



Unit 17: פורים Purim

through the lens of the Jewish Value "Ometz Lev" (Courage)

BIG PICTURE

Purim: Purim is a rabbinic holiday introduced by the rabbis of the Talmud. The narrative comes from Megillat-Esther, the scroll of Esther, found in the Tanach (Hebrew bible) in the third section called Writings. Megillat Esther takes place in Persia during the 1st Exile (appx 6th century BCE). Purim is on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar. In the Megillah, the villain Haman casts lots (like throwing dice/playing the **lottery**) to choose a date to attack the Jewish people in Shushan, and lands on the 13th of Adar. His plan is foiled, and the Jews are allowed to defend themselves and fight back, which they do on the 14th of Adar.

Purim was established as a holiday by the Rabbis of the Talmud, so it does not have any "restrictive" practices like Shabbat or Yom Tov (no cooking, no driving, no technology...); instead it is a festive day with only 4 positive mitzvot: (1) Hear Megillat Esther chanted out loud, (2) host or attend a Seudah (festive meal), (3) Share Mishloach Manot (gift baskets) with friends and family, and (4) Give Matanot L'Evyonim, gifts to the poor. Modern traditions include dressing up in costumes (especially of the Megillah characters), baking and eating triangle-shaped filled cookies called Hamantaschen, and participating in a carnival of some sort.

Teacher Resource Reading: [5 Things to Know About Purim](#)

Relating Purim to the Jewish Value of Ometz Lev (Courage): Help your students relate Tu B'Shvat and Tikkun Olam to our value lens of Ometz Lev. Create learning moments to reinforce these ideas throughout the day at JKG:

- Esther, Vashti, and Mordechai all showed Ometz Lev in different ways in the way they stood up for themselves against King Achashverosh and Haman

RESOURCES (to be used during Shulchanot, Zman Kehilah, etc. as needed)

Terms/Vocab for This Unit

- **פורים** Purim (poor-eem) פּוּרִים - Name of the holiday, literally translates as "lots" (as in casting lots in gambling)
- **מגילה** Megillah (meh-geel-ah) מְגִלָּה - shorthand for "[Megillat Esther](#)", "the scroll of Esther"; literally translates as "scroll"
- **שושן** Shushan (shoe-shawn) שׁוּשָׁן - the capital city of the Ancient Persian Empire, and where the Purim story takes place. Shushan is modern-day Shush in Iran
- **משלוח מנות** Mishloach Manot (Meesh-lo-ahch Mah-note) מִשְׁלוּחַ מְנוֹת - Literally "Sending Portions", one of the 4 mitzvot of Purim to send a gift of (at least) 2 foods to friends, family, and neighbors.
- **סעודה** Seudah (seh-oo-dah) סְעוּדָה - A festive meal, also one of the 4 mitzvot of Purim

Coloring Pages for This Unit:

- [Purim Coloring Pages](#)

Songs for This Unit

- [Mishenichnas Adar](#)
- [Chag Purim](#)
- [Raise your mask \(fountainheads\)](#)
- [Ani Purim](#)

Books for This Unit (check your site for the PJ Library books!)

- [Esther didn't dream of being queen](#)
- [Meet the hamantaschen](#)
- [A Persian princess](#)
- [Purim Chicken](#)
- [Queen Vashti's comfy pants](#)
- [Sweet tamales for purim](#)
- [Talia and the Haman-Tushies](#)

Megillat Esther Recap (for adults)

In ancient Persia, a king named [Achashverosh](#) threw two lavish parties, one that lasted 180 days and one that lasted a week. During this time, he ordered his wife--Queen [Vashti](#)--to come out before his party guests wearing only her royal crown, so he could show off her beauty. When she refused, he executed her. Later, he was sad without a queen, so his advisors began a search for a new queen. Esther did not want to be queen, but she was rounded up with the other young, beautiful women in her city and brought to the palace.

After going through preparations, each girl was sent in to the King, so he could choose one girl to be his new queen. He chose [Esther](#). No one knew Esther was Jewish, and [Mordechai](#)--her older cousin who had raised her--told her not to say anything, even to the King. Mordechai meanwhile overheard two of the King's guards plotting to kill him, and saved the King's life by revealing them and their plot.

[Haman](#) had recently become the King's Prime Minister, and the King issued a decree that everyone must bow before Haman whenever he walked by. Mordechai refused, because Jews bow only to God. Haman was furious and got the King's permission to kill the Jews. Haman used lots (kind of like ancient dice) to choose the date for their destruction--the 13th of Adar. This is why the holiday is called Purim; Purim means "lots." Mordechai heard about the decree to kill the Jewish people, and told everyone to fast.

