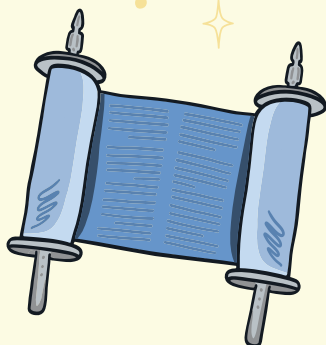
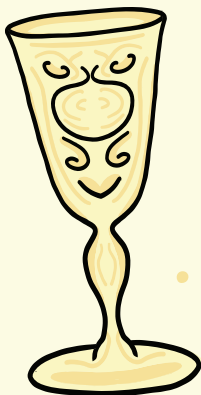


Kids' Guide

Beauty and Ritual: Judaica from
the Jewish Museum, New York

Hi, kids!

I'm Lumi, your guide for this exhibition. Inside this booklet are fun activities for you and an adult to do here at the museum and at home.

The artworks in this exhibition are related to *Judaism*, one of the world's oldest religions, and its beliefs, holidays, and traditions. Judaism is practiced by Jews, who trace their history back nearly four thousand years ago. From their origins in the Eastern Mediterranean, Jews have moved and settled all around the world, including right here in Nashville.

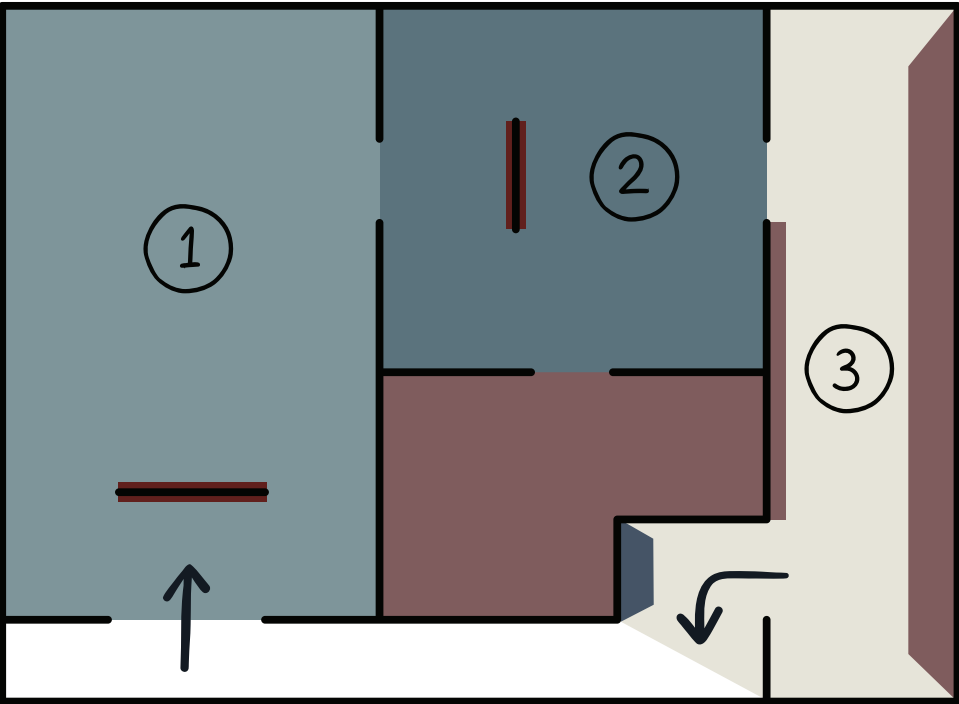
Do you know what a ritual is? A ritual can be as simple as actions you do every day, like brushing your teeth before bed. Religious rituals are more meaningful and elaborate, and they often happen during special celebrations and ceremonies.

In this exhibition we can learn about *Judaica*, beautiful works of art made for Jewish rituals.



Exhibition Map

Let's find some artworks in the three areas of the exhibition indicated on this map.



