



# Masks of Authenticity: A Purim Activity

Purim is a time to celebrate and be merry! It is a holiday to rejoice in resilience and honor identity. While hearing the story from Megillat Esther people of all ages dress up, breaking boundaries and blurring perceptions. Purim is a perfect time to step out of comfort zones and be the you of your wildest imagination!

The story of Esther revealing her Jewish identity to save the Jewish people beautifully lends itself to LGBTQ+ themes of authenticity and resilience. For many LGBTQ+ people, it takes great courage to come out and come into community, but **living your truth can be life-saving and life-giving**. This is also true for Esther in the Purim story.

The tradition to dress in costume on Purim dates back centuries. There are several reasons that have been shared through the generations. Some of them include that it adds to the carnival-like energy, it honors the hidden miracles of the story—as God is not overtly mentioned—and the hidden identity of Esther until she tells the King she is Jewish and he must save her people. Masks and costumes have been used to hide or blur who one truly is during holiday festivities.

Purim is a holiday of the topsy-turvy, where everything gets flipped upside down! **Instead of using a costume to conceal, what if the costumes we wear amplify who we are and how we want the world to see us?** The clothes, makeup, and masks we choose can affirm our identities and not distract from them.



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Esther eventually stands in her truth to save her people despite what she even thought she was capable of. And so can we show up as our truest selves and become the us'es of our wildest dreams.

Here is an activity to celebrate authenticity this Purim:

## Make a mask of resilience and authenticity!

Instead of using the mask as a way to conceal who you are, turn it into a work of art that affirms your identity! Decorate masks (or any other wearable items) using the prompts -

- What makes me feel like the best version of me?
- How do I want the world to see me?
- I feel fabulous when...
- I am brave because...

Use materials that help display what you want others to see! If setting up the activity for others, make sure to have a variety of materials to choose from. Some ideas are glitter, fabrics, leaves, paint, recycled magazines, flowers, beads.

Decorate with words that feel empowering. If you don't have a mask you can try the activity on a t-shirt or use makeup. The sky's the limit and let your creativity soar!

Chag sameach!

