Discovering PURIM



A Christian Family Guide

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Feast of Purim

The Festival of Purim (Festival of Lots) observes the divinely orchestrated salvation of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire from Haman's plot to "annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants, and women, in a single day." As Christians, this is an important day for us to remember, because it reminds us of God's faithfulness and loyal love to His chosen people. If Esther hadn't stepped up in this story, the bloodline of Abraham would have been destroyed, and Jesus couldn't have come through this people group as God had promised. Our children can draw courage from Esther's bravery and Mordecai's wisdom. God used ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and He wants to do the same with our children today!

This guide is for the whole family. If you have wondered how a Christian can celebrate Purim, this will give you ideas. There are activities for young kids to keep them engaged, and some recipes for the popular "Haman's Pockets" cookies.

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Invitation to Celebrate

FESTIVAL OF LOTS

This Festival of Purim, also known as the Festival of Lots observes the Divinely orchestrated salvation of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire from Haman's plot to "annihilate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, in a single day." In a Hebrew calendar, Purim falls on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar. This plot against the Jewish people was connected to a long-time enemy of theirs, the Amalekites (Haman was an Amalekite).

THE AMALEKITES

The Amalekites were a people group frequently mentioned in the Old Testament and were a persistent enemy of Israel. In the same way, we have an enemy who relentlessly pursues us, though in the unseen realm. As we reflect on the story of Israel and the Amalekites this month, we gain insight into the spiritual battle against forces that seek to destroy God's people. The story of Purim and the legacy of the Amalekites reminds us that God calls each of us to strengthen ourselves in Him and overcome the schemes of the enemy.

A VICIOUS SURPRISE ATTACK

This enemy struck Israel immediately after their escape through the Red Sea and God's provision of water at Rephidim. Israel was not ready for the fight. The same strategy is used by our unseen enemy. We should not be surprised if, after the Lord delivers us from something, a spiritual attack follows. We must learn how to position ourselves in Christ so that we can overcome.

What is striking about this attack is that Israel was not on Amalekite territory and was not even headed in that direction. This reminds us that there has long been hostility toward God's chosen people.

Today, as believers, we have been grafted into God's family (we are not a replacement for Israel) and set apart for His holy purposes. That alone makes us targets as we pursue the Lord. We have all come out of an Egypt. While the power of that former master has been broken, our journey toward God's promises is still unfolding. God desires to teach us not only how to stand firm, but how to take ground and push back against the gates of hell.

We are called to advance the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth. In Scripture, we see Moses going up the mountain to intercede for Israel, and Esther fasting and praying for her people's deliverance. Like them, we must seek a higher perspective and view the battle from where Christ has seated us in heavenly places, as Ephesians 2:6 declares.

The story of Esther also reminds us to pray for the salvation of the Jewish people and for people around the world. There is a spiritual opposition at work today, often operating through willing vessels, seeking to oppose God's purposes. As we celebrate this day, we celebrate the victory of Jesus over the world and over the enemy.

