

Jewish Dreidels

Many Jewish immigrants left Europe and came to America in search of religious freedom. The first Jewish communities in Mississippi can be traced back to Natchez in the early 1800s and with improved transportation and increased economic opportunities, Jewish immigration to Mississippi grew. Many became peddlers and merchants, working in and owning their own stores. During the winter, Jews celebrate Hanukkah, the eight-day festival of lights. Two-thousand years ago, after Syrian-Greeks destroyed the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the Jewish people revolted and won a great victory. When they returned to re-dedicate their Holy Temple, they only had enough sacred oil to light it for one night, yet the oil burned for eight nights. This miracle has continued to be celebrated each year during Hanukkah, which in Hebrew means “dedication.” It includes the lighting of a menorah (a nine branched candelabra), gift giving, songs, and special foods. To commemorate the miracle of the oil it is traditional to eat foods fried in oil such as *latkes* (potato pancakes) and *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts). It is also traditional to play the dreidel game. Dreidels are four-sided spinning tops with Hebrew letters on each side that read “A great miracle happened there [Israel],” a phrase that reminds its users about the ancient miracle in the Jerusalem temple.

Craft Materials:

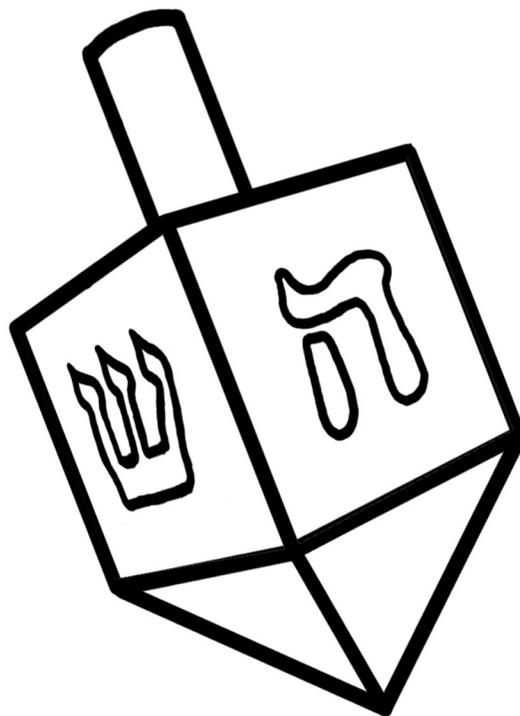
- Template
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons or Colored Pencils
- Pencil

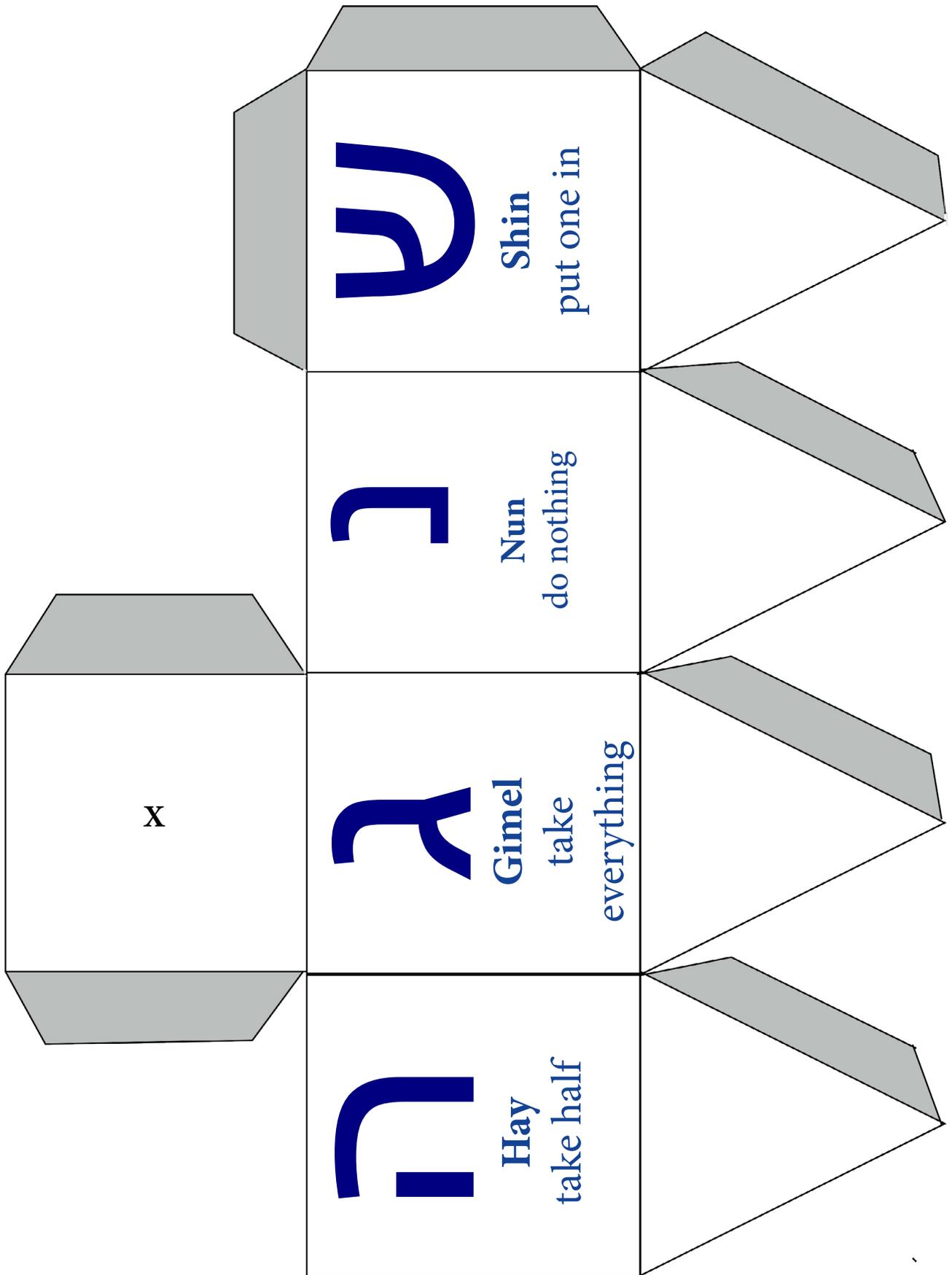
Craft Directions:

1. Color template if desired; cut out template.
2. Fold along the solid lines.
3. Glue grey flaps to underside of dreidel.
4. Push pencil through the X and the bottom point, then spin.

Dreidel Game Directions:

1. Give each player 20 markers (coins, beans, chocolates, etc).
2. At the start of the game, each player puts two markers in a center pot (when the pot is empty, each player puts in two more markers).
3. Moving in a clockwise direction, give each player one spin of the dreidel. Watch how it lands and follow the directions. The player should add to or take from the pot as directed.
4. Continue to play until each player has had five spins. The player with the most markers at the end of the game is the winner.





Template from <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk/make-a-dreidel>.