

Eight alternative ways to celebrate Chanukkah *after* you light the candles

1. Check out the Reform Movement's Social Justice Gift Guide: [click here](#)
2. Relax and enjoy an activity that you don't usually make time for - we are not supposed to work by the light of the Chanukkah candles!
3. Support Shir Tikvah's "Camperships" (like scholarships only for camp) fund
4. Consider gifts to give the planet (see below)
5. Learn more about the origins, meanings, and how-to's of Chanukkah - or something else Jewish that interests you. [Here](#) is resource page from the Reform Movement.
6. Celebrate with Shir Tikvah - events, blessings and song sheets are [here](#)
7. Enjoy the indulgence in some oily foods "to celebrate the miracle"
8. Write a card or make a phone call to someone who brings light into your life.

8 Chanukkah Gifts You Can Give to the Environment

By Melissa Rappaport Schifman, author of a [Sustainable Home Guide on Energy and Water](#)

- 1: Replace an incandescent light bulb with a LED bulb. Bypass the compact fluorescents all together - LEDs are a much better buy.
- 2: Lighten the Phantom Load. According the MN Energy Challenge website, the average Minnesota family has between 30-40 electronics left plugged in all the time - many of them using electricity even when they are not in use. Get a Belkin Power Conserve Switch to "unplug without unplugging."
- 3: Insulate the easy-to-reach areas. It's not just about exterior walls, which typically requires a phone call and a short-term mess. Foam insulators for hot water pipes and areas around switches and outlets are inexpensive and easy to install. Some hand-picked energy-saving products are available on Amazon.
- 4: Get Energy Star Electronics and/or Appliances. In particular, it might be time to replace that old refrigerator. Xcel Energy will even haul away your old one and give you a \$35 check!
- 5: Get an energy audit for your home. For local readers whose electricity is provided by Xcel Energy, [click here](#) - Xcel has a host of programs, rebates and incentives. Centerpoint Energy also offers home energy audits; [click here](#).

6: Install low-flow faucet aerators and showerheads. Yes, this will save you water, but it how does it save energy? It saves you hot water, and it takes energy to heat that hot water.

7: Think about your driving habits. Could you carpool, walk, bicycle, or take public transportation more? Do you leave your car idling in carpool pick-up lines? If driving less is not an option, your car can become more fuel efficient just by making sure there is enough air pressure in all of the tires, and by cleaning out your car (every 100 lbs you carry loses 1 mpg in fuel efficiency). If you are in the market for a new car, check out www.greencars.org for a comprehensive list of low-emitting and fuel-efficient vehicles.

8: Learn more. There are abundant resources on the web: www.energystar.gov, www.fresh-energy.org, www.globalwarming.org, www.coejl.org.

Doing even one of these 8 gift will hopefully make you feel good, because it is a core Jewish value to repair the world and leave it better for future generations. And the icing on the jelly donuts? By conserving energy and reducing our demand for coal, we are not only helping the environment, we are also saving money. So we can buy more gifts.