

The Sorting Hat

The purpose of this activity is to stress the fact that the Purim story was real, involving real people, rather than a story in a storybook. By identifying themselves as one of the characters in the story, we hope to make them more relatable. Once the story is real, the message has meaning.

Activity:

Split the NCSYers into groups of 4-5, each group with an advisor. Each advisor should have a list of questions. Read each question, have the NCSYers choose their responses, and then indicate where they should go to get their cards. To raise the energy, distance the advisors with the cards and give them a time limit-15/20 seconds to get their card and get back to their seats. This can be done as a group (each group votes on an answer and decides which one to choose) or individually (each teen has to run and pick up their own chosen number- for this, you'd need many more number cards printed, and also loses the team feel, but has the benefit of making it more personalized.)

Each answer has a number assigned to it - 1, 3, 5, 7. After each question, the NCSYers will be directed to one of four advisors/staff members to get a card with the number that corresponds to their choice for that question. After going through all the questions, they'll add up their cards and find out which character they're most similar to - Esther, Haman, Achashveirosh, Mordechai.

After they have added up their points, designate areas for each person of the megila - Esther → Mordechai - and announce the ranges of number values, directing NCSYers to gather in the area that fits their range (if done as a group, announce the values to everyone and have them debrief in their original group). Debrief either each group together, or take one teen from each group and debrief that way.

Debrief:

- What did we just do?
- What question stood out to you as really matching your personality?
- Is it fair to make these types of assumptions about the characters in the Purim story?

Real people have real personalities. Based on what we know about them, we can try to extrapolate what they would have done in other scenarios.

- The questions were about how the Purim people would react to life nowadays. How do you think you would respond, if you were involved in the Purim story? Would you be the character from the activity?

The answer doesn't matter. Thinking this way reinforces the idea that there's a real story being played out-no magic or fantasy, these are real people who were in a real situation.

When we think of the characters in the Purim story as real, it takes on a whole new level of meaning. There were really people in danger, Mordechai and Esther really had to figure out a plan of action to save the entire nation, and Esther was really in danger of being killed if she took a wrong step. Behind the scenes, Hashem was making it all work out-but they had to do what they could to put the pieces in place!

The Questions

- 1) What would you order at a really fancy dinner?
 - a. Whatever's hardest for the waiter: 3
 - b. A salad: 1
 - c. I don't care, but pour me another glass of wine: 5
 - d. A steak: 7
- 2) How would you respond to someone calling you a not-nice name?
 - a. Ignore it: 1
 - b. Figure out a way to make his life miserable FOREVER: 3
 - c. Try to understand what he's feeling and how you can help him feel better: 7
 - d. Cut his head off: 5
- 3) What's your favorite sport?
 - a. Basketball: 7
 - b. Curling: 1
 - c. Chess: 5
 - d. Boxing: 3
- 4) What's your favorite color?
 - a. Pink: 1
 - b. Blue: 7
 - c. Black: 3
 - d. Rainbow: 5
- 5) What's your dream job?
 - a. Dictator: 3
 - b. Wine Tester: 5
 - c. Teacher: 7
 - d. Stay-at-home parent: 1
- 6) Your friend comes to you to ask for advice about a problem they're having with a bully at school. What do you tell them?
 - a. Challenge the person to a fight after school: 3
 - b. Just remain calm and always think before you speak: 1
 - c. Stand up to the person, but don't stoop to their level by starting a fight: 7
 - d. Call your advisors and have them deal with the problem, you're too tired to think about it: 5
- 7) Which describes a dream you might have?
 - a. You're so exhausted every night that you just pass out and sleep like a rock-you never remember any dreams, except for one time where you were flying on a magic carpet over the whole world, Aladdin-style: 1
 - b. You wake up in a cold sweat, remembering a horrible nightmare where everyone was pointing at you and laughing about something you did: 3
 - c. You dream that your best friend is trying to stab you in the back, and everyone who knows you is standing around watching but not trying to help you!: 5
 - d. You get to meet your hero, who lived three hundred years before you were born: 7

- 8) What does a tie really mean to you?
- You lost: 3
 - You both win!: 1
 - You didn't lose, but you also didn't win. Try again: 7
 - You both lose, but you both win, but at the same time...I don't know: 5
- 9) What book should everyone need to read by the time they're past Bar/Bat Mitzva?
- Dumb Ways to Die Vol 1: 3
 - A Princess Diary: 1
 - Captain Underpants: 5
 - Chumash: 7
- 10) Which animal is a duck-billed platypus most similar to?
- Duck: 1
 - Otter: 7
 - Octopus: 5
 - Poison Tree Frog: 3
- 11) How do you spend a Saturday night?
- Snuggled up at home with a long book: 1
 - Playing GTA: 3
 - Hanging out at a pizza place: 5
 - Mishna Club!: 7
- 12) What is your Patronus?
- Butterfly: 1
 - Bee: 3
 - Grizzly Bear: 5
 - Horse: 7
- 13) When you help someone, what do you expect in return?
- A simple thank you: 1
 - Why should I help them? What have they done for me lately?: 3
 - Years of gratitude: 5
 - You don't expect anything but it's nice to know your help was appreciated: 7
- 14) You get to play king and make the rules for a day, what do you use your power for?
- Retire and make someone else deal with it: 1
 - To get whatever I want: 3
 - Make the world's craziest party: 5
 - World peace: 7