

WOMEN'S LEAGUE FOR CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM

International Day of Study

Craft Directions for Masks & Groggers

PART I: INTRODUCTION

This year, the International Day of Study features a special Judaic arts component to bring together adults and children. You will have the opportunity to make either a traditional noise maker, known as a *grogger* (*gragger* in German) or your own personally-designed mask. Both items are yours to use at Purim.

Please use the short study texts to set the tone and provide background.

PART II: OUTLINE FOR SESSION

1. Welcome everyone and divide the group into pairs such as parent or adult and child.
2. Explain that the goal of the session is to learn something about the objects they will create as well as make a personal *grogger* or mask.
3. Share the information or read from the short study texts that follow.
4. Establish the working procedures for the session, including work rules and clean up.
5. Distribute materials.

STUDY TEXTS

The *Grogger* – Its History and Usage

According to Jewish tradition, during the reading of *megillat Esther*, at the mention of the name *Haman*, we should make great noise in order to blot out his name. *Haman*, the enemy of the Jews in Persia, was supposedly a descendant of *Amalek*, the ancient enemy of the Jews. In the Torah (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), the Amalekites attack the Jews on their way out of Egypt to Israel. We are enjoined never to forget this deed, and the Torah concludes the story with the injunction to “blot out the memory of *Amalek*”.

According to *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, during the reading of the *megillah* in Ashkenazi synagogues, a special noise maker, called a *grogger* (*ra'ashanim* in Hebrew), is used to obliterate Haman's name.

The custom of making noise when Haman's name is read has an old, but uncertain history. In the Middle Ages, children would write Haman's name on stones or pieces of wood and bang them together until Haman's name was erased.

Although we don't know exactly when the *grogger* came into use, several wooden ones remain from 18th century Germany. They have metal or wooden gears at the top of the handle which rattle when the *grogger* is swung around. The bodies were decorated with sayings and Purim symbols.

There are no specifications for the construction of a *grogger* other than it should make enough noise. *Groggers* can be made in any form, filled with anything that rattles, such as beans, beads, bells or pebbles.

The Mask

The Hebrew word for mask is *mascab*. The custom of donning masks and costumes on Purim was first reported in 14th-century Provence (the area of Southern France and Northern Spain that had a large Jewish population) and later became popularized as the German *Fastnacht* and Italian *carnivale*.

The traditional Jewish explanation for the use of masks has to do with concealment. Masks conceal a person's true identity, and concealment is a major theme in the Purim story. Esther initially hides her identity as a Jew until Haman's evil plot forces her to reveal herself. One interpretation of the name Esther is "I will hide" (*'astir*).

Additionally, God does not appear once in *Megillat Esther*; God is the hidden agent in the story.

REFERENCES

Encyclopedia Judaica. Keter Publishing, Jerusalem, 1972

Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin-Teutsch, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*. Jason Aaronson, Inc., Northvale, New Jersey, 1992

Stephen S. Kayser, editor, *Jewish Ceremonial Art*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1955

Michael Strassfeld, *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary*, Harper & Row, New York, 1985

Alan Unterman, *Dictionary of Jewish Lore & Legend, Thames and Hudson*, London, 1991

Arthur Waskow, *Seasons of Our Joy* Bantam Books, New York, 1982

GROGGER

The Purim *grogger* is a noise maker. It can be made in many ways with a variety of materials. Here are three possibilities:.

TRADITIONAL WOODEN GROGGER

Materials

- wooden *grogger* kit for each person (see below to order)
- paint markers or acrylic paint with brushes
- printed Hebrew letters or words
- clip art from books or computer programs
- stickers, sequins, ribbons, etc.

The traditional wooden *grogger* is composed of a head and a handle. The head is a block of wood with a gear mechanism that rattles as the *grogger* is swung around. The wooden *grogger* can be decorated with painted or with designs.

You can make a family heirloom of the *grogger* by putting the word *Mishpachat* (family) + YOUR FAMILY NAME in Hebrew, on one or both sides. You can personalize the *grogger* with a child's name and appropriate decorations. Add the date of when you make the *grogger* and you will have a remembrance forever.

