



# Venture into Purim



*Activities, recipes, information, and more  
that will help you learn about and  
celebrate Purim.*





# Venture into Purim



## tool • kit

a personal set of resources, abilities, or skills.

*"Venture into Purim is a toolkit full of things you can use to learn, play, and celebrate Purim!"*

**In this kit,** you will find activities, recipes, information, and more that will help you learn about and celebrate Purim. If you have questions or are seeking more information, please reach out. jkidphilly is here to help!

## Table of Contents

<b>Info: Fast Facts</b> <i>(Purim at a glance!)</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>Info: The Purim Story</b> <i>(for ages 2-6 and 7+)</i>	<b>2</b>
<b>Info: Purim Around the World</b> <i>(Some of the variations in other countries.)</i>	<b>3</b>
<b>Activity: Paper Dolls</b> <i>(Create fun paper dolls of all the major heroes and villains of the Purim story!)</i>	<b>4</b>
<b>Keep Learning: Ometz Lev</b> <i>(See how Queen Esther's actions relate to this Jewish value!)</i>	<b>5</b>
<b>Activity: Create a Superhero</b> <i>(What special powers will your superhero have?.)</i>	<b>5</b>
<b>Info: Purim Food Around the World</b> <i>(Would you try these foods from across the globe?)</i>	<b>6</b>
<b>Keep Learning: Mishloach Manot</b> <i>(Learn why we "send portions to one another" on Purim.)</i>	<b>7</b>
<b>Make a Mishloach Manot Basket</b> <i>(Give one to your friends!)</i>	<b>7</b>
<b>Activity: Adoughma</b> <i>(Purim play dough prompts.)</i>	<b>8</b>
<b>Info: Purim Spiels</b> <i>(What are these funny skits all about?)</i>	<b>9</b>
<b>Activity: Purim Masks</b> <i>(Decorate your own and dress up to celebrate Purim!)</i>	<b>10</b>
<b>More Resources:</b> <i>Links to activities, information, videos, music, books, and more.</i>	<b>11</b>



[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## FAST FACTS!

1. Purim is the most festive holiday of the Jewish calendar.
2. Purim is the story of **Queen Esther**, who courageously risked her life to save the Jews.
3. On Purim, we read the **megillah**, which is the **Book of Esther** and tells the Purim story.
4. At Purim, we give **mishloach manot** — gifts of food — to family and friends.
5. **Groggers** — noisemakers — are used to drown out the name of Haman.
6. A common Purim treat is **Hamantaschen**, a filled triangular cookie said to represent the shape of Haman's tri-cornered hat.
7. One of the mitzvot of Purim is to give support to those who need help through **tzedakah**.
8. Purim is celebrated similarly by Jews all over the world, but each culture has its own special spin on the celebrating.
9. **Shushan** is the name of the Persian city where the Book of Esther takes place.
10. The main players in the Purim story are named King **Achashverosh**, Queen **Vashti**, Mordechai, Queen **Esther**, and **Haman**.





[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## The Purim Story

### For 2-6 year olds:

A long time ago, many Jewish people lived in the country of Persia. The king loved to give big parties in his palace. At one of his parties, he wanted the queen to dance for his guests, but she did not want to so she said no. The king got so angry that she wouldn't do what he said, so he sent her away and started to look for a new queen. He chose a beautiful and kind woman named Esther and she became the new queen. She was Jewish, but the king didn't know it.

One day, the king's helper, a mean and greedy man named Haman was walking down the street and telling everyone to bow down to him. One man said he would not bow. He said, "I am a Jew and I don't bow to anyone!" This brave man's name was Mordechai and he was Queen Esther's cousin.

This made Haman angry and he decided to punish all the Jews. One night, Esther invited the King and Haman to a party so that she could tell the King in front of Haman that he planned to hurt her.

"I don't want to hurt you," exclaimed Haman, "You are my Queen."

"Well, you want to hurt the Jewish people and I am Jewish!" The King was shocked. He had no idea that his queen was a Jew! He immediately took Haman's job away and sent him away. The Jews were very happy. They sang and danced and gave big parties, which is how we celebrate the holiday of Purim today.

### For ages 7+

A long time ago, many Jewish people lived in the city of Shushan in the country of Persia. The king and queen of this country were named King Ahashverosh (A-hash-vay-rosh) and Queen Vashti. King Ahashverosh loved to give big parties in his palace. At one of his parties, he wanted Queen Vashti to dance for his guests. Vashti did not want to dance, so she sent a message that she would not attend the King's party.

"Nobody says 'no' to the King! Vashti will no longer be my queen!" Ahashverosh sent Vashti away from the palace and called all young women to the palace so that he could choose a new queen. One was a Jewish girl named Esther. She did not want to go, but her cousin, Mordechai, said she must.

The King chose the beautiful and kind Esther to be his queen. Meanwhile, Haman, a selfish, mean, and greedy man who was the King's assistant, would walk down the streets and tell everyone to bow down to him. People were afraid of him so they bowed down to him as he ordered. But there was one man who refused to.