Make a crown

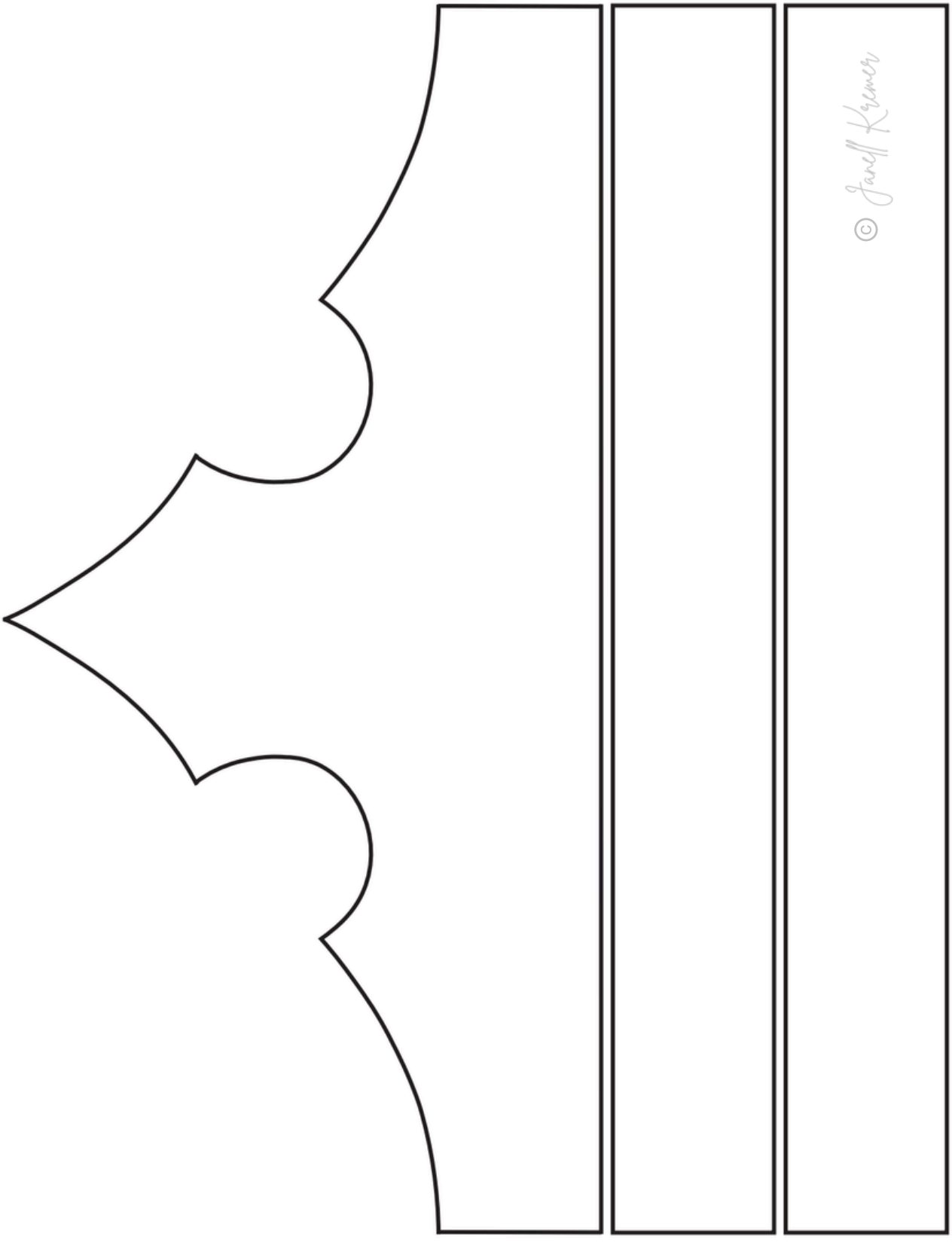
PRINTABLE PURIM CROWN

Want to act out the Purim story with friends or siblings?