Exhibition sections

- 1

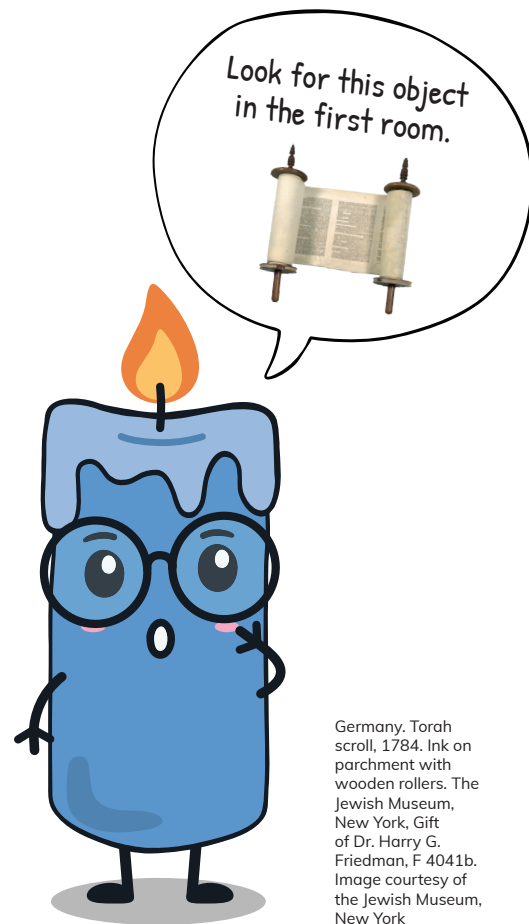
The Art of the Synagogue: Adorning the Torah
- 2

A Day of Rest: The Splendor of the Sabbath at Home
- 3

Beyond the Synagogue and the Home: The Radiance of the Hanukkah Menorah

The Art of the Synagogue: Adorning the Torah

Since ancient times, Jews have used scrolls to record their most sacred text, the Torah, which contains the stories and teachings that shape Jewish life. Every week, Jews read aloud from Torah scrolls in synagogues.



Germany. Torah scroll, 1784. Ink on parchment with wooden rollers. The Jewish Museum, New York, Gift of Dr. Harry G. Friedman, F 4041b. Image courtesy of the Jewish Museum, New York

The exhibition begins with works of art designed for synagogues, the buildings where Jews gather as a community to worship. On many of the objects is writing in Hebrew, the ancient and modern language of the Jewish people.

Each Torah scroll is carefully made. First, about sixty specially prepared animal skins (from cows, goats, or sheep) are sewn together; then, the text—all 304,805 Hebrew letters of it—are handwritten on it using a natural black ink. Both ends of the scroll are attached to wooden sticks called staves around which the scroll is rolled. You can see all these aspects on this Torah scroll made in Germany in 1784.

Every other object in this section of the exhibition was made to decorate a Torah scroll or to store one when not in use. These objects are fashioned from gold, semiprecious stones, silk, silver, wood, and more to make them as beautiful as possible.

When Torah scrolls are not being read, they are dressed like kings and queens—with mantles, shields, and crowns—to show respect.

Next, find these two crowns near each other in the center of the first room.



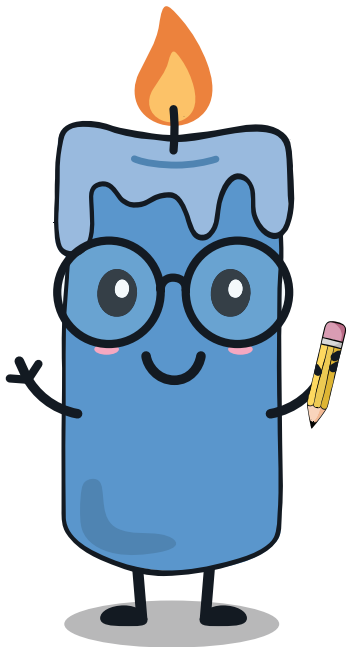
Left: Marked BM (?). Torah crown, 1809–10. Chased, cast, and parcel-gilt silver. The Jewish Museum, New York, Gift of the Danzig Jewish Community, D 52. **Right:** Moshe Zabari. Torah crown, 1969. Raised and forged silver, pearls on strings. The Jewish Museum, New York, Gift of the Albert A. List Family, JM 85-69. Images courtesy of the Jewish Museum, New York

Both crowns are designed to be placed over the two wood staves of a Torah scroll. Despite having the same function, the crowns are different in many ways, aren't they?

The Torah crown on the left was made in Eastern Europe more than two hundred years ago and has many traditional characteristics of Torah crowns, such as a round shape. There are bells, which ring to call attention to when the Torah scroll is about to be read. How many bells are there? The artist, whose name is unknown to us today, also decorated this crown with doves, lions, swirling vines, and an acorn on top. Do you see all those? This crown is made of silver, which in some places is covered with a thin layer of gold. The crown really shines, doesn't it?

The crown on the right was made in 1969 in New York City by Moshe Zabari. Like many other artists at that time, he was inspired by science and space exploration—1969 was the year that an American astronaut first landed on the moon! Zabari's crown is modern and sleek. Although also made of silver, it is simpler than the other crown and, in place of bells, pearls hang from strings. The pearls make a quivering noise. Zabari wanted his crown not just to look different but to sound different too!

Take a moment to think and talk about how these objects are the same and different.



Fun at Home

Design your own Torah crown!

