

Values Curriculum:

Purim/Being Yourself

OVERVIEW	This session explores the holiday of <i>Purim</i> . Through the rituals of <i>Purim</i> , including making groggers, masks and <i>mishloach manot</i> , students will explore what it means to be yourself and to share the best of yourself with others.
OBJECTIVE	To engage in <i>Purim</i> practices with an eye to sharing the best of yourself with your community.
VALUE(S)	<i>Tehiyeh Atzmecha</i> (Be Yourself)
STORY	"The Purim Superhero" by Elisabeth Kushner
MATERIALS	Grogger materials, mask makings, <i>mishloach manot</i> supplies
AT HOME CHALLENGE	Students will take their <i>Purim</i> groggers and masks home plus one <i>mishloach manot</i> . Families will be encouraged to go and hear the megillah in their community and to make more <i>mishloach manot</i> to give away.

Materials List

Activity One

- Paper mask cut outs or foam sheets for cutting into masks
- Pairs of scissors
- Sequins, jewels, foam shapes, googly eyes, pipe cleaners, feathers, glitter glue (things for decorating masks)
- Glue
- Markers
- Hole punch
- Elastic Cord

Activity Two

- Paper or cardboard boxes (tip: use recycled containers from home such as boxes that held tea bags.)
- Assortment of wrapped sweets, nuts, fruits (like mandarins)
- Card stock, cut to small card size
- Markers

Gathering Activity

- Recycled yogurt, tea, vitamin or other similar containers
- Pebbles, beans, bells, dry rice, dry pasta (things that can be shaken)
- Variety of colored masking tape

Opening/Closing Circle

- Book: "The Purim Superhero" by Elisabeth Kushner
- Big pad of paper and markers
- At Home Challenge Sheet

Gathering Activity: Grogger Making (15 Minutes)

Students will make their own groggers, experimenting with sounds.

1. Gather children around a table with grogger materials laid out.
2. Demonstrate for the children how different materials in different kinds of containers will make different kinds of sounds. You can have them guess which they think might be the loudest or the quietest.
3. Show the children how once they have decided on their grogger materials they can seal and then decorate them with colored masking tape.
4. Invite children to experiment with different materials in different containers until they find the combination they would like for their own grogger.
5. Have each child seal and decorate their grogger with the colored tape.
6. Once the children are done, invite them to shake their groggers one at a time in order to hear the variety of sounds.



Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle and begin with a melody, a niggun or a greeting song such as Hineh Ma Tov.

Tell about today's theme:

- Today we are learning about *Purim*.
- What do we already know about *Purim*?
- *Purim*: is a spring festival, remembers the story of Esther who saved the Jewish people from the wicked Haman, is celebrated by dressing up in costume, making and eating hamantashen, hearing the story of Esther (the megillah) read aloud or watching it acted out (in a spiel), enjoying a carnival, giving *mishloach manot*/gifts of food to friends.

Introduce today's Hebrew words — *Purim* and *Mishloach Manot*:

- Everyone swing your right hand around like you are sounding a grogger and say "Pu." Shift that motion to your left hand and say "Rim." Put them together and say "*Purim*." *Purim* means "lots" like a chance at winning something. That's one of the reasons why we have carnivals at *Purim*.
- Everyone, act like you are putting something in a basket with one hand and say "Mish." Now with your other hand and say "lo." Now with your first hand again and say "ach." Do them all together and say, "*Mishloach*".
- Everyone act like you are tossing the basket with one hand and say, "Ma." Toss with the other hand and say, "note." Put them together and say "*manot*."
- Do it all together "*mishloach*" (packing the basket), "*manot*" toss it to your neighbor. *Mishloach manot* are gifts of food that we give to neighbors and friends at *Purim*.

Story (20 Minutes)

Introduce the Story — "The Purim Superhero"

- Ask the children if they have ever or are planning to dress up for *Purim*. What kinds of costumes did they wear?
- The story we're going to read is about a person named Nate. Nate has a great idea for a *Purim* costume but it's different than what his friends want him to be. Nate has to decide whether he will do what his friends want or choose the costume he wants. Let's see what Nate decides.

Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**

- ◇ What did Nate want to dress up as for *Purim*?
- ◇ What did his friends want him to dress up as? Why did they care what Nate was for *Purim*?
- ◇ What did Nate decide to be in the end?

- **Get Curious**

- ◇ What are kids wondering about the story?
- ◇ Encourage kids to wonder about WHY something happened in the story, WHAT might happen next, or HOW someone did something.
- ◇ Record these questions on the big pad of paper.
- ◇ These questions don't have to have answers – though kids are welcome to try and answer each other's questions.
- ◇ Have kids respond to each other's questions with "good question!" and a thumbs up

- **Give one more Question to Ponder**

- ◇ I'm wondering: When is it important to do your own thing and when is it ok to go along with the group?

10 Minute Break

Activity One: Masks (20 Minutes)

Children will make masks that share something about themselves.

Introduce the Activity:

In our story, Nate made a costume that was something he really loved reading about, learning about, and imagining.

We are going to make our own masks today. And we want them to share something about us, something or someone we would really like to be, or something or someone we are really interested in. Think about that for a minute before you start.

You can be inspired by each other's ideas or the way someone uses one of the materials but try and share something about yourself with your mask.



1. Show children the materials you have for making and decorating masks.
2. Ask children to tell you their idea before they get their mask and/or start gathering their materials.
3. Have every child make their mask.
4. When a child is done they can bring their mask to you to have you fit it with elastic cord at a length that will work for their head. If their mask needs to dry, cut a length of cord and tie it just on one side; they can do the other side with someone at home when their mask is dry.
5. When the masks are done set them aside.



Activity Two: *Mishloach Manot* (20 Minutes)

Children will make *mishloach manot* to give to another child in the group.

Introduce the activity:

In our story, Nate did a brave thing by choosing a costume different than what his friends wanted him to do. By being willing to share himself, he inspired his friends to start thinking differently about how to choose a costume and how to share something about themselves. One way we share ourselves is by being ourselves.

Another way we share ourselves is by giving someone something that we made. At *Purim* it's traditional to make *mishloach manot*/gift packages for sharing with friends and neighbors. Today we are going to share ourselves by making *mishloach manot* for each other. When we go home, we can make more to share with friends and neighbors.



1. Show the children all of the things they can put in their *mishloach manot* and a sample of what it could look like when it's done.
2. Give each of the children a card to decorate. They could use some of the mask materials to make them fancier.
3. When a child is done with their card, give them one of the containers and have them put together their *mishloach manot*.
4. If they have time, they can decorate their *mishloach manot* container as well.

Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle bringing their masks and their *mishloach manot* with them.

Have each child show their mask and tell about it; what does their mask tell us about them? Then have them give their *mishloach manot* to someone else in the circle. Everyone has to choose a new person to give their *mishloach manot* to so that everyone in the circle gets one.

Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:

- Have the children practice the Hebrew words with their bodies:
- *Purim* (swing first one hand then the other like you are shaking a grogger). Children could actually shake their groggers here.
- "*Mishloach*" (packing the basket), "*manot*" toss it to your neighbor.
- Have the children say what *Purim* and *Mishloach Manot* mean (lots and gift basket)

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet

Sing a goodbye song like *Shalom Chaverim* or *Oseh Shalom*.

At Home Challenge: Celebrating *Purim* & *Mishloach Manot*

Today, in celebration of *Purim*, we made groggers, masks and *mishloach manot*/gift baskets. We also learned how we can be ourselves and share ourselves with our community.

Here are the next steps to take at home to celebrate *Purim*:

1. Find out when you can attend a megillah reading or *Purim* spiel in your community. Bring your child's grogger and mask and participate in the celebration.
2. Following the example of the *mishloach manot* your child received today, make *mishloach manot* for friends and neighbors. Keep it simple and make one or two from things you already have in the pantry with a quick note attached to each, or make it an adventure and add homemade baked goods, special treats and homemade notes for as many people as you can. Either way you will fulfill the mitzvah of giving *mishloach manot*, and you will share yourselves with your community.