

Objects Tell Stories: Jewish Holidays



This resource was developed for elementary and middle-school teachers but may be adapted by high school teachers as well. This is not a Jewish Studies curriculum per se as we recognize that each school has guidelines grounded in its own mission and philosophy. Instead, these materials are intended to supplement and enhance the exploration of Jewish holidays and rituals.

AN EDUCATOR'S RESOURCE

The Jewish Museum
1109 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10128
Under the auspices of
The Jewish Theological Seminary

TheJewishMuseum.org
info@thejm.org
212.423.5200



Acknowledgments

This educator resource was written by Josh Feinberg, edited by Michaelyn Mitchell, and designed by Olya Domoradova. At The Jewish Museum, Nelly Silagy Benedek, Director of Education, Michelle Sammons, Educational Resources Coordinator, and Hannah Krafcik, Marketing Assistant, facilitated the project's production. Special thanks to Dara Cohen-Vasquez, Senior Manager of School Programs and Outreach, and Roger Kamholz, Marketing Editorial Manager, for providing valuable input. This resource is made possible by a generous grant from the Kekst Family.



Works of Art

Ideas for exploring the Jewish holidays through art and artifacts by highlighting ten unique objects from The Jewish Museum's extensive collection.



Abraham Shulkin

Torah Ark from Adath Yeshurun Synagogue



Abraham Shulkin (American, b. Russia, 1852-1918) Sioux City Iowa, United States, *Torah Ark*, Torah Ark from Adath Yeshurun Synagogue, 1899, pinewood: hand-carved, openwork, stained and painted 125 x 96 x 30 in. (317.5 x 243.8 x 76.2 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of the Jewish Federation of Sioux City, JM 48-56a-s

About the Work

Information about a unique work of art from The Jewish Museum's extensive collection.

Abraham Shulkin, a peddler and junk dealer, carved this work of art for the Orthodox synagogue in Sioux City, Iowa, in 1899. It is an ark—a cabinet designed to hold the scrolls of the Torah (the Five Books of Moses).

Shulkin was among the Russian Jewish immigrants who arrived in Sioux City in the late 19th century. In creating this ark, he drew heavily from the artistic traditions of the Old World. The intricate style of the carving, as well as many of the ark's motifs, show a close connection to wooden Torah arks of Eastern Europe. In fact, the synagogue of Izabelin, Lithuania, not far from Shulkin's native village, had a wooden ark similarly carved with animals and vegetal motifs. Shulkin's ark also includes numerous Jewish symbols—six-pointed Jewish stars, seven-branched candelabras, lions, the Ten Commandments, hands outspread in the priestly blessing—as well as an eagle, a symbol often used in Eastern Europe as an emblem associated with the ruling power.

The proud artist inscribed his name on the work in Hebrew. On either side of the Ten Commandments is written, "This is the hand-work of Abraham Shulkin." Below the Decalogue is a dedicatory inscription, which reads, "This Torah ark was donated by Simhah, daughter of the esteemed David Davidson." David Davidson owned a department store in Sioux City, and he provided the lumber to build the ark.

About Shavuot

Extensive information about the holiday of Shavuot.

The holiday of Shavuot (Hebrew for "Weeks") falls exactly seven weeks after Passover. Like the other Jewish pilgrimage festivals (Passover and Sukkot), Shavuot carries both agricultural and historical significance. In ancient Israel, Shavuot marked the end of the barley harvest and the beginning of the wheat harvest. It was also the time of the "first fruits," when the early summer crops were harvested and brought as offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Historically, Shavuot is believed to be the anniversary of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Many communities acknowledge this connection by holding a Tikkun Leil Shavuot, an all-night Torah study session. It is customary to eat dairy foods on Shavuot as well. There are many explanations for this. One reason is the belief that the Torah is akin to milk in its ability to sustain the Jewish people. It is also traditional on Shavuot to decorate homes and synagogues with beautiful spring flowers.

Resources

Bibliography and web links for this work of art.

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Conner, Susan M. *Remember When...Personal Recollections and Vignettes of the Sioux City Jewish Community 1869–1984: Based on Oscar Littlefield's History*. Sioux City, IA: Jewish Federation, 1985.

Kleeblatt, Norman L., and Gerard C. Wertkin. *The Jewish Heritage in American Folk Art*. New York: The Jewish Museum; Museum of American Folk Art; Universe Books, 1984, p. 82 (no. 64) and pl. 2.

Piechotka, Maria, and Kazimierz Piechotka. *Wooden Synagogues*. Warsaw: Arkady, 1959.

Shadur, Joseph, and Yehudit Shadur. *Jewish Papercuts: A History and Guide*. Berkeley, CA, and Jerusalem: Judah L. Magnes Museum and Gefen, 1994, p. 31 and pl. 11.

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CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- What materials were used to make this object? How do you think it was made? How do you think it feels to the touch?
 - What do you think this object was used for? What parts of the object make you think this? Does it remind you of anything you have seen before?
 - What designs do you see on this ark? What do you think they mean?
-

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to look closely at this work of art, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- Why do you think people create elaborate arks and decorations for the Torah?
- Can you think of any ways that rituals in your life are enhanced by the use of special or beautiful objects?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Moshe Zabari, *Torah Crown*



Moshe Zabari (Israeli, b. 1935) New York, New York, United States, *Torah Crown*, 1969, silver: raised and forged; pearls Height: 13 1/2 in. (34.3 cm) Diameter: 15 3/8 in. (39 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of the Albert A. List Family, JM 85-69

Like older examples of Torah crowns, Moshe Zabari's modernist work emphasizes the majesty of the Torah. Zabari, however, eschews the traditional crown shape in favor of a more abstract form. He defines the volume of the ornament with fluid, curved lines and small pearls that hang in the in-between spaces. When the crown is carried, the pearls shake and the silver wires quiver, evoking the movement of the dangling bells that often appear on older crowns.

Discuss with students:

- It is traditional to decorate the Torah with a crown. Why do you think that is?
- Look at this crown. How would you describe the lines that make up the crown? Make a list of descriptive words. How would you describe the texture? What do the small hanging pearls remind you of?
- See Solomon Alexander Hart's painting *The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue in Leghorn, Italy*. How is Zabari's crown different from those in the painting? What do they have in common?
- Does this object look like a crown to you? If not, what do you think it looks like?
- Do you think this "crown" is appropriate to decorate a Torah? Why or why not?

Tobi Kahn, *Omer Calendar, Saphyr*



Discuss with students:

- Describe this sculpture. What shapes do you see? What colors? How many pieces are there? What do you think it is made of?
- This sculpture was made to be used as an Omer counter. How do you think you would use it?
- Each peg stands for one of the 49 days of the Omer. Why do you think the artist made each peg a different shape? Why do you think he painted all the pegs the same color? What effect does this have?

Tobi Kahn (American, b. 1952) United States, *Omer Calendar, Saphyr*, 2002, acrylic on wood 27 1/2 x 22 1/4 x 9 1/2 in. (69.9 x 56.5 x 24.1 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Aryeh and Raquel Rubin/Targum Shlishi Foundation, Nick Bunzl, Goldman-Sonnenfeldt Foundation, Marvin I. Haas, and Daniel and Elizabeth Sawicki, Gifts; and Contemporary Judaica Acquisitions Committee Fund, 2004-22a-xx

In Temple times, the 49 days between Passover and Shavuot were marked with a grain offering known as the Omer. Today, Jewish people “count the Omer” each night during this period by saying a blessing and enumerating the day. The omer is a time of semi-mourning, during which many observant Jews refrain from cutting their hair, listening to music, or celebrating marriages. These customs of mourning are observed in remembrance of Rabbi Akiva’s 24,000 disciples who perished in a plague in the second century CE.

Tobi Kahn’s sculptural work *Saphyr* was designed to assist in the Omer-counting process. The user can start with all 49 pegs in the base and remove one for each day of the Omer, or begin with an empty base and add one peg each day. Kahn’s Omer counter turns the activity of counting into a physical, tactile act. Each peg on his counter is unique, but they all fit together as a whole, their combined form suggesting the rooftops of a village. The dark color of the work reflects the mood of the Omer period.



New Year Greeting Attributed to Happy Jack



Attributed to Happy Jack (born Angokwazhuk) (Inupiaq, b. Alaska, c. 1870–1918) Nome, Alaska, United States, *New Year Greeting*, 1910, walrus tusk: engraved; gold inset Height: 10 in. (25.4 cm) Diameter: 1 in. (2.5 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of the Kanofsky Family in memory of Minnie Kanofsky, 1984–71

About the Work

This unusual Alaskan artifact combines the Jewish custom of sending Rosh Hashanah cards with the centuries-old Inuit craft of walrus-tusk carving. The greeting was made by an innovative and influential Alaskan carver named Angokwazhuk—also known as Happy Jack. Happy Jack is credited with introducing the practice of engraving tusks with a very fine needle. Once engraved, the lines would then be enhanced by filling them with India ink, graphite, or ashes.

This tusk records the faces and clothing of a religiously observant Jewish couple believed to have run a store in Nome. The woman is dressed in typical turn-of-the-century style and seems to be wearing a wig. (Traditionally, Orthodox Jewish women cover their natural hair after marriage as a sign of modesty.) The man's beard is neatly trimmed, and his top hat suggests a holiday or formal occasion. Even though he could not read or write, Happy Jack was able to reproduce written inscriptions with great accuracy. The Hebrew inscription on this object delivers the traditional Jewish New Year salutation: "May you be inscribed for a good year, 5671 [1910]." In English is added: "Nome, Alaska."

Jews have lived in Alaska since the 19th century. It is believed that some Jews sailed there with the Russian fishing fleets in the 1830s and 1840s. It was not until a Jewish-owned firm, the Alaska Commercial Company, secured the seal-fishing rights that Jewish traders began making regular visits to the territory. In 1885, the first permanent Jewish settlers arrived in Juneau. The Klondike gold rush of 1897, soon followed by another discovery of gold near Nome, brought thirty thousand miners, fortune hunters, and businessmen into Cape Nome around the turn of the century. A number of Jews were part of that immigration.

About Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are often referred to as the High Holy Days. In many ways, these festivals and the intervening period (known as the Ten Days of Repentance) represent the pinnacle of sanctity in the Jewish year. The mood of the Jewish New Year is serious. It is an opportunity not just to wish each other a Happy New Year (*Shanah Tova* in Hebrew) but also to look back at the year past, to consider mistakes and missteps, and to ask forgiveness for personal transgressions. According to the High Holiday liturgy, there are three ways to improve one's lot for the coming year: repentance, prayer, and *tzedakah* (acts of charity or righteousness).

Resources

Bibliography and web links for this work of art.

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Goodman, Philip. *The Yom Kippur Anthology*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1992.

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Ray, D. J. "Happy Jack: King of the Eskimo Carvers." *American Indian Art* 10, no. 1 (winter 1984): 32–47.

CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- Describe the images and writing you see on this object. Look closely at the shape, color, and apparent texture of the object. Where do you think the object is from? What do you think it is made of? What do you think it was used for?
- Notice the way the people are depicted. How would you describe the figures on the object?
- When do you think this object was created? Why?
- How do you think this object was made?

