# LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLAN BY SETH GOLDSWEIG

## The Mitzvot of Purim

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**Students will look at the four mitzvot of Purim, considering both the actual definition of a mitzvah as a commandment and the popular understanding that a mitzvah is a good deed. In small groups they will then create an activity or program that focuses on both understandings for one of the mitzvot of Purim.**

### OBJECTIVES

- **Students will explore the meaning of the word "mitzvah."**
- **Students will know the four mitzvot of Purim.**
- **Students will find a meaningful way to connect with one of the mitzvot of Purim.**

### VOCABULARY

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|---|---|
| מִצְוָה | **commandment** |
| לִקְרֹא | **to read** |
| לֶאֱכֹל | **to eat** |
| לִשְׁלֹחַ | **to send** |
| לָתֵת | **to give** |

1. Begin by asking the class to define the word מִצְוָה (mitzvah). You are looking for two answers: a) a commandment, and b) a good deed.

2. Tell the students that today you are going to look at the מִצְוֹת (mitzvot, plural of mitzvah) of Purim based on both understandings of the word.

3. Distribute the texts and the accompanying worksheet (both are available to print at babaganewz.com/teachers). As a class, read the texts aloud and ask students to identify the four commandments of Purim.

   1) Reading Megillat Esther
   2) Making and delivering *mishloaḥ manot* (gift baskets of treats) to friends and family
   3) Giving *matanot l'evyonim* (tzedakah for the poor)
   4) Partaking in a *seudat mitzvah* (festive meal)

4. Divide the class into four groups. Ask each group to discuss how these commandments could also be understood as good deeds and to fill in the worksheet.

5. Then assign each group the task of focusing on one of the mitzvot of Purim. Encourage the students to fulfill the mitzvah in a creative and meaningful way. Ask the groups to answer the guiding questions as they think about what they would like to do.

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

**Reading Megillat Esther**

- How do you want to present the story? (Read it aloud, act it out, make a movie, turn it into a commercial, make a PowerPoint, etc.)
- Which part of the story do you want to focus on and why?
- What role will each group member have?
- How can you incorporate the ideas of how the mitzvah could be seen as a good deed into your presentation or activity?

**Delivering *Mishloaḥ Manot* (Gift Baskets of Treats)**

- What sort of class feeling do you want to create by sending gifts to one another?
- What items should be included in your *mishloaḥ manot* and why?
- Should your group do it for the class or do you want to coordinate something that the whole class can do?
- What role will each group member have?
- How can you incorporate the ideas of how the mitzvah could be seen as a good deed into your presentation or activity?

***Matanot L'evyonim* (Tzedakah for the Poor)**

- What is tzedakah for the poor? What forms can it come in?
- Who are "the poor?" Who do you want to receive your tzedakah?
- Is this something you want just your group to do or do you want to coordinate something that the whole class can do?
- What role will each group member have?
- How can you incorporate the ideas of how the mitzvah could be seen as a good deed into your presentation or activity?

***Seudat Mitzvah* (Festive Meal)**

- What makes a meal festive? Is it more about the food or more about what occurs at the meal?
- How can you add a sense of joy and happiness to a meal in your class?
- What role will each group member have?
- How can you incorporate the ideas of how the mitzvah could be seen as a good deed into your presentation or activity?

6. When the groups are done planning, assign a time frame in which the groups should complete their mitzvah in class (this will probably take more than one period for it to be meaningful).

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