He went to see Esther, and told her she had to talk to the King. Queen Esther said she couldn't, because no one was allowed to go see the King without being summoned, or they'd be put to death. She hadn't seen him for thirty days! The only way to avoid being killed was if the King showed one favor by extending his scepter to her. Mordechai convinced her to go through with it, suggesting "perhaps you were born and made Queen for this very reason" and she did.

The King extended his scepter to her, and Queen Esther's life was spared, and she was allowed to make a request. She requested that the King and Haman come to a dinner party she was arranging for them. They went to the party, and the King asked Esther if she had any more requests. She requested again that they come to another party she wanted to throw for them. The King agreed to her request.

That night, the king couldn't sleep. He had his royal chronicler go through his chronicles (basically a king's diary) and the chronicler read to him about when Mordechai saved his life. He remembered he'd never done anything to thank Mordechai. He called in Haman, asking him what the king should do for someone he wants to show honor. Haman thought the king was talking about honoring Haman, so he described a huge, showy parade that he'd like to have. The king approved, and said, "Go do this for Mordechai." Haman was beyond furious, but had no choice but to parade Mordechai through the streets on horseback as everyone honored Mordechai. Haman was looking forward to killing Mordechai and the other Jews.

The King and Haman attended Queen Esther's second dinner party. When the King asked her request this time, she asked for her life. She revealed that Haman was planning to kill her and all her people. The King was furious and had Haman executed. He made Mordechai Prime Minister in his place. Queen Esther and Mordechai then sent out decrees to help the rest of the Jewish people, and saved everyone. The Jewish people celebrated, and that's why we celebrate Purim.

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Learning Objectives for Full Unit:

A. Students will know the basics of the Megillah narrative

(littles) Major characters are Esther, Mordechai, King Achashverosh, and Haman

(middles) Basic plot point that Esther is a Jew who hides her identity to become a Persian Queen and helps save the Jews from the king's advisor Haman

(biggs) Details of the plot that include Mordechai saving the King's life

B. Students will know the four mitzvot of Purim

(littles) There are 4 mitzvot

(middles) There are 4 mitzvot, 2 of which are to hear the story and to give gift baskets to friends

(biggs) All 4 mitzvot - Hear the Megillah, Have a festive meal, Give gift baskets to friends, Give money to the poor

C. Students will reflect on Esther's display of courage

(littles) Esther showed courage when she told King Achashverosh she was Jewish to save the people

(middles) Connect Esther's bravery with their own acts of courage

(biggs) Compare Esther's courage with Vashti's. Why isn't Vashti more celebrated?

D. Students will consider the balance between Hiding and Revealing

(littles) We wear masks/costumes on Purim to remind us to be brave

(middles) We wear masks/costumes on Purim because Esther hid her Jewish identity

(biggs) Does wearing a mask always hide your true self or can it allow your true self to come out?



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Learning Goal A: Students will know the basics of the Megillah narrative

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(littles)	Major characters are Esther, Mordechai, King Achashverosh, and Haman
(middles)	Basic plot point that Esther is a Jew who hides her identity to become a Persian Queen and helps save the Jews from the king's advisor Haman
(biggs)	Details of the plot that include Esther and Mordechai's relationship, and Mordechai saving the King's life


PEULAH OPTION A1: Purim Character "Guess Who" - Suggested for "middles"

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: who are the characters in Megillat Esther]

Materials:

- Video player
-  The Purim Story in 4 minutes: Go Esther!

Watch  The Purim Story in 4 minutes: Go Esther!

ACTIVITY: Purim Character "Guess Who" (15-20 min)

[Frame: What do we know about the characters in Megilat Esther?]



Materials:

- Deck of cards
- White Board
- White board marker
- Post-it notes
- pens

Directions:

1. Ask students to identify the top 5 characters in Megilat Esther, and write them on the White Board in T-Chart style:
2. Ask them to come up with at least three characteristics for each character, and write them together under their name (ex: Esther = girl, Jewish, queen, lives in Persia, only child...)

3. Pass out a playing card to each student, tell them to KEEP THEIR CARD A SECRET - don't tell anybody what they have!
4. Explain that each card represents a character:
 - a. Queen of Hearts--Queen Esther
 - b. King--King Achashverosh
 - c. Ace--Mordechai
 - d. Haman--Joker
 - e. Queen of Spades--Queen Vashti
 - f. Numbered cards--Yourself (these are added in so that everyone has a card, and it makes guessing a little more difficult)
5. They now are to try and find the 5 Purim Characters by asking each other Yes or No questions as if they are their character. So if they got the Queen of Hearts--Queen Esther--they would answer "Are you a girl?" as "Yes." Whichever kids get number cards will answer questions as themselves. **They cannot ask "are you [character's name]?" at any point in the game**
6. If there are any questions the kids don't know the answer to, they can ask the teacher and/or say "I don't know."
7. Kids are welcome to write down the "clues" they get from their friends' answers, in order to keep track of the information.
8. Kids can mill around the room and talk to each other, in no particular order (but everyone should make sure that all the kids are included and being asked questions).
9. After about 10 minutes, gather the kids back together, and give everyone 5 post-its and something to write with
10. On each post it, have them write the name of the student they think has each character, and then stick their post-it guesses under the character's name on the white board.
11. Once everyone has guessed, characters reveal themselves one by one