Note: Try not to allow too much paint to accumulate in the gear, clogging it and affecting its functioning.

To purchase a ready-to-assemble kit for a 6" x 2 ½ " *grogger* with only two pieces, contact:

The Craft Shop

www.thecraftshoponline.com

699 East 2nd Street

Brooklyn, NY 11218

1-866-4-A-Craft

Style: WH902J

Cost: \$1.40 per unit plus shipping and handling

Usually a minimum order of \$50.00 is required. When ordering, tell The Craft Shop that you are from Women's League for Conservative Judaism and an adjustment will be made.

WATER BOTTLE GROGGER

Materials

- empty 8 or 12 oz plastic water bottles, labels removed, keep caps
- Tacky Glue
- felt or sticker appliques
- cut paper pieces from magazines
- colored tissue
- scissors
- card stock
- paint markers
- rattles (beans, beads, pebbles, etc.)

Decorate the bottle, using a variety of materials. Paste designs using either Tacky Glue or the peel away sticker designs available in any craft store. Pre-cut **felt appliques** work best when applied with Super Tacky Glue.

You can also use **paper mosaic** pieces cut from magazine advertisements or from colored tissue. Once you have pasted the mosaic design to the bottle, cover the design with clear contact paper. This final step will keep everything in place and protect the finished product.

Decorate with **paper cut-outs** of the *Megillah* characters. Using card stock, sketch the design and paint the character's dress using markers. Paste the finished character around the body of the bottle. Cover the finished design with the clear contact paper.

Fill your *grogger* with a small handful of rattles. These can be dried beans, small wooden or plastic beads (Pony beads), bells or small pebbles. [An anonymous legend suggests that ten rattles be used in the *grogger* to represent *Haman*'s ten sons who were punished with their father.]

Complete your *grogger* by closing the bottle with its cap and adding ribbons and streamers.

Thanks to Paula Coplon, of Marietta, GA, for this suggestion.

CARDBOARD GROGGER

Materials

- cardboard
- glue stick or white glue (Elmer's or Tacky Glue)
- scissors
- markers or crayons

The model and complete directions are printed on the model page (provided in this packet). This design is especially good as a collaborative activity between parent or adult and a young child. The parent does all the pasting and cutting. The child does the coloring and decorating. They collaborate on the assembly, following the directions.

If you are going to use this model, have **card-stock** available so that you can photocopy the amount that you require. (1 piece of card stock for each *grogger*)

Thanks to Barbara Yetwin Sanofsky, of Longmeadow, MA, for this suggestion.

PURIM MASKS

HALF FACE MASK

Materials

- half face masks (available at any party store)
- decorating supplies such as lace, feathers, streamer, sequins, glitter
- Tacky Glue
- card stock
- scissors

Start with the half mask and then let your imagination take over. When decorating, be sure that the eye opening is clear.

- Enhance the area around the edge of the mask by gluing pre-ruffled lace or feathers.
- Cut card stock to create a turban or crown and glue to the upper portion of the mask.
- Create different noses or bird beaks by pasting folded card stock to the nose area. If you choose to be a bird, decorate the upper and lower portions of the mask with feathers or feather-like pieces of paper.
- Decorate the body of the mask with sequins, glitter or any other applique material.
- Create a larger eye around the opening by painting a clown's eye.

FULL FACE MASK

The full face mask covers the child's entire face and should be carefully tooled to assure eye, nose and mouth clearance.

The Craft Store has an all in one **Mega Masks Classpack** that contains 24 pre-cut masks of card stock with four different designs. All of the necessary materials for decorating the masks, such as stickers, streamers and paste-ons, come in the kit. You need to provide the scissors and glue. To order, contact:

The Craft Shop

www.thecraftshoponline.com

699 East 2nd Street

Brooklyn, NY 11218

1-866-4-A-Craft

Style: A133

Cost: \$29.25 per unit plus shipping and handling for a 24 piece pack

When ordering the kit or kits, be sure to say that you are from Women's League for Conservative Judaism.