
*Body Adornment in Ceremonial Practices*

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| **Introduction**  |
| This is a Jewish wedding ring, made of silver and decorated with a small, sculpted synagogue on top. Although the exact origins of the ring are unknown, it is confirmed to be from a Jewish population in central Europe, and it was made in the late 17th or early 18th century. Sometime after its fabrication, the Hebrew letters "Kaf" and "Hay," possibly the initials of a couple, were engraved on the band of the ring.Rings shaped like synagogues, symbolizing the sacredness of marriage and family in Jewish religious life, were used in Jewish weddings in central Europe from the late Middle Ages through the eighteenth century. Like many Jewish ritual objects, these rings were passed down in families or owned collectively by the community. Their unique shape makes them easy to identify, and helps historians identify Jewish populations across Europe. |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:** 7.1.2 Describe, compare, and contrast the historical origins, central beliefs and spread of major religions. GHW.2.1 Map the development over time of world religions from their points of origin and identify those that exhibit a high degree of local and/or international concentration.GHW.2.2 Differentiate among selected countries in terms of how their identities, cultural and physical environments, and functions and forms of government are affected by world religions. | **Compelling Question(s):** * How do objects used in ceremonial practices help us understand a culture?
* What does personal body adornment reflect about social status, cultural practices, and personal preferences?

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| **Lesson Objectives:** Students will learn about Jewish religion and wedding ceremonial practices by observing the wedding ring in the form of a synagogue.Students will understand how body adornment functions as a form of cultural expression, identity, and religious practices. They will explore the significance of adornment in various cultures, connect it to personal identity, and reflect on the role of body adornment plays in both historical and contemporary contexts. |
| **Materials**  |
| **Museum Collections**[Wedding Ring in the Form of a Synagogue- Windows to the World](https://w2w.indiana.edu/explore-collections/wedding-synagogue-ring.html)[Marriage Ring- Hebrew Union College/Jewish Institute of Religion](https://csm.huc.edu/2021/04/15/marriage-ring/)[Jewish Marriage Ring - Museum of Fine Arts Boston](https://collections.mfa.org/objects/61451/jewish-marriage-ring;jsessionid=D9D7BDA2A7BF44C7635D43904FD97BE5?ctx=e0a14abf-4a8f-48b8-9b00-f33aac6fd249&idx=6)**Judaism Resources**[Introduction to Judaism- Holocaust Encyclopedia](https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-judaism#:~:text=Judaism%20is%20a%20monotheistic%20religion,geography%2C%20language%2C%20and%20autonomy.)[Judaism 101](https://www.jewfaq.org/)[The Synagogue- Customs and Etiquette](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/synagogue-customs-and-etiquette#google_vignette)[Marriage in Judaism](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/marriage-in-judaism#google_vignette)**Body Adornment article** [The Study of Dress and Adornment as Social Positioning- Material Culture Review](https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/mcr/article/view/17996/21942) |
| **Learning Plan**  |
| **Activities** 1. Show students images of the wedding ring from the [W2W website](https://w2w.indiana.edu/explore-collections/wedding-synagogue-ring.html). Ask them to describe the ring, what do they notice (material, size, design)? Prompt them to answer the following questions:
* Who would wear it?
* Is it practical or can it be used for everyday life?
* What is sculpted on top of the ring?
* What does this figure symbolize?
* Why might it look like a synagogue?

Explain that the ring is from a Jewish community in central Europe, created between the late 17th and early 18th century. The ring is made of silver and features a sculpted synagogue, symbolizing the sacredness of marriage in Jewish life.Depending on the level of familiarity of students about Judaism, you can utilize the resources provided above to familiarize them with wedding ceremonies. Students can look up the terms “synagogue” and marriage” in the [Jewish Virtual Library](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/).Discuss the importance of the synagogue in Judaism. Explain how the synagogue is a place of worship, community gathering, and spiritual significance in Jewish culture.Discuss that marriage is a sacred agreement between two individuals, where both parties become companions, fulfill God’s commandments, while promoting family and community life.1. Using the resources provided above on other museum collections, read the descriptions of similar rings from the MET museum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Jewish Institute of Religion. From these objects' descriptions, students should deduce that this type of wedding ring was worn during wedding ceremonies in Judaism. Sometimes this type of ring is also referred to as a communal ring, lent by the synagogue during the ceremony and returned for the next couple to use. Considering its large size, the ring was not used every day but only worn during the wedding ritual. The adornment on top was visible to guests from a distance and therefore, it validated the marriage.
2. Ask them to discuss:
* How do you think the design of the ring reflects Jewish traditions surrounding marriage and family?

Advanced students can read the [dress and adornment article](https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/mcr/article/view/17996/21942) to learn about how some cultures communicate social class, gender, or social status within their community. Further, this article also discusses individual choices and preferences while maintaining cultural norms. Body adornment is not just decoration, it is a significant cultural and personal practice that conveys identity, status and beliefs.* What does wearing this ring exclusively during the wedding ritual convey about the importance of rings to symbolize marriage in Jewish society?

