

Exploring Why **Menorah**



Extended Version

Exploring Why

Menorah

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Bear Lands Publishing

About Aled and Siân

Aled and Siân love exploring the places where they live and the places they go to visit. They enjoy playing 'I Spy' to help them get to know these places better. In the *Exploring Why* series Aled and Siân are curious to find out why some of the things around them are important to their Christian, Jewish and Muslim friends.

The series takes seriously the social significance of religion and is based on extensive research into how children learn about themselves, others and the world in which they live.

To support this storybook series, there is a large range of free downloadable resources for children and teachers available at hwb.wales.gov.uk/Resources and st-marys-centre.org.uk

The storybooks and activities are devised for 5- to 7-year-olds, but the downloadable resources make the series relevant for younger and older children too.

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Titles in the *Exploring Why* series are:

Bread
Cross
Light
Menorah
Veil
Water
Symbols of Faith





Aled and Siân love exploring the places where they live and the places that they go to visit. They enjoy playing 'I spy' to help them get to know these places

better. Today, they spotted a menorah in a book, and set out to discover how many other menorahs they could find and where they could find them.



Aled and Siân walked down the street. They walked past houses and bungalows. They walked past flats and caravans. Then they stopped outside Rebecca's

Café to peer through the window. They gazed at the tables and the chairs, and then something caught their eye.



There on the mantelpiece above the fireplace they saw smiling family photos and postcards. “I spy a menorah,” shouted Aled. He pointed to a large brass Hanukkah menorah with nine branches.

Close by, there were colourful cards with greetings for a happy Hanukkah. “I wonder why the menorah is so important?” said Siân.



Aled and Siân continued their walk past the fire station, until they came to the playground. In the playground they saw an elderly woman taking a small black dog for a walk. They saw a young child

being pushed on the swing by her father. They saw some older children playing a game on the climbing frame.



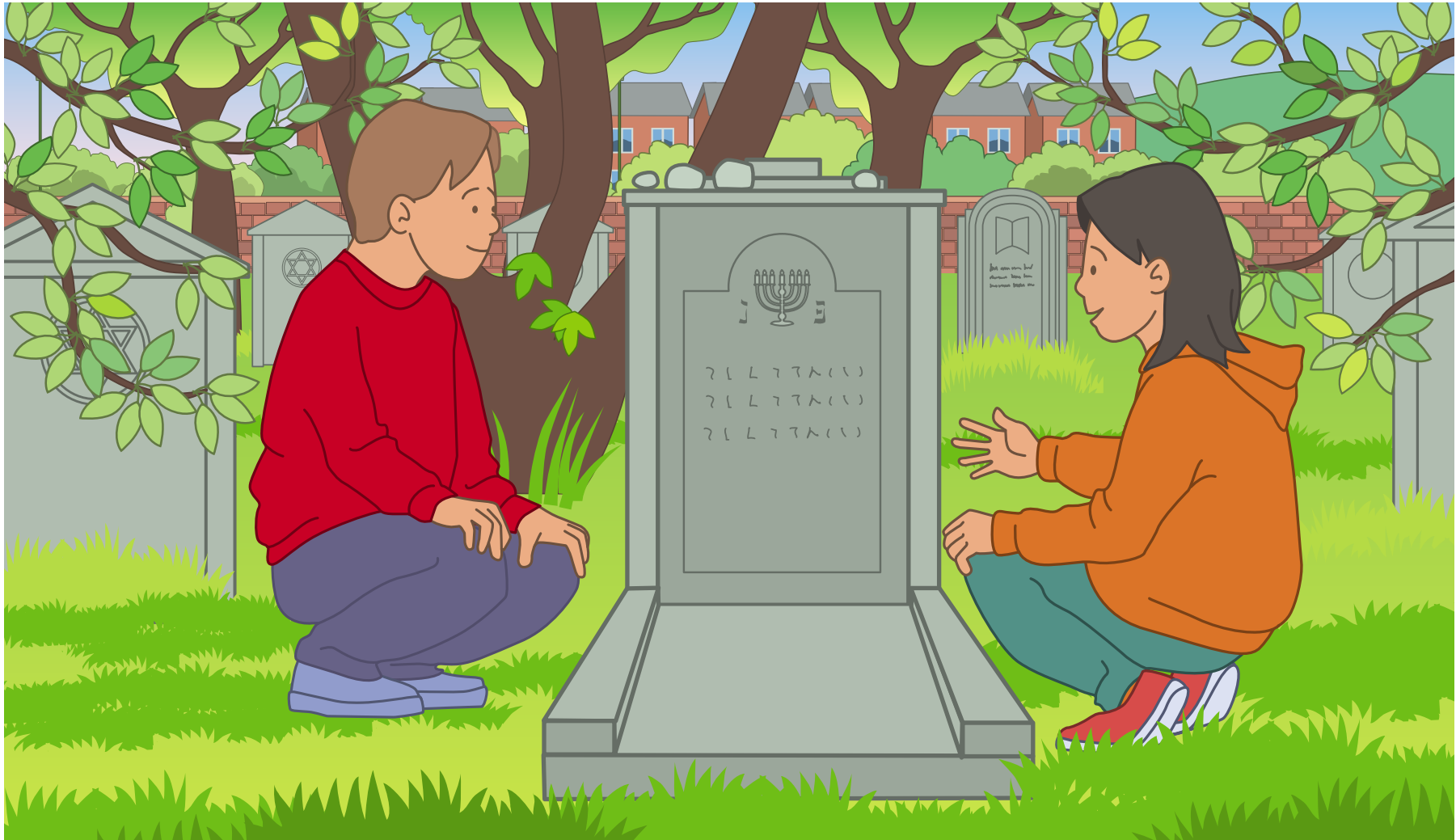
Then among all the people, Aled and Siân saw a young woman wearing a necklace with a silver menorah. "I spy a menorah," said Siân. The menorah suddenly caught the sunlight and shone.