"I won't bow down to any man," he said, "I bow down only to my God." This brave man was Queen Esther's cousin Mordechai! Haman decided to punish all the Jews because of Mordechai, without knowing that Queen Esther was Jewish or that she was Mordechai's cousin.

One day, Mordechai was standing outside the palace walls when he overheard two guards whispering about harming the King. Mordechai warned the King and saved him. The King was grateful and to reward Mordechai, gave him his best clothes to wear and told Haman to lead him through the streets of Shushan on the King's beautiful horse. This made Haman even angrier and more determined to punish all the Jews. One night, Esther invited the King and Haman to a party so that she could tell the King in front of Haman that he planned to hurt her.

"I don't want to hurt you," exclaimed Haman, "You are my Queen."

"Well," responded Esther, "you want to hurt the Jewish people and I am Jewish!" The King was shocked. He had no idea that his queen was a Jew! He immediately took Haman's job away from him and gave it to Mordechai.

The Jews were very happy. They sang and danced and gave big parties, which is how we celebrate the holiday of Purim today.





# Venture into Purim



[Print this page](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Purim Celebrations around the World

In a Sephardic synagogue in London, **England**, congregants write the name of Haman on a paper and erase it when his name is read.

In **France**, children took smooth stones and would write or engrave Haman's name on them, and strike them together during the Megillah reading whenever Haman's name was mentioned, in order to erase it.

Jews in Salonika, a city in **Greece**, bake "Haman-shaped" cakes on the eve of the Shabbat before Purim and place them on the window ledges until the festive Purim meal. During the meal, the cakes resliced so that participants can "devour Haman".

In Bukhara, **Uzbekistan**, the ground is usually covered with snow at Purim. A snow-Haman is built next to the synagogue. After the Purim meal, the community gathers around the Haman and a large fire is made of wood, rags and paper. They stand and watch until Haman melts in the heat and disappears, singing until it is completely melted.

In **North America**, Purim is traditionally celebrated with the reading of the megillah (Purim story), carnivals with prizes and games for children, and festive costume parades.

In Mumbai, **India** Purim is celebrated by singing, 'Esther Ranichi Katha' — the tale of Queen Esther — sung to Hindu temple tunes accompanied by musical instruments like Dholak and Harmonium.

*The Festival of Santa Esterica* is a holiday that was created as a substitute for Purim by the Sephardic Jews forced to convert to Catholicism after their expulsion from Spain in the late 15th century. It is still celebrated today in parts of the **Southwestern United States** and **Latin America**. The festival is about a fictional "Catholic" saint called "Esterica" who was heavily based upon Queen Esther.

Jews in **Morocco** bake challahs called *Ojos de Haman* (Haman's eyes), which include almonds and two unpeeled hard-boiled eggs.



[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Heroes and Villains Paper Dolls

*Create fun paper dolls of all the major heroes and villains of the Purim story!*

*Materials: paper doll templates\*, crayons/markers/colored pencils, scissors (optional: tape\*\*)*

1. Print the paper doll template onto cardstock or heavy paper.

2. Color in and cut out the doll. Don't forget to draw on a face!



3. Print the costume templates onto plain paper and color them in.



4. Cut out the costume templates (being careful not to cut off the folding tabs) and then mix and match the costumes onto the doll.

*\*\*Use tape to secure beard tabs, if necessary.*



*\*Printable templates can be found at the end of the Toolkit*



[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Keep Learning!

### Jewish Value: *Ometz Lev* Courage

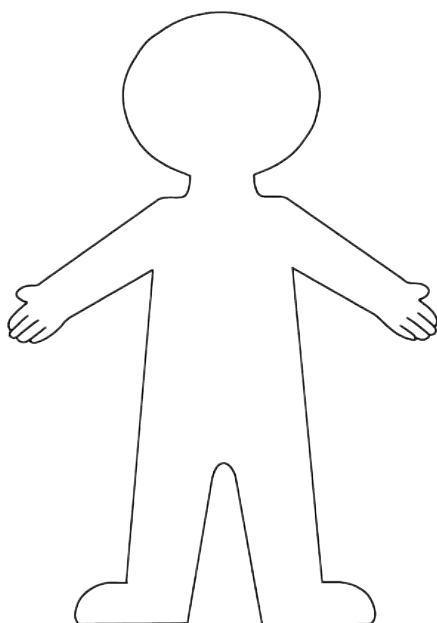
The Hebrew term for courage, *Ometz* or *Ometz Lev*, literally means “strength” or “heart-strength.” This doesn’t mean you have no fear, but that you have the inner strength to move forward anyway. Even if you sometimes feel scared or worried, you can still access *Ometz Lev* at any time. It’s also important to remember that sometimes it takes courage to not move forward when you feel scared. Listening to your heart and your body and pausing when there is fear and anxiety can be difficult and *Ometz Lev* may also mean having the courage to take a moment and regroup.