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)


- Who are the five main characters in Megilat Esther? (*Esther, Mordechai, Vashti, Achashverosh, Haman*)
- How did "hiding and revealing" the character's identities in the game relate back to the Megillah? (*Esther had to hide her Jewish identity and revealed herself in order to save the Jewish people*)


PEULAH OPTION A2: Make a Megillah/Scroll - Suggested for “littles”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: who are the characters in Megillat Esther]

Materials:

- Video player
-  Shalom Sesame: Purim Story

Watch  Shalom Sesame: Purim Story

ACTIVITY: Make a Megillah/Scroll (15-20 min)

[Frame: What do we know about the characters in Megilat Esther?]



Materials:

- [Paper towel tube](#)
- [brown paper](#) (recycled paper grocery bags also can work!)
- Glue
- [Megillah Coloring Characters](#)
- markers
- Ribbon

Directions:

Tell students that we're making our very own Megillah - a scroll - that tells the story of Purim.

Fun Fact: A Sefer Torah usually has two poles that the parchment wraps around, but a Megillah only has one.

1st Make the Scroll:

1. Each child gets a paper towel tube, and a sheet of brown paper
2. Place the paper in landscape (long sides on top and bottom, short sides on left and right)
3. Apply glue directly onto one side of the craft tube, then lay it down on the left side of the paper and roll the edge of the paper over the tube until the paper completely covers the tube. Let dry.

Make the Characters:

4. Hand out the [Megillah Coloring Characters](#)
5. One at a time, go through the characters and discuss/remind students who they are and their role in the story. While discussing, students color in that character (*if students are easily distracted, consider pre-cutting the characters and handing them out one at a time instead of the full sheet at once*)
6. When all four characters have been colored in, cut them out and students glue them onto their Megillah
7. Students that can write are encouraged to write pieces of the character's story around their picture.
8. When dry, wrap the scroll up and tie it with a ribbon

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- Who are the four main characters in Megilat Esther? (*Esther, Mordechai, Achashverosh, Haman*)
- What special thing did Esther do? (*saved the Jewish people from Haman*)
- What do we call the scroll where we read their story? (*Megillah*)

PEULAH OPTION A3: Mordechai's Horse game - Suggested for "bigs"

HOOK (7-10 min)

[Frame: Review the part of the story where King Achashverosh honors Mordechai]

Materials:

- [The King Remembers Mordechai \(chapter 6\)](#)

Print and cut the chapter 6 narrative into strips. Hand them out, and have the students read the section they received out loud.

Discuss:

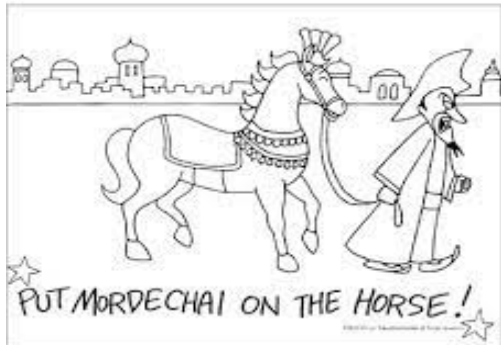
Why did Haman come up with such an elaborate plan? Who did he think the King wanted to honor? (himself)

How do you think he felt when the king told him it was for Mordechai?

How do you think the horse felt during that parade? Do you think it could feel the tension between Haman and Mordechai?

ACTIVITY: Mordechai's Horse (10-15 min)

[Frame: What do we know about the characters in Megilat Esther?]



Materials:

- OPTIONAL: [crown and royal cape/robe](#)

Directions:

To play Mordechai's horse, everyone needs to sit in a circle. Tell students that Purim is a holiday that encourages silliness and playfulness, so today we are going to do both.

The first player has to pretend to be Mordechai's horse, walk on their hands and knees up to each person in the circle, one at a time, and neigh at them.

Each person they neigh at has to keep a straight face (decide on the duration).

Horses can neigh in silly, crazy ways and can make funny faces. Whoever laughs, becomes the new horse and continues going around the circle (and so on).

OPTIONAL: Connect it deeper to the story by having "the horse" wear a king's crown and robe like Mordechai did

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- What is the connection between a horse and Megillat Esther? (*Mordechai rides the King's horse wearing the King's clothes because he saved the King's life.*)
- Why do you think Purim is a holiday dedicated to silliness and making people laugh?

