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Hey there! Welcome to episode 34 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I am delighted to have you here with me today. Today's episode is brought to you by Daily Harvest. Daily Harvest is a healthy, plant-based meal delivery system perfect for busy families because their meal and smoothie options are delivered to your doorstep and ready in minutes. My busy kids love their smoothies, and this busy mom enjoys their harvest bowls for quick, healthy lunches. My listeners can get a deal for \$25 off your first box when you visit busykidsdopiano.com/harvest, and I'll share the link for that special offer in the show notes as well.

Hanukkah is an eight-day Jewish Festival and this year -- the year 2020 -- Hanukkah will be observed beginning on sundown of December 10th and ending at sundown on December 18th.

You'll sometimes hear Hanukkah referred to as The Festival of Lights, because the festival is observed by lighting the candles of a candelabrum with nine branches, called a menorah. Each night, one additional candle is lit until all eight candles are lit together on the final night of the festival. The shamash candle -- the one in the center that is elevated above the rest of the candles of the menorah, is the candle used to light the other candles.

In addition to the lighting of the candles, the observance of Hanukkah also includes a daily reading of Scripture, recitation of some Psalms, daily prayers and thanksgiving to God for freedom from oppression. As with many festivals and holidays, music has an important role in Hanukkah traditions.

There are three Hanukkah blessings that are sung during the lighting of the candles of the menorah. The third blessing is only sung on the first night.

While there is no one specific melody assigned to these words, the words of the third blessing, translated from Hebrew, say, “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe Who has kept us in life, sustained us, and brought us to this moment.”

The piece you’re hearing now is called “Ma’oz Tzur” in Hebrew, which translated into English is “Rock of Ages”. This is considered by many to be the anthem of Hanukkah. It is a Jewish liturgical poem that is often sung on Hanukkah at the conclusion of the candlelighting ceremony. There are six verses of the poem that tell the story of Jewish history and the deliverance of the Jewish people from four enemies: Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman and Antiochus. It is believed to have been written in the 13th century during the time of the Crusades.

Family observances of Hanukkah include children. As celebrations occurred through the centuries, games and music were developed to engage children in order to both entertain them and also to teach them. Let’s learn about and listen to a bit of three popular Hanukkah songs among children and adults alike.

One of the most recognized English Hanukkah songs is “Hanukkah Oh Hanukkah!” The English words are roughly based on the Yiddish translation and are often sung by children and adults alike. It was published in 1912, making it a more recent Hanukkah song than some other traditional songs. It is a favorite of both Jewish Americans and non-Jewish Americans alike.

Another favorite Hanukkah song in the English speaking world is “I Have a Little Dreidel.” This song was written in 1927 by New York composer Samuel Goldfarb and even though it has become a classic, it has no real relationship to actually playing the dreidel game, but is simply about making a dreidel and playing with it. A dreidel is a toy

that is traditionally used at Hanukkah, and has a Hebrew letter on each of its four sides. The letters stand for a Hebrew phrase that when translated means, "A great miracle happened here."

Remember -- many of the games and songs written for children were not only so they could have fun playing and singing, but also learn about important Jewish history.

Another traditional Hanukkah song called Sevivon Sov Sov with Hebrew lyrics is sometimes known as "the other dreidel song. This song is actually more popular in Israel than "I Have a Little Dreidel." The lyrics of the song are a celebration of the Jewish people and a great miracle taking place.

If you head over to [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/34](https://www.busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/34), I've linked a playlist on YouTube that includes performances of the Hanukkah songs you've heard in today's episodes as well as other Hanukkah songs that are part of the celebration and tradition of Hanukkah. Again you'll find that at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/34](https://www.busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/34).

I hope you've enjoyed learning a little bit about some of the songs that are part of the celebration of Hanukkah. To all those who will be celebrating, I wish you a Happy Hanukkah, and I hope you will join me in 2 weeks for more musical discoveries with the next episode of Busy Kids Love Music.