When you get home, try designing a Torah crown yourself. What shape will it take? Will it be traditional or modern? Where will you find inspiration?

A Day of Rest: The Splendor of the Sabbath at Home

Now, let's go to the next room. This section of the exhibition features ritual objects from Jewish homes.

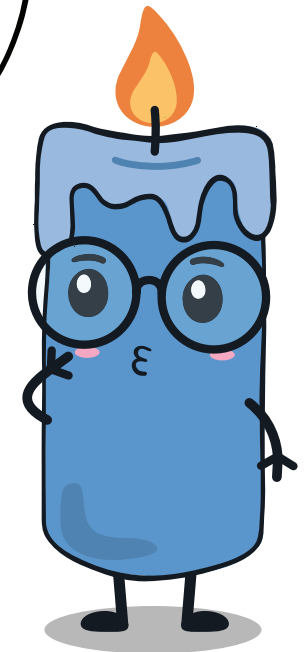
These objects are used during the Sabbath, which Jews observe from sunset on Friday until nightfall on Saturday. Sabbath celebrations include a special dinner at home. During this time, work and outside distractions are avoided.

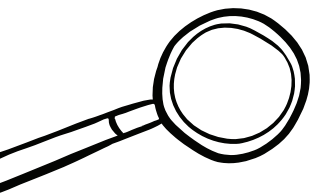
Find this painting:



The painting by Isidor Kaufmann shows a woman prepared for Sabbath dinner. Look closely at what is on her dining table, then look around you. Do you see any objects in this room like the ones in the painting? Now, turn the page!

Isidor Kaufmann. Friday Evening, ca. 1920. Oil on canvas. The Jewish Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. M. R. Schweitzer, JM 4-63. Image courtesy of the Jewish Museum, New York





Did you find all these kinds of objects?

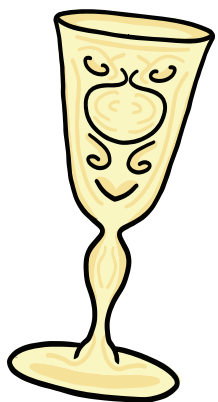
Each of these items plays an important part in the Sabbath.

The dinner table is set with two candles that are lit eighteen minutes before sundown. This ritual brings light into the home.

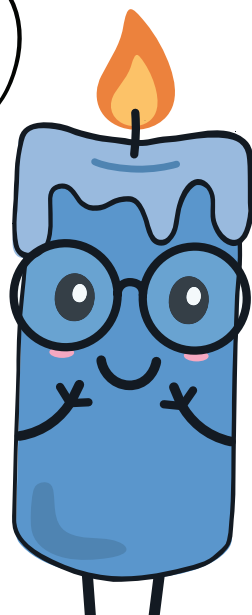


A cloth is placed over two loaves of braided bread called *hallah* (or *challah*) so that they cannot be seen. The cover is removed before saying a blessing, then the bread is sprinkled with salt and shared.

A blessing known as *kiddush* is said over a cup of wine or grape juice.



Do you have any special traditions or rituals? Is there an object you use to celebrate? Why is it important to you? Tell a friend about your object!



This section also has a second room with works of art related to the Jewish Sabbath. Don't miss it!

Beyond the Synagogue and the Home: The Radiance of the Hanukkah Menorah

Now, let's go to the last room of the exhibition. Here you will see lots of menorahs—lamps lit during the holiday Hanukkah.



Moshe Zabari. Hanukkah lamp and dreidel, 1982. Hand-worked copper alloy. The Jewish Museum, Gift of the artist, 1986-11a-f. Image courtesy of the Jewish Museum

Celebrated each winter for eight nights in a row, *Hanukkah* is the Jewish Festival of Lights. It commemorates a joyous miracle that happened more than two thousand years ago when Jews were rededicating their Second Temple in Jerusalem. Despite only having enough olive oil to light the Temple's menorah for one night, the oil lasted for eight nights.

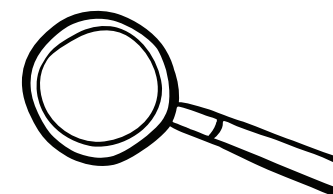
Jews recall this event when they kindle the lights of Hanukkah lamps—one more light each night

of the holiday until, on the final night, all the lights glow. Take a closer look at the menorahs in this room. Do you see that they have either oil sockets—to burn oil with a floating wick—or holders for wax candles?

Now pick your favorite menorah and imagine it with all its lights illuminated with a flame. How would it look different? How would the light make you feel?

Each Hanukkah lamp is decorated in a unique way. It's fun to look at each one, isn't it?

See if you can find these animals on any of the lamps: birds, deer, and lions!



