

Jesus, Lamb of God

Resource Guide for Celebrating Passover

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What is Passover?

Passover is a celebration of *deliverance*. For the Jewish people, it is a sacred remembrance of the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt and a celebration of how God delivered them out of their bondage with a mighty hand and outstretched arm to embark on a desert journey to Canaan, where He would fulfill His promise (or covenant He made with Abraham) to Abraham and make them a great nation. It is a powerful story of the redemptive love of God—a God who promises to never leave or forsake his people, a God whose heart is always focused on the rescue and reformation of his family.

By God's command (Ex 12:14), Jews celebrate this story of deliverance every year, a foundational tradition that serves as a reminder to each generation that rescue and redemption were a critical part of God fulfilling his covenant promises to Abraham.

Passover (*Pesach*) is celebrated in the early spring, from the 15th through the 22nd of the Hebrew month of Nissan. Strict observances involve the removal of leaven from the home for a period of seven days, a thorough cleaning of the house, a ceremonial search for the "hidden" leaven, and the celebratory *Seder* meal with the reading of the *Haggadah*, or "telling," of the Passover story through the celebration of a *Seder* meal. Some families simply celebrate with the *Haggadah* and *Seder* meal.

The ceremonial aspects of the *Seder* involve the passing of the *Seder* plate—a special plate usually holding a sampling of bitter herbs, sweet apple mixture, parsley, horseradish, and bone. Through the *Seder*, some are tasted and others simply acknowledged, but all are part of the ritual retelling of the Exodus story. The *Haggadah* is deeply meaningful but highly celebratory, and the central focus is always on God's unfailing love for His family.

Why should Christians celebrate Passover?

The commandment to pause, acknowledge and honor the redemptive hand of God is for all of us. Passover is the story of Israel's deliverance from captivity, but it's also *your story*. Like the Israelites in their captivity, every one of us was a slave to sin, ensnared and in bondage to our own broken choices. We, too, needed a "pass over" from the shadow of death. In Exodus, God commanded that each Israelite door be covered with the blood of a spotless lamb, thereby giving His people a means of escaping death. That sign identified them as God's family, and death passed over the blood-stained door posts. Through obedience and sacrifice, God's people were saved from physical death.

In the same way, our bondage to sin was broken and our spiritual death averted by the blood of Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God. His sacrifice fulfilled both a covenant promise (Jer 32:38) and a covenant stipulation (Heb 9:12). The Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples at the Last Supper brought an end to blood sacrifice. He would paint the door posts of every human heart with his own blood and thereby deliver us from the bondage of sin and the judgment of death. Just as God delivered the Israelites with a mighty hand and outstretched arm so did Jesus die on the cross with outstretched arms.

As you walk through the *Haggadah* and participate in the *Seder* meal, you will learn that each ceremonial element has both historical meaning and kingdom significance. For example:

- The Passover lamb points to a God whose heart has always been set on redemption—delivering Israel from the slavery of Egypt *and* delivering all of mankind from the wages of sin.
- The salt-soaked parsley (*karpas*) and the bitter herb recount the tears shed by the Israelites while under the yoke of slavery. For us, they are a reminder of the sorrow and tears produced by the pain of our sinful choices.
- The unleavened bread (*afikomen*) reminds us of the haste with which the Israelites had to flee from Pharaoh, where leaven is a reminder of the past, of what was “left behind.” For us, it is a reminder of the life we leave behind when we turn our backs on the past, flee from sin, and accept the redemptive sacrifice of the Lamb of God. But more importantly, the *afikomen* represents the Messiah. It was this bread that Jesus took, broke and gave to his disciples, saying to them, “Take, eat; *this is My body* which is *given for you*; do this in remembrance of Me.” (1 Cor 11:24)

So why should we, who are redeemed in Christ, pause to honor such a story?