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine the New Year's greeting, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- Does anything surprise you about this object?
- How is the Alaskan New Year Greeting similar to or different from other New Year's greetings you have seen?
- Jewish New Year's greetings are generally printed on paper, instead of being inscribed on walrus tusk. Why do you think the couple depicted on the tusk—presumably the senders of the "greeting"—chose a tusk instead of a card as the bearer of their greeting?
- What different kinds of New Years can you think of (for example, Rosh Hashanah, January 1, the beginning of the school year, one's birthday)? How is each one marked or celebrated? Why are there so many different kinds of New Year?
- The Jewish New Year is an opportunity to think about any mistakes made in the past and about goals for the coming year. What goals do you have for the coming year?

RELATED WORK OF ART

Harriete Estel Berman *Alms Container Tzedakah*



Harriete Estel Berman (American, b. 1952), San Mateo, California, United States, *Alms Container Tzedakah*, 1999, pre-printed steel and aluminum rivets Each: 3 11/16 x 6 7/16 x 1/2 in. (9.4 x 16.4 x 1.3 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Dr. Joel and Phyllis Gitlin Judaica Acquisitions Fund, 2001-8a-yy

Jewish people are encouraged to help less fortunate individuals year-round but especially at the time of the High Holidays. Harriete Estel Berman takes a unique artistic approach to the idea of the tzedakah box, a container in which to collect alms. Berman fashioned 50 envelopes from metal boxes, including several blue-and-white boxes that had been used to collect money for the Jewish National Fund. Her piece suggests the most common form of charity today—a check in an envelope—while recalling the deep Jewish tradition of giving. It is also a reminder of the many worthy individuals and causes still in need of assistance.

Discuss with students:

- Describe Harriete Estel Berman's work titled *Tzedakah*. What do the envelopes remind you of? What do you think they are made of? How did Berman decorate the recycled tins to create her envelopes? Why do you think she included so many envelopes?
- How has the artist organized the envelopes? What is the effect of arranging them in rows?
- Imagine that each envelope is meant for a different charity or cause. Where would you put your money? Why?
- What other forms of tzedakah are there besides giving money?



Allan Wexler

***Dining Room with Walls as Projections
of Chairs and Table (Study for Sukkah)***



Allan Wexler (American, b. 1949), New York, United States, *Sukkah Model Dining Room with Walls as Projections of Chairs and Table (Study for Sukkah)*, 1988, basswood 6 3/4 x 8 x 7 in. (17.1 x 20.3 x 17.8 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Judaica Acquisitions Fund, 1998-86



About the Work

This model is part of a series called “Sukkah, Proposals for Dining Buildings” by the artist and architect Allan Wexler. Each work in the series plays with some aspect of the traditional sukkah structure in order to explore the function and ritual of the sukkah. In this case, the legs of the chairs continue through the floor of the sukkah, and the chair backs extend up through the roof of the building. The legs become stilts that hold up the building and support the sitters.

By extending the chairs vertically in both directions, Wexler connects the interior of the sukkah with the natural environment—the earth and sky. Sukkot is an agricultural holiday that celebrates our ancient connection to the earth (no matter how removed from our agricultural roots we may feel today). The ritual of the sukkah takes place outdoors. Because the ancestors of the Jewish people camped under the desert skies, those building a sukkah today are required to design it so that the stars can be seen through the branches covering the roof.

Wexler has explored the form and function of the sukkah in a number of his works. In one example, he plays on the temporary, portable nature of the structure by creating a full-size sukkah on wheels, made up of four small sheds that fit together.

About the Artist

Allan Wexler is an architect, designer, and artist. He is particularly interested in the human-made environment, the functions of everyday objects, and the ways we interact with them. He investigates these ideas by creating models, drawings, and installations that challenge expected notions of furniture, architecture, and ritual objects. His art is a kind of experimentation. By redesigning chairs, tables, rooms, and houses, he examines the ways we interact with these objects in our daily activities of sitting, sleeping, and eating. He deconstructs these everyday structures and reassembles them in new ways.

About Sukkot

Sukkot is one of the three Jewish holidays known as the pilgrimage festivals. The others are Passover and Shavuot (Pentecost). In ancient Israel at these times of the year, throngs of people would make a pilgrimage to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem so that the priests could offer sacrifices to God on their behalf. Like the other pilgrimage holidays, Sukkot has both an agricultural and a historical significance. Agriculturally, Sukkot celebrates the fall harvest; historically, it commemorates the forty-year period during which the Children of Israel wandered in the desert.

To celebrate Sukkot, a family traditionally erects a temporary structure, known as a *sukkah*, in which they will eat their meals during the festival. Cut branches cover the top of the sukkah but not completely: One must still be able to see the stars through the branches. Another important Sukkot tradition involves the use of an *etrog* (a yellow fruit similar to a large, wrinkly lemon) and a *lulav* (a bundle of branches from the date palm, myrtle, and willow trees). In the synagogue, these four species, as they are known, are waved in all six directions (front, back, right, left, up, and down) to symbolize God’s omnipresence.

Resources

Bibliography for this work of art.

Goodman, Philip. *The Sukkot/Simhat Torah Anthology*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1988.

Groner, Judyth, and Madeline Wikler. *All About Sukkot*. Minneapolis, MN: Kar-Ben Publishing, 1998.

Siersma, Betsy and Allan Wexler. *Dining Rooms and Furniture for the Typical House*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1989.

Scoates, Christopher, and Debra Wilbur. *Custom Built: A Twenty-Year Survey of Work by Allan Wexler*. Atlanta: Atlanta College of Art Gallery, 1999.



CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- What unusual or surprising things do you notice about this structure?
 - Do you think this is a model of a building that was meant to be built? Why or why not? Why would an artist design a building that is not meant to be built?
 - Wexler titled this model *Dining Room with Walls as Projections of Chairs and Table (Study for Sukkah)*. What do you think the title means? How does the title help explain the design?
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For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this piece, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- What do you think this model has to do with the holiday of Sukkot?
- Sukkot was originally an agricultural holiday that celebrated the fall harvest. But most of us today are not farmers. Is it still important to celebrate the harvest? Why?
- Wexler built his sukkah model out of basswood, a relatively soft and light wood. If you were building a sukkah, what materials would you use? Why? What factors would influence your decision?



Solomon Alexander Hart

The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue in Leghorn, Italy



Solomon Alexander Hart (British, 1806-1881), *The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue in Leghorn, Italy*, 1850, oil on canvas 55 5/8 x 68 3/4 in. (141.3 x 174.6 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Gruss, JM 28-55

About the Work

In Solomon Alexander Hart's painting, worshippers at the synagogue in the city of Leghorn ("Livorno" in Italian), Italy, ceremoniously carry ten beautifully decorated Torah scrolls in celebration of Simchat Torah. Clothed in Asian turbans, Middle Eastern robes and European cloaks, the congregants represent the diverse Jewish community of this port city. The women, however, are not seen; they were probably seated in a balcony or behind a screen, as traditional Jewish practice prohibits men and women from praying together.

Hart brings an air of grandeur to the painting. The high arches, columns, and gold and silver hanging lamps suggest a dignified and sumptuous interior. Hart's depiction of the synagogue was based on drawings he had made during a visit to Italy several years earlier. Originally built in 1591, the Leghorn synagogue was lavishly redecorated in the 18th century. During World War II, the synagogue was destroyed by the Nazis.

The composition brings the viewer's eye directly to the key element of the painting, the regal procession of the Torah scrolls. The leader of the procession stands in the center of the painting, drawing the attention of the congregants on either side. He is illuminated by the white prayer shawl draped around him and the light reflecting off the white balustrade of the raised bimah behind him. The richly colored mantles and gleaming ornaments of the scrolls trailing behind him further highlight the central action of the painting.

About the Artist

Born in Plymouth, England, in 1806, Solomon Alexander Hart studied painting at the Royal Academy of Arts from 1823 to 1826. In 1840, he became the first Jewish member of the Royal Academy. Founded in 1768 by King George III, the Royal Academy is England's oldest institution devoted entirely to the promotion of the visual arts. At any given time, its membership includes up to 80 of the country's most esteemed working artists.

About Simchat Torah

Every Sabbath, a portion of the Torah is chanted in the synagogue. It takes a year to complete the entire cycle. On Simchat Torah, which falls immediately after Sukkot, congregants reach the end of Deuteronomy and start the reading over again from the beginning of Genesis.

The completion and restarting of this cycle is an opportunity for celebration. Simchat Torah literally means "Rejoicing with the Torah." On this day, all of the Torah scrolls are removed from the ark and amid festive singing and dancing are paraded around the synagogue in their ornaments. Children often join in the processions with flags or miniature scrolls. As the

final chapters of the Pentateuch are chanted and a new cycle begins, it is customary to give everyone an *aliyah*—an invitation to ascend the bimah and recite the blessings over the Torah reading.

Resources

Bibliography for this work of art.

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Ziegler, A. "Jewish Artists in England." *Studio International* 153 (1957): pp. 1-2.

CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

What do you think is happening in this painting? What do you see that supports your ideas? What holiday do you think is being celebrated?

How are the people dressed? When or where do you think this is (for example, what time period, what time of year, where in the world, what type of building)?

- What do you notice about the architecture in the painting?
- How many Torah scrolls do you see in this painting? How are the scrolls decorated? What would you say is the mood in this painting? How has the artist created this mood?
- What would you say is the focal point of this painting? How does the artist focus your attention?
- How does the way the building looks contribute to the celebration?

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this painting, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- This scene takes place in Italy, but the people originate from different parts of the world. What clues do you see that suggest where the people are from? Do your clothes provide clues about where you come from?
- How is this scene similar to or different from celebrations you have attended?
- On Simchat Torah, Jewish people honor the Torah. How are the Torah scrolls being honored in this painting? Are there other objects in your life that you try to treat with great honor or respect? How do you show them honor?
- How has the artist created an atmosphere of honor and respect in this painting?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Portion of a Synagogue Wall Isfahan



Portion of a Synagogue Wall, Isfahan, Persia, 16th century, Faience tile mosaic 104 1/2 x 181 x 4 1/2 in. (265.4 x 459.7 x 11.4 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of Adele and Harry G. Friedman, Lucy and Henry Moses, Miriam Schaar Schloesinger, Florence Sutro Anspacher, Lucille and Samuel Lemberg, John S. and Florence Lawrence, Louis A. Oresman, and Khalil Rabenou, F 5000

In most Ashkenazi communities, the Torah is dressed in a cloth mantle, decorated with a crown or finials, and stored in a cabinet-style ark when not in use. But these customs are not universal. In some Middle-Eastern communities, a Torah scroll is housed in a rigid cylindrical case, or tik. When not in use, the tikkim may be placed in an ark or in niches in the synagogue wall. This mosaic was once part of a wall in a 16th-century synagogue in the city of Isfahan, Persia (modern-day Iran). The floral designs and Hebrew inscriptions were created from small glazed ceramic tiles that were fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle.

