

# The Boston Chocolate Party

By Tami Lehman-Wilzig and Rabbi Deborah R. Prinz  
Illustrated by Fede Combi

# READING GUIDE

## About the Book

Joshua Mendes misses his best friend Isaac, who has moved to Boston. Joshua's Papa is importing chocolate beans to the American Colonies, showing café owners how to make hot chocolate now that the tea tax has made tea too expensive to drink. When Papa travels to Boston, Joshua joins him. Together, they help Isaac's family open a chocolate house, while the people of Boston demonstrate against British tea taxation.

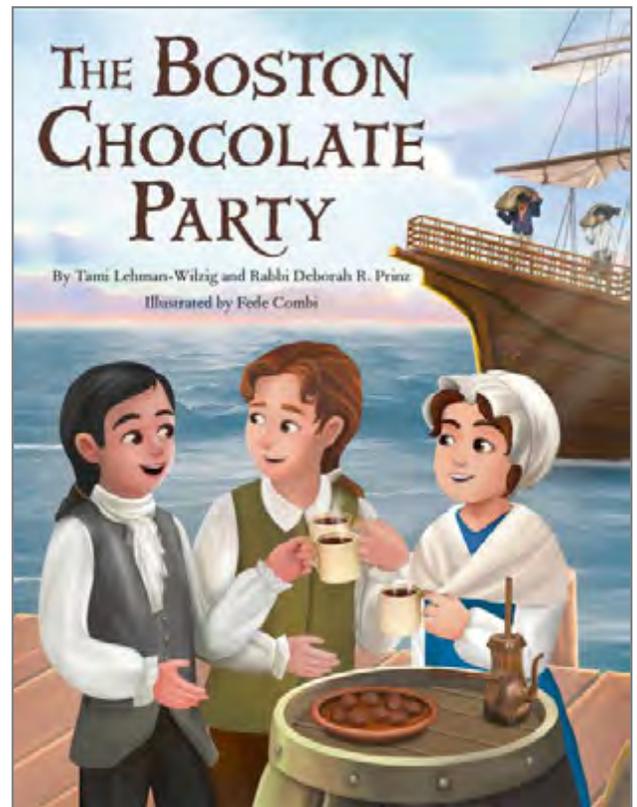
Set against the backdrop of Hanukkah and the American fight for independence, this is a story of friendship, freedom, and a love of chocolate.

End notes provide background about the Boston Tea Party, a brief explanation of the holiday of Hanukkah, and a description of America's first Jews, predominantly settlers from Spain and Portugal who came to escape religious persecution and to find religious freedom and economic opportunity. Includes recipes for Colonial-style hot chocolate and bunuelos.

**Tami Lehman-Wilzig** is an award-winning author of many picture books, including SOOSIE, The Horse That Saved Shabbat, Boston Chocolate Party, Keeping the Promise, Passover Around the World and On the Wings of Eagles. She lives in Kfar Saba, Israel.

**Rabbi Deborah R. Prinz** authored the pioneering bestseller On the Chocolate Trail. That book provided the foundation for the museum exhibit, "Semite Sweet: On Jews and Chocolate" at the Bernard Museum, NYC. She lives in New York City.

**Fede Combi** has illustrated more than 200 children's books and fascicles. He loves researching new styles and finding new ways of drawing to surprise readers. He lives in Buenos Aires.



## Key Themes:

Freedom, Friendship, Hard work

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Ages 5–8 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.

## While Reading

- How would you describe Joshua? Isaac?
- Why did Isaac's mother move the family to Boston?
- How is the menorah (Hanukkiah) that Joshua and his family use different from those you may have used or seen before? What is similar?

## After Reading

- What are the themes of this story?
- What is the connection between Hanukkah and The Boston Tea Party? What makes them similar? How does that connection come through in this story?
- Joshua's family comes from Portugal and are known as Sephardim. Sephardim have their own special customs for Hanukkah. Which custom did you learn about in this story?
- Joshua developed a plan to help his friend Isaac's family. There are many people who need help in our communities. Can you think of ways to help them?
- What are your favorite Hanukkah songs? Joshua and Isaac probably sang Hanukkah songs in Ladino, a Judaeo-Spanish language. Here is a popular Ladino Hanukkah song for you to watch/listen to. It's called "Ocho Kandelikas," which means "Eight Little Candles." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyDYB8UXy8s>

