

Make Your Own Maccabee Shield

When the Jewish people living under the rule of Antiochus in Egypt during 2nd century B.C. were forced to abandon their beliefs and worship Greek gods instead of their own, many Jewish people and priests were upset. Judah Maccabee lead a group of followers, called the Maccabees, through a series of battles. They finally escaped from their rulers and returned to Jerusalem, bringing the Temple back to its Jewish roots of worship. Jonathan Maccabee was then named high priest and ruled over the holy lands. Today, Hanukkah is a celebration of this victory.

This activity blends the history of the Maccabee revolt with a creative project for your children. By using cardboard to cut out his own shield, your child will refine his motor and conceptual skills. The shield itself will be shaped like a triangle and will help your child to recognize this geometric shape. Your child's important fine motor skills will further come into play as he paints the insignia of the Maccabees on its surface.



What You Need:

- Large piece of cardboard
- Paint
- String
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Hole punch

What to Do:

1. Help your child cut the large sheet of cardboard into the shape of a shield. Because the Maccabee insignia is usually housed within a triangle, urge him to create this shape in particular. It's okay if it isn't perfect, but try to help them cut out a fair representation of a triangle.
2. Ask your child to move one of the points of the triangle upright, and this will be the top of his shield. Allow him to paint the surface of the shield in blue paint. Help him to keep as much paint on the cardboard and off of his hands as possible!
3. After the blue paint has dried thoroughly, help your child to stencil in the Maccabee symbol with a pencil (see accompanying image).
4. Ask your child to fill in the pencil outline with yellow paint. Encourage him to do his best to stay within the lines, and you can help them with the narrower parts. Remind him that any imperfections will only serve to make the shield more unique!
5. Once your shield has been able to dry all the way, attach the string to the back of the shield. Do this by helping your child punch a hole on either side of the shield, and insert one end of string into each hole and tie it in place. Repeat this process on each side, leaving enough slack in the string for your child to hold onto the shield from the back.

With your child's Maccabee shield now complete, encourage him to let his imagination soar and to play with his new shield to his heart's content!