

## Palm Sunday Seder – The Haggadah (the Telling)

1. Stories tell us who we are, where we came from, and why we are a community. When we lose our stories, we lose the glue that keeps us together. This is why family time, church time, and small group time is so important. The world can only use us for its purposes once it divides us from the group.
2. That is why the devil is referred to as a lion: he picks off the one who has strayed from the group. Coals go dark and cold, snowflakes melt, and identity dies when we leave the group.
3. The Jews have kept together through the millennia by telling their stories to each other over and over again. Their holidays are Holy Days and some, like Passover, are celebrated in the home and involve all ages in the story.
4. The actions taken around the table are called the Haggadah – the telling. This story, this ritual, has taken place every year for 3500 years. [Leviticus 23:2-7; Exodus 12:14]
5. Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, participated in the Telling. That is why it was so important to him and the disciples that they found a room and made preparations for this, arguably the most important night in the Jewish calendar.
6. The day begins with the father and the children ridding the house of all leaven. Leaven is a symbol of sin, for just a little leaven changes the entire lump of dough. No amount of sin is small enough to be considered safe so...they sweep the house and examine the cabinets but they also ritually brush surfaces and talk about the need to rid the house of leaven...and their lives of sin.
7. On the table, there is a seder plate (“seder” means order). On it is a bit of bitter horseradish, a sweet mixture of apples and honey, parsley, a roasted egg, and the shank bone of a lamb. Each of these plays a part in the telling of the Passover story.
8. Sunset...and the mother comes forward to light the candles. As she does so, she says this: [all women are to say – SLIDE 1].

9. The leader says: Just as this mother has begun tonight's Seder by lighting the candles and brought light into this room, so it was a woman who brought Light into the world. [Isaiah 7:14; John 8:12]
10. On the table are four cups of wine. Each cup represents a different part of the story: sanctification, plagues and deliverance, redemption, and completion and praise. As the first cup is lifted, we all say this together: [SLIDE 2]
11. The leader then lifts the cup and says "let us remember that we are sanctified by our relationship with our God. Let us praise Him, saying [SLIDE 3]. Let us drink together the first cup of Passover.
12. At this point, there is a ritual washing that recalls the large brass sink – the Sea of Brass – that once stood before the Temple. As the bowl is passed, the father says "As we offer the bowl to each other, we remember that we who are believers in Messiah have been washed clean by the blood of the Lamb of God." The towel that dries the fingers is folded and laid aside, remembering when Jesus washed the feet of the apostles.
13. The parsley is lifted. "This parsley represents the newness of life, created by God, which springs from the earth at this time of year. It reminds us that God is a faithful provider of sustenance for His people.
14. The salt water is lifted. [SLIDE 4]
15. Now, the Four Questions begin. [SLIDE 5] It is our duty to pass on to our children the lessons we have learned, and never let them be forgotten throughout all generations.
16. The child asks: "Why is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights, we eat bread or matzah. On this night, why do we eat only matzah?" The leader responds: As leaven in bread causes it to rise, so sin in our life causes us to puff up in our own estimation. But on this night we eat no leaven to represent our desire to rid ourselves of sin and to live lives devoted entirely to the Lord.

17. The children of Israel fled Egypt in great haste. There was no time to allow their dough to rise. It was baked flat by the harsh desert sun. We must lay aside the sins that keep us enslaved and embrace the Bread of Life, our Lord and Savior, the Messiah. [1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 5:7 and John 6:35]
18. The leader lifts 3 matzah. “This is the bread of affliction and deprivation which our ancestors ate in the land of bondage. And, yet, it is life and sustenance. It represents the hope and promise of salvation.” (they are wrapped in a cloth) The three are one, representing the mystery of the unity of God. [SLIDE 6]
19. The leader then removes the middle matzah. This matzah represents our Messiah. It is unleavened for he lived a sinless life. “He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:9) The leader breaks the matzah. “As we break the middle piece, we recall the brokenness of the Messiah in his sacrifice for us.”
20. The broken matzah is separated. One section is “hidden” where the youngest child can find it later. “He will remain hidden from us for a time, but he will return to us.” The other matzah is shared with all at the table. As it is passed around, the family says [SLIDE 7].
21. Now the child asks the second question: [SLIDE 8] We take a bit of horseradish and eat it, allowing the bitterness to bring tears to our eyes as we remember the bitterness of our slavery in Egypt. No less bitter is the slavery to sin of those who do not walk after our Lord.
22. Again, the child asks a third question: [SLIDE 9] We dip them into the mixture of apples and honey to remind us of the mixture of bricks and mortar we used when we were slaves in Egypt. NOW take a bit of horseradish and matzah and dip it into the sweet mixture. That reminds us that all affliction can be sweetened by our hope in God.
23. The child asks the fourth question: [SLIDE 10] It was considered a symbol of freedom and peace to eat your food reclining.

The first Passover was eaten in haste [Exodus 12:11]. Today, we are a free people by God's grace. We may recline at the Passover table and fully enjoy our meal.

24. This is the point in the evening where the leader tells the story of the captivity and how God freed them. Each plague is recited in order with the tale of the deity it represented and how God is God over all gods, King of the Universe, the only True and Living God.
25. The lamb is now presented. It is a shank of Lamb to represent the arm of the Lord. [Isaiah 53:1; Exodus 12:7-8,13]
26. Since the temple was destroyed in 70AD, there is no place to sacrifice the lamb, so Jewish people no longer eat lamb at Passover. We who are believers in Jesus as Messiah know that his sacrifice was perfect and eternal. There is no longer any need of another sacrifice. His life, his blood, and His promise are sufficient for us.
27. We speak of this story in the first person for this is not history – it is OUR story. [SLIDE 11-13]
28. At this point, the hands are washed again, the supper is eaten, and grace is said after the meal. At that point, the children are sent to seek the hidden matzah. When found, it is brought to the leader of the Seder and the child receives a small gift. The leader then says “Let us eat together that which comes last, the final food of Passover. As we eat it, let us allow the taste to linger in our mouths, a reminder as we depart of what God has done for us.”
29. The cup of redemption is taken. A cup of praise is taken. A final blessing is given. It is traditional to then say “Next year in Jerusalem!” We go further. We believe He joins us now, but that he will take this supper with us in heaven, eating with us, treating us as his equals, his brothers and sisters.
30. So we come to the table in faith, even on the darkest of days, even as we contemplate the crucifixion...our eyes are full of hope.

[Patrick prays and we come to the Tables]