What are some of the ways in your life that you live the Jewish value of *Ometz Lev*? Are there times when you

## Activity:

### Create a Superhero

When we think of superheroes, we think of characters who have amazing powers and often use them to go into scary situations to help people. Think of Superman using his courage to rescue someone from the top of a burning building. Or Storm courageously creating toxic rain to save people from harm. Create your own superhero. What special powers do they have and how do they use them to act with *Ometz Lev* [courage]?



**My Superhero is named:**

---

**They have the superpower of:**

---

**They use this superpower to show courage by:**

---

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[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Purim Food Around the World

*Would you try any of these Purim foods from across the globe?*

**Italian** Jews eat vegetable pastry turnover called Buricche. It symbolizes the vegan diet Esther kept in the palace, enabling her to hide her Jewish identity.



**Iraqi** Jews prepare baaba cookies and sambusak, which is a protein-filled dough that's deep-fried and full of aromatic flavor.



Jews in **Bulgaria** eat Caveos di Aman, a dish consisting of olives and hard-boiled eggs served with stringy pasta, representing Haman's hair.



Jews in **France** eat palmiers, a pastry symbolizing Haman's misshapen ears.



**Greek** Jews enjoy a bread called folares. It's meant to symbolize Haman's head. Its dough is wrapped around a hard-boiled egg.



Jews in **North America** eat hamantaschen. It may refer to "Haman's tash" (the Yiddish word for "pocket"), which held money to bribe King Achashverosh. It also may refer to the shape of Haman's hat or his bent ears.





[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## Keep Learning: *Mishloach Manot*

*Mishloach Manot* [meesh-LOE-akh mah-NOTE] means "sending portions to one another." It is a phrase taken from the Megillah [Book of Esther] that commands the Jewish community to give small packages of food or gifts to friends on the day of Purim.

There are two explanations for why this commandment might exist. The first explanation is because Haman accused the Jews of being "a scattered, and divided nation." So, Jewish people send gifts to each other in order to show that they are not divided, but united.

Another explanation is that so that everyone can fulfill the mitzvah of eating a proper, festive meal on Purim.

## Make a Mishloach Manot Basket

*Materials: 8x10 sheet of colored paper, scissors, glue stick, tissue paper or coffee filter*



Holding the paper horizontally, fold it in half four times and then unfold.



Cut on all the fold lines, creating 16 strips. (This will be enough for two baskets with 2 left over)



Make a "+" with two strips and glue them together at the center.



Make an "x" with two more and glue those on top at the center, making an "\*"



Cut one of the remaining strips in half and glue that half onto another strip (this will be the ring and it will be 1.5 strips long.)



Glue the ends of the strip to make a circle and place it in the middle of the "\*"



Bend and then glue the ends of the strips to the outside of the band, all the way around.



Glue the ends of the last strip onto the inside of the band to create the handle.



Line the bottom of your Mishloach Manot basket with tissue paper or a coffee filter and then fill it with treats to share with a friend!





# Venture into Purim



[Print this page](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Purim Play Dough Prompts

Purim is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the joy of the historic overturning of an unpleasant fate for the Jews of Persia more than one thousand years ago. There is an exciting story and many rituals and customs associated with Purim. Setting up and observing your child engage in sensory play around the themes of Purim will help you gain insights into how your child thinks and feels about what they have learned about this holiday.

Play is an important part of learning and adults have a critical role during play.

*Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a psychologist at Temple University, said, "The best toys are 90% the kid, 10% the toy".*

**Sensory play is 90% kid!**



### What is your role during sensory play?

- Observe and listen
- Praise their play
- Imitate how they play
- Describe what you're seeing them do
- Allow them to have choices in what they are doing

*If they seem finished or bored, you can expand their play by adding an, "I wonder if..." statement.*

### "I wonder" statements for Purim Dough Play:

- I wonder what character from the Purim story we can create.
- I wonder what treats we can make to share with our friends on Purim at the seudah [festive meal].
- I wonder what we can put in our hamantaschen [traditional Purim cookies].
- I wonder why hamantaschen have three corners.
- I wonder what treats we can put in our Mishloach manot - [Purim gift baskets some Jews send to one another].
- I wonder what Jewish symbols Queen Esther had to hide from the king.
- I wonder if you can make a grogger with these materials.
- I wonder what these objects from the story might have looked like - King's seal, the lots, Haman's hat.

*When the play is finished, reflecting is an important step to construct meaning and compound learning. Ask questions like these when you are finished playing:*

- "How does it feel when someone gives you a present?"
- "How does it feel when you give a present to someone else?"



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[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## Purim Spiels

### What is a Purim Spiel?

*Spiel* is a Yiddish word meaning a “play” or “skit.” A Purim spiel actually tells the story of the *Book of Esther*, giving people an opportunity to cheer the heroes (Mordecai and Esther) and boo the villains (Haman).



Purim spiels are usually funny skits that include popular songs with rewritten lyrics that poke fun at current events or popular people. Some spiels are small readings and others are big productions with costumes, music, and props.



The Purim Spiel often takes a look at world politics with various world leaders playing the roles of heroes and villains and is an opportunity to present a Jewish version of political justice in the world.

Have you ever seen or been in a Purim spiel? Maybe you could use the paper doll activity on the next page and create your own version of a spiel!