Learning Goal B: Students will know the four mitzvot of Purim

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(littles)	There are 4 mitzvot
(middles)	There are 4 mitzvot, 2 of which are to hear the story and to give gift baskets to friends
(bigs)	All 4 mitzvot - Hear the Megillah, Have a festive meal, Give gift baskets to friends, Give money to the poor

PEULAH OPTION B1: Make Mishloach Manot - Suggested for all

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: What are mishloach manot?]

One of the 4 mitzvot of Purim is “Mishloach Manot”. This literally means “sending portions”, and it is a mitzvah to send out portions of food and drink to our friends, family, and neighbors on Purim. Because the Megillah uses the word “manot”, which is plural, the tradition became that a person must send Mishloach Manot to at least two people, and they must include at least two foods that require *different* brachot.

So, can I give a mishloach manot with only an apple and an orange? (*no! They are both “borei pri ha’etz”*)

Can I give a mishloach manot with only a chocolate bar and a rice krispy treat? (*no! They are both “shehakol”*)

So, what CAN I give then? (let them throw out some suggestions)

ACTIVITY: Make Mishloach Manot (15-20 min)

[Frame: What do we know about the characters in Megilat Esther?]




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Materials:

- [Small paper gift bags with handles](#)
- Markers
- Stickers
- [Brachot Flash Cards, printed and cut](#)
- [Mishloach Manot labels](#)

Directions:

1. Print multiple copies of the color-coded [Brachot flash cards](#), and cut them into individual piles of each color.
2. Students pick the two people they want to send to, and pick from the piles the two brachot that they want to include in their Mishloach Manot, and fill out the label to attach to their bag



I want to make Mishloach Manot for
my next door neighbor

I want to include a borei pri ha'etz
like apple, orange, fig, strawberries..

and a borei minei mezonot
like cookies, hamentashen, muffins..

3. Once they've done that, they decorate the bags with markers, stickers, jewels, etc, as well as the two brachot they will include.
4. Take them home, ask their parents for help filling with their chosen brachot foods, and deliver!

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)


- What does Mishloach Manot mean?
- How many different brachot should be in Mishloach Manot?

PEULAH OPTION B2: Rice Krispy Treat Hamentashen - Suggested for “bigs”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: What are hamentashen?]

Materials:

- Video player
-  Hamantaschen, a sweet Purim tradition

Watch this short excerpt from CBS Sunday Morning about the origin of Hamantaschen cookies, and how they relate to the Purim story.

- What is your favorite Hamentashen flavor?
- There are 4 Mitzvot of Purim - festive meals, hearing the Megillah, sharing Mishloach Manot, and giving gifts to the poor. Where can hamentashen fit in?

ACTIVITY: Rice Krispy Treat Hamentashen (15-20 min)

[Frame: Making a traditional Purim treat to go in Mishloach Manot or to serve at a Seudah]



Materials:

- 6 cups Rice Krispies Cereal
- 10 oz bag mini marshmallows
- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- Decorating icing
- Sprinkles
- Large microwave-safe bowl
- Sturdy mixing spoons
- Wax paper
- Cooking spray
- Disposable gloves
- Ziplock bags

7oz of [Marshmallow Fluff](#) can be substituted for the mini marshmallows and butter

Directions:

1. Precut a sheet of wax paper for each student
2. In microwave-safe bowl heat butter and marshmallows on HIGH for 3 minutes, stirring every 30 seconds. Stir until smooth.
3. Add Rice Krispies cereal. Stir until well coated.
4. Spoon out a ball onto each square of wax paper
5. Have students put on disposable gloves, and spray the gloves with cooking spray
6. Carefully have them shape their warm ball of mixture into a triangle shape, then let cool
7. Decorate the center of the triangle with icing and sprinkles to look like hamantaschen filling

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- What are two different explanations for Hamantaschen? (*Haman's ears/hat, or poppy seed pockets*)
- Which of the four mitzvot would you use Hamantaschen for?

PEULAH OPTION B3: Make Me Laugh games - Suggested for “littles”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: Purim is a holiday to be silly!]

Explain that it's important to be happy on Purim, and that's why people do crazy, silly things on Purim, like dress up in funny costumes, and read the Megillah in funny voices and songs. Tell them that since it's so important to be happy on Purim, you're going to practice laughing now with some funny games.

ACTIVITY: Make Me Laugh games (15-20 min)

[Frame: 3 games to encourage laughter that are tied to the Purim story]



Materials:

- OPTIONAL: [crown and royal cape/robe](#) for Game #3

Directions:

Game #1: HaHaHa-mentashen

1. Everyone sits in a circle. Have one person be “It”; It sits in the middle of the circle.
2. Starting with one person, go around the circle, each person asking “It” a question, any question.
3. “It” must respond with “Hamantaschen” with a straight face. They must try to stay serious and not laugh! (Everyone else is allowed to laugh, though.)
4. Once everyone has asked them a question, It returns to the circle and someone else takes their place.

