



# **Purim Story and Improv Shpiel**

## **Topic**

Review the story of Purim

## **Grade Level(s)**

3<sup>th</sup> grade and up

## **Goals for the Lesson/Activity**

### **Students will**

- Learn the story of Purim.
- Have fun with the story using “Improv” games.

## **Materials needed**

None

## **Background for Teachers**

- Review the story of Purim with the JTeach.org Purim Blendspace or share a book from your local library.
- The term “Shpiel” means play or skit in Yiddish. A shpiel is a folk-inspired tradition that provides an opportunity for crowds to cheer the heroes, Mordecai and Esther, and boo the villain, Haman.

## **Description of Activities**

1. Share the story of Purim using the digital resources on the JTeach.org Purim Blendspace.
2. Tell the students that it is a custom to be silly and do a Purim Shpiel on Purim.
3. Use one of the following Improv games to bring a creative twist to this tradition.

## **Game 1**

### **Adapted from the “Scene Replay” game**

1. Create prompts for the “actors.” Ask the students to write down random emotions, places or kinds of TV shows (e.g., reality TV, sitcoms, talk shows, newscast) and movies (e.g., romance, actions, drama, comedy) and put them in a hat or a cup.
2. Assign each student a role: Esther, Mordecai, Haman, Ahashverosh, Vashti, the guards...
3. Ask a student leader to pick a prompt from the hat.
4. Ask the students on stage to act out the story of Purim using the prompt. The leader can decide to change the words as he or she pleases and the students have to adapt the play accordingly. (For example, the first scene is broadcast on the news using a British accent.)
5. Make sure to give a turn to each student.



## Purim Story and Improv Shpiel

### Game 2

#### **Adapted from the “Fortunately, Unfortunately” game**

1. Have the players stand in a circle, the goal of the group is to tell the story of Purim going around the circle, each player contributing one line at a time.
2. A leader will begin the story with one establishing sentence. Then every line must alternate between “Fortunately...” and “Unfortunately...”

EXAMPLE:

LEADER: “Once there was a King named Ahashverosh.”

PLAYER 1: “**Unfortunately**, he had a wife who did not want to dance in front of his friends.”

PLAYER 2: “**Fortunately**, he was the king so it was easy to get rid of her.”

PLAYER 3: “**Unfortunately**, “He was left with no more queens.”

PLAYER 4: “**Fortunately**, “Many single women lived in Shushan.”

PLAYER 5: etc.

### Game 3

#### **Adapted from the “Fast Forward/ Rewind (DVR)” game**

1. Ask four or more players to take the stage to create a scene from the Purim story.
2. Tell the students to start acting it out.
3. Ask a student who is not in the scene to be the “Remote Holder.”
4. Have the scene begin; at any moment in the scene the “Remote Holder” can call out commands like “Pause,” “Rewind,” “Fast-forward,” “Slow Motion,” etc .and the players must act accordingly.
5. After a while , allow a new set of players to take the stage and start the process over again.

Some ideas for the “Remote Holder:” use the commands to make a player say a funny phrase of dialogue over and over again, or “pause” in a silly way, etc.