Discuss with students:

- What do you notice about the decorations on this mosaic? What kinds of designs do you see? What do they remind you of?
- Do you see any similar designs in the painting by Solomon Alexander Hart? Where?
- This mosaic is about 15 feet across. How do you think it might have been used?

Samaritan Torah Case



Matar Ishmael ha-Ramhi (active mid-16th early 17th century) Damascus (Syria), *Samaritan Torah Case (Tik)*, 1568, copper: inlaid with silver 25 1/4 x 8 in. (64.1 x 20.3 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. The H. Ephraim and Mordecai Benguiat Family Collection, S 21

Many eastern communities use a hard case, or tik, to house and protect the Torah scroll. A tik can be made of wood, leather, or metal; this example is made of copper, inlaid with silver. It was created for the Samaritan community. Samaritans abide by the laws of the Torah and believe that they are the true followers of the ancient Israelite religion. A small community of Samaritans still lives and worships in northern Israel, the historical home of the Samaritan people.

Created in the mid-16th century, this tik with floral arabesques reflects the Mamluk style of art that continued to be used in the region even after the Ottoman conquest of Syria in 1516.

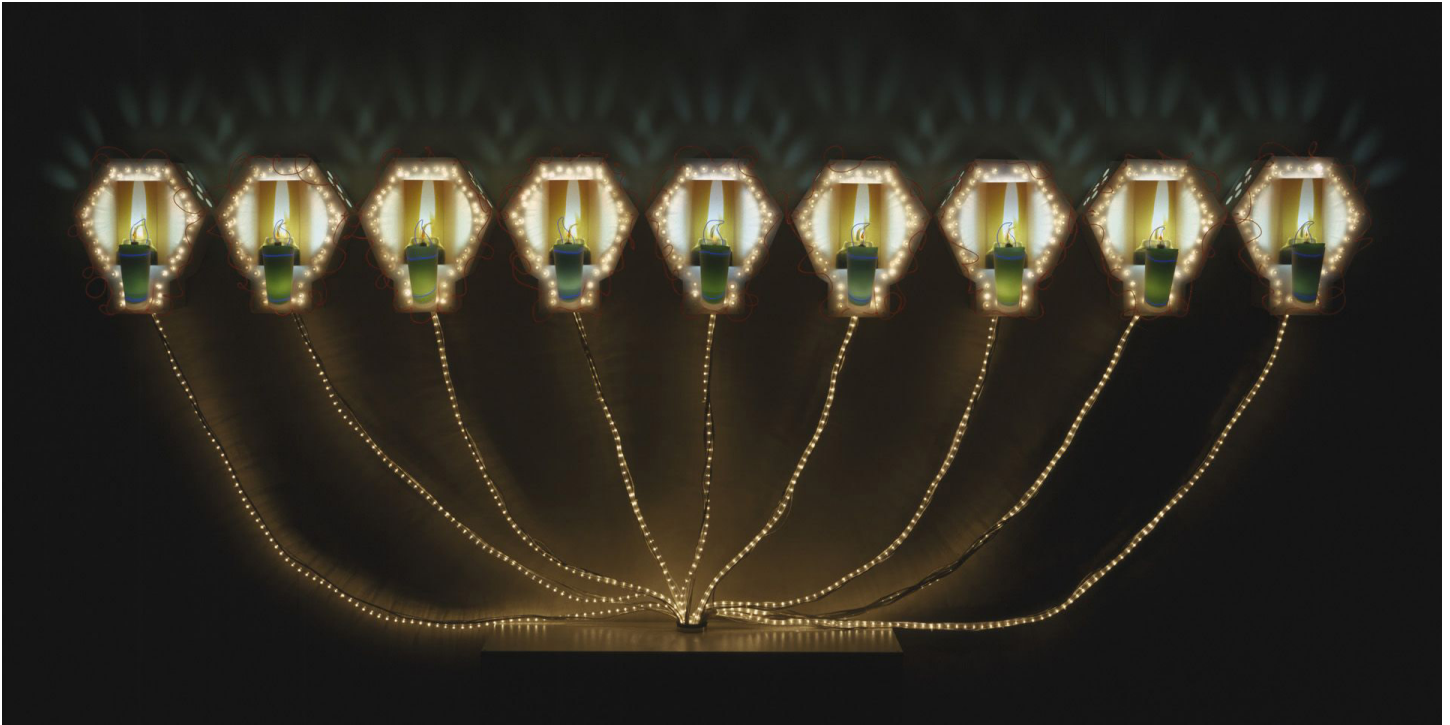
Discuss with students:

- What do you notice about the designs on this object? What do the designs remind you of?
- How do you think this object was used? What do you see to support your answer?
- How does this object compare with the Torah covers in Hart's painting?
- What might be the advantages of a hard tik as opposed to a soft Torah mantle? What might be the disadvantages?



Lyn Godley

Hanukkah Lamp, Miracle



Lyn Godley (American, b. 1956) Blandon, Pennsylvania, United States, *Hanukkah Lamp, Miracle*, 2004, light boxes and power source; light sources: flicker bulbs, backlit sculpted vinyl, electroluminescent panels, fiber optics, electroluminescent wire, vinyl overlay diffuser panels, LED lights, backlit digital imagery, light bulbs, and rope lighting, installation approximately: 72 x 156 in. (182.9 x 396.2 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York, Jewish Museum Centennial Commission. Purchase: Nancy and Jeffrey Lane and Cheryl and Michael Minikes Gift in honor of Phyllis Mack, 2005-1a-j



About the Work

Lyn Godley's joyous and monumental light installation captures the essence of kindling the holiday lights. The electric Hanukkah lamp is 11 feet across. It is made of nine different types of light, including electroluminescent panels, fiber optics, electroluminescent wire, LED lights, backlit digital imagery, and regular light bulbs.

According to tradition, the number of lights in a Hanukkah lamp increases each night, from one up to eight, because we increase in matters of sanctity and do not decrease. In Godley's interpretation, the nine different sources of light are used in a cumulative fashion. The work runs on a timer, cycling through the eight "nights" of the holiday. First, a flame-like shamash appears and then the first "candle," which consists of the flame and a second type of light. Another candle is then added, along with a third light source. The number of light sources increases with each candle so that by the end all nine types of illumination are blazing.

Godley says, "With each additional day that the flame continues to burn, the miracle magnifies. The gasp that we utter on the third day is greater than the second, and continues to grow with each day. The experience of awe and wonder, when in the presence of a miracle unfolding, multiplies with the continuation of that which is inexplicable."

About Hanukkah

Although Hanukkah is not the holiest or most ancient of Jewish holidays, it has become one of the most widely celebrated. Hanukkah literally means "dedication," and the festival celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem in 164 BCE, following the Jewish victory over the Syrian army. According to accounts in the Talmud and Books of Maccabees, the Syrian king Antiochus had forbidden Jews in the Land of Israel to practice their religion. In response, a small band of Jews, led by Judah "the Maccabee" ("the Hammer"), rose up against the Syrian army. Two miracles occurred. The Jewish rebels defeated the mighty Syrian forces, and a small bit of oil burned in the rededicated Temple for eight days—giving the Jews time to find more pure oil to keep the eternal flame lit.

Candle-lighting remains the primary ritual associated with Hanukkah. One flame is lit on the first night of the holiday, and an additional candle (or oil container) is added each night until eight lights are burning in the Hanukkah lamp. Generally, an additional 'helper' flame, called the shamash, is lit on each night as well. Hanukkah lamps are not meant to provide light for utilitarian purposes but rather to make public the miracles of Hanukkah. Other Hanukkah traditions include playing the dreidl game (a betting game played with a spinning top), eating foods cooked in oil (such as potato pancakes and jelly doughnuts) as a reminder of the miracle of oil, and giving coins (or in recent years, other kinds of gifts) to children.

Resources

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CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- Describe what you see. What do you think this object is? How big do you think it is?
- How is this Hanukkah lamp similar to others you have seen? How is it different?
- In this installation, each time another light is illuminated, a new source of light is added. Why do you think the artist used nine different types of light?
- Notice the shapes and colors of the lights in this work. What do they look like to you?
- This installation stretches 11 feet across one wall of a darkened room. How do you think that affects the impact of the work? How would it be different if it were only a foot across?

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this installation, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- Godley calls her installation *Miracle*. Why do you think she chose that name?
- Hanukkah is not only about miracles. It is also about celebrating light in the winter. Light is often used as a metaphor for other things (for example, knowledge, life, the Torah). What does light symbolize for you?
- Godley's work uses electric lights. Do electric lights have a different meaning or significance than candles or oil lamps? Why?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Joel Otterson, *Hanukkah Lamp, Unorthodox Menorah II*



Joel Otterson (American, b.1959), Cincinnati, Ohio, United States, *Hanukkah Lamp, Unorthodox Menorah II*, 1993, mixed metal pipes, cast bronze, porcelain, and glass 37 1/4 x 61 x 16 1/2 in. (94.6 x 154.9 x 41.9 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Judaica Acquisitions Fund, Henry H. and Ruth Herzog Gift, and Rabbi Louis Frishman Gift, 1993-216

The Jewish Museum commissioned this work in 1993. The artist, Joel Otterson, likes to use everyday materials, often combining them in surprising ways. Here, he has welded copper pipe fittings together to create the branches of a Hanukkah lamp. He has topped the shamash with a glass figure of the wrestler Hulk Hogan. The artist said he was inspired by the pop-culture images he saw on ceremonial objects during a visit to Israel. "If they can make a Bart Simpson yarmulke," he reasoned, "I can make a Hulk Hogan menorah." But the presence of the wrestler is not as incongruous as it may seem. Traditional Hanukkah lamps often feature heroic figures, such as the biblical character Judith, to symbolize the victory of the Jewish people over their oppressors.

Discuss with students:

- What materials did Otterson use to create his Hanukkah lamp? How are these materials usually used?
- The statue on top depicts the professional wrestler Hulk Hogan. Why do you think Otterson included Hulk Hogan on his Hanukkah lamp? How do you feel about this choice?
- Otterson calls his lamp *Unorthodox Menorah*. What do you think that means? Can a Hanukkah lamp be meaningful or serious even if it is "unorthodox"? What title would you give to this work?

Hanukkah Lamp, Stolin



Hanukkah Lamp, Stolin (Belarus), c. 1885, lead: cast, tin Each: 2 7/8 x 1 x 15/16 in. (7.3 x 2.5 x 2.4 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of the Chernick Family, JM 102-73

Each of these chairs is an individual oil receptacle. The oil would have been poured inside the seat and a wick inserted in the small hole on top. As a group, these eight lights form a Hanukkah lamp. The two Hebrew letters on the front of each chair stand for *Ner Hanukkah* (Hanukkah light) and *Nes Hanukkah* (Hanukkah miracle). The chairs were cast from lead. Because lead is a soft metal it has a low melting point. The flames of the lights, therefore, caused the deterioration of the chairs over the years.

The tradition of making cast lead or pewter objects for Hanukkah was centered in Germany, Bohemia, and eastern Europe. Children would create lead dreidels from molds they often made themselves. This Hanukkah lamp is one of several chair lamps still in existence. It is not known why the chair form was chosen; however, one type of Hanukkah lamp form, with a backplate, row of lights, and legs, is referred to as the “bench” type. This lamp may have been a whimsical interpretation of the bench form.

