



20th Annual Purim Mask Invitational

The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art



(2026 Best in Show)

Deadline: Friday, February 12, 2027

Open to all Oklahoma students K-12

Over \$500 in prize money

Awards Reception Thursday, March 11, 2027 at 5:30 p.m.

Mythical Creatures

Masks must be wearable

Masks must have wall-hanging equipment strung and attached

Questions? Contact Tracey Herst-Woods, twoods@jewishmuseum.net; 918-492-1818

20th Annual Purim Mask Invitational

CALL FOR ENTRIES The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art would like to invite your school to participate in the 20th Annual Purim Mask Invitational Competition. It is the goal of the Museum to promote understanding of Jewish life and culture through learning about the Jewish holiday of Purim. Students may explore the holiday by learning about the traditions, foods, and celebration of the story of Esther and her rescue of the Jews of Persia. The winning masks will be exhibited at The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. Other masks will be included in the exhibition as allowed by space and number of entries.

GUIDELINES FOR THE INVITATIONAL The 2027 Invitational is a competition open to all Oklahoma students in three divisions: Elementary School K-5th, Middle School 6th-8th and High School 9th-12th.

We also have a Teacher's Category. We invite all participating teachers to create a mask that will be displayed with your students. Use the same guidelines and materials as your students, and show our guests that teachers are artists too!

PRIZES The Best of Show is \$150.00 and is the purchase price for the winning student mask, which will become part of the Museum's permanent collections. A \$50.00 First Place Cash prize is awarded for each division with a smaller Cash prize awarded for 2nd and 3rd place winners. A \$25.00 People's Choice Award that will be voted for our Facebook page at facebook.com/TheSherwinMillerMuseumofJewishArt. The Awards Reception will be held Thursday, March 11, at 5:30 p.m. Candy selection, light appetizers and refreshments will be available.

THEME: All masks must be based on the theme of Mythical Creatures this year.

MASKMAKERS' GUIDELINES

- All masks must be wearable.
- All masks must be structurally strong enough to hang from its own wire that is strung and attached when submitted.
- Size restrictions: No mask may be over 24 inches high or wide.
- Stable material suitable for exhibition must be used.
- **No** organic material that rots, such as candy
- **No** construction paper (color fades too quickly)
- **No** hazardous material (No sharp metal edges or sharp protrusions).
- **No** glitter
- Paper-mache, fired clay, foam, and other three-dimensional constructions are encouraged, but unfired clay is very fragile and may break.

LABELS All masks **MUST** be labeled with Student's first and last name, grade, and school in black Sharpie pen on the back of the mask. Please do not use tape. If we cannot read your name, we cannot give you a prize.

TEACHERS Please attach an itemized list of your students that are submitting when dropping them off.

DROP OFF Please deliver your masks by Friday, February 12th at 5:00 p.m. to: The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art, **attn: Tracey Herst-Woods, Chief Museum Officer, 2021 East 71st St., Tulsa, OK 74136 918-492-1818** email: twoods@jewishmuseum.net.

Purim History

THE STORY OF PURIM According to the Book of Esther, the king of Persia, Ahasuerus, was almost convinced to kill all the Jews in his land. Ahasuerus' chief advisor Haman despised Jews, especially a man named Mordechai who had refused to bow before Haman. Mordechai's niece, Esther, was Ahasuerus' queen. Haman wanted to exterminate all Persian Jews for Mordechai's actions and convinced Ahasuerus to approve his plan. Ahasuerus, who was unaware that his queen was Jewish, accepted Haman's plan to cast lots, or Purim, to determine a day to murder the Jews. Esther intervened on behalf of her people by telling the king that she was Jewish and asking him to reconsider his approval of Haman's plan. Upon hearing this, Ahasuerus ordered Haman's death instead, and Mordechai assumed Haman's position as chief advisor.

WHAT IS PURIM? Purim is a holiday celebrated by dressing in costumes and masks. This custom began because the name of G-d is never mentioned in the Book of Esther, even though He worked through her to safeguard the Jewish people of Persia.