They gazed at the necklace and counted the menorah's seven branches. "I wonder why the menorah is so important?" said Aled.



Aled and Siân continued their walk out of the playground. They walked past the band hall where they heard the brass band practising. They walked

past the red post box where a man was posting a letter. Then they stopped at the Jewish cemetery. Here they stopped to gaze at the headstones.



There in the cemetery, they saw a Star of David with Hebrew letters carved beside and below it. There in the cemetery, they saw pebbles balanced on a headstone. "I spy a menorah," said Aled. In the

cemetery there was a menorah with seven branches carved into the stone. "I wonder why the menorah is so important?" said Siân.



When they had finished looking at the Jewish cemetery, Aled and Siân continued their walk along the street. They walked past a travel agents. There

were holidays for sale to places around the world. Then they stopped at the music shop. Here they saw a small girl pointing at something in the window.



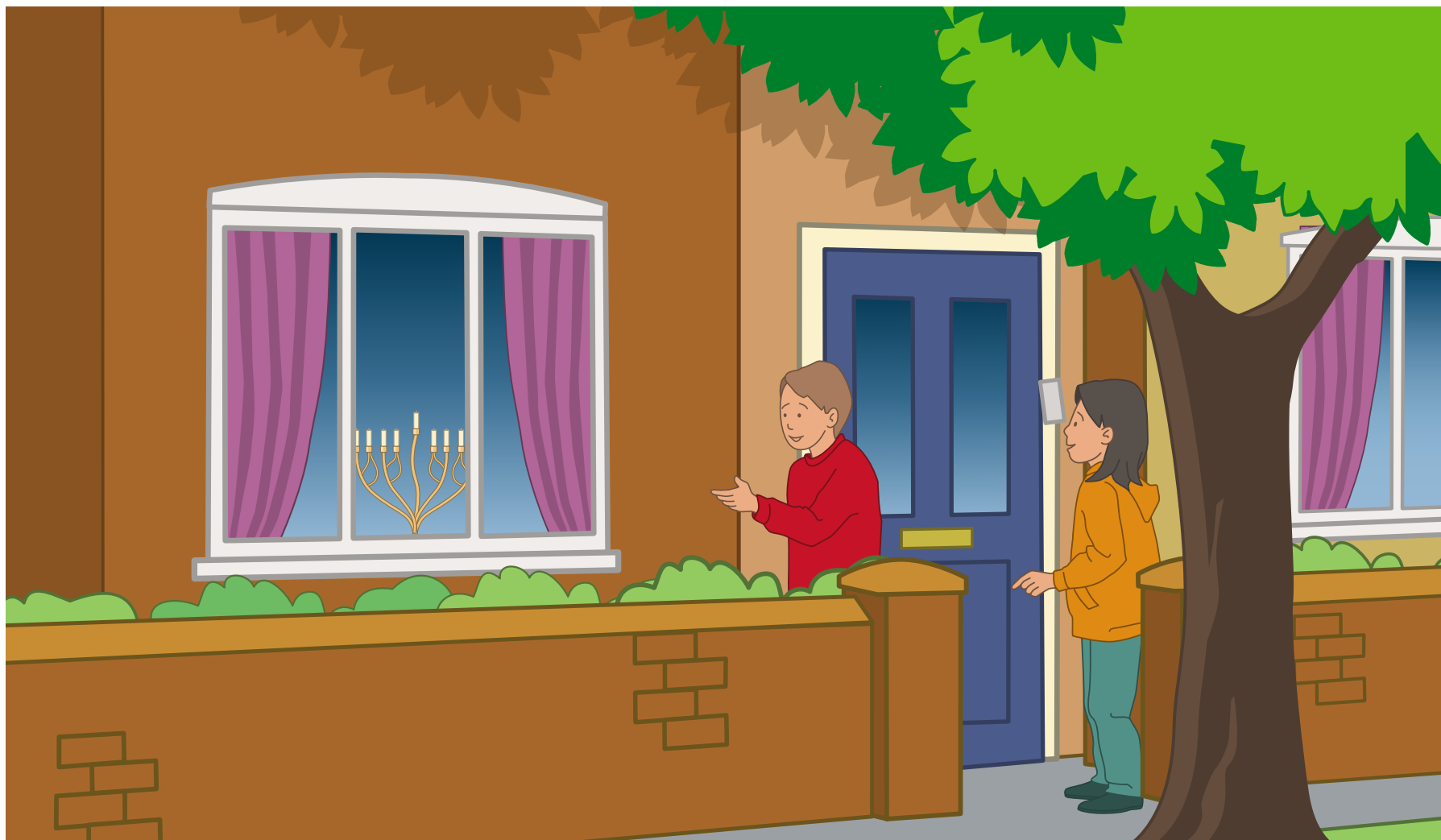
They gazed at the display in the window. There were pictures of orchestras and bands. There was a violin and a guitar propped upright on stands. "I spy a menorah," said Siân. There among the pictures