Discuss with students:

- What do you notice about the forms of this Hanukkah lamp? How is it different from other lamps you have seen?
- The holes in the chairs are too small for candles. How do you think this lamp worked?
- Who do you think used this lamp? Discuss your ideas.

Samuel Halpert

Trees



Samuel Halpert (American, b. Russia, 1884-1930), *Trees*, 1917, oil on canvas 32 x 25 1/2 in. (81.3 x 64.8 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Halpert with donor maintaining life estate, 1990-145

About the Work

The solid, simplified forms of the trees and farmhouses in this painting reflect the modernist style of artist Samuel Halpert. Halpert uses thick outlines and deep colors to give volume and power to his forms; the result is reminiscent of stained glass. Halpert generally painted from nature, depicting the landscapes he saw before him. Here, he uses atmospheric perspective to enhance the sense of depth in the scene: The trees in the distance are painted in more subdued colors and with fewer details than those in the foreground.

About the Artist

Born in Bialystok, Russia, in 1884, Samuel Halpert came to the United States at the age of five. One of eight children, Halpert lived with his family in a tenement apartment on New York's Lower East Side. He studied art at the Educational Alliance and the National Academy of Design. He later traveled to Paris, where he continued his studies and became influenced by the work of modernist masters Paul Cezanne and Henri Matisse.

Halpert returned to New York in 1912 but remained an avid traveler throughout his life, searching out appropriate subjects for his paintings in the European countryside or up and down the coast of the eastern United States. He painted from life, creating bold, carefully balanced landscapes, cityscapes, and still lifes.

About Tu B'Shevat

Samuel Halpert probably did not have Tu B'Shevat in mind when he painted *Trees*, but the image is appropriate to the holiday nonetheless.

Tu B'Shevat is sometimes called "the New Year of the trees" or "the birthday of the trees." The holiday's origins can be traced to the biblical laws of tithing. The Torah states that one cannot eat the fruit produced by a tree during its first three years and that the fruit of its fourth year must be given to God. But how does one know when a tree turns three or four or five? The solution of the rabbis was to assign a "birthday" to all the trees. And that day is Tu B'Shevat, the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month Shevat.

Tu B'Shevat generally falls in January or February, around the time that the first trees begin to blossom in Israel. Some people mark the day by planting trees in Israel or eating fruits that grow in the Land of Israel. It is also an opportunity to consider our connection to the natural world in general and the role trees and other plants play in our lives. Recent years have seen a revival of a mystical custom known as the Tu B'Shevat Seder. Modeled on the Passover Seder, a Tu B'Shevat Seder typically includes four cups of wine, readings, and the eating of various fruits and nuts.

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CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- What season do you think it is in this painting? What makes you say that?
 - If you were inside this scene, what do you think you would hear? What do you think you would see if you looked to the left or the right or behind you?
 - What mood has the artist created here? How has he created this mood?
 - Look at the colors. How do they add to the mood? What kind of texture do you imagine these trees have?
 - What details has the artist put in the painting? What details has he left out?
 - Notice the reflection of the trees in the water. How does this contribute to the atmosphere of the scene?
 - What title would you give to this painting? Why?
-

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this painting, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- Halpert did not actually paint this picture for Tu B'Shevat. If you were to paint a picture specifically for Tu B'Shevat, how might it be different?
- Tu B'Shevat is considered "the birthday of the trees." Why do trees need a birthday? Why should we celebrate trees? What do they contribute to our lives?
- There is no specific ritual for Tu B'Shevat. What do you think you could do to celebrate the holiday? What kinds of rituals or activities would be appropriate for this day?



Robert Indiana

Purim: Four Facets of Esther



Robert Indiana (American, b. 1928), *Purim: The Four Facets of Esther*, 1967, screenprint on paper 29 7/16 x 23 1/2 in. (74.8 x 59.7 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Commissioned by The Jewish Museum, JM 109-67 © 2008 Morgan Art Foundation Ltd./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

About the Work

The Jewish Museum commissioned this work by Robert Indiana in 1967 and exhibited it on Purim that year. Indiana here uses his usual repertoire of bright colors, geometric symbols, and stenciled letters and numbers to celebrate the multi-faceted nature of Queen Esther. Esther is the champion of the Purim story, a young woman who took great risks to save her people from annihilation.

Indiana had at one point considered a career as a poet, and the way he builds complex meanings from fragmentary words and symbols is itself a form of poetry. We see here his love of words, as he plays with the related sounds of faith, feat, feast, fast, and facet. These few words express key elements of Esther's story and character with great brevity (see About Purim for further explanation). Circles and stars are common in Indiana's work as well, and here he substitutes his usual five-pointed star (often associated with the American flag) with the six-pointed Jewish star, in honor of the heroine.

About the Artist

Robert Clark was born in Indiana in 1928 and later took the name of his birthplace as his own. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago from 1949 to 1953 and moved to New York in 1954. There he met Ellsworth Kelly, Jack Youngerman, and other artists working in an abstract mode. Indiana was especially influenced by Kelly's hard-edged painting style. In the early 1960s, Indiana began to experiment with stencils, creating the kinds of brightly colored paintings of numbers and words for which he would become known.

Although Robert Indiana is associated with the Pop art movement, his work is often more personal than that of his Pop art contemporaries. Indiana alludes to road signs and other features of consumer culture but uses these symbols to reflect his own autobiography and identity as an American. Words like "eat" and "tilt", for example, recall the roadside diners and pinball machines of his Depression-era childhood.

About Purim

Purim celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from destruction, as recounted in the Book of Esther. In the biblical story, Haman, evil advisor to the king of Persia, plots to slaughter all the Jews in the kingdom. He does not know, however, that Queen Esther is secretly a Jew. At the urging of her uncle, Mordecai, Esther decides to appeal to King Ahasuerus to try to save her people. Before taking the bold and precarious step of approaching the king uninvited, Esther fasts. (Jews today traditionally fast on the day before Purim in remembrance of Esther's fast.) The king, however, is happy to see her, and Esther invites the king and Haman to a series of

feasts. At the final feast, Esther reveals her motives, accusing Haman of plotting to murder her and her people. Haman's evil plan is averted.

The celebration of Purim is one of the most festive of the Jewish year. There are four main *mitzvot* (commandments) to fulfill on this holiday. The first is to hear the reading of the *megillah* (scroll) of Esther. As the text is chanted in the synagogue, members of the congregation typically try to drown out Haman's name with noisemakers. The second mitzvah is to participate in a festive meal, and the third is to send gifts of food to friends and relatives. The final mitzvah is to give money or other donations to the poor, because even at our times of greatest joy, we must remember those who are in need.

Resources

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CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- What words, numbers, and symbols do you see in this print? What do they have to do with the Purim story? Where would you expect to see images like this?
 - What do you think Indiana is trying to say about Esther's actions?
 - Why do you think Indiana uses the words "fast," "feast," "feat," and "faith" to tell Esther's story? What effect do these words have? What is the effect of numbering Esther's facets from one to four?
 - Discuss the artist's use of color. Which colors has he used? How has he used them differently in each area of the work?
 - How is each circle different?
-

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this print, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes.

- Although Indiana's work is non-figurative, this print might be considered a kind of portrait of Esther in words and numbers. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Can you think of four words to describe another character in the Purim story? What four words would you use to tell your own story?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Purim Noisemaker



Purim Noisemaker, Poland, 1933, wood: carved and incised 8 1/2 x 6 3/4 x 3 1/8 in. (21.6 x 17.1 x 8 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. The Rose and Benjamin Mintz Collection, M 424

This small, roughly carved wooden noisemaker creates a noise by alternately striking the heads of Adolf Hitler and Haman. Made in Poland in 1933, it foreshadows the devastating events that occurred in Europe over the following decade. The noisemaker was owned by Benjamin Mintz, a Warsaw collector who brought a group of Jewish artifacts to New York in 1939 to exhibit at the World's Fair. Shortly after, Hitler invaded Poland, so Mintz and his wife remained in the United States. Mrs. Mintz sold the Judaica collection to The Jewish Museum in 1947.

This noisemaker reflects the tradition of identifying contemporary oppressors with the biblical character of Haman.

Discuss with students:

- Describe this noisemaker. How is it different from other noisemakers you have seen?
- When you flip the noisemaker back and forth, it hits Haman and Hitler on the head. What do you think the maker of this object was saying by putting the heads of these men on it?

Laurel J. Robinson
Purim Set, Purim Kit 2000



Laurel J. Robinson (American, b. 1952), Phillip Taylor, *Purim Set, Purim Kit 2000*, wood: burned, painted; glass; brass; printed paper 18 7/8 x 11 1/2 x 3 1/2 in. (47.9 x 29.2 x 8.9 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Dr. Joel and Phyllis Gitlin Judaica Acquisitions Fund, 2002-55

Laurel J. Robinson's *Purim Kit 2000* includes several items intended to help recount and celebrate the Purim story—a mask, a flask, and a Scroll of Esther. The double-sided mask features King Ahasuerus on one side and Queen Esther on the other. It is traditional for adults to drink on Purim (until one no longer knows the difference between “blessed be Mordecai” and “cursed be Haman”), so Robinson's kit includes a flask. Shaped like a woman's leg, it represents Esther's royal predecessor, Queen Vashti, who appears to be kicking her husband in the face.

Discuss with students:

- What objects are included in Laurel Robinson's *Purim Kit*?
- What would you put in a Purim kit? What would you include in a Rosh Hashanah or Hanukkah kit? What about a birthday kit or Fourth of July kit?



Neil Goldberg

Seder Plate, Untitled



Neil Goldberg (American, b. 1963) New York, United States, *Seder Plate, Untitled*, 1996, matzah and paper in epoxy resin and wheels Height: 5 in. (12.7 cm) Diameter: 12 1/4 in. (31.1 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Judaica Acquisitions Fund, 1998-44

About the Work

A special plate is traditionally used to hold the symbolic foods eaten at the Passover seder. The seder plate generally includes designated spots for the egg, roasted shank bone, green vegetable, bitter herb, and *haroset* (a sweet mixture of fruits, nuts, and wine).

Encouraging children to ask questions is an essential part of the Passover seder. In this spirit, Neil Goldberg visited six Jewish day schools of different denominations and invited children to write down their questions about God. He then reprinted these questions in spirals to form the placeholders for the traditional items on the seder plate.

Goldberg's seder plate is made from a real matzah mounted on four wheels. This matzah-on-wheels suggests the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt in biblical times. The spiraling questions reflect the universal urge to question and discover God, while also acknowledging the diversity that exists within modern Judaism.

About the Artist

Neil Goldberg was born in Queens, New York, in 1963. Primarily a video and installation artist, Goldberg has created numerous short video works that capture the mundane moments of everyday life and reflect the power, emotion, and poetry often hidden within them. He has focused his camera, for example, on the disappointed faces of New Yorkers missing a train, the rhythmic action of shop-owners rolling up their security gates, and the expressions of diners making their choices at a salad bar. Goldberg's work is not merely voyeuristic; he tries to get at the core of human emotion through his pieces. In some of his recent works, he has turned the camera on himself and his parents in order to explore his own family relationships.

