

## IN YOUR HOME

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### *PURIM*

FEBRUARY, 2012 – ADAR, 5772

#### **Shalom Parents,**

**Purim is one of the most joyful and fun Jewish holidays.** *Purim* celebrations always include great joy, dancing, singing, eating, drama and sharing food with friends and money with those in need. It also has a very serious message, commemorating a time when, approximately 2500 years ago, the small and oppressed Jewish population of Persia courageously overcame an evil enemy and was saved from extermination.

**The story of Purim is told in the biblical book of Esther.** Esther, a beautiful orphaned young Jewish woman living in Persia, was raised, like a daughter, by her cousin Mordechai. One day, Ahasuerus, King of Persia, took Esther into his harem, in the Persian city of Shushan. He loved Esther more than the other women in the harem, making her his queen. He was unaware that Esther was a Jew, as Mordechai had warned her not to reveal her identity. Haman, the story's villain, was an arrogant, egotistical advisor to the king. He plotted to destroy the Jewish people to settle a personal gripe against Mordechai. The name of the holiday, "*Purim*" means "lots" referring to the lottery that Haman used to choose the date for the massacre of Persian Jews. But Haman was unsuccessful, his plot was discovered and the Jews of Persia were saved.

**Listening to the reading** of the Book of Esther during the *Purim* service is *Purim's* primary commandment. It is customary to boo, hiss, stamp feet and rattle *groggers* (noisemakers), blotting out Haman's name whenever it is mentioned. We are also commanded to eat, drink and be merry on this day, in celebration of Persian Jewish delivery from extinction.

**The Purim seudah** (feast), held on the afternoon of the day of *Purim*, while it is still light outside, is a venue for celebrating our deliverance from danger. We say *HaMotzi* (blessing over bread) at the start of the *seudah*, but, unlike other festivals, there is no *kiddush* (blessing over wine) or candle lighting. The dinner is more festive than usual and might include special foods, singing and games, often continuing until after dark. Many people dress up in costumes, and tell the story of *Purim*, through a dramatic presentation called a "*spiel*" (pronounced *shpeel*).

**We give gifts.** We send at least two portions of food, known as *mishloah manot* (also called *shalach manos*) to a friend or family member, in addition to a gift of money to at least two poor people, ensuring that everyone has enough food to enjoy the feast held later that day in an environment of friendship and love.

**Purim is celebrated on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Adar**, usually falling at the end of February or in March. In cities that were walled at the time of the original story (Jerusalem, for instance), *Purim* is celebrated on the 15th of *Adar*, because the Book of Esther tells us that in *Shushan* (a walled city), Jews were not saved until the next day. That day is known as *Shushan Purim*.

**This year's Purim observance** starts with the Fast of Esther on Wednesday, March 7, commemorating the period of hardship imposed upon the Jews by Haman's death decree. The *Purim* festival will be celebrated on Thursday, March 8. The *Megillah* (scroll containing the *Purim* story) will be read aloud in synagogues on Thursday night and Friday morning (March 9).



## HAVING FUN AT HOME

### BAKE, EAT & SHARE WITH OTHERS

As we bake, eat & share *hamantashen*, we're reminded of the *Purim* story's events and characters.

### Wheat Flour *Hamantashen*

#### Ingredients:

- 1 1/3 cup margarine or butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 2 cups white flour
- 2 cups wheat flour (No substitutions. Wheat flour is necessary for correct consistency)
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- Any fruit preserve or pie filling

Blend the margarine and sugar thoroughly. Add eggs and juice, blending thoroughly. Add flour, 1/2 cup at a time, alternating white and wheat, mixing thoroughly as each amount is added. Add baking powder and cinnamon and mix. Refrigerate the mixture for 5-8 hours. Place a small ball of dough between two sheets of wax paper, dusted with flour. Then roll the dough between the wax paper sheets as thin as possible. Using a wide-mouth jar or drinking glass, cut out circles. Place a heaping teaspoon of filling on each circle and pinch edges together to form a triangle. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes, until browned. Makes about 3-4 dozen.

### Wheat-Free, Gluten-Free Variation

For those on a wheat-free or a gluten-free diet, substitute 4 cups buckwheat flour (make sure it's labeled wheat-free/gluten-free) and 1 cup milled flax seed for the white and wheat flour. Reduce the baking powder to 2 tsp. The *hamantashen* will be the color of pumpernickel, and taste delicious.



### MAKE COSTUMES & DRESS UP

*Purim* is a time for dressing up in any way you wish.

#### • Construction Paper Crown

Cut a narrow piece of thin cardboard to fit around your child's head. Overlap its ends slightly. Then staple or glue it together. After it has dried, decorate it with sparkles, fabric, ribbon and markers.