Game #2: The HaHa Game

1. Have everyone lie in a circle with each other's head's on each other's stomachs.
2. On “go”, the first person will shout “HA” and then it will be repeated one by one clock-wise around the circle. (When you do this everyone's heads bounce up on the person's stomachs).
3. Then you shout two”HA HA's” and go around.
4. Continue doing this and increase the number of “HA's!”
5. See if you can get all the way around the circle to shout “HAMENTASHEN” at the end!

Game #3: Mordechai's Horse

1. Everyone needs to sit in a circle.

2. The first player has to pretend to be Mordechai's horse, walk on their hands and knees up to each person in the circle, one at a time, and neigh at them.
3. Each person they neigh at has to keep a straight face (decide on the duration).
4. Horses can neigh in silly, crazy ways and can make funny faces. Whoever laughs, becomes the new horse and continues going around the circle (and so on).

OPTIONAL: Connect it deeper to the story by having "the horse" wear a king's crown and robe like Mordechai did

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- What are some ways we act silly on Purim?

PEULAH OPTION B4: Silent Megillah (Charades) - Suggested for “middles” and “big”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: It is a mitzvah to hear the Megillah]

There are four mitzvot to do on Purim - can you name all four?

Attend a SEUDAH (festive meal), Send MISHLOACH MANOT (gift baskets), Give MATANOT L'EVYONIM (gifts to the poor), and **hear** MEGILLAT ESTHER (the scroll of Esther read out loud). Why do you think the mitzvah is to HEAR the story of Esther, and not just to read it?

Let's see what happens when we tell a story without hearing a story...

ACTIVITY: Silent Megillah (charades) (15-20 min)

[Frame: Acting out scenes from the Megillah silently]



Materials:

- Scene descriptions written out on strips of paper:
 - King Achashverosh feeling sad without a queen, and beginning the search for a new queen.
 - Esther being chosen as queen.
 - Mordechai refusing to bow before Haman.
 - Haman parading Mordechai through the streets on horseback.
 - Haman rolling dice to decide when to punish the Jews.
 - Mordechai convincing Esther she needs to go to the King to save the Jews
 - Esther going in to see the King, and the King extending his golden scepter to her.
 - Esther throwing a dinner party for the King and Haman.
 - Esther begging the King for her life.
- Hat or bucket
- Prize for the winning group

Directions:

1. Divide students into groups of 2-3
2. Put the Megillah scene descriptions in a hat or bucket and have each group pick a scene from the hat. Don't let the other groups know what scene you got!

3. Groups get 5 minutes to plan how they will mime their scene - they may not use ANY words or sounds during the performance - no talking, humming, sound effects, etc! (They may talk while planning)
4. Groups then perform for each other; the audience groups watch until the scene is over, and then discuss among themselves for a few seconds. Each group gets one guess as to what the scene was. Whoever guesses correctly, gets one point. The acting group also gets a point if their scene is guessed correctly. (If both groups guess correctly, everyone gets points.) Keep a tally on the board of points.
5. Whichever group has the most points at the end wins

Megillat Esther Scenes:

- King Achashverosh feeling sad without a queen, and beginning the search for a new queen.
- Esther being chosen as queen.
- Mordechai refusing to bow before Haman.
- Haman parading Mordechai through the streets on horseback.
- Haman rolling dice to decide when to punish the Jews.
- Mordechai convincing Esther she needs to go to the King to save the Jews
- Esther going in to see the King, and the King extending his scepter to her.
- Esther throwing a dinner party for the King and Haman.
- Esther begging the King for her life.

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- Discuss: After playing this silent game about the Purim story, why do you think it's important to hear the Megillah read aloud?

Learning Goal C: Students will reflect on Esther's display of courage

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- (littles) Esther showed courage when she told King Achashverosh she was Jewish to save the people
- (middles) Connect Esther's bravery with their own acts of courage
- (big) Compare Esther's courage with Vashti's. Why isn't Vashti more celebrated?

PEULAH OPTION C1: Esther's Affirmations Mirror - Suggested for "littles" and "middles"

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: Esther convinced herself that she is brave]

Materials:

- Video player

Watch either: [The Purim Story in 4 minutes: Go Esther!](#) or [Esther - Bible Story](#)

Discuss: Did Esther want to go to the King to ask him to save the Jewish people?

What was she afraid of?

How did she get brave?