About Passover

Passover ("Pesah" in Hebrew) is a springtime festival that celebrates the rebirth of the natural world at this time of year. Passover also commemorates the Jewish Exodus from Egypt in biblical times and is thus a celebration of the birth of the Jewish people.

One of the key Passover rituals is the seder, a service and a festive meal at which Jews not only retell the story of the Exodus but try to relive it symbolically. Specific foods represent important elements of the story, readings and discussions help bring the past to life, and songs and hymns of praise create a festive atmosphere.

Passover is also known as the Festival of Matzot. During the holiday, Jews refrain from eating regular bread and anything

that has yeast or leaven in it, which causes it to rise. The only bread that is allowed is matzah—a thin cracker that is prepared quickly so it doesn't have time to rise. The matzah is a reminder of the unleavened bread the ancestors of the Jewish people took with them when they hastily left Egypt.

Although the Torah specifies that the Passover holiday should last seven days, Jews outside of Israel traditionally add an extra day, as is the case with most of the religious holidays. This practice dates back to ancient times, when the exact day of a holiday was set only after witnesses had observed the new moon, which marked the beginning of the month. Often, it would take weeks for news of the new moon to reach Jews living outside of Israel. So Jews in the Diaspora would celebrate each holiday for an extra day, just to make sure they did not miss the correct day.

Resources

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CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- Describe Neil Goldberg's seder plate. What do you think it is made of? Why do think the plate is on wheels? What do you think of Goldberg's use of an actual matzah for the plate?
- The six spirals on the plate are made up of questions that kids had asked of God. What do such questions have to do with a seder plate?
- Goldberg left his seder plate untitled. What title would you give it?

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this piece, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes.

- Goldberg's seder plate is partly about questions. What questions would you ask people about Passover that might elicit interesting responses? What questions would you ask God? What questions would you ask Neil Goldberg about his seder plate?
- Goldberg's piece is also about leaving in a hurry—the matzah and the wheels both relate to the Jews' hurried exodus from Egypt. What do you think it was like for the ancient Jews to have to leave their homes so suddenly? Do you think the story of Passover would have been different if the Jews had been able to take their time leaving Egypt? Why do you think the Jewish tradition places so much importance on retelling the story of the Exodus?

RELATED WORKS OF ART

Amy Klein Reichert, *Miriam Cup*



Amy Klein Reichert (American, b. 1959) Manufacturer: Stephen Smithers (American, b. 1951) Williamstown, Massachusetts, United States, *Miriam Cup*, 1997, silver: cast and hammered Height: 4 1/2 in. (11.4 cm) Diameter: 7 3/4 in. (19.7 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Purchase: Lorraine and Martin Beitler Foundation Gift and Judaica Acquisitions Fund, 1997-131

A cup of wine is traditionally placed on the seder table for the Prophet Elijah, who, it is said, will return to herald the coming of the Messiah. In recent years, some families have added a second cup—this one filled with water for the Prophet Miriam, who was Moses' sister. The Torah relates that after the crossing of the Red Sea, with timbrel—a percussion instrument similar to a tambourine—in hand, Miriam led the women of Israel in songs and dances of praise to God. According to legend, because of Miriam's merit, a well followed the children of Israel and sustained them as they wandered through the desert. When Miriam died, the well dried up.

Amy Klein Reichert is an architect and exhibit designer. Her *Miriam Cup* was one of the first objects of Judaica she created. She has said, "What are the sounds of freedom? The wind rustling through grasses, the murmuring of exiles, desert sounds, a joyous song with a tambourine. Miriam's cup is a restless vessel, like her ancient well accompanying the people of Israel along their journey. It is heard as well as seen, its cymbals dancing in response to the slightest vibration of the table."

Discuss with students:

- What do you notice about the design of Reichert's Miriam Cup? What do you think this object sounds like?
- The artist has asked, "What are the sounds of freedom? The wind rustling through grasses, the murmuring of exiles, desert sounds, a joyous song with a tambourine." What do you think freedom sounds like?

- The inclusion of the Miriam cup at the seder table is a relatively new ritual. Water is put in the cup at the seder to remember the role Moses' sister Miriam played in the Exodus. What does water symbolize to you? What other kinds of modern rituals do you know of?

Seder Plate Tiered Seder Set



Seder Plate, Tiered Seder Set, eastern Galicia or western Ukraine, 18th–19th century. Brass: cast and engraved; wood: painted and stained; ink on paper; silk: brocade; linen; cotton 13 3/4 x 14 in. (35 x 35.5 cm) The Jewish Museum, New York Gift of the Danzig Jewish Community, D 115

This seder set includes holders for the symbolic foods, a pedestal for Elijah's cup, and wooden trays down below to hold the matzot (the plural form of matzah). Rampant lions carry plaques displaying the blessings that are said over the symbolic foods. The curvature of their bodies and their notched paws echo the shapes of the grillwork surrounding the matzah trays. Although there are other tiered seder sets from the 19th century, this one is unique in its elaborate design and use of brass rather than silver as a primary material.

Discuss with students:

- Look closely at this seder set. What kinds of designs do you see? How do you think this set was used?
- This seder set includes holders for the symbolic foods and trays for the matzot. Compare it with Neil Goldberg's seder plate. How are these objects similar? How are they different?
- If you were having a seder, which would you prefer to use? Why?



James Jacques Joseph Tissot, *Pharaoh's Daughter Receives the Mother of Moses*



James Jacques Joseph Tissot (French, 1836–1902), *Pharaoh's Daughter Receives the Mother of Moses*, c. 1896–1902, gouache on board 8 5/8 x 10 7/16 in. (22.5 x 26.5 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of the heirs of Jacob Schiff, X1952–146

At the Passover seder, participants retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt through text, ritual, and symbolic foods. This painting, by the 19th-century French artist James Jacques Joseph Tissot, captures a particular moment in that story.

Chapter 2 of Exodus tells the story of Moses' mother, Yoheved, who sent her infant boy down the Nile in a basket because Pharaoh had ordered the death of all male Jewish babies. Moses' sister Miriam followed the basket, and when Pharaoh's daughter discovered the baby among the bulrushes, Miriam offered to find her a nursemaid from among the Hebrews. Unbeknownst to the princess, Miriam brought Moses' own mother to nurse and take care of him. In this painting, you can see Moses in a basket among the bulrushes. On the left stands the Pharaoh's daughter with her handmaidens; on the right, Miriam and Yoheved bow down before her.

This is one of nearly 400 paintings by Tissot depicting stories from the Hebrew Bible. During the last two decades of his career, Tissot painted two large biblical series—one based on the Christian Bible and one on the Hebrew Bible. He based his work on sketches he had made of the landscape, archaeology, and people of Palestine and the Near East. Although Tissot's paintings are not always historically accurate, he created rich, romantic, accessible images that have even influenced contemporary visions of the Bible on film and television.

Discuss with students:

- What do you think is happening in this painting? Who are these people? How are they related? Where are they?

- This painting is titled *Pharaoh's Daughter Receives the Mother of Moses*. How does the title help you understand the scene? Which woman do you think is Pharaoh's daughter? Why? Which one is Moses' mother?
- How would you describe the artist's style—the way he painted the image? What choices did he make about the way he painted the figures? The background? What sort of atmosphere has he created?
- What do you think will happen next in this picture?

Moses Formstecher

Model of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in a Bottle



Moses Formstecher (1760-1836) Offenbach (Germany), *Model of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in a Bottle*, 1813, glass: halfpost blown; wood: painted; metal 11 1/4 x 5 in. (28.6 x 12.7 cm). The Jewish Museum, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Bial, JM 21-79a Digital image © 2006 The Jewish Museum, New York. Photo by Ardon Bar Hama.

About the Work

Information about a unique work of art from The Jewish Museum's extensive collection.

Although Solomon's Temple no longer exists, we can envision its appearance from the Bible's description of a magnificent building made of costly woods and having gilded decorations and furnishings of pure gold. Jews around the world have prayed that the magnificent sanctuary would be rebuilt in the Messianic Era. Artists through the ages have imaginatively interpreted the biblical description to recreate the Temple in paintings, illustrations, and ritual art. However, the form that this example takes—of a Temple model in a bottle—is unique.

How did Formstecher fit his creation into this thin-necked bottle? People often assume with such works that the bottles are created or completed around the models. Generally, however, the pieces of the model are inserted unfinished into an existing bottle. The maker then completes the assembly inside the bottle, with the help of long, thin, specialized tools and lots of patience.

About Tisha B'Av

Extensive information about the holiday of Tisha B'Av.

Tisha B'Av (the 9th day of the Hebrew month Av) is the saddest day in the Jewish calendar. It commemorates the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE and the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. A number of other tragedies befell the Jewish people on this date as well, including the expulsion from Spain in 1492.

Tisha B'Av is the culmination of a three-week period of mourning that begins on the 17th day of Tammuz, the date on which both the Babylonians and the Romans first breached the walls of Jerusalem. During these three weeks, many Jews refrain from cutting their hair or participating in joyous celebrations. In the final nine days leading up to Tisha B'Av, it is traditional not to eat meat or drink wine. Tisha B'Av itself is a full day of fasting. In the synagogue, the Book of Lamentations is chanted as members of the community sit on the floor or on low benches to reflect the spirit of mourning.

CLOSE LOOKING & DISCUSSION

Key questions and exploration of individual works of art.

Close Looking / Visual Analysis:

- What can you say about the model inside the bottle? What does it look like to you?
- How big do you think this piece is?
- How do you think the artist got the model inside the bottle?

For Further Discussion:

After giving students ample opportunity to examine this piece, lead them in a discussion of related topics and themes:

- Solomon's Temple and the subsequent Second Temple were both destroyed on Tisha B'Av, and Jewish people mourn their loss on that day. People still visit the Temple site in Jerusalem and pray at the Western Wall (a retaining wall for the platform on which the Temple once stood). It is considered a holy location. What do you think makes a place holy?
- The Temple was once the center of the world's Jewish community. Today, synagogues and other institutions fill that need within local Jewish communities. What buildings or institutions serve as centers for your community?
- The model inside the bottle is an artist's idea of what the ancient Temple in Jerusalem looked like. What do you think it looked like?
- If you could bottle a special object or location, what would it be? Why?



Themes

The works of art and artifacts featured on this site have been grouped into four themes. Select a holiday theme:

Ritual

Explore how these works of art relate to the theme of ritual.

Abraham Shulkin
Torah Ark
Sioux City, Iowa, United States, 1899

Allan Wexler
Sukkah Model
New York, United States, 1988

Solomon Alexander Hart
The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue in Leghorn, Italy, 1850

Lyn Godley
Hanukkah Lamp
Blandon, Pennsylvania, United States, 2004

Samuel Halpert
Trees, 1917

Neil Goldberg
Seder Plate
New York, United States, 1996

Isidor Kaufmann
Friday Evening, c. 1920

Identity

Explore how these works of art relate to the theme of identity.