#### • Tzedakah (Charity) Box

Cut a hole in the bottom and one on each side of a large box. Turn it upside down and fit it over your child's head and arms. Wrap the entire box with silver wrapping paper. Write "Tzedakah" on the front with the marker. Cut "coins" out of gold paper, and glue them onto the front of the box.

#### • Flower

Dress your child in green shirt and pants. Follow the instructions above to make a headband. Cut large flower petals out of colorful posterboard and glue them to the headband. Cut large leaves out of green posterboard and pin them to your child's sleeves or pants.

#### • Ladybug

Dress your child in a dark shirt and pants. Cut wing shapes out of red posterboard. Using a drinking glass, trace circles from black posterboard. Glue them onto the wings. Punch two holes at the top of each wing and thread black twine through them, tying them over your child's shoulders, backpack style. Make a headband as described above. Wrap one end of each of two

pipe cleaners around the headband. Either twirl the ends or attach a pompom to the ends, creating antennae.



### SHARE WITH OTHERS

*Purim* offers excellent opportunities for children to learn Jewish concepts of hospitality and *tzedakah* (charity).

• **Mishloah Manot, the exchange of goodies** with friends and relatives, is traditional and fun.

#### With your child:

Make containers (using paper lunch bags, unused boxes or any other material). Cover the inside of the container with tissue paper, and decorate the outside with glued-on colorful shapes

made from construction paper, colored popcorn, beads, buttons or pasta. Fill the containers with favorite goodies and deliver them (in costumes if possible).



• **Purim Seudah, is a time to invite family and friends** to share a celebratory meal, different from all others.

**With your child:** Create a guest list and make and mail invitations or invite guests via phone or email. Choose a fun and unusual menu. Make a list of games to play and songs to sing. Dress up in costumes. Welcome your guests, tell jokes, and enjoy the *seudah*.

## MORE FUN AT HOME

### TELL THE STORY WITH A PUPPET SHOW

Encourage your child to tell and retell the story in his own way, and as many times as he wishes.

#### Make a variety of puppets:

- Draw the face of a *Purim* character on construction paper and cut it out. Then, glue it onto the upper part of a stick or a long cardboard tube.
- Stuff a paper bag or an old sock. Draw a face on it. Push a long stick or cardboard tube into the center of the bag or sock.
- Using colored markers, draw the face of a *Purim* character onto a paper bag. Place your hand inside the bag and manipulate it.
- Create a face on a paper plate. Use yarn for hair and colored markers, paper, sequins or glitter for facial features and clothes.
- Turn an empty plastic detergent bottle upside down. Draw a face on it. Roll up a newspaper and insert it inside the bottle to create a handle.



#### Make a puppet theater:

- Place several low chairs under a long high table. When performing the show, sit on the chairs and hold the puppets high up, above the table. Alternatively cut a large hole out of the back of a large box, decorate it, and stand it up on a table. Then present the show by holding the puppets up high as you sit on a low seat.

### TELL THE STORY WITH A THRONE

Make and use a throne to dramatize the story.

- Look at pictures of thrones in storybooks.
- Provide pieces of fabric, scarves, jewelry, stickers, ribbons, and a chair that you don't mind temporarily redesigning.
- Invite your child and her friends to dress up as *Purim* story characters. Tell the story and invite the children to act out the parts, incorporating the "throne" into their dramatization.

### CHILDREN AND DRAMA

**Children are delighted with drama.** Their fascination with pretending starts when toddlers, younger than a year old, mimic their world. Preschoolers love acting out stories they've invented or heard from others. Elementary school children continue acting out stories begun in earlier years with greater detail and attention to rules than previously.

#### Dramatic play is essential for children's healthy development.

While engaging in dramatic play activities, children learn to use language effectively and creatively, while encountering different points of views. Their play often helps them look for solutions and make decisions, as they socialize, develop empathy and exchange ideas with other players, contributing to their self-esteem and creativity.

***Purim* offers many opportunities for children and families** to act out a well known and dramatic story. It is customary to hold

carnival-like celebrations, perform plays and parodies, and hold beauty contests on this day. For many, *Purim* would not be complete without a *spiel*. A tradition for hundreds of years, it typically includes humorous plays, skits, and music. The *spiel* can be the actual story, a comic interpretation of the traditional *Purim* story using modern characters and settings, or anything else players decide upon. Read *Purim* stories to your children. Then create and hang decorations throughout your home, make and wear costumes, dress up as the *Purim* story characters and act out the story.

#### Invite friends and neighbors to be the audience

when the show is ready to be shared. Children adore having all members of their family join them in acting out the performance.

Research confirms many benefits of drama for children but first and foremost it's fun to dramatize the story with your family. *Purim* offers memorable opportunities for self expression for all.