1. Celebrating Passover aligns us with God’s divine calendar and establishes the rhythm of his kingdom patterns in our lives and in the earth.
2. God calls us to sacred spaces of *remembrance* (Ex. 12:14, Luke 22:19) so that we will hold our redemption close and never forget the sinful past from which we’ve been delivered. More importantly, remembering these sacred traditions “re-members,” or *reconnects*, God’s family—tying us back to Him as our King and to each other as Kingdom family.
3. We do it all to honor Jesus the Lamb and Jesus the *afikomen*—bruised, pierced, broken, buried, and brought back. Without Him, we would still be dead in our trespasses and sin, as enslaved as the Israelites in Egypt. And just as lost.

Each person in a traditional Passover celebration is supposed to put themselves in the story—to imagine themselves on the night of the Exodus, the last night of captivity before being set free. New Testament believers can do more than just imagine ourselves into that story. With our eyes and hearts on Jesus, we need only recall our own captivity and deliverance from sin to make this story a personal and deeply meaningful one.

Seder Preparation

The Passover *Seder* meal should be celebratory. The overall theme of the meal is that of a family gathering, of a father and mother telling their children the story of God the Deliverer or of a single man or woman recounting the story to a table of friends. The preparations for a traditional *Seder* can be very detailed and the typical liturgy quite long. For the purposes of this guide, an easy-to-follow version is provided. Recipes and songs are included in the Extra Resources section of this guide for adding more elements to your experience.

Getting Ready

- **Extending an invitation.** Passover *Seder* can be a small, intimate affair within your own household or offered to an extended circle of family, friends, and guests. Widening your circle of inclusion is a way to celebrate the power of community and reinforce the value of Kingdom family, so consider adding a place setting or two at your table. If those at your table will be unfamiliar with Passover and/or why you'll be celebrating it, copy and include the *What is Passover?* section of this guide with your invitation.
- **Cleaning the home.** Traditionally, a Jewish home would be thoroughly cleaned to remove all traces of leaven, and this cleaning can take many days, even weeks. For Christians, this preparation can focus on spiritual cleansing to remove the "leaven" from their hearts (sin, unforgiveness, pride, etc.).
- **Setting the table.** More formal than Shabbat, the Passover *Seder* requires more care to be taken with the setting of your table. You'll need the following:
 1. Nice linens, place settings, and your best dishes, as appropriate for this occasion.
 2. Two candles with matches or a lighter nearby.
 3. A plate with three pieces of *matzah* covered with a napkin. No leavened bread should be present on the table.
 4. A goblet or glass of wine or grape juice *at each place setting*.
 5. A bowl of water and a small towel for hand washing. More than one set may be helpful for a larger table.
 6. A copy of *The Passover Haggadah* (found in this this guide) on each plate. This will enable your family and guests to follow along and actively participate in the ceremonial prayers and responses during the reading.
 7. A *Seder* plate with all the required items below. This is typically positioned at the center of the table but should be within reach of every person seated at the table, so depending on the length of your table and the number of participants, you may want two *Seder* plates, one at each end of the table. Each *Seder* plate should contain the following:
 - A roasted lamb bone (beef or chicken can be substituted)
 - A small bowl of salt water
 - Springs of parsley (enough for each person)
 - Several spoonful of ground horseradish

- A mound of *charoset*, an apple/nut mixture. (The recipe can be found in the *Extra Resources* section at the end of this guide.)
- 8. A selection of worship music (optional). Incorporating worship into the *Seder* experience can be powerful. Songs that focus on deliverance, freedom, and Jesus as Redeemer and Lamb of God would be appropriate. (A selection of recommended songs can be found in the *Extra Resources* section at the end of this guide.)
- **Consecrating your space.** If you're hosting the *Seder* in your home, set aside time to pray over your table. Consider anointing each chair and interceding for your expected family and guests. The Passover experience not only celebrates deliverance and freedom, but it can be a powerful opportunity for the Holy Spirit to actively move, speak, and *bring* freedom into the space you have consecrated.

The Passover Haggadah

A Step-by-Step Guide

Opening

Father/Leader

Passover is the story of how God created a people for Himself through redemption from slavery. For over 3,500 years, Jews have been celebrating Passover—from their wandering days in the desert to their Babylonian captivity to the destruction of the Temple and their scattering across the globe to modern day practice. Tonight, we will recount this story and remember with joy the rescuing hand of our God, and we will acknowledge and celebrate the ultimate fulfillment of God’s redemption plan through Jesus, the Passover Lamb. As we remember and celebrate the mighty work of God, it is tradition to put ourselves in the story, meditating on each historical moment and connecting this story to our own testimonies of captivity, deliverance and redemption.