Happy Jack (born Angokwazhuk)
New Year Greeting
Nome, Alaska, United States, 1910

Solomon Alexander Hart
The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue in Leghorn, Italy, 1850

Neil Goldberg
Seder Plate
New York, United States, 1996

Moses Formstecher
Model of the Second Temple
Offenbach (Germany), 1813

Isidor Kaufmann
Friday Evening, c. 1920

Ceremonial Objects

Explore works of art with a ceremonial purpose.

Abraham Shulkin
Torah Ark
Sioux City, Iowa, United States, 1899

Lyn Godley
Hanukkah Lamp
Blandon, Pennsylvania, United States, 2004

Neil Goldberg
Seder Plate
New York, United States, 1996

Contemporary Perspectives

Explore works of art created in our time. Discuss the artists' use of modern materials and contemporary ideas.

Allan Wexler
Sukkah Model
New York, United States, 1988

Lyn Godley
Hanukkah Lamp
Blandon, Pennsylvania, United States, 2004

Robert Indiana
Purim: Four Facets of Esther, 1967

Neil Goldberg
Seder Plate
New York, United States, 1996



Activities

Tikkun Olam Envelope Books

Aim: To create a personal envelope book inspired by Harriete Estel Berman's work, *Tzedakah*.

Grades: 3–5, 6–8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Identity

Artworks: Berman: *Alms Container, Tzedakah*, USA, 1999; Happy Jack: *New Year Greeting*, Alaska, 1910

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, English Language Arts

Materials: Envelopes, markers, glue sticks

book. When unfurled, all the envelopes will open on the same side. Students may use a piece of ribbon to fasten the book shut.

5. Ask students to decorate each envelope in the book to illustrate a different form of charity or good deed (for example, recycling, helping a family member, saying something nice to a friend, volunteering). These envelopes will serve as reminders of each student's tikkun olam goals.
6. Every time a student accomplishes one of these goals, he or she can write a note about the experience and slip it into the appropriate envelope within the book.

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artworks.
Discuss with students:
 - What does the title of Berman's work suggest to you?
 - Do you think this was meant to be used as a tzedakah container or only to be viewed as a work of art?
 - If you were going to use this object as a tzedakah container, what kinds of causes would you collect money for?
 - What are some ways to make the world a better place besides giving money?
2. Have each student create a simple accordion-style envelope book to help in the practice of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).
3. Choose an attractive style of envelope (any size or shape will do) and give each student an odd number of them (about seven).
4. Have students use glue sticks to adhere the flap of one envelope to the front of another envelope. Students should repeat this for all of their envelopes. Each student will end up with a string of envelopes that are glued together and can be folded up like an accordion. The flap of the first envelope will serve as the cover of the envelope



Holiday Greetings

Aim: To create holiday greetings using non-traditional materials.

Grades: K-2, 3-5

Themes: Identity

Artworks: Happy Jack: *New Year Greeting*, Alaska, 1910

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, English Language Arts

Materials: An assortment of craft and found materials but not including paper (for example, wood pieces, beads, yarn, wire, paint and paintbrushes, glue, cardboard)

Procedure:

1. Have students examine the listed Artwork. Discuss its unique features and its function as a Jewish New Year's greeting.
2. Ask students what holidays they celebrate. List the answers and discuss the various ways these holidays are celebrated. Ask each student to choose one holiday for which to make a special holiday greeting. But, like The Jewish Museum's New Year greeting, the students' greetings will not be made from paper. Students will experiment with alternative materials to create their greetings.
3. Make available a wide range of supplies and give students enough time to explore them. Have students consider what colors, textures, patterns, and symbols relate best to the mood and themes of the holiday. What are they trying to convey through their greetings? Encourage students to make their cards in interesting shapes using unusual materials.

Design a Sukkah

Aim: To work in small groups to create imaginative sukkah designs for different environments.

Grades: 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ritual

Artworks: Wexler: *Dining Room with Walls as Projections of Chairs ...*, USA, 1988

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, Math, Science

Materials: Paper and pencil

Procedure:

1. Have students examine and discuss the listed Artwork. Discuss with students:
 - Is Wexler's sukkah model practical? Could people really use the sukkah he proposes?
 - Would his sukkah be easy to assemble? Easy to store? Effective against wind? Heat? Cold? How would you change it to make it more usable?
2. Break students into small groups and have each group design a sukkah. Give each group different parameters, for example:

Your sukkah must be able to withstand strong winds.
Your sukkah will be assembled by only one person.
Your sukkah must be inexpensive.
Your sukkah will be built in a very cold climate.
(Alternatively, give each group the same parameters and see how each approaches the same problem.)
3. Have students create a sketch of their sukkah, list the materials it will use, outline the unique features of the structure, and explain how it will be assembled.
4. Have each group present its design to the rest of the class.



Create an Earth Mobile

Aim: To use found objects to design a hanging sculpture for your sukkah or window.

Grades: K-2, 3-5

Themes: Ritual

Artworks: Wexler: *Dining Room with Walls as Projections of Chairs ...*, USA, 1988

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Found objects (for example, fabric, bottles, bottle caps, sticks), glue, paint, and yarn.

Procedure:

1. It is customary to adorn one's sukkah with hanging fruit, posters, cards, and other decorations. You can, for example, have students design hanging sculptures using everyday materials such as fabric, bottles, and paperclips.
2. Students can begin with a branch or stick and use yarn to hang various collected objects at different heights.
3. Encourage students to explore ways to transform the materials with paint or collage or by gluing them together in unusual ways.
4. Hang students' creations in a window or in a sukkah.

Paint a Celebration

Aim: To paint images of celebration.

Grades: K-2, 3-5

Themes: Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Hart: *The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue...*, 1850

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Paints, paintbrushes, paper

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artwork. Discuss with students:
 - What words would you use to describe the celebration in this picture?
 - How has the artist used color, light, and movement to depict the celebration?
 - What celebrations have you participated in? What were you celebrating? How did you celebrate?
2. Have students use paints to depict times when they rejoiced with music and dancing. Before they begin, encourage students to think about how they will convey joy, music, and dance through color, shape, and line and also about the way they will apply the paint.
3. Share all paintings in a class celebration of celebrations.



Adorning the Torah

Aim: To create three-dimensional crowns and finials for the Torah.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Shulkin: *Torah Ark*, Iowa, USA, 1899; Hart: *The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue...*, 1850; Zabari: *Torah Crown*, USA, 1969

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Aluminum foil; glass beads, ceramic tiles, or other trinkets; glue

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artworks. Discuss with students:
 - What do you notice about the different ways the Torah is adorned in the painting?
 - What shapes, patterns, and materials do you see?
 - How does the design of Moshe Zabari's *Torah Crown* compare with the Torah ornaments in the painting?
 - Why is the Torah decorated in these ways?
2. Have students construct their own Torah crowns or finials. Encourage students to think about the form their work will take. Will it be a crown or separate finials? Will it be traditional or modern? Will it use any recognizable images and symbols, or will it be more abstract?
3. Make foil available to students and have them squeeze, ball, flatten, scrunch, mold, and shape it according to their own ideas and design aesthetics. Students can also glue on beads, tiles, or other ornaments to enhance their designs.
4. Create a display of student work.

Mosaics

Aim: To create a mosaic inspired by the decorations on a Persian synagogue wall.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Hart: *The Feast of the Rejoicing of the Law at the Synagogue...*, 1850; Portion of a Synagogue Wall, Isfahan, Persia, 16th century

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, Math

Materials: Ceramic tiles or bits of construction paper, cardboard and glue

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artworks. Discuss with students:
 - What is this object? How does it protect the Torah and emphasize its majesty?
 - Discuss the mosaic art form. Have students seen mosaics before? Where? What kinds of patterns do they see in this mosaic from Isfahan, Persia?
2. Have your students create mosaics inspired by the Islamic designs on this mosaic. Students can use ceramic tiles (purchased from an art-supply store) or paper "tiles" made from cut-up construction paper and glue them onto a cardboard backing.
3. Encourage students to think about images that are meaningful to them and plan their compositions carefully before gluing anything down.



Hanukkah Lamps

Aim: To use found materials to create Hanukkah lamps inspired by Joel Otterson's *Unorthodox Menorah II*.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ceremonial Objects, Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Godley: *Miracle, Hanukkah Lamp*, USA, 2004; *Hanukkah Lamp*, Stolin, c. 1885; Otterson: *Hanukkah Lamp, Unorthodox Menorah II*, USA, 1993

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: A variety of found objects and assorted craft materials (for example, glue, wire, foil, wood blocks and tiles)

Procedure:

1. Have students view and compare the listed Artworks. Discuss with students:
 - How are these two pieces similar? How are they different?
 - What materials are used? How are they used?
 - Based on these two objects, what do you think are the requirements for a Hanukkah lamp? Why do you think these two lamps look so different?
2. The Hanukkah lamps used over the centuries vary in form and decoration, but all have eight lights usually placed in a row and on the same level. Since it is forbidden to use the Hanukkah lights for any secular purpose, a ninth light—the shamash, or servitor—is often added to serve as a source of illumination and to kindle the other lights. Other than that, there are few requirements for a Hanukkah lamp. Joel Otterson created his lamp from a variety of found and unexpected materials. Have your students use found materials to create Hanukkah lamps inspired by Otterson's work.
3. Make a variety of found materials and craft supplies available to students. These should include some items that could be used as a base (for example, trays, plates, boxes, blocks of wood, pieces of foil) and some that could be use as candle or oil holders (for example, shot glasses, thimbles, plastic bottle caps, screw nuts).
4. Give students time to explore the materials and begin creating. Encourage them to be thoughtful about their constructions: How will the different objects and materials work together visually? Is there a theme or idea behind the work? Is the lamp practical? Could it be used?

Light Collage

Aim: To reflect on light and dark through collage.

Grades: K-2, 3-5

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ceremonial Objects

Artworks: Godley: *Hanukkah Lamp, Miracle*, USA, 2004

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Black, white, and metallic paper; scissors and glue

Procedure:

1. Have students view the listed Artwork. Discuss with students:
 - What do the lights in Godley's work remind you of?
 - Why is light such an important part of winter rituals? Why is it such an important part of religious rituals in general?
 - What do lights and flames symbolize? What do they mean to you personally?
2. Distribute supplies and ask students to create collages that reflect the meaning of "light." Students can rip or cut the paper and combine the pieces in any way.
3. Afterward, you might ask students to write about their work, create a related poem about light, or find an existing text or quote about light to pair with their work.



Leaf Collage

Aim: To create landscapes through collage.

Grades: K-2, 3-5

Themes: Ritual

Artworks: Halpert: *Trees*, 1917

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Paper, scissors, glue, magazines, or leaves and other materials collected from outside

Procedure:

1. Have students view the listed Artwork.
2. Have students create their own landscapes through collage. Students can cut shapes and designs out of magazines to create leaves, branches, flowers, grass, and other plants. Remind them that they can cut out portions of magazine pages just for color in addition to cutting out images of nature. For example, the brown from a shoe ad could be torn out for tree bark, and the green from a textured skirt could be used for leaves. Encourage students to fill their papers with trees and plant life.
3. Alternatively, students can create landscape collages using natural materials such as leaves, blossoms, bark, and other materials collected from outdoors.