# Venture into Purim



[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

[Print this page](#)

## Purim Masks

***Create a mask to symbolize the Purim story's theme of "hidden identity" and to dress up and celebrate the holiday!***

*Materials: Felt Masks with elastic band, letter and jewel stickers that adhere to felt*

1. Ask child to select a word describing something they love, wish to be, or way they should behave.

2. Based on child's age or ability, have them help search for the letters in the word they selected.



3. Peel sticker backs off of letters and stick word on to felt mask.



4. Ask child to pick 4-6 jewel stickers to decorate their word, and peel of stickers to put on the remaining space of the mask.



# Venture into Purim



Print this page

[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## More Resources

*More to learn, play, cook, read, watch, and listen!*

### PLAY

- Color and send [cards](#) to family and friends.
- Check out our [Purim Pinterest board](#) for more ideas!

### COOK

- No- bake child-friendly [hamantashen recipe](#)
- Check out our hamantaschen [Pinterest board](#)

### LINKS

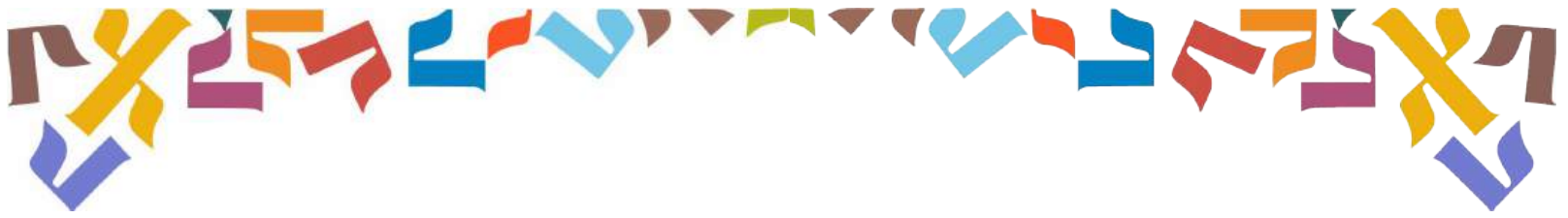
- Read more about Purim customs around the world [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)
- Read more about [Purim foods in other countries](#).
- PJ Library teaches about [Mishloach Manot](#).
- [The Spiel Guy](#) writes Purim parodies of all kinds.
- Here is a [Purim play](#) for grades 3-7. [Scroll down for "The Courage of Esther."]
- Read more about the Jewish value of [Ometz Lev](#).

### READ

- *A Persian Princess*
- *The Purim Superhero*
- *Sweet Tamales for Purim*
- *Cakes and Miracles*
- and more!

### WATCH/LISTEN

- Enjoy jkidphilly's Purim [Spotify playlist](#)
- Shalom Sesame's *Be Happy, It's Purim!* [for younger kids]
- *Princess of Persia* [a video for older kids]

