

# Purim March Madness

An Activity from [Hebrew at the Center](https://www.hebrewatthecenter.org/)

This fun and interactive game combines the excitement of March Madness with Purim themes! Students will "compete" by voting on Purim-related matchups to determine the ultimate Purim winner in their bracket. It can be played as a class activity, either in-person or on Zoom.

In 2025, Purim starts on Thursday night, March 13th, and Selection Sunday is on Sunday, March 16th. This means that for your Sunday morning Purim carnivals and Hebrew School days will coincide with Selection Sunday, aka the day that everyone fills out their March Madness brackets.

Purim literally means "lot", which is a form of chance or fate. Ancient cultures would often use casting lots to determine the divine will in a given situation. The result of a casting lot was considered to be the divine response to the situation or question they were considering because the outcome was determined at random. That means it's a great time to cast your voting brackets!

## Objective:

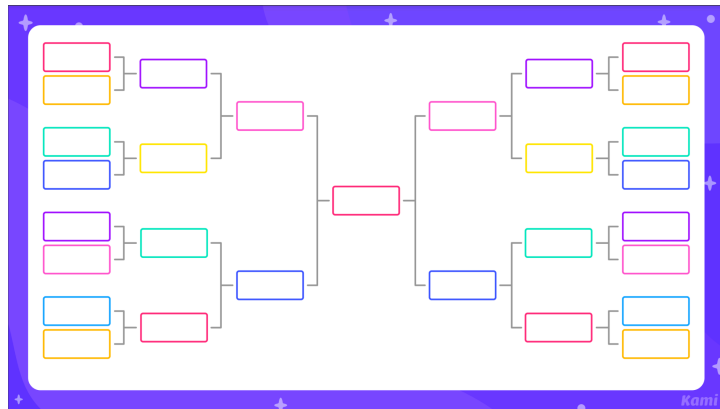
Students will learn about the themes, characters, traditions, and symbols of Purim while participating in a playful, tournament-style game.

## Multiple ways to play:

1. One way to play this game is to let the kids choose what to fill the boxes with. Some examples of themes might be foods, Jewish foods, sports teams, vacation destinations, celebrities, Jewish bible heroes, or Jewish holidays (see some samples at the bottom of this document). If the class has been practicing certain Hebrew words or letters, try to incorporate those into the categories given.
  - a. How to decide winners
    - i. Flip a coin!
      1. Heads = the top item wins
      2. Tails = bottom item wins
    - ii. Voting
      1. Classes can vote by secret ballot – if you start with 16 items to begin, there will be 4 rounds of voting, which could be done over 4 class periods (could coincide with the weeks of actual March Madness, which continues until April 7th). The teacher can count the secret ballots in between each period and give out new ballots with the next round from the winners

2. The teacher can go around the room and let each student decide on the winners of individual matchups or have the class raise their hands for a democratic vote.
2. Another way to play the game is to put in the names of each of the kids in the class (write their names in Hebrew for an extra layer of Hebrew reading practice). Then have them compete in something simple such as a 3 point ping pong game, rock/paper/scissors, or shooting a ball or balled up paper into a basket. After a student loses to their opponent, they can gather behind that person and cheer for them (ala a Rock Paper Scissors Competition).

Here's a [sample March Madness bracket](#).



Sample items for competition:

Bracket for 8 Entries:

1. **Haman vs. Mordechai**
2. **Esther vs. Vashti**
3. **Hamantaschen vs. Latke**
4. **Costumes vs. Mishloach Manot**

הַמֵּן נֶגְדַּ מְרֻדְכֵי  
 אֶסְתֵּר נֶגְדַּ וּשְׁתֵּי  
 אֶזְנֵי הַמֵּן נֶגְדַּ לְבִיבוֹת  
 תַּחְפוּשׁוֹת נֶגְדַּ מְשֻׁלוּחַ מְנוֹת

Bracket for 16 Entries (Optional):

1. **Haman vs. Mordechai**
2. **Esther vs. Vashti**
3. **Hamantaschen vs. Latke**
4. **Grogger vs. Megillah**
5. **Costumes vs. Mishloach Manot**
6. **Purim Carnival vs. Purim Spiel**
7. **Dreidels vs. Gelt**
8. **Achashverosh vs. Pharaoh**

הַמֵּן נֶגְדַּ מְרֻדְכֵי  
 אֶסְתֵּר נֶגְדַּ וּשְׁתֵּי  
 הַמְּנֻטָּשׁוֹן נֶגְדַּ לְטִקָּה  
 רַעֲשָׁן נֶגְדַּ מְגִלָּה  
 תַּחְפוּשׁוֹת נֶגְדַּ מְשֻׁלוּחַ מְנוֹת  
 קַרְנָבֵל פּוּרִים נֶגְדַּ סְפִיל פּוּרִים  
 סְבִיבוֹן נֶגְדַּ מְעוֹת חֲנֻכָּה  
 אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ נֶגְדַּ פְּרָעָה