Heroes and Heroines

Aim: To create a portrait of a hero in words and pictures.

Grades: 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Identity

Artworks: Goldberg: *Seder Plate, Untitled*, USA, 1996; Indiana: *Purim: The Four Facets of Esther*, 1967; Otterson: *Hanukkah Lamp, Unorthodox Menorah II*, USA, 1993; Reichert: *Miriam Cup*, USA, 1997; Godley: *Hanukkah Lamp, Miracle*, USA, 2004

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, English Language Arts

Materials: Research materials, paper and a pencil

Procedure:

1. Have students view all or some of the listed Artworks. Discuss with students:
 - How does each of these works depict a hero or heroine? What, if anything, does each tell us about the hero or heroine? How does each reflect the idea of heroism?
 - What makes a hero or heroine? Is Esther a heroine? Is Miriam a heroine? Is Judah Maccabee a hero? Is Hulk Hogan a Hero? Why or why not?
 - What are the qualities that make someone a hero or heroine? Who are your heroes? And why?
2. Have each student research his or her hero or heroine and write about that person. (If the hero or heroine is a family member, friend, or person in the community, the student can interview the hero or heroine). Students should consider: What has this person done that is heroic? What heroic qualities does this person possess?
3. Have each student find a picture of his or her hero or heroine or create a portrait of the hero or heroine through drawing or photography.
4. Have each student choose a short piece of text from what he or she has written and combine the portrait with the text. Have students consider various ways to combine the two. For example, students might overlay words on top of the image, write the text around the perimeter of the image, or incorporate the words into the image. Show students images from comics, magazines, and advertising to help them explore ways to combine them.
5. Encourage students to incorporate their own hero or heroine into their work as well.



Bravery Books

Aim: To create personal books reflecting on one's own bravery.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Identity

Artworks: Indiana: *Purim: The Four Facets of Esther*, 1967

Discipline: Visual Art, English Language Arts

Materials: The book *Brave Irene*, by William Steig, construction paper, markers, and collage materials

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artwork. Discuss with students:
 - What made Esther brave? What does it mean to be brave?
 - Who else do you consider brave?
 - When have you been brave?
2. Read *Brave Irene*, by William Steig and discuss how it reflects on the idea of bravery.
3. Have each student create a book about an occasion when he or she felt especially brave. Students can draw, write, or use collage to create their books.
4. Tell students to read their books once a year on Purim or on another day they choose to be their Day of Bravery.

Numbers and Words

Aim: To create a work of art that tells the Purim story using only numbers, words, and shapes.

Grades: 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Identity

Artworks: Indiana: *Purim: The Four Facets of Esther*, 1967

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, Math, English Language Arts

Materials: Paper; markers or colored pencils; magazines, scissors, and glue for collage

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the work of art below. Discuss with students:
 - How is Indiana able to tell Esther's story with so few words? What parts of her story does he tell?
 - Does he really tell the story or just remind us of the story we already know?
 - How can we tell stories or convey ideas through numbers, letters, words, and symbols?
2. Have each student try to convey elements of a simple, well-known story (for example, the story of the three little pigs) using single words, numbers, and simple drawings. Have students share their work with the class. Discuss symbols and the way we use recognizable symbols to communicate broader ideas.
3. Next, ask each student to pick a character from the Purim story and think of four words to describe that character's role in the story. Point out the way Robert Indiana used alliteration in his painting, and encourage students to use alliteration (or rhyming) in their work.
4. Have students combine these words with numbers, shapes, colors, and symbols to create their own retelling of the Purim story from their characters' perspectives. Students may use collage, drawing, or a combination of both, but they can only use numbers, words, and shapes to communicate their ideas.
5. The Purim story is usually told in a narrative (the *megillah*). Indiana's work is a kind of visual poetry. Discuss the different ways to tell a story. What other ways are there to tell the Purim story?



Make a Megillah

Aim: To create a class scroll illustrating the entire Book of Esther.

Grades: K-2, 3-5

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ritual

Artworks: Indiana: *Purim: The Four Facets of Esther*, 1967

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Paper, pencils, fabric squares, fabric markers and a text that recounts the story of Esther

Procedure:

1. The story of Purim is told in the Book of Esther, which is usually recorded in scroll form and read on Purim in the synagogue. The scroll used for the public recitation of the Book of Esther in the synagogue is undecorated. By the 16th century, however, Jews began to own Esther scrolls for private use. These, as well as their cases, were often highly decorated, frequently with scenes from the story. Show students an Esther Scroll, or megillah, from The Jewish Museum's collection.
2. Have your class create its own illustrated Esther scroll. Share the story of Purim with the class. Then divide the story into sections and give one section to each student or pair of students.
3. Ask each student or pair to sketch an illustration of that section of the story on a sheet of paper.
4. Then have each student or pair create a final version of the illustration in marker on a square of fabric.
5. Sew, staple, or tape the fabric segments together into one long scroll in order to create your own illustrated class megillah. You might ask the class to act out the story, one scene at a time.

Micrography Seder Plate

Aim: To create seder plates for Passover.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ceremonial Objects, Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Goldberg: *Seder Plate, Untitled*, USA, 1996

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Paper plates or pie tins and markers

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the work below. Discuss the way Goldberg incorporates text into his design. Goldberg's work is reminiscent of micrography, the art of creating designs or pictures out of very small writing. Micrography is a traditional Jewish art form.
2. Have students use paper plates, pie tins, or other materials to create seder plates inspired by Goldberg's design.
3. Have each student come up with some text for his or her seder plate. Students can write about the meaning of each item on the seder plate, create questions about the seder, or write down their own seder memories.
4. Have students use their text as micrography, creating their designs (including the locations for each of the symbolic foods) out of their words.



The Sound of Freedom

Aim: To write poems that reflect on the meaning of freedom.

Grades: 3–5, 6–8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Identity

Artworks: Reichert: *Miriam Cup*, USA, 1997; Goldberg: *Seder Plate, Untitled*, USA, 1996

Discipline: English Language Arts

Materials: Paper and pencil

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artwork.
2. Share with students what the artist wrote about the object:
 - “What are the sounds of freedom? The wind rustling through grasses, the murmuring of exiles, desert sounds, a joyous song with a tambourine. Miriam’s cup is a restless vessel, like her ancient well accompanying the people of Israel along their journey. It is heard as well as seen, its cymbals dancing in response to the slightest vibration of the table.”
 - Discuss the artist’s statement with the class.
3. Ask students to write poems titled “The Sounds of Freedom.” You might encourage them to write their poems in the form of a haiku. Japanese haiku are very concise, consisting of three lines.

The first line generally has five syllables, the second line seven syllables, and the third line five syllables. Haiku is especially appropriate to this topic, as haiku are meant to be very descriptive and often deal with themes such as nature, feelings, and experiences.

Passover Role-Play

Aim: To role-play various scenes in the story of the Exodus.

Grades: 3–5, 6–8

Themes: Ritual

Artworks: Goldberg: *Seder Plate, Untitled*, USA, 1996; Tissot: *Pharaoh’s Daughter Receives the Mother of...*, c. 1996–1902

Discipline: Theater, Jewish Studies, English Language Arts

Materials: None

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artworks.
2. Discuss the biblical scene it depicts. Invite several students to assume the roles of the different figures in the painting and act out the scene.
3. Then divide students into small groups. Have each group write a skit based on a different scene in the story of the Exodus and act it out.



Papercuts

Aim: To create Shavuot papercuts exploring symmetry and the use of positive and negative space.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Ritual

Artworks: Shulkin: *Torah Ark*, Iowa, USA, 1899

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, Math

Materials: Construction paper, glue, pencils, scissors

4. Ask students to cut one of the pieces in two and discard one half. Have them create a line drawing on the other half of the paper. Encourage students to work with floral motifs.
5. Have the students cut the pieces of “negative space” out of the drawing and glue the remaining “positive” pieces on to one half of the other sheet of paper. Tell the students to hold onto the pieces of “negative space” they cut out. Have them glue these cut-out pieces into place on the other half of the paper to create a mirror image of the original design, made from negative space.

Procedure:

Abraham Shulkin’s *Torah ark* incorporates a symmetrical design and the intricate use of positive and negative space, much like eastern European papercuts of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Shulkin may have created a preparatory papercut to use as a model for his carved-wood ark.

1. Have your students research examples of eastern European papercuts. Ask students to compare the papercuts they find with Shulkin’s ark. For example:
 - What similar designs and images do you see? How are the papercuts and the *Torah Ark* similar in their overall structure (for example, in their symmetry or architectural form)?
 - In both works, the shapes (positive space) are defined by what has been cut away (the negative space). Where do you see positive space? Where do you see negative space? How has each artist created this negative space?
 - In what ways are the papercuts and the *Torah Ark* different (for example, in their materials or use of color)?
2. In parts of eastern Europe, it was especially popular to make floral papercuts to decorate the windows of Jewish homes on the eve of Shavuot. There were a number of inspirations for this custom, including the words of the Akdamut hymn, which is read in synagogue on Shavuot; the legend that Mount Sinai burst into flower at the giving of the Torah; the classic image of the Torah as the Tree of Life; and the Song of Songs’ image of Israel as a rose. This kind of papercut was known as a *Shevuoslekh* (little Shavuot) or *royseleh* (rosette).
3. Have students create their own *Shevuoslekh* that incorporate symmetry and explore positive and negative space. Give each student two sheets of paper in contrasting colors.



Omer Calendars

Aim: To design Omer calendars.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ceremonial Objects, Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Kahn: *Omer Calendar*, *Saphyr*, 2002

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, Math

Materials: Paper and pencil

Procedure:

1. Have students examine the listed Artwork. Discuss with students:
 - How is this object used?
 - Why do you think someone would create an object like this?
 - Have you ever counted the days until an anticipated event? What was the event? Why did you count the days? What was the experience of counting the days like?
2. Have students design their own Omer calendars. Encourage them to think creatively about different ways to mark the 49 days of the Omer—for example, using 49 pegs in a peg-board (as in Tobi Kahn’s work), creating tags to hang on 49 hooks, building a spinning “Omer wheel,” designing a counter that keeps track separately of the weeks and days.
3. Alternatively, you can have students design counters to count the days until some other event (for example, the end of school, the start of camp, students’ birthdays, or another holiday).
4. After students complete their designs, you might ask them to construct and use their counters.

Make an Israel Memory Box

Aim: To create a symbolic reminder of Israel.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Identity

Artwork: Formstecher: *Model of the Second Temple in Jerusalem...*, 1813

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Small wooden or cardboard boxes such as shoe boxes, found items, construction paper, markers, scissors and glue

Procedure:

1. Moses Formstecher created his model in a bottle as a reminder of the ancient Temple that once stood in Jerusalem. (A more common type of reminder is what is known as a *mizrah*. Mizrah is Hebrew for “east.” It is traditional for Jews living west of Israel to pray toward the east, the site of the Temple. A mizrah plaque is sometimes placed on the eastern wall of a home or synagogue as a reminder of the direction of prayer.)
2. Show students Formstecher’s model and discuss its design and function. Then have students create their own memory boxes to remind them of Israel and Jerusalem.
3. Have students collect stones, postcards, colors, or other textural elements that symbolize Jerusalem to them.
4. Distribute boxes to students along with markers, paper, scissors, and glue. Students can arrange and attach their found items inside the boxes or hang them from the outside. They can also decorate the inside and outside of the boxes with traditional or personal images, including the letters of the Hebrew word mizrah .



