

MIRIAM'S CUP Etched Glass

Education Session: What is Miriam's importance to Pesach?
Where/when did this new ritual start?
Why do we fill her cup with water?

There are many sources for the answer to these and other questions. If you search online for "Miriam's Cup" you will find several sources, including a site, miriamscup.com. The study session can be as simple as asking questions about Miriam, filling in the gaps of information, and explaining the history of Miriam's Cup. Have a ritual available to hand out explaining how to use Miriam's Cup at a Seder.

Project: Make a Miriam's Cup using glass etching techniques. Allow two hours.

Project overview: Participants will prepare a glass goblet for chemical etching by using stencils or stickers. Most of the materials used are readily available from craft stores, discount department stores, dollar stores, and hardware stores. Consider using a variety of glasses, so each one is unique. It is amazing how one is 'called' to a cup! For example, my daughter's Miriam's Cup started off as a clear iridescent martini glass!

Materials:

1. Clear glass goblets (colored glass is okay). I shop Goodwill and Dollar stores. If you obtain cups used and kashrut is an issue, have your rabbi check them and follow his/her directions for koshering.
2. Masking tape and solid color contact paper
3. Exacto knives to cut designs. I also use disposable scalpels.
4. Cutting surface to protect tables (I use silicone cutting boards or mats)
5. Stickers, stencils, paper punches (make sure they work on contact paper), decorative edged scissors, reusable stencils and Rub & Peel stencils designed specifically for etching
5. Craft sticks to smooth out bubbles
6. Etching cream (available at craft stores or available online – Armour Products)
7. Cheap brushes or flux brushes
8. Small plastic or paper cups for individual portions of etching cream
9. Plastic gloves – optional for participants to use
10. Permanent fine line markers
11. Scissors
12. Table coverings – plastic preferred

Technique:

Stencil style:

Creating your own: using contact paper, create a design on contact paper using fine line marker. Design may be original or use an existing stencil. Keep in mind the goblet is curved. Cut design out with scissors and exacto knife. The areas cut away will be etched.

Apply prepared design to goblet, making sure all bubble are rubbed out.

Using commercial stencils: Look for reusable stencils or stencils with some kind of adhesive. Regular stencils are only good when you use them to prepare your own. Place stencil on glass. Mask areas not to be etched.

Sticker Style:

Look at the shapes of stickers, not just the colors. I get stickers from craft stores. Look for flowers, butterflies, spirals, ribbons, borders.

Place stickers on glass.

Mask any areas, such as rim, stem and base to be left clear.

DO NOT MIX STENCILS AND STICKERS. PICK ONE TECHNIQUE ONLY!

Finishing:

1. When the goblet is ready for etching, clean the area of any unused materials and tools.
2. Brush etching cream onto clear glass areas with brush and let sit about five minutes.
3. Wash cup under running water, removing any masking materials, stencils and stickers. Save any reusable stencils. Rinse a final time to make sure all the etching cream is off. While the cup is wet, it will look like the cream didn't work. Don't panic. Once it is dry, the design pops out!
4. Wash goblet before using. Design is permanent, so the Miriam's cup can be washed in a dishwasher.

Some additional notes: I charge \$10 per person or cup. The most expensive parts of the project are the goblets, stickers, stencils, and the etching cream. I always buy things on sale and am constantly on the hunt! Armour Products makes a blank reusable stencil that I use to make a stencil for my own Miriam design.

Optional design ideas: Use glass paint (let it dry 24 hours and then bake at 325 degrees for 40 minutes. It is Dishwasher safe after baking. Embellish with small rhinestones and permanent adhesives.