ACTIVITY: Esther's Affirmations Mirror (15-20 min)

[Frame: We can find our bravery like Queen Esther]



Materials:

- [Mirror-template.pdf](#) (if cutting out your own oval shapes)
- [Wavy craft sticks](#)
- Craft Ovals ([wood circles](#), [paper plates](#), or [foam sheets](#) cut into an oval shape are all good options)
- [Heavy-duty Tin foil](#)
- glue/masking tape
- [Large craft gems](#)

- Glitter glue (optional)
- Sharpie/marker
- [Pre-printed affirmations](#) (for students who cannot write yet)

Directions:

1. Lay a stiff sheet of tin foil (try to have as few wrinkles as possible) on the table
2. Place a craft oval (back side up) lightly on top of the foil, making sure there's excess foil on all sides/angles
3. Gently fold the excess foil over the top of the oval, securing down with either tape or glue
4. Flip the oval over so the foil side is now face up - this is now your mirror!
5. Decorate the edge of the oval with the craft gems and/or glitter glue to make a regal mirror fit for a queen
6. While the gems and glue dry, take the craft sticks and write one (or all) of the following affirmations on it:
 - a. I am Brave (like Queen Esther)
 - b. I am Kind (like Queen Esther)
 - c. I was Born for This (like Queen Esther)

For students who cannot write yet, glue the pre-printed affirmations to the stick instead

7. When dry, attach the stick to the base of the mirror with either tape or glue
8. Practice making your affirmations into the mirror to reveal your bravest self, just like Queen Esther did!

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- How did Queen Esther make herself feel brave enough to go see the King?
- What makes you feel brave?

PEULAH OPTION C2: My Megillah of Courage - Suggested for “middles”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: *Courage means doing the right thing, even when we're scared*]

Queen Esther had to face an extreme set of circumstances and use great courage to save the day. We probably don't encounter such extreme scenarios in our day-to-day lives, but there are still plenty of times when we must show courage. What is courage, though? [Have kids offer their thoughts.]

One way to define courage is this: **Courage is doing the right thing, even when you are scared and don't really want to.** This is having Ometz Lev, strength of the heart. Ometz Lev refers to having the strength of heart to do what's right, even when we're scared. Situations in which we need Ometz Lev can be different for every person, whether it's taking a stand against bullying, believing in yourself, admitting that you're the one who broke something or made a mistake, or getting up the courage to apologize to someone--there are all kinds of situations in our daily lives in which we need courage.

ACTIVITY: My Megillah of Courage (15-20 min)

[Frame: *I have a story of courage to tell too, just like Esther*]



Materials:

- [Old-looking parchment paper](#)
- [Wooden Dowel rods](#)
- [Styrofoam balls](#) (2/kid)
- Tin foil
- Glue
- Markers
- ribbon

Directions:

1. Explain: Megillah means, “scroll.” We generally refer to the Book of Esther--the Purim story--as the Megillah, or Megillat Esther. The Megillah is, amongst other things, a story of Queen Esther's courage.
2. Give each kid a piece of the “aged parchment” paper, turned Landscape (long ends on the top and bottom)

3. Explain that they are going to make their own megillah to tell the story of a time they had a lot of courage, like Queen Esther did.
4. *On your scroll, you can tell a story of a time you had a lot of courage. If you can't think of a specific time you had great courage, you can either depict a scene from the Purim story of Queen Esther being courageous, or you can write about something or someway you are inspired to have courage. Maybe it's a quote or something you do to make you feel brave--share it! You can write, draw a full picture, or draw a comic. This is the Megillah of YOUR courage.*
5. Once they've written their megillah, they can build their scroll handle:
6. Attach a styrofoam ball at either end of the wooden dowel, then wrap the ball in tin foil
7. Using a thin line of glue, attach the dowel to the left side of their megillah (the short side)
8. Roll the megillah around the dowel, and tie with a ribbon

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- How did Queen Esther have Ometz Lev in the Purim story--in what ways?
- Did she have it in one part of the story, or multiple?
- Did any of the other people in the story have Ometz Lev? How so?

PEULAH OPTION C3: Esther and Vashti Triorama - Suggested for “bigs”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: Courage means doing the right thing, even when we're scared]

Materials:

- [Queen Vashti's comfy pants](#)

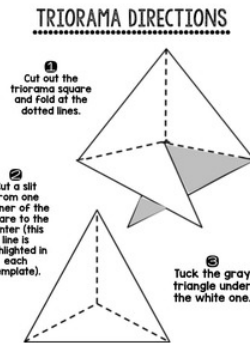
Read [Queen Vashti's comfy pants](#), and discuss:

Queen Esther had to face an extreme set of circumstances and use great courage to save the day; one way to define courage is this: **Courage is doing the right thing, even when you are scared and don't really want to.** This is having Ometz Lev, strength of the heart. Ometz Lev refers to having the strength of heart to do what's right, even when we're scared. Situations in which we need Ometz Lev can be different for every person, whether it's taking a stand against bullying, believing in yourself, admitting that you're the one who broke something or made a mistake, or getting up the courage to apologize to someone--there are all kinds of situations in our daily lives in which we need courage.