and instruments, they found a menorah with seven branches on a CD cover. "I wonder why the menorah is so important?" said Aled.



When they had finished looking through the music shop window, Aled and Siân walked back past the park and the playground, past the war memorial

and past the garage. Then they came to the house where their friends Nathan and Rachel lived, with their mother, father and grandmother.



They waited for their friends to open the door. Aled and Siân looked at the small rectangular box nailed to the doorpost and then peered through the dining room window. “I spy a menorah,” said Aled. There

on the windowsill was a Hanukkah menorah, with nine branches. “I wonder why the menorah is so important?” said Siân.



Nathan and Rachel took Aled and Siân into the large synagogue near their house. They all walked in through the big front door. Aled and Siân

touched its smooth wood and cold handle. Then they walked into a large room. They saw rows of seats where people sat during a service.



Nathan and Rachel guided Aled and Siân to one of the walls of the synagogue. There they saw colourful stained-glass windows. "I spy a menorah," said Siân. There above their heads they saw a

menorah with seven branches and seven flames. "I wonder why the menorah is so important?" said Aled.



When they had finished looking at the stained-glass menorah, Nathan and Rachel took Aled and Siân to the front of the synagogue. They pointed to the ark, which looked like a large cupboard. They

pointed to its closed doors and curtain. Then they began to explain why the menorah is so important to their family.



Nathan and Rachel opened the doors of the ark and pulled back the curtain. They showed Aled and Siân a menorah with seven branches embroidered on a Torah scroll. They showed them a lamp

burning in front of the ark. "In the Temple in Jerusalem the menorah's light is a sign that God is present with us," said Nathan.



When they had closed the ark, Nathan and Rachel took Aled and Siân back to their home. There they found their grandmother's Talmud. They began to

tell Aled and Siân a story about a battle between Jews and Greeks, which happened a long time ago in Jerusalem.



