: NO! Our Torah says...

Antiochus: here we go again with this Torah Oy vay

Son 6: The Torah says: "know this day, and lay it to thy heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."

(Deuteronomy 4:39)

וַיִּדְעַת הַיּוֹם, וַהֲשִׁבֹתָ אֶל-לַבְבְּךָ, כִּי ה' הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים, בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל-הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת: אֵין, עוֹד.

King: Take him a way!!!

Storyteller: And so each of Hannah's sons came before the King. None of them would bow down to the idol. At last the **youngest son** (*son 7*) came to the King.

King Antiochus: (now I know what I can do, I will trick him) listen to me. You do not need to bow to the idol. I will drop my ring and you will pick it up. My people will think that you bowed to the idol.

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End!

All actors are bowing!



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