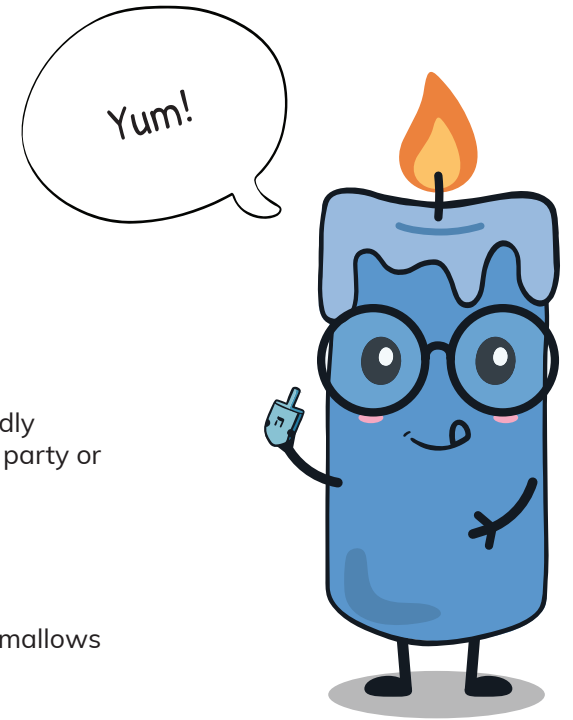


Edible dreidels with gelt. Image courtesy of Hannah Paperno

Spin the Dreidel: A Hanukkah Game

During Hanukkah, children play a game called *dreidel*. Each side of a dreidel (a spinning top) is decorated with a Hebrew letter; in Hebrew these four letters stand for the sentence “a great miracle happened there,” referring to the story of Hanukkah. During the game, players take turns spinning the dreidel. Then, depending on which letter the dreidel lands on when it stops spinning, the player takes or adds to a pot of chocolate coins called gelt.

- נ (nun): The player takes no action.
- ג (gimel): The player takes the entire central pot.
- ה (hey): The player takes half of the pot.
- ש (shin): The player adds one piece back into the pot.



More Fun at Home

Make Edible Dreidels!

This is a perfect quick, kid-friendly activity—great for a Hannukah party or any celebration!

Ingredients

- 1 package regular-sized marshmallows
- 1 package thin pretzel sticks
- 1 package Hershey's Kisses
- Melted chocolate, icing, or nut butter
- 1 package decorating or cookie icing, writing gel, or food decorating pens

Instructions

- ① Press one pretzel stick into the flat end of one marshmallow until it goes about 3/4 of the way through.
- ② Put a pea-sized amount of melted chocolate, icing, or nut butter on the flat end of an unwrapped Hershey's Kiss as “glue,” then stick it to the center of the other flat end of your marshmallow.
- ③ Decorate your dreidel with icing, writing gel, or food decorating pens. Add the Hebrew letters or your own designs.
- ④ Enjoy!

Recipe contributed by Liza Moskowitz, who lives in Nashville and owns and operates the Jewish bakery Liza's Loaves (@LizasLoaves)

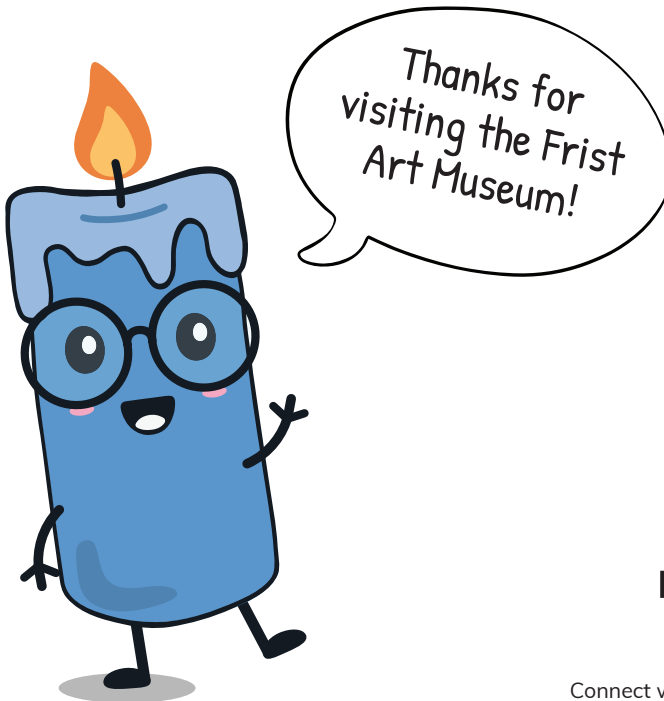
Beauty and Ritual

Judaica from the Jewish Museum, New York

October 30, 2026–February 7, 2027
Upper-Level Galleries

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