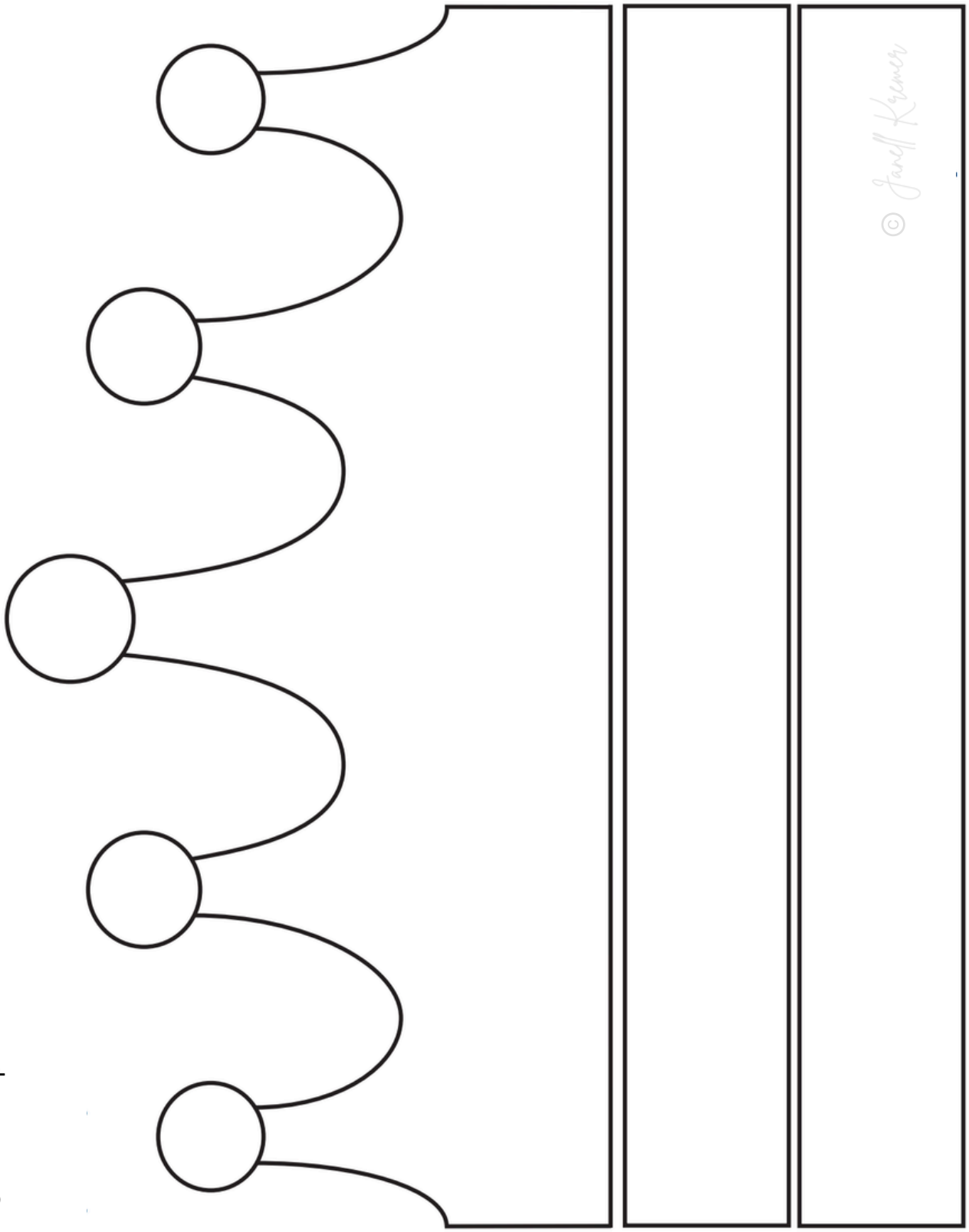
This crown is for you!

- Print the crown. You can print it on white or colored cardstock or construction paper.
- Decorate. You can color in the lines or turn it around and decorate freely on the blank side. You could also use glitter, sequins, or feathers to make it fancier.
- Customize the length of the crown and cut the excess off. Glue the ends together.





Crown Template 1



Crown Template 2

Make Finger Puppets

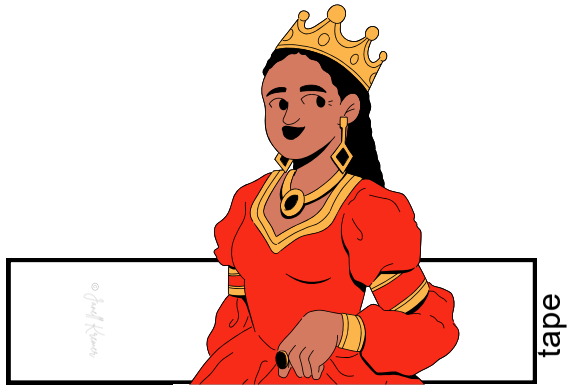
PRINTABLE FINGER PUPPETS

As you read the Purim story, your kids can act it out with these cute finger puppets!