Monologues

Aim: To use creative writing to reflect on the thoughts and feelings of the figures in the Sabbath-related work of art.

Grades: 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Kaufmann: *Friday Evening*, c. 1920

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies, English Language Arts

Materials: Paper and pencil

Procedure:

1. Have students examine the listed Artwork. Discuss with students:
 - What do you think is happening in this scene?
 - What do you think the character is thinking?
 - What do you think happens next in this scene?
2. Ask each student to write a monologue from the point of view of the woman in Kaufmann's painting. Based on what the students see, what do they think the figure might be thinking?
3. Have students perform their monologues for the rest of the class.

Create a Sabbath Room

Aim: To bring the spirit of the Sabbath into your classroom.

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

Themes: Ceremonial Objects, Identity

Artworks: *Studio Armadillo: Linen*, 2002; Kaufmann: *Friday Evening*, c. 1920

Discipline: Visual Art, Jewish Studies

Materials: Objects from home and Sabbath decorations

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss the listed Artworks. Discuss with students:
 - What do all these works have in common?
 - How would you describe the "Sabbath spirit" as captured in each?
 - What is it that makes the Sabbath special?
2. In 1899, Isidor Kaufmann created a "Sabbath Room" in the Jewish Museum of Vienna. The room was set up as if prepared for a traditional Sabbath celebration. Kaufmann's Sabbath Room became the basis for his painting *Friday Evening*.
3. Turn your classroom into a Sabbath Room. Have students bring in ritual objects, make decorations, and arrange the room to create a feeling of the Sabbath. Afterward, discuss: Were you able to evoke the Sabbath spirit in your room? What objects helped to create the feeling? What does it mean to create sacred space?



Build a Spice Container

Aim: To make a tower-form spice container.

Grades: 3–5, 6–8

Themes: Contemporary Perspectives, Ceremonial Objects, Identity, Ritual

Artworks: Kaufmann: *Friday Evening*, c. 1920; Segal: *Spice Container*, Israel, 1986

Discipline: Visual Art, English Language Arts

Materials: Mini cereal boxes, raisin boxes, or other small cardboard boxes; markers, construction paper, glue, tape, scissors, and cloves

Procedure:

1. Have students view and discuss Zelig Segal's *Spice Container*, as well as the 16th-century spice container below. Discuss with students:
 - How are these two objects similar? How are they different?
 - What do you notice about the design of the traditional spice container?
 - It was common in earlier centuries to create spice containers in the shape of towers and buildings.
2. Distribute supplies and have students create tower-form spice containers. They can base their constructions on their school or home, a famous skyscraper, or any another building.
3. Remind students that their spice containers should be functional. There needs to be a place to put the spices, a way to open and close the spice compartment, and a way to smell the spices when they are inside.
4. Give a few cloves to each student so they can try out their spice containers.



Resources

Books

Adler, David A. *The Kids' Catalog of Jewish Holidays*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1996.

Cooper, Ilene. *Jewish Holidays All Year Round: A Family Treasury*. Illus. by Elivia Savadier. New York: Harry N. Abrams, in association with The Jewish Museum, 2002.

Goodman, Robert. *Teaching Jewish Holidays: History, Values, and Activities*. Denver, CO: A.R.E. Publishing, 1997.

Klagsbrun, Francine. *Jewish Days: A Book of Jewish Life and Culture Around the Year*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.

Mindel, Nissan. *The Festival Series*. Brooklyn, NY: Kehot Publication Society, 1992.

Renberg, Dalia Hadori. *The Complete Family Guide to Jewish Holidays*. New York: Adama Books, 1985.

Ross, Kathy. *The Jewish Holiday Craft Book*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1997.

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

Waskow, Arthur I. *Seasons of Our Joy: A Modern Guide to the Jewish Holidays*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1982.

Wylen, Stephen M. *The Book of the Jewish Year*. New York: UAHC Press, 1996.

Links

Jewish Virtual Library
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidays.html>

Jewish Encyclopedia
<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com>

Judaism 101
<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday0.htm>



Glossary

Abstract

Art is described as abstract when it has its origins in nature but then exaggerates, distorts, or simplifies those forms. Strict abstraction may be completely non-representational.

Abstract Expressionist

Abstract Expressionism was a form of abstract art that developed primarily in New York during the 1940s and '50s. Abstract Expressionists were interested in the power of line, shape, and color to express ideas and emotions. Artists such as Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko were pioneers of Abstract Expressionism.

Aliyah

Hebrew for “going up.” Used to describe both literal and spiritual ascent, including going up to the bimah to read from the Torah, to recite special blessings before and after the reading of the Torah, or “going up” to live in the Land of Israel.

Arabesque

A decorative pattern of interweaving plant motifs often used in Islamic art.

Ark

An ark is a protective box or chest. The term is used to refer to a cabinet in the synagogue in which the Torah scrolls are kept.

Ashkenazi

One of the three great traditions in Judaism that originally developed in Germany and northern France and later spread to eastern Europe. The other two traditions are the Mizrahi, practiced by Jews from the Middle East, and the Sephardi, originating with the Jews of medieval Spain.

Besamim

Fragrant spices smelled during the havdalah service, which marks the end of the Sabbath.

Bimah

A raised platform in a synagogue from which the Torah scroll is read.

Challah

Usually braided and customarily egg-based, challah is a type of bread traditionally eaten on the Sabbath and during festivals.

Dreidl

A four-sided top traditionally used on Hanukkah to play a game of chance. In the Diaspora, it is decorated with the Hebrew initials for the phrase “A great miracle happened there”; in Israel, with the initials for “A great miracle happened here.”

Etrog

A yellow citrus fruit, also known as a “citron,” that is used on the holiday of Sukkot along with the lulav (a bundle of palm, willow, and myrtle branches). During Sukkot, blessings are recited over these four species. The etrog is usually stored in a container to protect its tip or pistil, which, if not intact, renders the fruit unusable for the holiday.

Finial

A finial is an ornament. The term is often used to refer to ornaments that grace the staves of the Torah scroll. Ashkenazi examples of Torah finials are often tower-shaped and echo local architecture and church vessels. In Middle-Eastern communities, finials are generally fruit-shaped, embodying the Hebrew terms for finials, rimmonim (pomegranates), and tapuhim (apples).

Genre painting

The depiction of subjects and scenes from everyday life. Genre painting became especially popular in the Netherlands during the 17th century.

Hard-edged painting

A type of abstract painting that became popular in the 1960s, and which features sharply delineated areas of paint. Artists who work in this style include Ellsworth Kelly and Kenneth Noland.

Haroset

A mixture of nuts, fruits, and wine that is eaten at the Passover seder to symbolize the mortar used by Jewish slaves in Egypt.

Havdalah

Hebrew for “separation.” The Saturday evening service that marks the transition from the Sabbath to a weekday. The ceremony begins with the Kiddush (blessing over wine). Next, aromatic spices are inhaled. Finally, a multiple-wick or braided candle is lit to mark the end of the Sabbath.

Judenstern

German for “Jewish star.” A hanging lamp with a star-shaped basin for kindling Sabbath and festival lights. Non-Jews ceased using this type of lamp by the 16th century, but its form remained traditional among Jews well into the 19th century.

Kiddush cup

A wine cup over which a special blessing of sanctification (the Kiddush) is recited on the Sabbath and holidays.

Lulav

A palm branch bound together with sprigs of myrtle and willow that is used (along with the citron, or etrog) on the holiday of Sukkot.



Matzah

An unleavened bread eaten during the holiday of Passover to recall the Exodus from Egypt.

Megillah

Hebrew for “scroll.” The term is often used to refer to the biblical Book of Esther or a scroll containing the Hebrew text of the book. Unlike a Torah scroll, which is rolled on two staves, the Esther scroll is rolled onto one stave.

Menorah

Hebrew for “lamp.” This word traditionally refers to the seven-branched candelabrum that was lit in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

Mitzvah

Hebrew for “commandment.” A mitzvah is any of the 613 commandments that Jews are instructed to observe. The word is often used more broadly to refer to any good deed.

Mizrah

Hebrew for “east.” The word is also used to designate a plaque for the eastern wall denoting the direction of prayer for those living west of Israel.

Modernist

Relating to a variety of artistic styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that were marked by a deliberate departure from tradition and the use of innovative forms of expression.

Mosaic

A picture or design made by fitting together pieces of colored glass, stone, or tile.

Negative space

Empty space, or the areas in a work of art that surround the forms and images.

Omer

A measure of barley that was offered at the Temple in Jerusalem on the second day of Passover, beginning the period of seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot. Today, the term is also used to refer to the seven-week period.

Orthodox

Conforming to established doctrine or traditional practice, especially in religion.

Pilgrimage festivals

The three agricultural holidays—Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot—during which Jews of ancient times would make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem.

Pop art

An art movement of the 1950s and '60s that drew inspiration and used images from popular culture, such as comic books, Hollywood movies, product packaging, and advertisements. Leading practitioners of Pop art include Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, and Andy Warhol.

Positive space

The areas of a work of art that are filled with forms or images.

Seder

Hebrew for “order.” The seder is a home service and meal held on the first night of Passover (and often on the second night, as well, outside of Israel) that commemorates the ancient Jewish Exodus from Egypt.

Shamash

The servitor or “helper” candle used to light the other flames on a Hanukkah lamp.

Shanah Tova

Hebrew for “Have a good year.” The traditional greeting for Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year).

Star of David

Also known as the Shield of David (“Magen David” in Hebrew), the Star of David is a six-pointed star that serves as an emblem of the Jewish people and is featured in the Israeli flag.

Tik

Hebrew for “case.” A hard metal, wood, or leather container for housing the Torah scroll, frequently used among Jewish communities of the Middle East and some North African communities.

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

An all-night study session held in some communities on the first night of the holiday of Shavuot. Tikkun olam is Hebrew for “repairing the world.” The expression tikkun olam is generally used to refer to the ongoing work of improving one’s world or community through acts of charity, kindness, and civic involvement.

Tithing

Literally “one-tenth,” tithing is the act of giving a percentage of one’s possessions to a religious institution.

Torah

Hebrew for “teaching.” This word usually refers to the first five books of the Bible or to a handwritten scroll containing the Hebrew text of those books. All aspects of traditional Jewish life are based on the Torah and ongoing rabbinic interpretations.

Tzedakah

Hebrew for “righteousness.” This word is used to refer to charity or alms.

Tzedakah box

A container used to collect funds for charity.

Sources:

Artlex Art Dictionary

Tate Collection Glossary

Glossary of Jewish Terminology

Objects of the Spirit: Ritual and the Art of Tobi Kahn; A Temple Treasury: The Judaica Collection of Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York