## Optional: Extension Activity

Play Jackstraws/Pick-Up Sticks

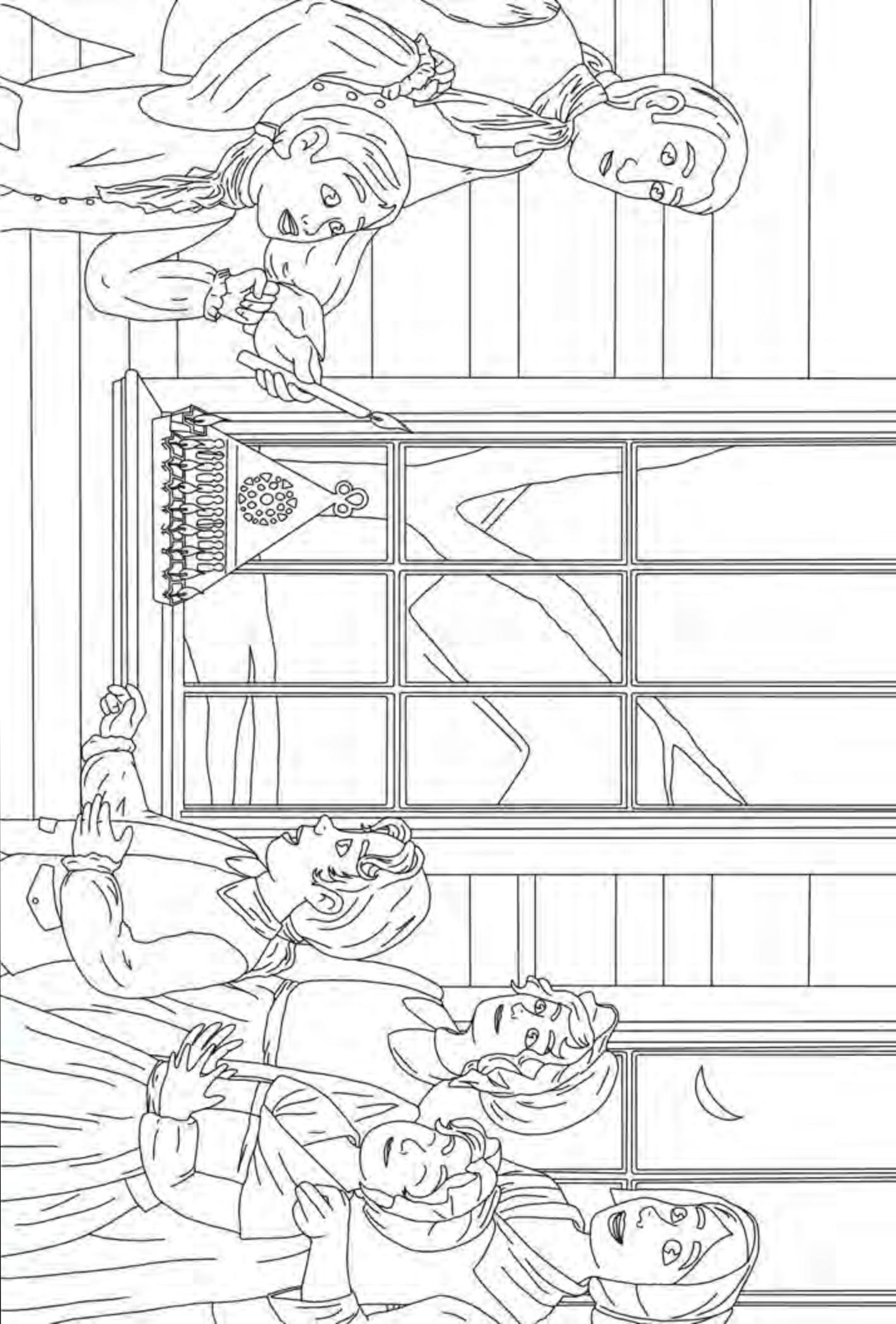
Materials: Straws plucked from a new, clean broom OR a package of bamboo skewers.

