The Jewish Museum is an art museum located on Fifth Avenue and East 92nd Street in New York City. Our exhibitions and programs explore the intersection of art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. The Museum’s collection spans 4,000 years and includes nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, media, and antiquities from around the world.

This lesson plan can be used to support discussion and exploration of Jewish ceremonial objects from the Jewish Museum’s collection. Explore related works of art in the Museum’s collection listed at the end of this lesson. For a more extensive look at Jewish ceremonial objects, visit our online collection, the Objects Tell Stories: Jewish Holidays Educator Resource, or listen to the Jewish Rituals audio tour.
**About This Torah Binder**

The Torah consists of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. This linen cloth with silk embroidery, called a Torah binder or wimple, wraps around the Torah scroll when it is stored in a Torah ark. The binder was originally created to swaddle a baby boy during his brit milah (circumcision). Wimples are often inscribed with the boy’s name and birth date and with the wish that he grow up to study the Torah, stand under the marriage canopy, and perform good deeds. After the ceremony, this same cloth was given to the synagogue to protect and beautify the Torah, sometimes on the
boy’s third birthday and sometimes when the boy became a bar mitzvah. The artist who made this Torah binder took great care to decorate the fabric with beautiful letters and images.

Discussion Questions

1. Look closely at the Torah Binder. Can you find the Hebrew letters? Notice how they are decorated with animals, plants, and flowers.

2. How many different animals can you find?

3. Can you find the image of the chuppah (canopy) used for a wedding ceremony? What other details do you see?

4. Why do you think the artist might have chosen to decorate this wimple with images and fancy letters?

Activity

Suggested Materials:

- Print outs or other images of Hebrew letters
- Pencils, markers, crayons, or colored pencils

1. Choose a letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

2. Draw or print out your Hebrew letter. (Click on this link to find Hebrew letters that you can print out or copy.)

3. Look at the shape of your letter. Does it remind you of anything? Can you transform the shape of the letter into something else? Try to decorate each letter in a unique way.
4. Take a picture of your creation and share it with the Jewish Museum here.

Hebrew Alphabet:

Related Works of Art in the Jewish Museum’s Collection

- Shlomo, son of Yitzhak Heimerdinger, Torah Binder, 1902-1906
- Sue Trytell, Torah Binder, 1991
- Tétouan, Morocco, Marriage Contract, 1837
- Chaim Gross, Marriage Contract, c. 1970
On this page you will find some examples of creative ways to transform Hebrew letters. Now try to make your own beautiful letter!