

Purim ID card

Holiday ID card: Holiday characteristics, precepts and customs;

Holiday customs (4Ms): Explanation of holiday customs and songs;

Story of the Book of Esther : Introduction to the story of the Book Creative activity surrounding the Book.

Purim ID card

Date: The 14th of Adar (14-15 in walled cities)

Reason for the holiday/event: Rescue of the Jews by Esther and Mordechai in the Kingdom of Achashverosh from Haman's intention of annihilating them.

Figures: Queen Esther, Mordechai the Jew, King Achashverosh, Haman the Villain.

Holiday precepts (*mitzvot*): Reading the Book (*Megillah*), feast-banquet, sending gifts to one another, gifts to the poor.

Customs: Dressing up, Adloyada - masquerade procession, making noise with noisemakers upon mention of the name Haman, making and eating hamentashen, Purim Spiel comic play.

Holiday customs

Course of the lesson

(21) To establish this among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, each and every year:

(22) As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them **days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.**

Meanings of words: Establish this among them - to observe the holiday; sorrow - sadness; mourning - sadness over death / injury; poor - people in need.

Joy of Purim

The precept (*mitzvah*) of joy is the common denominator of all Purim precepts. Joy is the most outstanding motif in the last chapters of the Book (8-9). Each Purim holiday precept is designed to create and cultivate joy in its own way.

Purim precepts: Reading the Book (*Megillah*), feast-banquet, sending gifts to one another, gifts to the poor.

Reading the Book

The most important precept of Purim is reading the Book; all, both men and women, are obligated to hear the reading of the Book. The Book is read twice: On Purim eve, and on the following day.

The Book is read again during the day, because every time observing the holiday for generations is mentioned, the reference is to days: And these days are remembered and done in each and every generation (Esther 9:28). The Hallel is not read on Purim, since reading the Book is considered as the Hallel.

Feast and joy (banquet)

The aim of the feast is to cause physical pleasure; such a precept does not exist in other holidays. One interpretation given for this: Haman's decrees were given in order to physically annihilate the nation (as opposed to Chanukah, where they were designed to destroy the nation spiritually). In order to annul this evil decree, the Jews fasted and afflicted their souls. "In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes." (Esther 4:3) When the Jews were saved, the event was celebrated with a feast and with drink, the opposite of fasting and afflicting the soul.

Sending gifts [of food]

The aim of this precept is to cultivate mutuality in joyfulness: The person receiving the gift is happy with his portion and the fact that he was remembered; the sender is glad to have caused his friend joy. On the matter of sending the gifts, it is important to note the following points:

- By sending portions, it means the sending of two portions to one person. The Rambam ruled as follows: Wherever the Torah speaks in the plural and does not indicate a number, this means at least two. In our case 'portions' (*manot*) means at least two. From the expression 'one another' we learn that in order to fulfill the obligation of sending gifts [of food], one must send at least two portions to one person.



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- The portions must be ready to eat. According to the Rambam's ruling, it follows that a person must send his friend portions ready to be feasted on, with no need for preparation (i.e., he shall not send raw ingredients such as flour, sugar or seasoning).
- A person who cannot afford to prepare portions to be sent may suffice with exchanging them with his friend. From other stories in the Gemara, it can be learned that the portions sent should include fine dishes that are not normally served on weekdays. It may be that the Rambam understood that not everyone can afford to provide a fine Purim feast and sending gifts [of food]; hence, the two precepts have been intertwined and replaced their feasts.
- The precept of sending portions applies to every Jew, even the poor. The precepts of sending portions and gifts to the poor obligate every Jew, both men and women, even if they themselves are poor and receive charity.

Gifts to the poor

The aim of this precept is that all classes of society should be joyful, even those who may be barred from it due to economic constraints.

Order of precepts

The order of precepts is written in the following verse: As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. (Esther 9:22).





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One can tell that the holiday activity begins at home – “feasting and joy”, continues to friends with “sending portions one to another,” friends of the person fulfilling the precept and, finally, directed towards the poor – “and gifts to the poor” outside the person’s home or immediate circle of the celebrator. Thus joy shall reach nearly everyone and be as complete as possible.