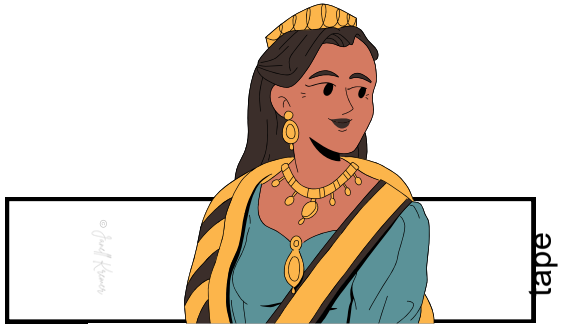
- Print the finger puppets. You can print it on white cardstock or construction paper.
- Customize the length of the finger puppet and cut the excess off. Glue the ends together.
- Place on child's finger!



Finger Puppets



Queen Vashti



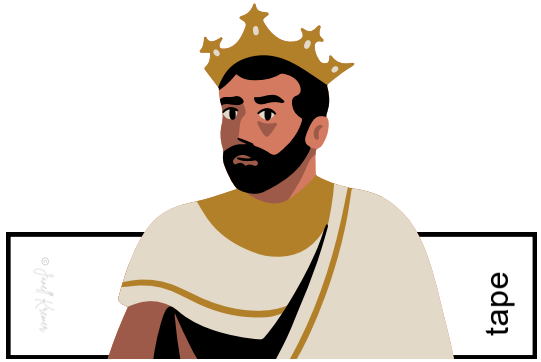
Esther



Mordecai



Haman



King Xerxes

Read Esther

OVERVIEW

Xerxes divorces Vashti	.....	Esther 1
Esther becomes queen	.....	Esther 2
Haman's Plot	.....	Esther 3
Esther's Courage	.....	Esther 4-5
Xerxes honors Mordecai	.....	Esther 6
Haman is hanged	.....	Esther 7
The Jews are saved	.....	Esther 8-9
Mordecai is honored	.....	Esther 10

WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

The Author of this book is *unknown*

WHY WAS THIS BOOK WRITTEN?

Esther reveals how God takes care of His people.

Keeping Kids Engaged

It is customary for kids to bang the table and make noise when Haman's name comes up in the story. They can yell "boo" when he is mentioned. When Mordecai and Esther's names are spoken, they can cheer.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS BOOK?

A Jewish girl named Hadassah becomes queen of the Persian Empire. An evil man named Haman plots to destroy all the Jews. Esther bravely intervenes and saves her people.

WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD IN THIS BOOK?

Although God's name isn't mentioned, keep your eyes out for His activity. God doesn't need to do miracles to rescue His people. He will often work through ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

WHO ARE THE KEY CHARACTERS IN THIS BOOK?

- King Xerxes
- Esther
- Mordecai
- Haman
- Queen Vashti

*Use the finger puppets!

Watch Movie/Show

“ONE NIGHT WITH THE KING” (2006)

Beginning with a minor appearance by Peter O’Toole as the prophet Samuel (who’s not in the Purim story, but whose story is linked to it by many commentators), the film tells the story of Purim. It’s the closest to the actual story. This is a great film for families, rated PG.

*Go to justwatch.com to see where you can view this movie

“SUPERBOOK: ESTHER — FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS”

Season 2 Episode 5

At school, Joy has to choose between standing up for Bonnie or going with the crowd. Suddenly, Superbook sends Joy, Chris, and Gizmo to a time when Queen Esther chooses to stand up for the Israelite people. This encourages Joy when she faces Janice and the Girls' Leadership Club.

*Go to superbook.cbn.com to see where you can view this episode

Watch Movie/Show

CELEBRATING PURIM: FOR CHRISTIANS

Gentile believers are not bound by dietary laws or restrictions, so this feast can be whatever you want it to be. Make it special—do something different from a normal meal. Use fancy plates and silverware, and invite your children to help set the table.

You might also light special candles. Read the story of Esther before, during, or after the meal. The goal is to celebrate God's faithfulness in protecting His people, even while they were in exile.