Lighting the Candles

Father/Leader

Let us begin our Passover with the lighting of the candles. We kindle the festival lights to sanctify and consecrate this time and space, to invoke the Holy Spirit, and to invite the Presence of God into this sacred moment. We pray the illumination of God’s Spirit would bring understanding and revelation to this Passover celebration.

Mother/Woman

Action: Light the candles while saying the blessing below.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has performed miracles for our ancestors and performs them still on behalf of his children, who has preserved us and sustained us, and brought us to this season.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who teaches us to be holy and has set us apart by his Word, who has given us Jesus the Messiah, the Light of the World. It is in His name that we kindle the Passover festival lights.

If the Seder lands on Shabbat then you would recite the Sabbath festival blessing.

"Blessed are You, Lord our God, the great King of the universe, who has set us apart by His word, who gave us Jesus our Messiah the light of the world and it is in His name that we light the festival lights."

ALL: Amen.

The Four Cups and the Seder Plate

Father/Leader

Tonight, we will drink four times from the cup of wine [or juice] to represent the four promises made by God to Moses in Exodus 6:6-7. Through these promises, God revealed to Moses how He would redeem the children of Israel. These same promises, when applied to the slavery of sin, were made to all mankind and were fulfilled through Jesus our Messiah. Let us start by reciting the promises together:

ALL

- "I will bring you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians"
 - "I will free you from slavery"
 - "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm"
 - "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God."
-

The Cup of Sanctification

Father/Leader

This first cup is the Kiddush, the Cup of Sanctification. God promised Abraham that He would set apart a people for Himself. He fulfilled that promise by bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. Jesus our Messiah did the same for us, by bringing us out of the bondage of our sin.

Action: Raise the goblet to signal the first cup.

Let us lift our first cup and bless the name of the Lord!

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth the fruit from the vine.

Father/Leader

"And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Luke 22:17-18

ALL: Amen.

Action: Take the first sip from the cup of wine [or juice].

The Washing of Hands (*urechatz*)

Father/Leader

Action: Dip fingers in the water bowl and wipe dry with the small towel.

We will now offer the bowl of water to one another for the washing of our hands, commanded by God to Moses and the Israelites in Exodus 30:21.

Father/Leader

Action: Pass the water bowls and towels around the table so that all can wash their hands.

As we wash our hands, let us reflect upon the model of humble servanthood seen in Jesus our Messiah, when on the night of Passover, he set aside his garments and girded himself with a towel. Instead of asking them to wash their own hands, he surprised his disciples by lowering himself to wash their feet. Let us recall his words together:

ALL

After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

"Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet."

The Parsley (*karpas*)

Father/Leader

Action: Direct the attention to the Seder plate(s) on the table.

In the tradition of Passover, we will use food as symbols of what God has done for our ancestors and for us. The elements you see before you on the Seder plate are used to tell the story of Passover, and we will discuss each one as we walk through the story.

Action: Hold up a sprig of parsley.

*Passover is celebrated in the springtime, when all the earth comes to green life after the dry and colorless season of winter. This vegetable, called *karpas*, represents life which is created and sustained by God.*

Action: Hold up the salt water.

But for the enslaved children of Israel in Egypt, life was full of suffering and bitter tears, represented here by this salt water. Let us take this parsley and dip it into the salt, remembering the words of Jesus—that in this life we will have trouble and that the tears shed from our sinful choices will always be painful and bitter. But let us also recall the goodness of God, who saw and cared for the suffering of Israel, just as he sees and cares for our own:

ALL

"The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.'" Ex 3:7

Father/Leader

Now let us eat the karpas together.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, (who creates the fruit of the earth).

ALL: Amen.

Action: Dip the sprig of parsley into the salt water and take a bite.