## A RECOMMENDED SELECTION OF BOOKS

### 1 - 2 ½ year olds

**When It's Purim** by E.S. Zolkower, Inc., Kar-Ben Publishing, 2009. This board book introduces listeners to *Purim* traditions through fun rhyming words and brightly colored illustrations of animals preparing *hamantashen*.

### 3-7 year olds

**Cakes and Miracles: A Purim Tale** by B.D. Goldin, Puffin Publishers, 1993. In this classic folktale, an angel inspires blind Hershel to make the loveliest *hamantashen* in his village.

**It's Purim Time** by L.B. Kropf, Kar-Ben Publishing, Inc., 2005. Preschool children prepare for *Purim* by making costumes, dressing up, acting out the *Purim* story, eating *hamantashen*, delivering *shalach manot* and making *groggers* (instructions included).

**The Purim Surprise** by L. Simpson, Kar-Ben Publishing, 2005. When Naomi and her mother move to a new community, they distribute *shalach manot* packages to everyone in the Jewish directory there. Naomi's mother is so busy delivering *Purim* treats, she forgets to notice Naomi's birthday....or does she?

**A Very Special Gift: A Purim Story** by S. Gettingger, Hachai, 1993. Avigail wants to buy a present for her mother, who is constantly busy helping other family members. This heartwarming tale sensitively helps readers understand disappointment.

**Hooray! It's Purim**, by S. Rick, Gefen, 2000. This delightful activity book is packed with *Purim* activities, as well as the story and symbols of *Purim*.

**The Mystery Bear: A Purim Story**, by L. Adelson, Clarion Books, 2004. After awakening from hibernation, Little Bear's hunger leads him to a *Purim* celebration where celebrants mistake him for a costumed guest.

**Sammy Spider's First Purim**, by S.A.Rouss, Kar-Ben Publishing, 2000. In this charming book with bold illustrations, while Sammy Spider helps Josh prepare for *Purim*, he gets stuck inside a *grogger*. Can he escape?

**Purim Fun for Little Hands**, Illustrated by K. J. Kahn, Kar-Ben Publishing, 1994. Games, riddles,

activity cards and a colorful center-fold board game are included in this picture story of *Purim*.

### 4-9 year olds

**The Story of Esther: A Purim Tale** by E.A.Kimmel, Marshall Cavendish Corp, 2010. Listeners are captivated by an exciting plot, strong willed women, daring Jewish heroes overcoming an evil scoundrel and a huge party to celebrate a exhilarating victory.

### A Purim Celebration: and Other Purim Stories

by M. Fuchs, Judaica Press, 2001. This easy-to-read and charming book describes a delightful and joyous *Purim* day with the Cohen family.

**Here Come the Purim Players!** by B.Cohen, UAHC, 1998. In this lively retelling of the *Purim* story, with beautiful illustrations, the Jews of the Prague ghetto excitedly crowd into Reb Zalman's house awaiting the arrival of the *Purim* players and the dramatization of the story.

**Make your Own Megillah: The Story of Purim** by J.Groner & M.Wikler, Kar-Ben Copies, Inc., 1998. Young children learn the *Purim* story in this colorful activity book with crafts, recipes, party games, songs and pages to color and assemble into a *megillah* scroll.

**The Whole Megillah: Almost**, by S.Silberman, Kar-Ben Copies, Inc., Rockville, MD, 1990. Questions, songs, activities and a ten-act play with production notes in Hebrew and English are included in this lively *megillah*.

**The Queen Who Saved Her People** by T. Balsley, Kar-Ben Copies, Inc., 2011. This rhyming fun tale can be read as a regular story or acted out with an ensemble of voices and actors.

### AND OTHER RESOURCES

CD: *Miracles and Wonders*, by Debbie Friedman

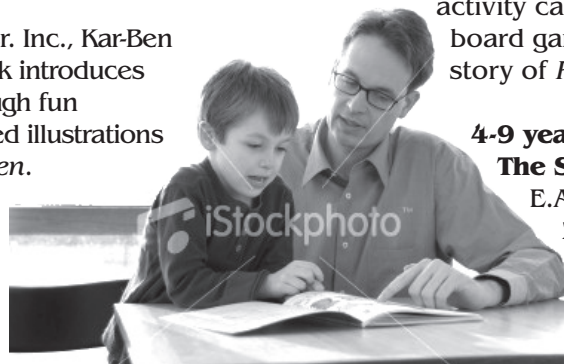
Websites:

[www.jewfaq.org/holiday9.htm](http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday9.htm)

[www.holidays.net/Purim](http://www.holidays.net/Purim)

[www.AISH.com/holidays/Purim](http://www.AISH.com/holidays/Purim)

[http://www.chabad.org/holidays/purim/default\\_cdo/jewish/Purim.htm](http://www.chabad.org/holidays/purim/default_cdo/jewish/Purim.htm)



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