Israel's election speaks to your own calling. God knew you by name before He created the universe (2 Thessalonians 2:13). He loves you with an everlasting love and draws you to Himself with kindness (Jeremiah 31:3). We can celebrate that there is no fear in God's sovereign, captivating love for our souls (1 John 4:18). If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31). What a wonderful God we serve!

Hamentaschen Recipe

HAMAN'S POCKETS

During Purim, it is traditional to eat Hamantaschen and other triangular-shaped foods, like stuffed cabbage or samosas, as a way of symbolically "defeating" Haman and celebrating the victory of the Jewish people over their enemies.

2 RECIPES INCLUDED

Both of these recipes are non-kosher for Gentile Christians. A dietary rule, cited three times in the Torah, concerns the separation of meat and dairy produce: “You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk.” (Exodus 23:19 and 34:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21). In some Jewish circles, this law is still observed.

As a result, butter, milk and cream are not used in preparing dishes made with meat or intended to be served together with meat. Oil, pareve margarine, rendered chicken fat, or non-dairy cream substitutes are used instead.

In both recipes included, you substitute for non-dairy options.

Hamantaschen

Ingredients

Base

- 1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 Tbsp milk (or non-dairy milk)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest (optional)
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour, plus more for rolling
- ¼ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt

Filling (pick as many as you wish)

- Fruit jam
- Chocolate
- Peanut butter



Directions

1. Beat the butter and sugar together until smooth.
2. Add egg, milk, vanilla, and lemon zest until mixed thoroughly.
3. Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt.
4. Add dry mixture to wet mixture until incorporated. (If dough is too soft, increase flour amount by a few Tbsp at a time until firmer)
5. Form dough into a disk and cover it with plastic wrap. Chill dough in the fridge for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.
6. Dust surface with flour to keep from sticking. Roll the dough to about ¼-inch thick.
7. Using a round 3-inch cookie cutter, cut out and place onto cookie sheet. To keep the dough from sticking to your cutter, dip in flour before each cut.
8. Fill each round with ½ tsp of your favorite filling, and using your favorite method, pinch corners together tightly (using the method to the right).
9. Pop into the fridge for 10 minutes, or freezer for 5 minutes, to ensure hamantaschen hold their shape.
10. Bake at 400°F for 7-9 minutes or until golden brown on the corners and the filling is bubbling.
11. Let cool and enjoy!

How to Fold:

1. Fold the right side of the circle toward the center.
2. Then fold the left side toward the center, overlapping the top right-hand corner.
3. Finally, fold the bottom of the circle upwards to create a triangle shape.
4. Pinch the corners securely.

Hamantaschen (Gluten-Free)

Ingredients



Base

- 2 cups fine almond flour
- 1 cup tapioca flour
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup cold vegan or dairy salted butter, cubed
- 1/4 cup milk, or non-dairy milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt

Filling (pick as many as you wish)

- Fruit jam
- Chocolate
- Peanut butter

Directions

1. In a medium sized bowl, mix together the sugar, milk, vanilla, butter and lemon zest.
2. Add almond flour, tapioca flour, baking powder, and salt. Begin mixing together with your hand to break up the butter and incorporate it into the dry ingredients to create a dough.
3. Once the dough is formed, remove it from the bowl and cover it in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
4. On a lightly floured or greased surface, roll the dough out so that its about a 1/4″ thick.
5. Using a round 3-inch cookie cutter, cut out and place onto cookie sheet. To keep the dough from sticking to your cutter, dip in flour before each cut.
6. Fill each round with ½ tsp of your favorite filling, and using your favorite method, pinch corners together tightly (using the method to the right).
7. Pop into the fridge for 10 minutes, or freezer for 5 minutes, to ensure hamantaschen hold their shape.
8. Bake at 350°F for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown on the corners and the filling is bubbling.
9. Let cool and enjoy!

How to Fold:

1. Fold the right side of the circle toward the center.
2. Then fold the left side toward the center, overlapping the top right-hand corner.
3. Finally, fold the bottom of the circle upwards to create a triangle shape.
4. Pinch the corners securely.