The Four Questions

Father/Leader

We are told in Exodus 12 that when our children ask of us, "What does this ceremony mean to you?" we are to tell them. The essence of the Biblical feasts, festivals, and observances is to pass these truths from generation to generation—to make sure each generation understands the miraculous power and faithfulness of God.

Child or Youngest Guest

- *On all other nights we eat bread and matzah. Why on this night do we eat only matzah?*
- *On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. Why on this night do we eat only bitter herbs?*
- *On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once. Why on this night do we dip twice?*
- *On all other nights we eat our meals sitting or reclining. Why on this night do we only recline?*

ALL

Tonight is different because we remember that our people were slaves in Egypt under Pharaoh, and our God brought us out with the strength and might of His hand. If he had not brought us out, we would still be slaves in Egypt. If Jesus the Lamb of God had not brought us out of the darkness of sin, we would still be slaves to sin and death. So, we answer these questions one by one:

- *The matzah reminds us of the haste in which our ancestors left Egypt, for the dough had no time to rise.*
- *The bitter herbs remind us of the bitterness of the bondage of slavery.*
- *We dip twice—first as a symbol of replacing our tears with joy and second to season the taste of bitterness, a reminder that Jesus is with us in our trials and sorrows.*

Father/Leader

And we recline in our drinking and eating as a symbol of our freedom, for only a truly free man can recline in peace at God's table, even in the presence of his enemies.

The Middle Matzah (*yachatz*)

Father/Leader

Action: Lift up the three pieces of matzah.

This is the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. May all who are hungry come and eat. All who are needy are invited to celebrate this Passover.

Action: Slide out the middle matzah and break in half as you share the reason below.

I break the middle matzah in two and remove one half. This portion is the afikomen. We wrap this broken piece in linen cloth and "bury" it symbolically by hiding it. Traditionally the three pieces of matzah represent a trinity. Historically for Jews, this trinity has represented the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For others, it represents the Priests, Levites, and the People of Israel.

But for Christians, the symbolism and meaning goes much deeper. The matzah represents the Trinity itself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—with Jesus the afikomen in the middle. He is the middle matzah, the one afflicted and bruised, pierced and striped, and just like the matzah, Jesus was without the leaven of sin. His broken body was wrapped in the linen of burial clothes, "hidden" in the tomb of Joseph, and revealed in resurrection on the third day.

Action: Take the other half of the middle matzah, break off a piece, and distribute the remainder among the people at the table.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Let us now partake of the Passover bread.

The Telling (*Maggid*)

The Story of the Exodus

Father/Leader

To escape a famine in the land, God led the people of Israel to the land of Egypt, where they would be enslaved to the Pharaohs of Egypt for four hundred years. We see the greater plan and providence of God at work in this, for it is through the Exodus story that God would establish Himself as a Deliverer and reveal His redemptive intent not only for Israel but for all mankind, ultimately fulfilled through Jesus our Messiah.

Reader #1

A Pharaoh arose in Egypt who did not recall the days of Joseph, who once had favor with the Pharaohs of Egypt. This Pharaoh saw that the original seventy Israelites who had migrated to Egypt had increased greatly in number. Concerned that their numbers could be added to his enemies, the Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites and controlled their numbers by putting male babies to death. A Hebrew woman, fearful for the life of her newborn son, put the baby Moses in a basket and sent him down the Nile river, where he was rescued and raised by a woman in Pharaoh's palace. He grew up under the blessings of Pharaoh's household, but when he was a grown man, he defended a Hebrew from the punishment of an Egyptian taskmaster, and he fled from Egypt to hide in the land of Midian.

Reader #2

God appeared to Moses in the land of Midian, speaking to him from a burning bush and commanding Moses to go back to Pharaoh in Egypt and demand the release of the enslaved children of Israel. God promises to go with Moses and bring punishment upon the Egyptians if Pharaoh refuses to listen to Moses and release the Israelites.

Reader #3

Moses went to Pharaoh and commanded him to let the Lord's people go, and when he refused, God sent plagues upon the land of Egypt. Each time the Pharaoh would relent but later change his mind, and ten plagues were sent to punish the Egyptians for Pharaoh's refusal. Finally, after the tenth plague, Pharaoh could take no more and commanded that the slaves be released, but this was only after the final and most dreadful plague, when the Angel of Death passed over Egypt, claiming the lives of every firstborn son.

