



# The Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium of Greater Philadelphia

Presents

## Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) Lesson Plans



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*Partners with Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia*

## INTRODUCTION

Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) is a unified national initiative during the month of February that aims to raise disability awareness and foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide.

In the Philadelphia area, the Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium works to expand opportunities for families of students with disabilities. The Consortium is excited to share these comprehensive lesson plans with schools, youth groups, and early childhood centers in our area.

We appreciate you making time for teachers to use these lessons during February—or whenever it's convenient for you.

For additional resources, please email me at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) or call me at 215-320-0376.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer,

Chief Program Officer

**JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 4<sup>th</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
**Whole Community Inclusion**

Written by: Gabby Kaplan-Mayer

**Objectives:**

- Student will become familiar with the story of Purim through the lens of disability awareness and inclusion.
- Students will identify ways that disabilities can be both visible and invisible.
- Students will share about the ways that feel both seen and “unseen”.
- Students will name ways that they can treat friends and peers with kindness and dignity, whether they see that a person has a disability or not.

**Materials:**

- Art materials: Markers, crayons, dot paints, stickers, sequins, yarn, etc.
- Scissors and glue
- [Mask template](#) or Paper Plates
- Laptop and projector to show [The Princess of Persia](#)
- Pictures of children with visible and invisible disabilities (attached)

**INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

- **SAY:** Today we’re going to think about how we can see some kinds of disabilities while others we can’t see.
  - What is a disability?
    - (EXPLAIN: a disability is a condition that limits a person in being able to see, hear, walk, or speak. Some people with disabilities may be blind, or deaf, or may use a wheelchair if they are unable to walk.)
  - Have you ever met a person with a disability?

**INTRODUCTION TO PURIM (10 minutes):**

**SAY:** Today we are going to use the Purim story to help us remember that when we only look at people from the outside, we only see some of who they are. We want to recognize how every human being is amazing and unique and how every human being also faces some kind of challenges.

**ASK:**

- Who can list the characters in the Purim story? (As students name them, write them on the board. Be sure to include Esther, Vashti, King Ahashveros, Mordechai and Haman)
- Can you describe Esther? Why was she chosen to be Queen? What does Esther do to be brave? (It is okay if they don’t have a lot of answers because they are going to watch a video about Esther’s bravery.)

**Key points:**

- Esther is the Queen of Persia (wife of King Ahashveros)
- Esther is Jewish but doesn’t share that she is Jewish at first because she is scared to show her true identity.

- When the Jewish people are in trouble because of evil Haman, Esther is brave and tells the King that she is Jewish and asks him to save the Jewish people.

**VIDEO AND DISCUSSION (10 minutes):**

**SAY:** We are going to watch a short video together called The Princess of Persia to help us remember the story of Esther.

**SHOW:** Play the short video of [The Princess of Persia](#) for the students.

**LIST:** After you watch it, make two lists on your board. One should say “**Esther on the Outside**” and one should say “**Esther on the Inside**.”

**ASK:**

1. Think about what the King and all of the people of Persia saw when Esther became the Queen. What do you imagine she looked like on the outside? As the students share, list their adjectives and description under “**Esther on the Outside**.”
  - (They may share words like queen, royal, beautiful, cool)
2. Then, ask the kids to imagine what Esther felt like when learned about Haman’s plan while she was living in the palace. As the students share, list their adjectives and descriptions under “**Esther on the Inside**.”
  - (They may share words like scared, nervous, afraid, anxious. You you can then explain that Esther also had courage inside of her that comes out when she faces her fears.)

**ASK:**

- Why do you think that Esther didn’t share that she was Jewish with the King right away?
- What had to happen before she felt that she could be herself? Sometimes we are like Esther—can you think of a time when you were afraid to share something important about you?
- What makes you feel safe to share all parts of yourself?

**PICTURES AND DISCUSSION (10 minutes):**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The pictures of children with and without visible disabilities are found at the end of this lesson and can be downloaded and printed or viewed from a computer.

**SAY:** We are now going to look at some pictures of children and we are going to think about what we know and don’t know from only looking at the outside of them.

**SHOW** each picture and ask the kids to describe what they see from looking at the outside of the person.

**EXPLAIN:** After you view them all, explain that some of the people have a disability that we can see. But until we get to know them as a friend, we don’t know what they are like on the inside. We may have lots of things in common with them—even if they are different from us on the outside.

Some of the children in the picture might have had a disability--even if we couldn't tell that from the outside. Many people have disabilities related to their brain or body that don't make them look different.

Sometimes individuals with disabilities are not seen for who they are on the inside but rather are judged by appearances, often inaccurately. Today, we want to remember that it's very important not to assume that we know a person based on what we see on the outside. We also want people to see who we are on the inside.

### **MASK-MAKING (15 minutes)**

**EXPLAIN:** On Purim, we use masks and costumes to pretend to be someone different from who we really are.

Today, we are going to make a unique kind of mask: a mask that we will use to teach each other something special about who we are--on the inside. Something that our friends might not be able to see about us right away.

**ASK:** What is a special talent or ability that you have? What is a way that you are kind and help others? And what is something that is hard or challenging for you to do? The "inside" of us is made up of many different things that make us unique!

**EXPLAIN:** The mask that you are going to create is going to express who YOU are--on the inside.

You can draw on it, make a collage, use words. Help to show your friends about the special person you are on the inside!

**GIVE** students a mask template or paper plate (you will have to help them cut out holes for eyes) and choice of materials.

**SHARE:** After children finish, invite everyone to share their mask and say something about what they created. It would be fun to take a group photo! Remember to take photos of the art and send them to Gabby Kaplan-Mayer at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) for use on Whole Community Inclusion's [JDAIM expressive art gallery](#).

**WRAP UP:** Purim helps to remind us that everyone needs to be seen for who they are on the inside, and everyone deserves to be included in our communities. It is important to remember that what we see on the surface is never the full story. Let's learn about how to support each other's challenges and recognize what is special about each of us! Chag Purim Sameach!





















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