



Puppeting Purim (and Other Holiday Stories)

An Educational Program Guide by Dr. Penny Joel



**THE JEWISH
EDUCATION PROJECT**

Developed in partnership with The Jewish Education Project

Overview

In this 100-minute intergenerational program, families with children ages 5–9 will bring the story of Purim to life by creating and using puppet characters. This program can be adapted for Passover, Hanukkah, and other holiday stories with dramatic characters.

Enduring Understanding

Creating puppets and using them to tell stories can be a powerful and personal way to engage children in the storytelling experience. Sharing holiday stories links us to our heritage, to the generations that came before us, and to our collective Jewish narrative.

Goals

- Engage in a creative and fun Jewish learning experience as a family (children, parents, grandparents, other family members).
- Become familiar with the Purim story and the names of the characters.
- Use puppets for a participatory storytelling experience that can build the storyteller's confidence as they bring the story to life.

Materials

O: Organization provides

F: Families bring

O	Copies of a summary of the Purim story
O	Brown or white paper lunch bags
O	Examples of some completed puppets (Mordechai, Esther, Haman, Achashverosh)
O	Markers
O	Scissors
O	Glue guns or glue bottles
O	Large quantity of craft supplies (colored construction paper, buttons, googly eyes, pom-poms, yarn, stickers, feathers, etc.)
O	Printed copy of puppet-making instructions for each family/table (see last page)
O	Name tags for participants, pens/markers

O	Screen and projector, speakers, computer to show parts of the following videos (or send them in advance): Paper Bag Puppets (option 1) , How to Make a Paper Bag Puppet of Yourself (option 2) ; or share this article: https://kidsactivitiesblog.com/62724/classic-craft-making-paper-bag-puppets
F	Charged devices to connect with extended family members (cell phone, iPad, laptop, etc.)

Suggested Room Setup

- Large room with good cell reception and strong Wi-Fi
- Clear directions to connect to Wi-Fi
- Tables with 4–6 chairs per family — enough space to spread out materials and set up devices to connect with long-distance family members
- Table coverings, if desired
- Place card or sheet with directions on each table
- Microphone, if needed

Timing (100-minute program)

O: Organization does

F: Families do

O	Welcome, outline of agenda, and demonstration of puppets	10 minutes
O	Brief outline of Purim story and discussion, using a video (The Purim Story in 4 Minutes: Go Esther! or Shalom Sesame: Purim Story) or your own version of the story, perhaps adapted from ReformJudaism.org	20 minutes
F	Puppet creation	30 minutes
F	Purim puppet show	30 minutes
O	Wrap-up	10 minutes

Program

0:00–0:10 Welcome, outline of agenda, and demonstration of puppets

Rabbi/educator/facilitator welcomes participants and introduces the program using a hand puppet like the ones participants are going to make. Present the plans for the activity and show some other Purim-themed examples of puppets you had created earlier.

00:10–0:30 Brief outline of the Purim story and discussion

Introduce the Purim story using one of the following videos or by reading, with your puppet, a summary of the story. Adapt the details according to the ages of the children present.

[The Purim Story in 4 Minutes: Go Esther!](#)

[Shalom Sesame: Purim Story](#)

Your own version of the story, perhaps adapted from ReformJudaism.org

Consider putting a summary of the Purim story on each table.

Discuss:

- What are your reactions to the story?
- Have you ever experienced something that reminds you of events in the story, perhaps someone who didn't like you because you are Jewish?
- Why do you think we retell this story every year?
- What are your main takeaways from the story? (*Esther's risk-taking and bravery; the power each of us has to be heroic and to speak truth to effect change; the important role of women in our tradition; how each of us can play a role in supporting our family and community*)
- What do we do to remember this story? (*celebrate Purim each year on the fourteenth of Adar; read Megillat Esther; observe Purim customs and traditions — give gifts of food (mishloach manot); eat a festive meal; give gifts to those in need; dress up in costumes*)

00:30–1:00 Puppet creation

Invite families to create puppets of the main characters of the story: Achashverosh, Esther, Haman, Mordechai, and Vashti.