- Purim is a joyful holiday in the Jewish calendar.
- It will occur on March 23, 2027 (Jewish Year 5787).
- The most popular way to celebrate Purim is to dress up in costume.
- On Purim, it is a mitzvah (commandment) to hear Megillat Esther (The Book of Esther) which is referred to simply as the Megillah (scroll) read out loud.
- The Megillah tells the story of Purim, a tale of a princess, a villain, and a hero.

MASKING IT UP This is by no means a commandment, but it's fun! Because the main theme of Purim is that things didn't turn out as they seemed they would, it became the custom to dress up and mask one's own identity. Often, people (children and grown-up children) attend the Purim feast in costume.

HOW TO CELEBRATE PURIM Below is a description of the various elements that go into the celebration of Purim. **READING THE MEGILLAH** This is one of the four Rabbinical commandments fulfilled during the holiday. Interestingly, we call it "reading" the megillah when what we really do is "hear" the megillah (from the mouth of the one person reading it). Because there is an element of entertainment in the reading, there are some congregations in which the cantor uses a different "voice" or intonation for the various main characters in the Megillah, the narrator, King Ahashverosh, Haman, Mordechai, Esther, etc... The reading of the Megillah can last anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour and a half. What factor causes the variance? Simply the reaction to the name "Haman." If the crowd goes wild every time the name Haman is read (which happens in most services) the reading can get drawn out. The point of this custom is to "beat" or take revenge on Haman. We boo, hiss, beat, and curse Haman. The custom when Haman's full name was read, people would shout "cursed be Haman" or "may the name of the wicked rot!" Somehow, this evolved the custom today: namely, making lots and lots of noise every time the name Haman is mentioned.

MISHLOACH MANOT The second of four Purim-related commandments, this custom could be literally translated as the delivery of a portion (of food). It entails sending 2 types of food to one person. Anything beyond that is extra credit. Of course, one can be creative with this and not be limited to sending the standard Hamentashen, fruit, and wine. We have seen varied themes of pasta, bagels and cream cheese, peanut butter and jelly, crackers, cheese and wine, nuts and raisins, etc.

MATANOT LE-EVIONIM (GIFTS FOR THE POOR) Incorporated into the body of four laws pertaining to Purim is this: one must give a monetary gift to at least two poor Jewish people. Maimonides also said in relation to Purim, “It is better for a man to increase gifts to the poor than to enlarge his feast and to increase gifts to his friends. For there is no greater and more wonderful joy than to make happy the hearts of the poor...”

PURIM FEAST (SEUDA) Imagine a commandment that says, “Thou shalt pigout verily.” Well, the fourth Rabbinic decree that must be fulfilled on Purim is the Seuda, Generally, sometime during the day of Purim, families and friends gather for a sumptuous meal. This repast tends to last into the night (unless Purim falls on Friday). In Yemen, there was special emphasis on the superiority of the food; the goal was to make a feast fit for kings with the best delicacies available.

Outline of the Story of Esther:

- King Ahasuerus dethrones Queen Vashti.
- Esther is crowned queen after winning a beauty contest.
- Mordechai uncovers a plot to kill the king and reports it.
- King Ahasuerus promotes Haman, making him more powerful than all the other officials.
- Mordechai refuses to bow before Haman a close confidant of the king.
- Haman seeks to destroy the Jews after his run-in with Mordechai.
- Mordechai appeals to Esther to save her people. Esther approaches King Ahasuerus and invites him and Haman to a banquet.
 - Mordechai is honored for having saved the king’s life. Esther entertains the king and Haman and invites them to a second banquet.
 - Esther pleads for her people at the second banquet. She accuses Haman.
 - The king grants Esther’s request and condemns Haman to die on the gallows that he built for the Jews.
 - The holiday of Purim is established.
 - Mordecai advances to a position of importance. The days following the Jews’ struggle with their enemies (the 14th and 15th of Adar) are declared days of feasting and merrymaking, today celebrated as Purim.

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