



How to Make a Family Portrait — with Hanoch Piven

An Educational Program Guide by Lisa Friedman



**THE JEWISH
EDUCATION PROJECT**

Developed in partnership with The Jewish Education Project

Overview

In this 100-minute intergenerational program, families will share their stories with one another and with the community through a creative art experience — making family portraits based on the work of Israeli artist Hanoch Piven.

Enduring Understanding

Family stories are powerful. Sharing them links us to the generations that came before us, to the generations to come, and to our collective Jewish narrative. According to [research](#) from Dr. Marshall Duke and Dr. Robyn Fivush, the more children know about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives and the higher their self-esteem. Art is one way of telling family stories.

Goals

- Engage in a meaningful and fun Jewish learning experience as a family (children, parents, grandparents, other family members).
- Understand that knowing our family's story helps us to grow more confident and resilient.

Materials

O: Organization provides

F: Families bring

F	Devices to connect with extended family members (cell phone, iPad, laptop, etc.)
O	Large piece of thick cardboard or cardstock for each participant/family
O	Colored construction paper
O	Markers
O	Scissors
O	Glue guns or glue bottles
O, F	Large quantity of household objects (buttons, bottle tops, yarn, stickers, feathers, small toys, combs, leaves, pebbles from the garden, playing cards, beads, small costumes pieces, plastic utensils, etc.)
O	Printed copy of guidelines for each family/table

○	Printed copy of Why Sharing Family Stories Is Good for Your Grandchildren for each family/table
○	Name tags for participants, pens/markers
○	Screen and projector, speakers, computer to show JGN's Hanoch Piven's how-to video

Suggested Room Setup

- Large room with good cell reception and strong Wi-Fi
- Clear directions to connect to Wi-Fi
- One table 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 with directions on each table
- Microphone, if needed

Timing (100-minute program)

○: Organization does

F: Families do

○	Welcome, outline of agenda, and set induction	15 minutes
○	Introduction to Hanoch Piven and watching video	15 minutes
F	Portrait creation	40 minutes
F	Sharing portraits	15 minutes
○	Wrap-up	15 minutes

Program

0:00–0:15 Welcome, outline of agenda, and set induction

Rabbi/educator/facilitator shares the following texts with participants:

1. “The great questions — Who are we? Why are we here? What is our task? — are best answered by telling a story. This is fundamental to understanding why Torah is the kind of book it is: not a theological treatise or a metaphysical system but a series of interlinked stories extended over time, from Abraham and Sarah’s journey from Mesopotamia to Moses’ and the Israelites’ wanderings in the desert. Judaism is less about truth as system than about truth as story. And we are part of that story. That is what it is to be a Jew.” ~Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
2. “And you shall tell your child. . . .” ~Exodus 13:8

In small groups, discuss what these texts teach us about storytelling.

- Why is storytelling important? (possible responses include: helps us understand ourselves and others—and the past; it’s an accessible way to convey values; stories can have different meanings for each listener; entertains while informing)
- What are some ways we tell stories as Jews? (*Torah stories, holiday stories, Jewish folktales, rabbi’s sermons*) As families? (*at family meals and celebrations*) How are these the same/different? (*Seders and Hanukkah rituals are largely celebrated as families; a celebration such as brit/baby naming or bar/bat mitzvah is both Jewish and often part of a community celebration and part of a family’s story.*)
- What are some other ways to share stories? (*photographs, videos, art, social media*)

0:15–0:30 Introduction: Hanoch Piven

Hanoch Piven is an award-winning Israeli illustrator, educator, and seasoned creative motivator. Piven’s artwork is unique in both form and method. By reinventing the meaning and use of everyday objects, he creates associations between these objects and the subject of his creation.

Say: We are now going to watch a video of Hanoch Piven demonstrating how to create a family portrait, produced by the Jewish Grandparents Network.

Show JGN’s [Hanoch Piven video](#).

Explain that participants will create their own portraits. They can do this any way they choose: each person makes a self-portrait, each person makes a portrait of another family member, everyone works together to make one family portrait.

Encourage participants to think about the following as they create their portraits:

- Choose one object in your creation that to you represents a family member's individual strength.
- Choose an object that to you represents your family in some way.

Point out all materials and resources. Answer participants' questions.

00:30–1:10 Portrait creation

Have a facilitator on hand to answer questions and help with the portrait creation process.

When creations are complete, take a large, clear photograph of each. Either give directions for how and where to share photographs of completed portraits, or upload them yourself.

1:10–1:25 Sharing

Invite families to view all the portrait creations museum-style by walking around to view one another's portraits.

Invite individual families to share their portraits with the whole group. Use directed questions to help focus their sharing; for example, please share one object in your creation that represents an individual strength and share another object that represents your family in some way. Keep responses short and focused.

1:25–1:40 Wrap-up

Have families discuss the following questions among their members: How did you feel while participating in this program? What was your favorite part and why? What surprised you? What is one thing you learned today? In what ways did sharing stories as a family help you feel more connected to one another? In what other ways can you begin to tell and share stories with your family? (*through family objects and photos*)

As time allows, invite families to share their responses with the group.

Optional variation: Separate children and adult participants at this point in the program. Children can debrief and/or play a game, have a snack, or complete another activity in another room or in their classroom. With the adults, add the following to the discussion: How can we take what we learned forward with us? What are ways that we can extend the learning/experience at home?

Sample preparation email

Dear Families,

On [day and date] at [time], [name of synagogue/organization] will hold a special family education program for all __ grade families.

How to Make a Family Portrait with Hanoch Piven is an intergenerational program designed for children, parents, grandparents, and other extended family members.

Together we will learn how to create portraits that tell each family's story using the unique style of Israeli artist Hanoch Piven. Learn more about Hanoch Piven [here](#)

We invite family members who are not local to [name of synagogue/organization] to join the program remotely. We encourage you to bring whatever device works best for your family. We'll make sure there's good cell reception and strong Wi-Fi! If you have questions about how to best make this work for your family, please contact [name of contact].

We also suggest reading the following [short article](#) about the benefits of telling family stories to children.

Finally, please bring a variety of discarded household objects such as old small toys, garden objects, buttons, beads, etc. — especially if you have objects that can help tell your family's story or illustrate something about a family member's personality or traits. For example, if every time your family gathers, you play a favorite card game, you might bring a card or two from a discarded deck. Or if Grandpa has bushy eyebrows, you might bring an old brush and use the bristles. [Name of synagogue/organization] will supply everything else you need to create your family portrait.

If you have any questions, please reach out to [contact name].

We look forward to creating together!

Sample follow-up email

Dear Families,

We are so pleased that you joined us on [date] for our workshop How to Make a Family Portrait with Hanoah Piven. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!

If you have not done so already, please take a photo of your completed creation and send it to [name and email] so we can add it to our display.

Here's the link to the Jewish Grandparents Network post about the [value of sharing family stories](#).

We also encourage you to explore [the Family Room](#) to find more opportunities and activities your family can do together.

As always, do not hesitate to be in touch if you have questions.



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