For most of us growing up, Queen Vashti was portrayed almost like a villain. **But what did she do wrong? Didn't she show courage just like Esther to stand up to King Achashverosh?**

ACTIVITY: Esther and Vashti Triorama (15-20 min)

[Frame: Esther and Vashti have a lot in common]



Materials:

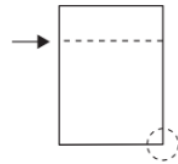
- Printer paper
- scissors
- Glue stick
- markers/crayons/colored pencils
- [Triorama instructions and template](#) printed

Directions:

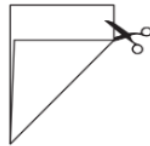
1. Today we are going to compare the bravery of two strong women - Queen Vashti and Queen Esther.

2. Make a list together - in what ways did Queen Esther show Ometz Lev? In what ways did Queen Vashti show Ometz Lev? What can we learn from both of them? How were they different? How are they remembered differently?
3. Give each student a piece of plain white printer paper, and **guide through steps 1-4** to build a Triorama (A 3-walled diorama):

Triorama Directions



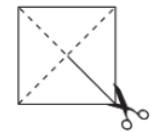
1. Place your sheet of construction paper flat on your desk so that the shorter ends make up the top and bottom of the paper.



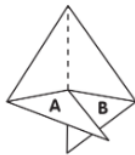
2. Fold the bottom right-hand corner up so that the bottom edge of the paper is now even with the left edge of the paper. Cut off the extra rectangular piece at the top so that you have a folded triangle.



3. Now fold that triangle in half.



4. Unfold the piece of paper so that it is a square. Then cut along one of the folds to the center point of the square.



5. Overlap Part A and Part B and secure them together with glue.



6. The finished product is a triorama! This will be the background and stage for the scene that you are creating!

4. Students should now have two intact triangles, and the bottom triangles cut in half. Leave the bottom half for now, and focus just in the top two segments:
 - a. In the top left triangle, using the information from the list you gathered together, decorate it for Queen Esther - be sure to include her name!
 - b. In the top right triangle, using the information from the list you gathered together, decorate it for Queen Vashti - be sure to include her name!
5. Give each student the two female figures from the Triorama Template - have them color in one as Queen Esther and the other as Queen Vashti
6. Now complete steps 5 and 6 from the Triorama instructions to secure the base of the triorama. *Does it remind you of a certain holiday cookie??*
7. Cut out the Esther and Vashti figures, fold down the flaps underneath them, and glue the bottom of the flap to the base of the triorama, standing each woman in front of her decorated side of the triangle.

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- How did Queen Esther and Queen Vashti have Ometz Lev in the Purim story--in what ways?
- Why do you think one woman was portrayed as a hero and the other as a villain?

Learning Goal D: Students will consider the balance between Hiding and Revealing

LEARNING GOAL D: Students will consider the balance between Hiding and Revealing

- (littles) We wear masks/costumes on Purim to remind us to be brave
(middles) We wear masks/costumes on Purim because Esther hid her Jewish Identity
(bigs) Does wearing a mask always hide your true self or can it allow your true self to come out?

PEULAH OPTION D1: Purim Masks - Suggested for “littles”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: *Why do we wear costumes on Purim?*]

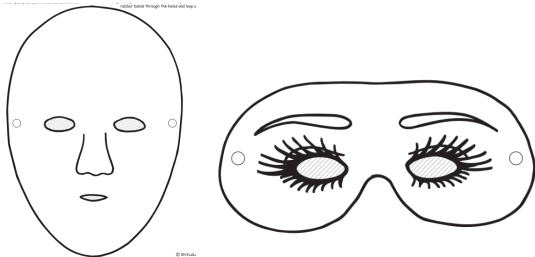
Materials:

- [The Purim Superhero](#)

Read and discuss: Why do you think we wear costumes on Purim? How can choosing a mask or costume help us be brave?

ACTIVITY: Purim Masks (15-20 min)

[Frame: *We wear masks to hide our faces on Purim*]



Materials:

- Mask templates: [Face mask](#) and [Eye mask](#) (consider pre-cutting the eye holes for the kids) or [order online here](#)
- Markers
- Hole punch
- Scissors
- Rubber bands or string or pipe cleaners (to attach)
- Glue
- Decorative objects: gems, sequins, feathers, glitter glue, stickers, foam pieces, tissue paper
- Audio player and Purim music (like [this playlist](#))

Directions:

1. Let students choose to decorate either a full face mask or an eye mask, and give them the appropriate printed template.