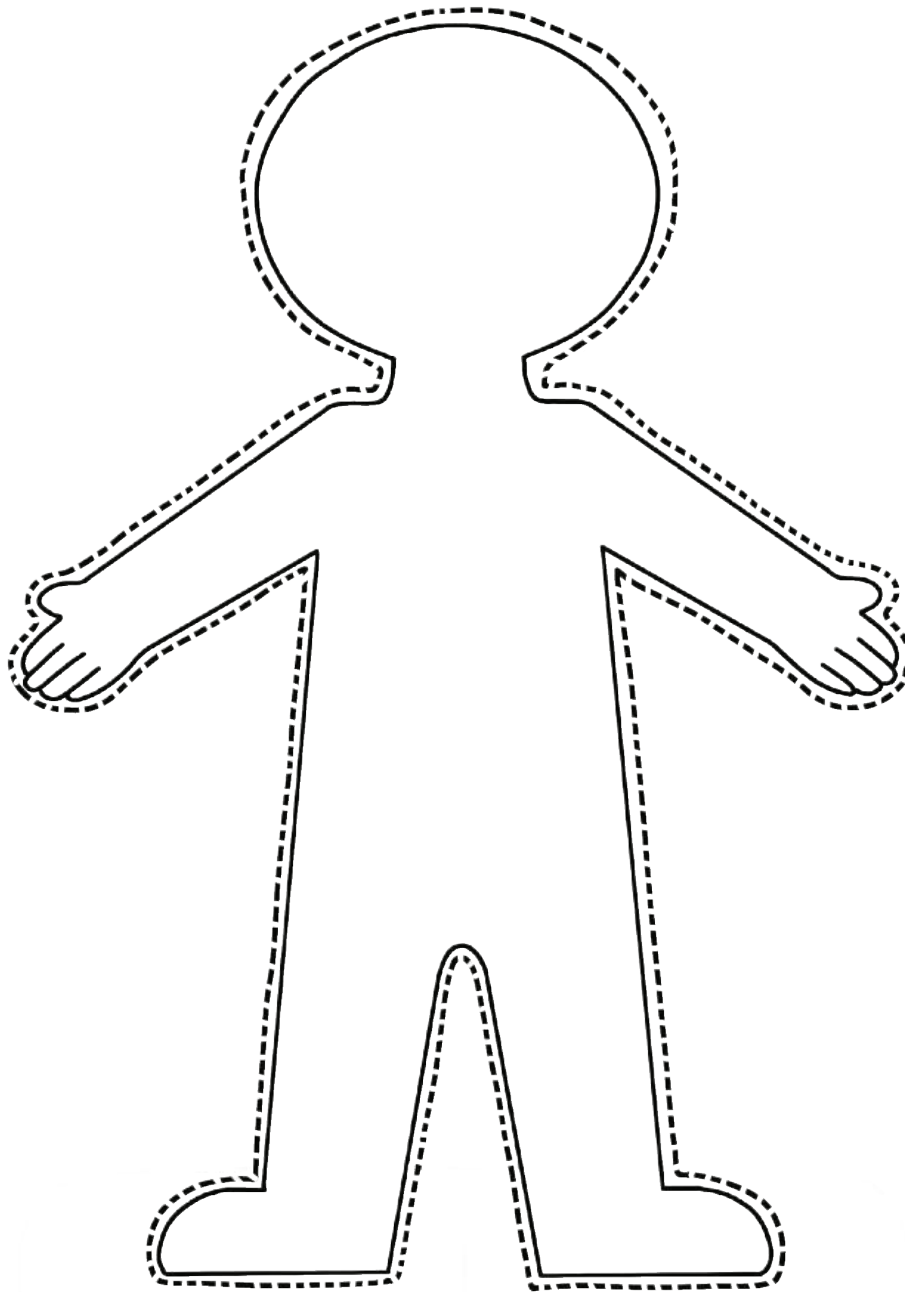


[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

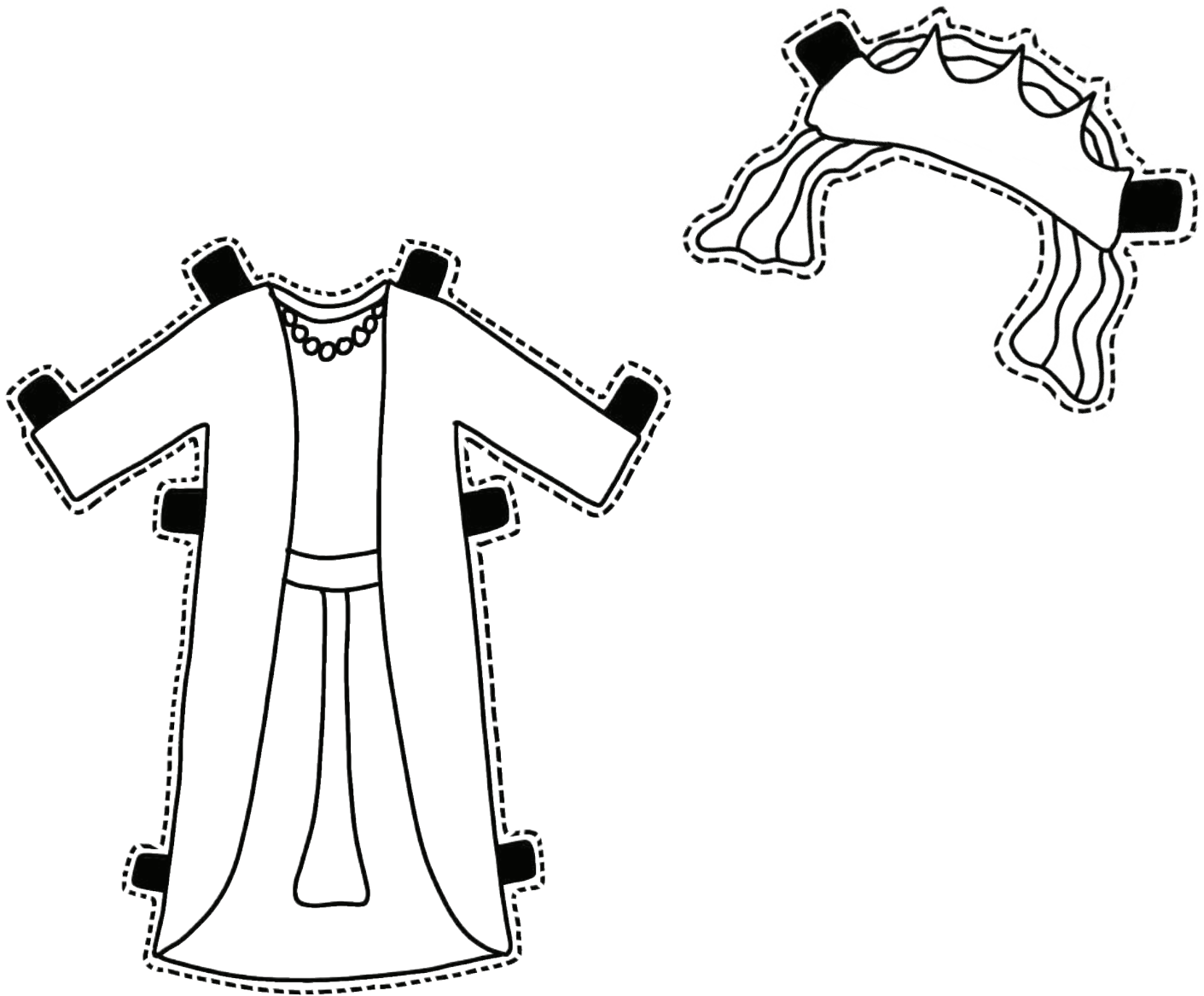




[Print this page](#)