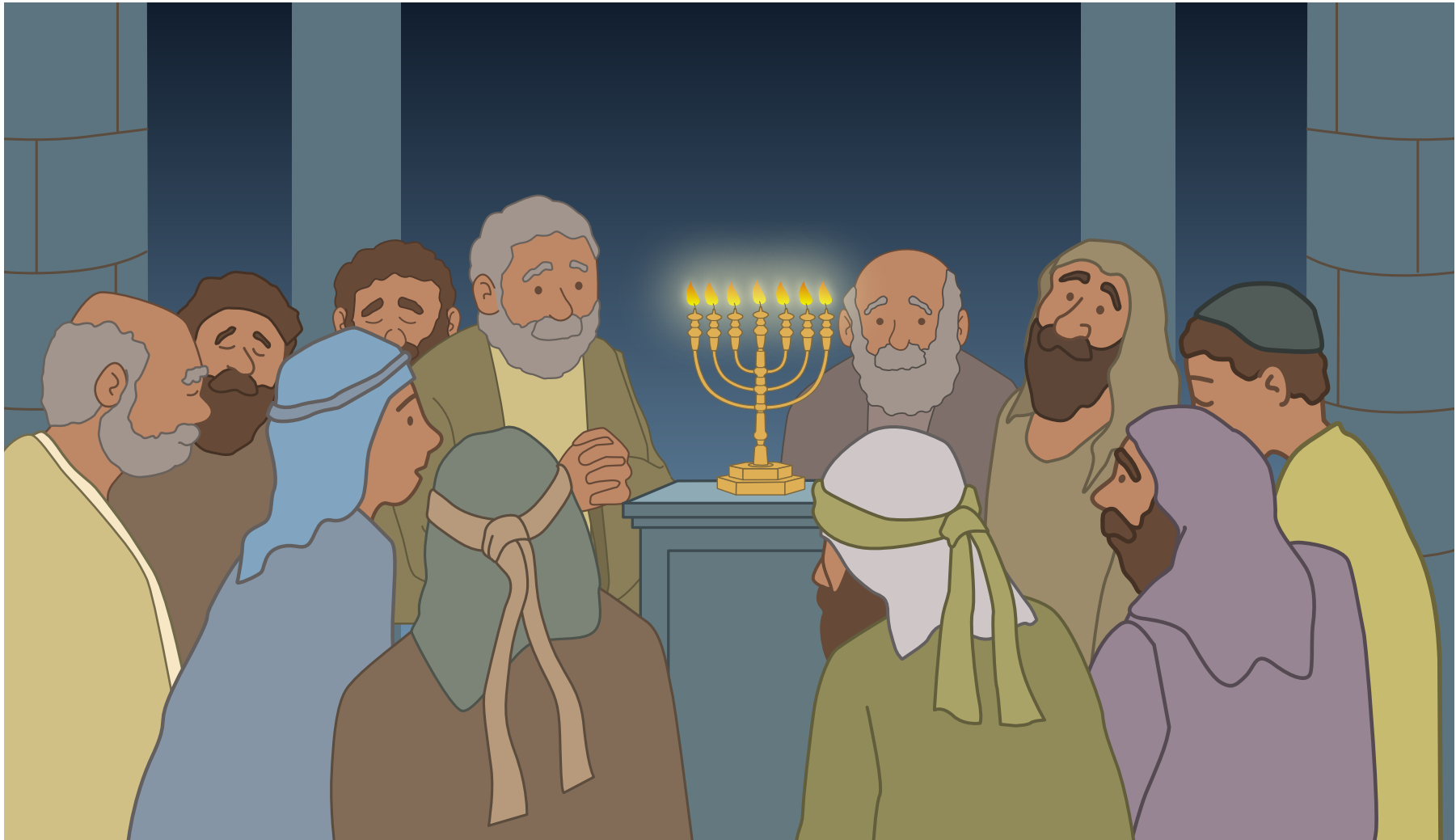
Aled and Siân heard how King Antiochus had killed Jewish people and had ordered them to stop following God's commandments. They heard how

King Antiochus had made the Temple in Jerusalem unclean and had built an altar there for the Greek god, Zeus.



A Jewish priest called Mattathias and his son, Judah Maccabeus, refused to obey the King's harsh laws. They led a group of rebels, who fought bravely for

the freedom of their people to follow the Jewish way of life. Soon, the King's armies were defeated and the rebels entered the Temple in Jerusalem.



Aled and Siân heard how the Temple was made clean again and a new altar was built to worship God. They heard how there was not enough clean

oil to keep the menorah light burning, but God kept the light burning for eight days until new oil had been prepared.



Nathan and Rachel took Aled and Siân to see their Hanukkah menorah on the windowsill. The sky outside became darker as night approached. They listened as Nathan and Rachel said blessings,

offering thanks to God. Aled and Siân watched as they lit the candles, slowly moving from the left side to the right side.



On each of the eight nights of Hanukkah, Nathan and Rachel lit a new candle. They remembered and gave thanks for all the miracles that God had done

for their people. They also remembered and gave thanks for the light of God's presence with them today.



As Aled and Siân left their friends' home, they turned to wave goodbye. They stared at the flames of the Hanukkah menorah in the window, bright

and warm in the darkness. "Now we know why the menorah is so important!" said Aled and Siân together.

Aled and Siân are playing 'I Spy' and today they are looking for 'Menorahs'. They find menorahs in all kinds of places around where they live. When Aled and Siân visit their friends, Nathan and Rachel, they start asking an important question – "I wonder why the menorah is so important?" With the help of Nathan and Rachel, Aled and Siân begin to find some answers.



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