



Purim Experiences Through the Lens of Multiple Intelligences

Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that learners approach content through a variety of modalities. Gardner asserts that the realization of different approaches to learning should empower learners to explore the world through multiple avenues. Use the following activities to celebrate Purim in a variety of ways.

The Four Mitzvot of Purim

1. **מְקָרָא מִגִּלָּה**
(*Mikra Megillah*, Reading the Megillah)
2. **מַתָּנוֹת לְאֲבְיוֹנִים**
(*Matanot l'Evyonim*, Giving gifts to the poor)
3. **מִשְׁלוּחַ מָנוֹת**
(*Mishloah Manot*, Giving food to friends)
4. **סְעוּדַת פּוּרִים**



Logical / Mathematical

- Who is the most prominent person on Purim? Compare the number of times Haman's name appears to the number of times Esther and Mordechai's names appear in *Megillat Esther*. What can be learned from this accounting? Check out this [Hebrew Scavenger Hunt](#) for additional ideas.
- Measurements of length and height in *Megillat Esther* are done in אַמּוֹת (*amot*, cubits), which is the length from one's elbow to the tips of one's fingers. Walking around the room, measure classroom distances and items in cubits. What is the problem with measuring in this way? How could this problem be solved?
- Haman is said to have had a three-cornered hat. Create a three-cornered wearable hat out of paper. Check out [in-depth](#) examples to get started.
- Many attribute Ahasuerus' kingdom to be Persia. Find a map of the Persian Empire. How long would it take to send a letter from Shushan (possibly the city of Susa) to the farthest reaches of the Persian Empire? Remember to take into account how fast a horse could carry the letter, rest time, etc.



Verbal / Linguistic

- Read the *Megillah* with different voices based on who is speaking.
- Write the sequel to *Megillat Esther*. What happens after chapter 10? Or write the prequel. How did all the people end up where they are?



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- There are several protest-worthy moments in the *Megillah* (gluttony, misogyny, and anti-Semitism to name a few). Create protest signs for different parts of the story.



Visual / Spatial

- Using Toontastic, Seedling Comic Studio, or another favorite comic creation app, choose your favorite section from *Megillat Esther* and produce a comic of it.
- Pictionary! Divide into teams. Put a collection of events from *Megillat Esther* into a hat. Take turns picking events and drawing.
- Collect items and arrange them to represent a snapshot from *Megillat Esther*. Take a photo of your creation and share it.



Musical / Rhythmic

- Traditionally, we drown out Haman's name using graggers, and the cacophony of sound they produce. How else might his name be drowned out? Rhythmic chanting? Singing? Drumming?
- Specific songs are played for both the President of the United States and the Queen of England when they enter public spaces. Choose theme songs appropriate to the people from the Purim narrative.
- Create a playlist that reflects the themes of the account in *Megillat Esther*. Bonus points for combining intelligences and creating a CD cover to go with the playlist.



Body / Kinesthetic

- Mordechai puts on sackcloth and ashes when he hears about Haman's evil decree. Try on different fabrics and compare how they feel. Which ones would be best for a time of mourning? Which would be best for times of joy?
- Purim is associated with the phrase **הָיָה הַפּוֹרְקָן** (*nahafoch hu*, it was turned upside down) because things did not turn out as expected. In honor of the holiday, engage in



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Backwards or Opposite Day: wear clothes inside out, write with your non-dominant hand, walk backward, etc.

- As someone reads the story of Esther, invite students to silently act out the story or portray the emotions of the characters.
- Mordechai is known for refusing to bow down to Haman. Practice other ways of respectfully acknowledging another person.



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Naturalistic

- While *Mishloah Manot* require two portions of food to be given, many people have the custom to make sure to give enough variety that the recipient would need to say at least two different בְּרָכּוֹת (*berachot*, blessings) on the foods. Brainstorm possible foods to include and the *berachah* that one would say before eating each item. Explain why each *berachah* applies to each food. (Check out this [comprehensive guide](#) if you need some assistance.)
- Esther fasts for three days before she goes to meet with King Ahasuerus. Research how long the human body can go without food and water. How long can it go with only water?
- There are several meals and feasts in *Megillat Esther*. Recreate some of the food or tea that may have been served at a Middle Eastern feast in that era.
- In the spirit of *Nahafoch Hu*, bake an [upside-down cake](#). Be aware of allergens and substitute accordingly.



Interpersonal

- Don't just give out *Mishloah Manot*; tell a joke or engage in witty repartee with the recipient in honor of adding joy to the day.
- Work with a friend or family member to collect items for *Matanot l'Evyonim*.
- Pick your favorite passage from *Megillat Esther* and act it out in a different milieu (e.g. underwater, superhero movie, sitcom, how-to video).
- Mordechai and Esther send letters to the people at the end of *Megillat Esther*. See an injustice? Be like Esther and speak truth to power. Send a letter to convey that truth.



Intrapersonal

- While the concept of *hester panim* (hidden face) is essential to Purim, some say that a Purim costume should bring out one's essence. This year, dress up in a costume that celebrates your inner self.
- Design a "Which Purim personality are you?" quiz.



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- Find something about yourself that is beautiful. Write down what it is and keep it in your pocket for when you need a pick-me-up.
- List the positive and negative characteristics of each person in *Megillat Esther*. What do you think might have made each person that way?