[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## Queen Esther







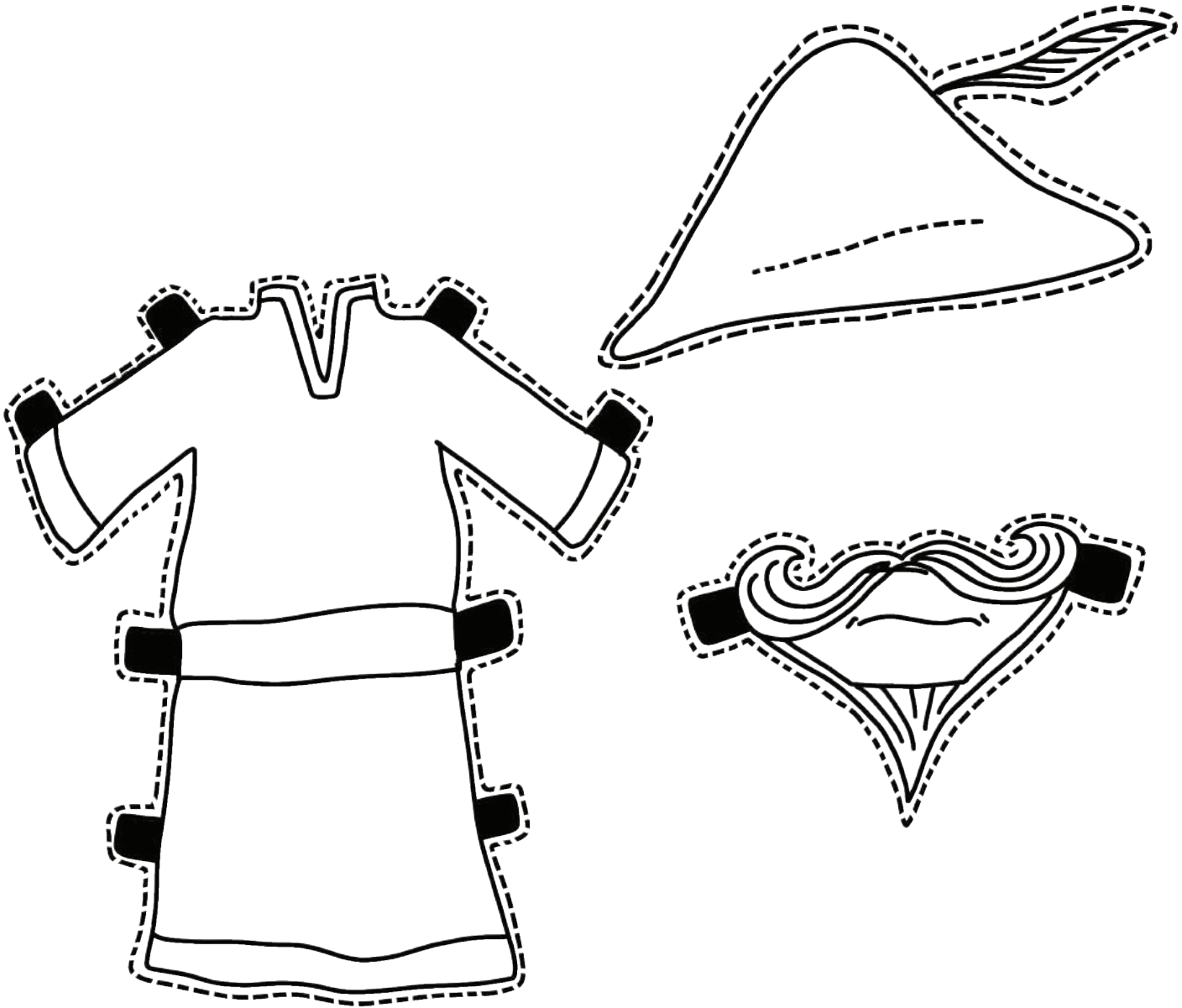
[Print this page](#)