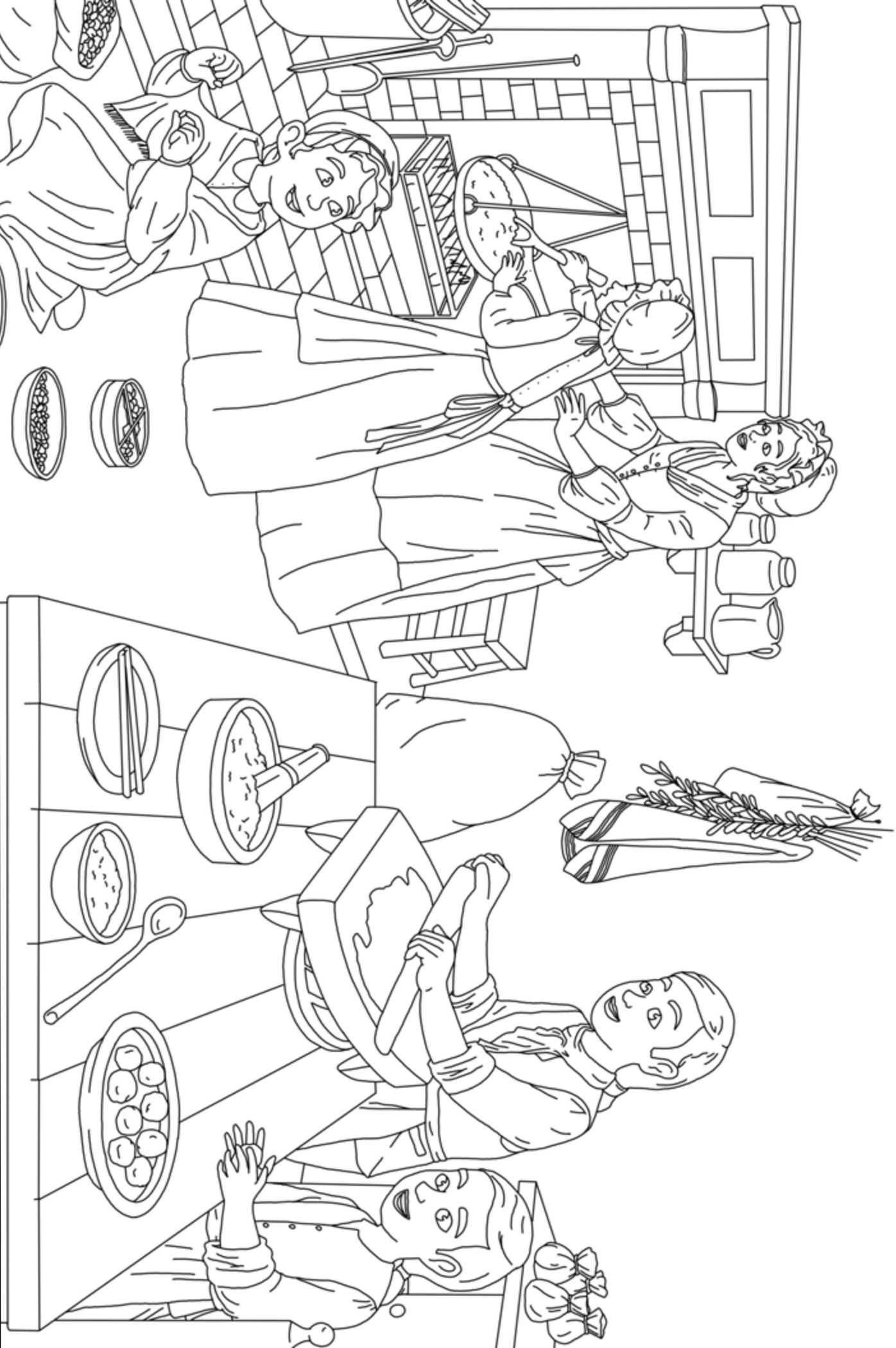
How to Play:

- Sit on the floor, with two-three players playing at a time. If playing with a large group, divide into two or three sections.
- Have one player hold all the sticks tightly in one hand, then open their hand to allow all the sticks to fall randomly on the floor.
- Have one player then remove an individual stick without moving any of the others and continue as long as the remaining sticks stay in place on the floor. If other sticks move, the turn ends. Then the next player gets a turn.
- At the end of each round, each player counts their sticks.
- If playing tournament-style: The player with most sticks wins and then plays against the winner from another group, and so on, until there is just one winner.

### Playtime

Use the concept of a chocolate house as the basis for a play. Turn a section of your classroom into your own Chocolate House. Make a Chocolate House sign, create your own menu with prices, create a kitchen workspace where children can pretend they are making chocolate based on the process portrayed in the book. Have children dress up, if possible, and play the roles of Chocolate House manager, chocolate makers, waiters/waitresses and customers. Serve real hot chocolate to everyone and if you can, serve buñuelos.





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# Character Cut Outs

