

Hanukkah Arts & Crafts

“Curiously Small” Secret Menorah



Big Ideas

1. During the time of the Spanish Inquisition 500 years ago, the Jews of Spain and Portugal were forced to either convert to Catholicism or leave. Some secretly remained Jewish and were called *anusim*, which is Hebrew for “forced,” since they were forced to convert.
2. Even when faced with persecution Jews found ways to preserve traditions.
3. We can take our Judaism wherever we go.

Introduction

At Hanukkah, Jews everywhere light menorahs and set them in their windows. At other times, however, Jews have not felt safe to practice Jewish customs in public. During the time of the Spanish Inquisition 500 years ago, the Jews of Spain and Portugal were forced to either convert to Catholicism or leave Spain under threat of death. Some stayed and converted. Some secretly remained Jewish and were called *anusim*, which is Hebrew for “forced,” since they were forced to convert. For safety, some Jews have had to hide their religion while practicing Judaism in secret at home, teaching Jewish traditions to their children and grandchildren. Other Jews left to find new homes.

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Sometimes, candlesticks, menorahs, and other treasures were secretly handed down with the hope that they could one day be brought out again and used in future generations. In Spain and former Spanish and Portuguese colonies, in many families the memory of being Jewish was lost but the traditions remained. Hundreds of years later, some families still lit candles every Friday night, did not work on Saturdays, refrained from eating pork, or even avoided bread during Passover, without understanding why. These remnants of Jewish tradition were called "costumbres familiares," customs or rituals that might be particular to a town, a small group of families or even individual families.

This craft project allows students to create a 'hidden' Hanukkah menorah that is small and easy to travel with.

Materials (for one menorah)

- 1 [metal tin](#) (about 3.75 by 2.45 by 0.8 inches or "Altoids" size tin)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ " [hex nuts](#), 10
- Super glue
- Birthday candles (Hanukkah candles are too wide)
- Oil-based [markers](#)
- Self Adhesive [Craft Jewels](#) and/or other stickers



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Directions

1. Line up 8 nuts inside the tin in a straight line, leaving room at the top for 2 hex nuts that will make up the shamash at the top (see photo above).
2. Glue the hex nuts.
3. Decorate the tin with paint markers and/or stickers.
4. Make sure to use birthday candles. Other candles will be too large.



Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever felt like you had to hide your Judaism?
2. What do you think it was like for the anusim who had to choose to leave their homes or hide being Jewish?
3. Share about your choices for decorating your secret menorah. Why did you decide to decorate it the way you did? How does the decoration add to the festive nature of the holiday?