Consider how the ring can symbolize the change of status. Compare the W2W ring to other museum collections, observe the lack of precious stones and its material (silver) in the first. What can this design choices tell us about the community who wears it? * Think about your own use of body adornment (jewelry, hairstyle, clothing, piercings, tattoos. etc.) What do these choices say about you? How do they represent your personal or cultural identity or beliefs?
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| **Assessment Suggestions**  Assess students' participation in group discussions and reflections. Quality of answers to the questions, showing understanding of cultural and historical significance. |
| **Extensions** Students can research a different religion or culture’s ceremonial practice. Choose an element from the ceremony and write a short essay on how this symbolizes the union of two individuals. Examples are garlands in Hinduism, crowning ceremony in Greek Orthodox weddings, and Paebaek in Korean culture.Students can choose any culture and research how body art (including tattoos, piercings, jewelry, and clothing) reflects cultural context like trends, economy, and personal taste. |

Wedding Ring in the Form of a Synagogue Activity Possibilities

Some of the best opportunities for education are *integrative*—meaning that students are able to make connections across disciplines to reinforce the knowledge that they are developing. For example, they may be learning about Renaissance Italy in World Studies at the same time that they read Dante’s *Inferno* in English class while also studying Botticelli in Art. Feel free to combine and adapt some of the ideas across disciplines and standards to best suit your particular context. You can also collaborate with other teachers at your school or supplement the resources provided by contacting your librarian.

**Note: The following ideas are meant to give general guidance for teachers to include artifacts and other material culture in their classrooms. They are not meant to be treated as comprehensive activities or lessons that are one-size-fits-all for any classroom. They should be personalized to best fit the needs of a teacher’s individual context in accordance with prior student learning, student abilities, available resources, and any curricular guidance.**

**Art**

**Visual Arts – Responding:**

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| **Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work****Enduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed throughout engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.** **Essential Question(s): How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?**  |
| **VA:Re7.1.1a** | Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.6a** | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
| **VA:Re7.1.6a** | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
| **VA:Re9.1.5a** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society |
| **VA:Re7.1.Ia** | Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences. |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIa** | Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments |
| **VA:Re7.1.IIIa** | Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life |

**Visual Arts – Connecting:**

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| **Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.** **Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.** **Essential Question(s): How does art help us understanding the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the videos of a society> How does art preserve aspects of life?**  |
| **VA:Cn11.1.1a** | Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.2a** | Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.3a** | Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made |
| **VA:Cn11.1.4a** | Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.6a** | Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.7a** | Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses |
| **VA:Cn11.1.8a** | Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIa** | Compare uses of art in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts. |
| **VA:Cn11.1.IIIa** | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society. |

*Students can be asked to consider how art reflects time periods, beliefs, cultures, traditions, etc. In exploring the wedding synagogue ring, students are examining how items such as this symbolize cultural and religious practices throughout history. Students could also explore the symbolism behind the objects' designs and motifs; if these modifications are functional or decorative; its cultural associations; how different cultures use art, artifacts, and props to demonstrate their interests, beliefs, and stature; how such items demonstrate social capital; etc. Students can discuss how other religions celebrate the union between to individuals, what are the associated practices, rituals, and objects used to represent this change of social status.*

**Social Studies**

**Grade 6: History, Places, and Cultures in Europe and Americas**

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| **6.1.3** | ***Explain the impact of humans on the physical environment in Europe and the Americas.*** |
| **6.3.10** | *Explain the ways cultural diffusion, invention, and innovation change culture.*  |
| **6.3.11** | *Differentiate between the terms anthropology, archaeology, and artifacts while explaining how these contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past.*  |

**Ethnic Studies**

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| **ES.4.1** | *Students examine historical and contemporary economic, intellectual, social, cultural and political contributions to society by ethnic or racial group(s) or an individual within a group.*  |

**Geography and History of the World**

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| **GHW.4.2** | *Use a variety of text (writing, maps, timelines and/or other graphic representations) to show the movement, spread and changes in the worldwide exchange of flora, fauna and pathogens that resulted from transoceanic voyages of exploration and exchanges between peoples in different regions. Assess the consequences of these encounters for the people and environments involved.*  |
| **GHW.4.3** | *Identify and compare the main causes, players, and events of imperialism during different time periods. Examine the global extent of imperialism using a series of political maps.*  |
| **GHW.4.4** | *Analyze and assess how the physical and human environments (including languages used) of places and regions changed as the result of differing imperialist and colonial policies.* |

**World History and Civilization**

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| **WH.7.3** | *Investigate and interpret multiple causation in analyzing historical actions and analyze cause-and-effect relationships.* |
| **WH.7.6** | *Formulate and present a position or course of action on an issue by examining the underlying factors contributing to that issue and support that position.*  |

*Outside of the 6th and 7th grade Indiana standards, the exploration regarding how imperialism has led to an impact on other cultures and environments. Students should be able to examine the role of human environment interaction involved in the development of such items as the shillelagh included in this lesson. There’s room for them to make connections to contemporary issues that are similar to and a consequence of this result of imperialism.*

**Language Arts**

**Writing Skills:**

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| **4.W.5**  | **Conduct short research on a topic.** * **Identify a specific question to address (e.g., What is the history of the Indy 500?).**
* **Use organizational features of print and digital sources to efficiently locate further information.**
* **Determine the reliability of the sources.**
* **Summarize and organize information in their own words, giving credit to the source**
* **Present the research information, choosing from a variety of formats.**
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| **5.W.5** | Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.* With support, formulate a research question (e.g., What were John Wooden’s greatest contributions to college basketball?).
* Identify and acquire information through reliable primary and secondary sources.
* Summarize and paraphrase important ideas and supporting details, and include direct quotations where appropriate, citing the source of information.
* Avoid plagiarism and follow copyright guidelines for use of images, pictures, etc.
* Present the research information, choosing from a variety of sources.
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*Students could conduct research projects in which they examine examples of other wedding ceremonies in different cultures. They can reflect on the symbolisms involved in these rituals and what objects are used throughout them and how these represent marriage. The can also reserach body adornment in different cultures and examine how their social context like the economy affects trends and personal taste.*