2. Use markers, gems, sequins, feathers, stickers, etc to decorate the masks
3. When ready, cut out the template and hole punch at the marked spots on each side
4. Use one of the following attachment methods:
 - a. Loop a rubber band through each hole and hook the rubber bands around the student's ears
 - b. Tie a piece of string into each hole and tie the strings together at the back of the student's head
 - c. Loop a pipe cleaner through each hole and connect the pipe cleaners together at the back of the student's head
 - d. Turn on a Purim kids playlist and host a Purim mask parade!

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- How does your mask remind you to be brave?

PEULAH OPTION D2: Code Word Hide and Seek - Suggested for “middles”

HOOK (5 min)

[Frame: Hiding and Revealing is a big theme in Purim]

Who is the hero of the Purim story? That’s right, Queen Esther! But did you know that Esther was not her real name? Her birth name was Hadassah - Esther is what she was called when she started to hide her Jewish identity in order to become queen. The word “Esther” comes from the Hebrew word “hester” (hess-tehr), which means “to hide”. Why do you think the Megillah renamed her “Hide”?

ACTIVITY: Code Word Hide and Seek (15-20 min)

[Frame: We wear masks to hide our faces on Purim]



ESTHER
JEWISH
COUSINS
HADASSAH
GOD'S NAME

Materials:

- [Code words](#), laminated and pre-cut letter by letter
- [Code Word map](#) to plug the letters into

Directions:

This game is a mashup of Hide and Seek and a scavenger hunt. The concept is instead of a person hiding, a teacher hides a Codeword that has been cut up into individual letters around the room, and students seek the letters in order to figure out what the code word is. The code words are all things that are “hiding” in Megillat Esther:

- ESTHER = hides her Jewish identity
- JEWISH = Esther hides that she is Jewish from the King
- COUSINS = Esther and Mordechai hide that they are cousins from the King and Court
- HADASSAH = Esther hides her Hebrew name while she is Queen
- GOD'S NAME = God is not mentioned anywhere in the Megillah!

*For an easier version: hide and seek the code words one at a time, and have them plug them into the map one at a time.

*For a challenge, divide students into teams and hide all of the letters to all of the words at once, and see if they can plug in all five words into the map at the same time

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- What are two elements hiding in/from the Megillah that we discussed today?
- Why do you think they are hiding?

PEULAH OPTION D3: Using Masks to Reveal - Suggested for “bigs”

HOOK (5 min)

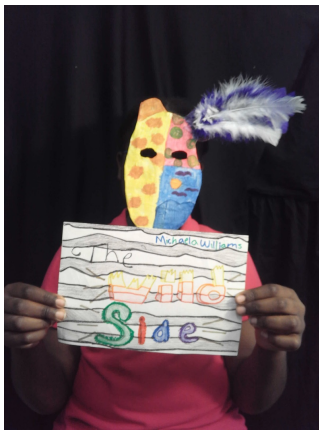
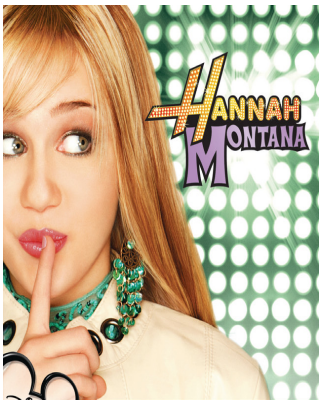
[Frame: Hiding and Revealing is a big theme in Purim]

Isn't it fun to dress up and be someone or something else? While we only do it for a night or two at Purim, some people spend a lifetime in costume. That's what Esther was doing, turning her life into a costume because she was afraid to simply be who she truly is. Be consistent. Maintain your integrity above all else. Don't dress yourself up in the hopes that more people will notice or respect or appreciate you.

Instead of treating a costume as a way to hide who we truly are, what if we use our masks and costumes as opportunities to explore sides of ourselves we don't often let the world see?

ACTIVITY: Using Masks to Reveal (15-20 min)

[Frame: Masks can reveal our true selves, not just hide them]



Materials:

- [Phantom “half-masks”](#) (if time permits (like at camp), try doing [paper mache masks](#) instead of using ready-made ones!)
- Sketch paper and pencils
- Sharpies
- Hole punch
- scissors
- Rubber bands or string or pipe cleaners (to attach)
- glue
- Decorative objects: gems, sequins, feathers, glitter glue, stickers, foam pieces, tissue paper
- Audio player and Purim music (like [this playlist](#))

Directions:

1. Ask students to sketch out their “alter ego” - not someone else they wish they could be for a day, but a part of themselves they don't otherwise let show
2. When ready, give them a plastic half-mask to decorate to represent their hidden self.

- a. Do they secretly love to sing? To play soccer? The color orange? To read fantasy adventures? Science projects?

WRAP UP / CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING (5 min)

- Do masks hide our true selves or allow our true selves to come out?