# Venture into Purim



[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## Haman





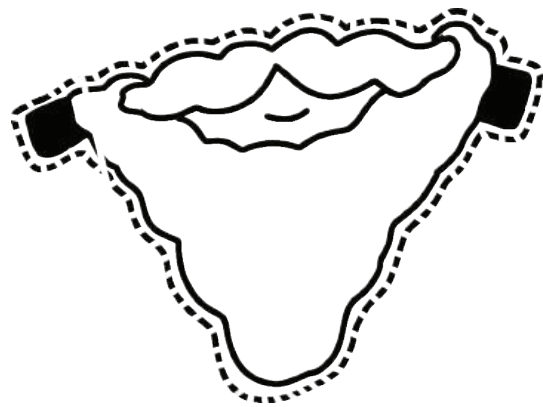
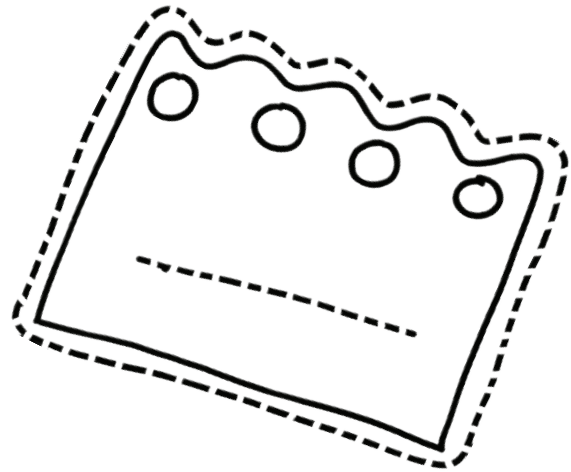
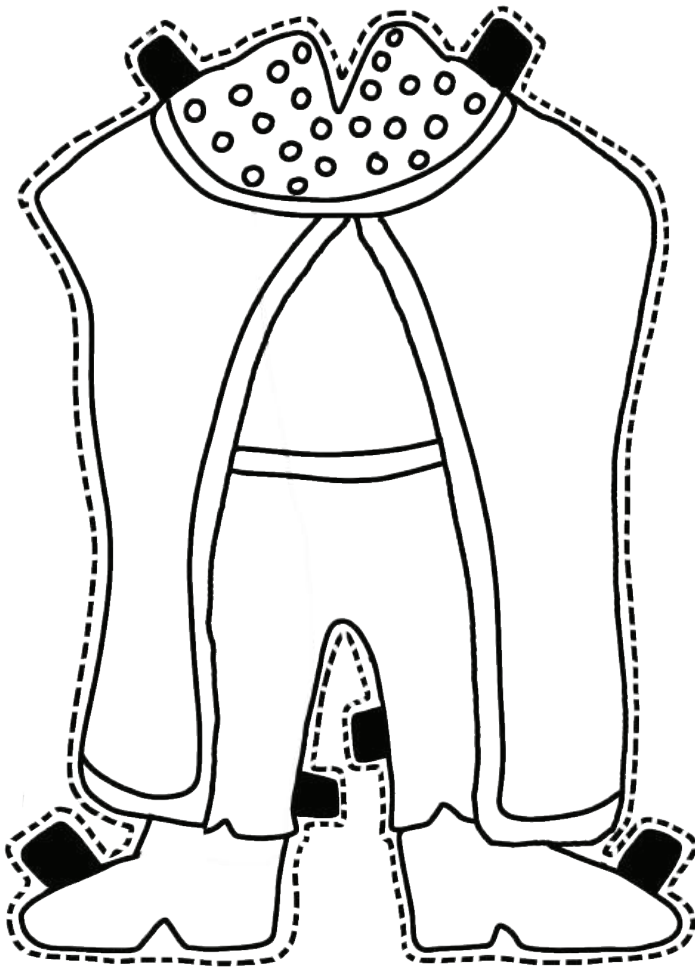
# Venture into Purim



[Print this page](#)