Reader #4

But the Hebrew people were protected from this plague. Their firstborn sons were spared when they obeyed the command of God. Each household was to sacrifice an unblemished lamb and spread its blood over the doorposts of each home. Seeing the blood on the doorposts, God's judgment would "pass over" them, and all would be spared.

Reader #1

As we celebrate this meal, we meditate on the fear and danger of that night and put ourselves in the story—knowing that the death of our firstborn was imminent, obeying the command of God to prepare our doorposts, and relying on His grace and mercy to spare our children. God passed over them and saved them from physical death just as he passed over us through the blood of Jesus and saved us from spiritual death. By the strength of his own arm, He redeemed mankind.

Reader #2

Though Pharaoh let the Israelites go, he changed his mind once again and sent his armies out to capture them. But God's plan for deliverance was not yet accomplished. He parted the waters of the Red Sea and led the children of Israel to dry land on the other side. Pharaoh's armies drowned in the waters of the Red Sea, the Exodus from Egypt was accomplished, and Israel was free.

Reader #3

The Exodus from Egypt was a type and shadow of the greater exodus from the slavery of sin we've been given through Jesus our Messiah. Like the children of Israel, we now look to a Promised Land—an eternal Kingdom—where we will be raised to eternal life.

Reader #4

In every generation, let each man look on himself as if he came out of Egypt. It is said, "And you shall tell your son in that day, saying, 'It is because of what the LORD did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.'" We who are redeemed from death by the blood of Jesus the Lamb of God should likewise declare, "It is because of what the LORD did for me."

The Cup of Judgment

Father/Leader

Action: Raise the goblet to signal the second cup.

The second cup is the Cup of Judgment, also called The Cup of Plagues, representing the promise of God to Israel that He would redeem them with "great judgments," by raining down plagues on the Egyptians. God sent plagues, one by one, yet with each plague, Pharaoh hardened his heart. The Egyptians became afflicted with discomfort and disease, affliction and blight. Still Pharaoh would not relent.

A full cup is a symbol of joy, and while we are filled with joy in celebrating God's mighty deliverance, we do not rejoice in suffering. As we recall these plagues, let us dip a little finger into our cups, allowing a drop of liquid to fall, reducing the fullness of our cup of joy.

ALL

Blood!

Frogs!

Lice!

Beasts!

Cattle disease!

Boils!

Hail!

Locusts!

Darkness!

Death of the Firstborn!

Father/Leader

Because this cup is the Cup of Judgment, we do not drink from it at this time.

The Passover Lamb (*pesach*)

Father/Leader

In Passover tradition, it is taught that the recounting of the Passover story should mention the three ancient symbols: The lamb, the matzah, and the maror. The shank bone on the Seder plate represents the lamb that was sacrificed so that blood could be painted upon the doorposts of each Hebrew home

and the firstborn of Israel could be saved. According to Exodus 12, the animals chosen for this sacrifice had to be year-old males without defect. Jesus our Messiah was the Lamb without defect or blemish who was sacrificed to save fallen humanity. His blood now serves as the sign of redemption over all newborn believers, marking us for eternal life in the Kingdom family of God.

ALL

Lord, by your mighty outstretched arm, you brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. By outstretched arms of Jesus our Messiah, you brought us out of the slavery of sin. It was you and no other who redeemed the children of Israel, and it is you and no other who has redeemed mankind.

Father/Leader

"For that night, I will pass through the land of Egypt."

ALL

I, and not an angel.

Father/Leader

"and I will kill all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both men and animals,"

ALL

I, and not a seraph.

Father/Leader

"and I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt,"

ALL

I, and not a messenger.

Father/Leader

"I am the LORD."

ALL

I myself and none other.

Father/Leader

Since the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem, lamb has not been eaten at Passover. The shank bone on the Seder plate is a reminder of the sacrificial lamb.

