

# Don't Invite a Bear Inside for Hanukkah

By Karen Rostoker-Gruber | Illustrated by Charles Arbat

# READING GUIDE

## About the Book

Don't invite a bear inside for Hanukkah! While he might try to be helpful with decorating and putting candles in the menorah, he will start to cause a mess soon enough, especially when latkes, gelt, and other holiday food is served.

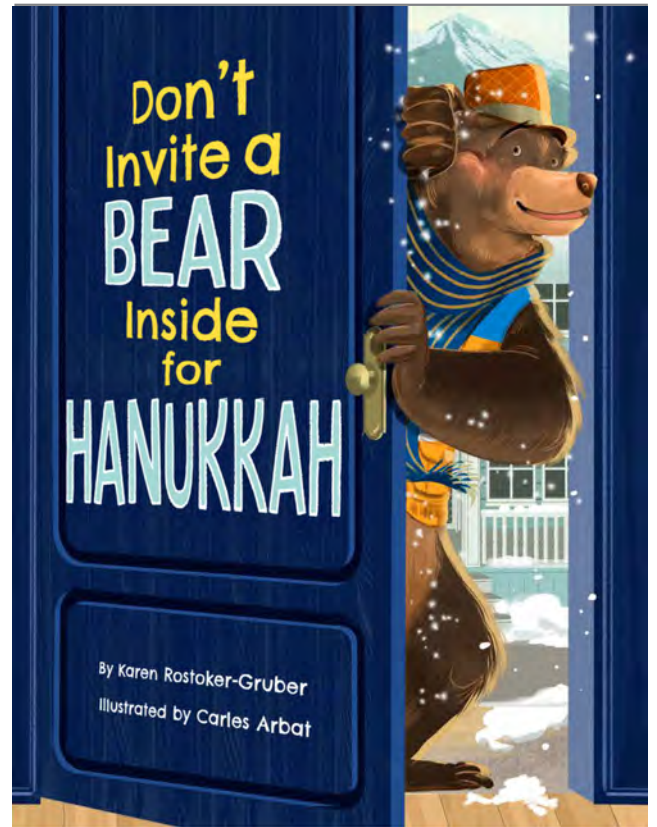
The bear will leave to celebrate alone. But maybe if you think creatively, you can still celebrate the holiday together. Because while you might not be able to invite a bear inside for Hanukkah, you can certainly invite a bear outside for a winter picnic!

In this energetic, lighthearted story, readers will learn about the preparations and traditions of Hanukkah. It's a tale about meeting new friends where they are, accommodating differences, being flexible, and learning to celebrate even if things don't go exactly as planned.

An endnote explains the Jewish value of welcoming guests and encourages readers to think about how they accommodate their friends and guests. It also includes safety tips should you encounter real wild animals.

**Karen Rostoker-Gruber** is an award-winning author of many picture books with hundreds of thousands of copies sold. *Farmer Kobi's Hanukkah Match* was named a National Jewish Book Award Finalist and awarded the 2016 Outstanding Children's Literature Award from the Church and Synagogue Library Association. Her book *Maddie the Mitzvah Clown* was named a PJ Library book selection in July of 2017 and again in July of 2022. Karen lives in Branchburg, NJ.

**Charles Arbat** was born in Bescanó, a little village in Catalonia, Spain. He studied at Olot's Art School and graduated in 1997 with a degree in Graphic Design. He immediately began his career as an illustrator for educational projects, magazines, and children's books. He lives in Barcelona, Spain.



## Key Themes:

Welcoming guests; Friendship; Accommodating differences; Hanukkah rituals.

ISBN 978-1-68115-642-2

Ages 3–6 years

Use these questions to preface and conclude a reading of this book with children. Encourage them to share their observations as you read the book together, and take time to linger on pages or spreads that generate more discussion.

## Before Reading

- Looking at the cover of this book, what do you notice? What season is it? How can you tell? What else do you see?
- Describe the bear on the cover of the book? (scary, friendly, big, cute, young, old...or something else?)
- What do you think will happen in the story? Do you think the bear will be invited inside for Hanukkah?

## After Reading

- Do you think the bear made a terrible mess on purpose, or was it an accident? Why do you think so?
- The author describes the bear as making a “beary big mess” and having a “beary big smile”. Plus, the boy tells the bear that he has to be, “beary, beary quiet”. Why do you think the author used those words in this story?
- In the book, the boy’s house has a “fancy” menorah, and the bear has a “tree branch” menorah. Compare the two menorahs: what about them is the same? What’s different?
- On the last page, the green box lists five different Hanukkah objects: gelt, dreidel, menorah, latkes, and jelly donuts (in Hebrew: *Sufganiot*.) Can you find each of those objects somewhere else in the book?
- The story says that, “It’s always nice to invite guests to celebrate.” Do you agree? Why or why not?

## Optional: Extension Activity

By the end of this story, the boy and his family in this book have a wonderful time celebrating Hanukkah with the bear. What holiday is your family celebrating next? Discuss with your family: Is there a friend or family member that you’d like to invite as a guest to make your holiday more fun for everyone?





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# Character Cut Outs