[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## King Achashverosh





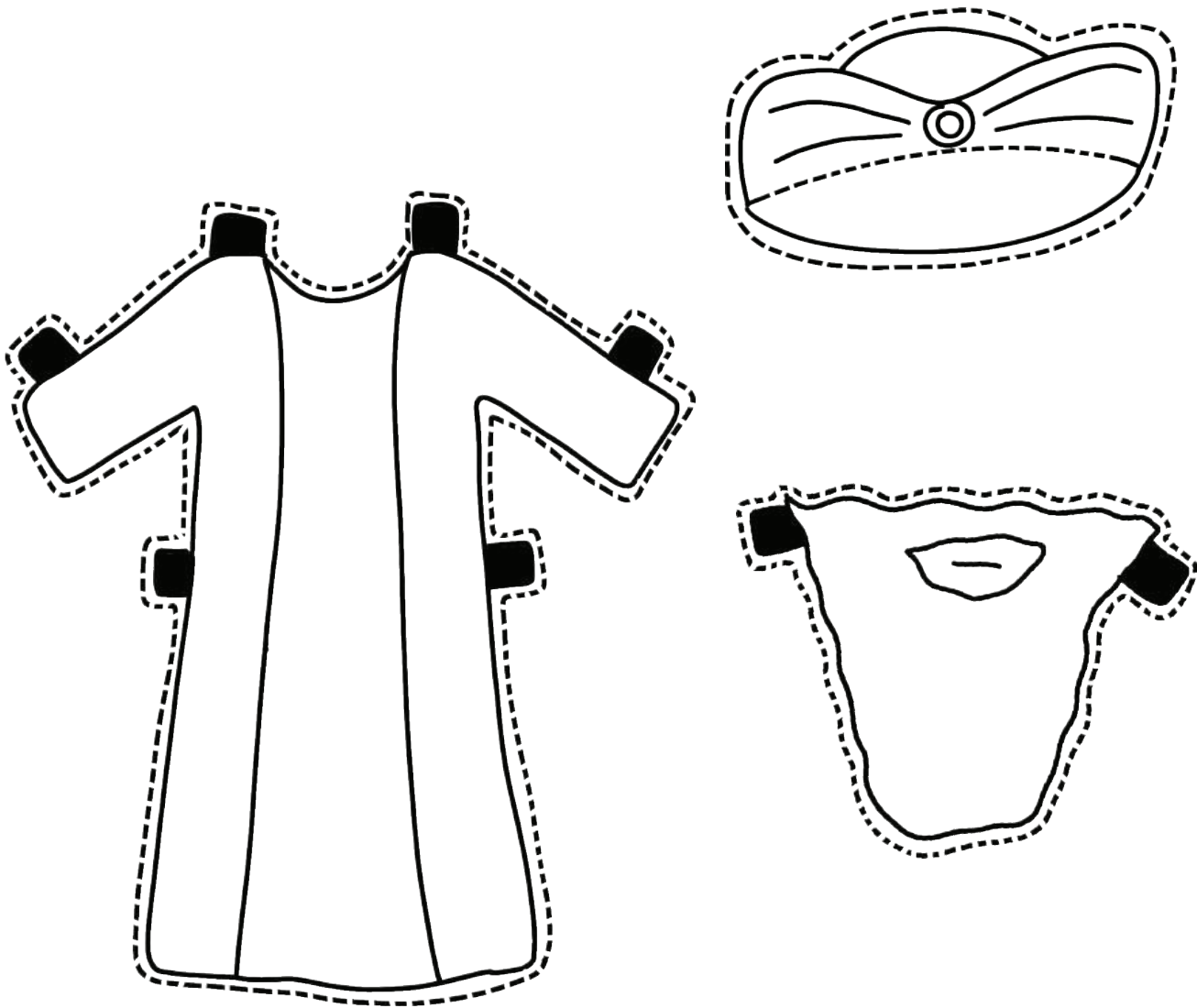
# Venture into Purim



[Print this page](#)

[Return to  
Table of Contents](#)

## Mordechai



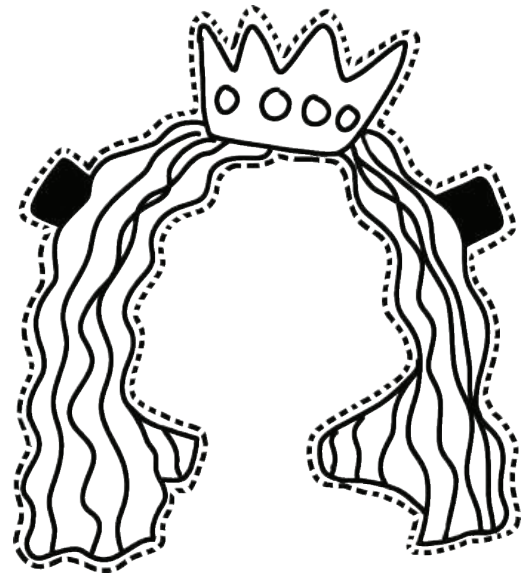
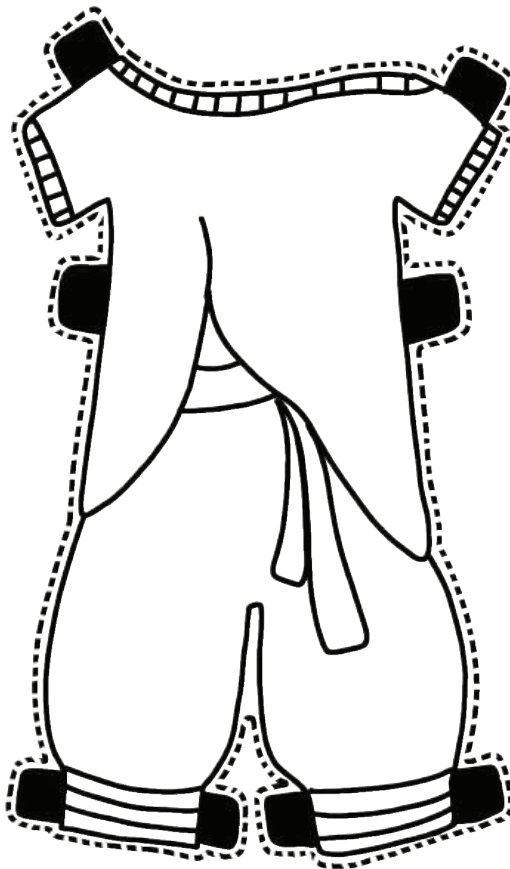


[Print this page](#)



[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Queen Vashti







...for families just like yours!