



## We Increase Joy

### Topic

Purim

### Grade Level(s)

1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

### Big Ideas

- Outward displays of joy can raise the level of happiness for a community.
- Appropriate humor is an important form of expressing joy.

### Learning Targets

Students will:

1. View Adar as a time of joy for the Jewish people
2. Connect their own joy to that of the Jewish people who defeated Haman
3. Develop outward displays that raise the level of joy in their building

### Relevant Vocabulary

מִשְׁנִיכְנָס אָדָר (Mishenichnas Adar)	When [the Hebrew month of] Adar enters
מַרְבִּין בְּשִׂמְחָה (Marbin b'Simchah)	We increase in happiness
אָדָר (Adar)	The Jewish month in which Purim falls
נֶהְפָּךְ (Nehpach)	Turned over

### Materials/Technology Needed

- Equipment to watch and listen to videos for the song Mishenichnas Adar Marbin b'Simchah. Examples of different tunes include:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaNlvy6mWgo>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnCaky9legA>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuNRB9IAKMw>

### Background for Teachers

The month of Adar is a particular joyous one on the Jewish calendar. According to an opinion in the Talmud, “מִשְׁנִיכְנָס אָדָר מַרְבִּין בְּשִׂמְחָה (When Adar enters, we increase joy)” (Tractate Ta'anit 29a). While there are differing opinions for exactly why Adar is such a joyous month (e.g. Rashi ad loc.), most agree that Purim is one of the reasons that we are so joyous during the month. This point is especially driven home in *Megillat Esther*:

Esther 9:22	מגילת אסתר ט:כב
The days that the Jews enjoyed relief from their enemies and the month that <b>turned</b> for them from grief <b>to joy (simchah)</b> and from mourning to a holiday...	כִּי־יָמִים אֲשֶׁר־נָחַו בָּהֶם הִיְהוּדִים מֵאוֹיְבֵיהֶם וְהַחֲדָשׁ אֲשֶׁר נֶהְפָּךְ לָהֶם מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׂמְחָה וּמֵאֵכָל לַיּוֹם טוֹב לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מְנוּחָה



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	וְשִׂמְחָה וּמְשָׁלוֹם מְנוּחַת אִישׁ לְרֵעֵהוּ וּמִתְנוּחַת לְאֶבְיוֹנִים:
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Note that *Megillat Esther* states that the month “נֶהְפֵּךְ” to joy. While this word can be easily translated to mean “turn,” it more carries the idea to “turn over.” As a result, many have the tradition to turn things over for the purpose of bringing joy during the month of Adar. These traditions might include changing décor to be more festive, silly signage on walls or other places, and walking through hallways (and maybe even entering classrooms) while singing Purim songs.

### Prepare in Advance

- Decorate the room festively. This might include streamers, balloons, joyful emojis, etc.
- Check the Zany Ideas (included at the end of this activity) for other things that might need to be done before everyone arrives.
- Optional: Make the words for *Mishenichnas Adar* easily visible in the room.
- Remember to smile and laugh; it's Adar!

### Description of Activities

1. Play one (or more) of the videos of *Mishenichnas Adar*. Encourage students to sing and/or dance along.
2. Explain that Adar is such a joyous month because we look forward to celebrating our escape from Haman on Purim.
3. Explain further that there is a tradition to do silly, fun things during the month of Adar. This could include dressing in silly clothes, singing funny songs, and doing harmless pranks.
4. Brainstorm with students what they can do to bring the joy of Adar to the school.
5. Decide with students which of the ideas they can (and will) put into practice.
6. Remind students that joyful activities during Adar can be crazier than usual but that they should never be hurtful to someone else (e.g. placing a boat in a classroom is funny while wrapping someone's car in toilet paper is mean).
7. Work with students to plan and execute joyful activities.



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## *We Increase Joy*

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### **Zany Ideas:**

Keep in mind that some of these are to prepare for students while others are to help students brainstorm.

- Turn Things Over:
  - Turn all of the posters in your classroom upside down or just turn them over.
  - Opposite Day! Students sit down when asked to stand up and vice-versa, etc. Go overboard with your reaction to their difficulty understanding your instructions.
- Backwards Day:
  - Invite students to come with their clothes on backwards
  - Run the school schedule backwards, saying goodbye as the children enter, etc.
  - Walk places backwards
  - Change the word order of your sentences.
- Walk through the hallways singing Purim, and other joyful, songs. Visit other classes and serenade them. (Remember to make sure this is OK with other staff members first.)
- Tech Option: Set up sound effects around the school. Arrange for spooky creaking noises when doors open, audience applause when people enter the building, etc.
- Give everyone secret agent names. Shhhhhhhh...
- Move pictures or posters around in the hallways if it can be done carefully and would not cause upset.
- Signs:
  - Switch nameplates on doors.
  - Cover classroom numbers with corresponding numbers written out in a series of different languages.
  - Put “No Diving” or “No Swimming” signs above toilets and urinals.
  - Place “Wet Floor” signs on ceilings.
  - Place “Caution!” tape over the doors of clergy and/or other senior staff.
  - Students speak in gibberish to each other around school. When non-classmates speak with them, students look at them blankly as though they do not understand.
- Hand out carnations to all of the parents as they drop off their children. If they ask why, tell them it is to bring them joy.
- Teach your students to juggle
- Spend the last twenty minutes of class telling jokes to one another.
- Make and hand out unexpected hamantaschen flavors like pizza or burrito.