From: Joy of Purim, teacher’s guide, department of planning and development of study programs





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Song of masks

Lyrics: [Levin Kipnis](#)

Music: [Nahum Nardi](#)

I have a long beard down to my knees
My mustache is two cubits long

Is anyone as merry and joyful
as me mask, ha ha?

Is anyone as merry and joyful
as me, mask?

I have horns like a goat

and teeth like a lion

Is anyone as merry and joyful...

In front of me is a braid with a ribbon
behind me a tail of such beauty

Is anyone as gay and joyful...

Meanings of words:

Amatayim – length of two cubits (forearms)

Tzohelet – merry (feminine form)

Layish – lion

Tiferet – beauty

Try to draw one or more of the masks described in the poem.



The story of the Book of Esther (adapted for children)

a.

Many years ago, in the city of Shushan, there lived a king whose name was Achashverosh.

The king once held a feast. The king ordered to bring in Vashti, his wife. He wanted all of the guests to see how pretty she is. He sent his slaves to bring her, but Vashti said: Even if King Achashverosh ordered so, I will not come to the party.

b.

Achashverosh became angry with Vashti and sent her away.

The king wanted a new queen. The king's messengers went out to search the land, and cried: Our master the king is looking for a woman to place a royal crown on her head.

c.

In Shushan there lived a Jew, his name Mordechai. He was the uncle of Esther. Esther was beautiful, good looking and lived in Mordechai's house. The messengers of Achashverosh brought many young girls to the king's palace, and Esther too. King Achashverosh liked Esther best of all. He placed a royal crown on her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

Esther did not tell him she was Jewish.

Bigtan and Teresh wanted to kill the king. This became known to Mordechai, and he told the king.

d.

King Achashverosh had a minister, his name was Haman. Haman was a very evil man. He ordered all people to bow to him. Mordechai the Jew did not want to bow to Haman. Haman the villain was angered and wanted to kill Mordechai and all of the Jews.

e.

Haman went to King Achashverosh and told him: The Jews are not following the king's orders, they should all be destroyed. King Achashverosh agreed. Haman cast lots. On the 13th of Adar, all the Jews must be killed and destroyed.

f.

Mordechai the Jew heard that Haman wanted to kill all the Jews. He wore a sack and went to Queen Esther to tell her. Queen Esther became very sad. She cried and fasted for three days.

g.

King Achashverosh's sleep wandered at night. He could not fall asleep. He lay in bed and read in his diary that Mordechai had once saved his life. Mordechai had told the king that two of his guards were plotting to kill him. King Achashverosh ordered to hang them from a tree, and wrote this in his diary.

h.

The king thought: How can I reward Mordechai for his good deed? The king asked Haman: What should be done for the man whom the king desires to honor? Haman thought in his heart: They king must mean me.

Haman said: He should be dressed in royal clothes and led on a horse in the city, with people calling out loud: Thus shall be done for the man whom the king favors. King Achashverosh replied: Take Mordechai the Jew and do all you just said.

Haman did as the king told. And the wrath of the king subsided.

i.

Esther the queen held a banquet. She invited King Achashverosh and Haman. King Achashverosh told Esther: Esther, what is it that you want? Whatever you wish for, I shall give it to you, even if it is half the kingdom.

Esther told him: An evil man wants to kill me and my people. The king asked? Who? Who is this man?

Esther told him: Haman that evil man.

j.

The king became angry with Haman and ordered to have him hanged on the tree prepared for Mordechai. The king sent messengers throughout the land and ordered that the Jews should not be killed.

Then Mordechai appeared before the king, wearing royal garments of blue and white, a large gold crown, and a fine purple robe; and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was merry. The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor.

Since then, each year, the Jews celebrate the Purim holiday on the 14th of Adar. They eat and drink and sending gifts [of food].



Suggestions for creative activities

- Prepare noisemakers
- Draw the story of the Book of Esther in pictures, and glue to the Book (*Megillah*).
- Dramatize parts of the Book.
- Create and decorate masks.