ALL

We who declare Jesus the Messiah believe that he is the Lamb of God, our Passover. We know that it was God himself, and no other, who substituted himself for the sin of mankind and through the sacrifice of Jesus the Lamb, he rescued us from the wages of sin.

The Bitter Herbs (*maror*)

Father/Leader

Action: Demonstrate how the matzah is dipped into the bitter herbs.

On all other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables, but on Passover, we eat only the bitter herbs as a reminder of the bitterness of slavery for the children of Israel. Our redeemed hearts can likewise recall the bitterness of our own captivity in sin. As we dip our matzah into the horseradish, let us allow the bitter taste to bring the sting of tears to our eyes and compassion to our hearts for those who suffered.

ALL

Action: Raise the matzah and *maror*.

Father/Leader

At the Last Supper Passover with his disciples, Jesus identified Judas as the one who would betray him as they participated in the dipping of the matzah. Let us partake of the bitter herbs.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us and commanded us to eat the bitter herbs.

ALL: Amen.

Action: Eat the matzah and *maror*.

The Sweet Apple (*charoset*)

Father/Leader

Action: Demonstrate how the matzah is dipped first into the bitter herbs and then into the *charoset*.

On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once, but on Passover, we dip them twice. We have already dipped once with our parsley in water. The children of Israel toiled under Pharaoh and the taskmasters of Egypt to fashion bricks out of straw and clay. We remember their labors by dipping our

matzah first into the bitter herbs and then into the charoset, which resembles the mortar used by the children of Israel to make the bricks for Pharaoh.

ALL

Action: Raise the matzah and *maror*.

Father/Leader

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us and commanded us to eat the bitter herbs.

ALL: *Amen.*

Action: Eat the matzah and *maror*.

The Dayenu

Father/Leader

We have journeyed from Egypt through the Red Sea to freedom. We've eaten the bread of affliction, tasted the bitter herbs of oppression, and grieved the destruction of the plagues. Now we sing the Dayenu, a thousand-year-old Hebrew song meaning, "It would have been enough for us." It is recited (or sung) as part of the Passover celebration to show our gratitude for all the ways God protected the Israelites as they journeyed from slavery to freedom.

Father/Leader: *Had God brought us out of Egypt and not divided the sea for us...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God divided the sea but not permitted us to cross on dry land...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God kept us for forty years in the desert but not fed us with manna...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God fed us manna but not given us the Sabbath...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God given us the Sabbath but not led us to Mt. Sinai...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God led us to Mt. Sinai but not given us the Torah...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God given us the Torah but not led us into the Land of Israel...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God led us into the Land of Israel but not built for us the Temple...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God built for us a Temple but not sent us prophets of truth...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

Father/Leader: *Had God sent us prophets of truth but not made us a holy people...*

ALL: *Dayenu! It would have been enough.*

ALL

Action: Take a second sip from the cup of wine [or juice].

The Passover Supper

Father/Leader

We will now partake of our Passover meal.

Action: A break is taken for serving the Seder meal, traditionally served in several courses.

Celebration of Freedom

The Afikomen

Father/Leader

Action: Retrieve the afikomen that was previously hidden (or have it retrieved and presented by a child or youngest guest). Break the afikomen into as many pieces as necessary to distribute to each person at the table.

The afikomen is the only Greek word used in the Passover Seder, which is historically the dessert and final food eaten at Passover. In Passover tradition, the afikomen is the substitute for the Passover Lamb. Jesus our Messiah is the afikomen, the one who took the place of and became the Passover Lamb. Like the afikomen matzah, Jesus was broken, bruised, and pierced in crucifixion then wrapped in linen, buried, and "found" again at his resurrection.

When his meal was ending as ours is now, Jesus shared the Passover matzah with his disciples, and confirmed that he was the afikomen and pointed to the path of sacrifice that lay before him.

ALL

Action: Raise the afikomen.

Father/Leader

"While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is My body.'" Jesus, you are the Bread of Life that came down from heaven, given for us.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

ALL: Amen.

Action: Eat the afikomen.

The Cup of Redemption

Father/Leader

Action: Raise the goblet to signal the third cup.

The third cup is the Cup of Redemption. It is the traditional cup of celebration for the freedom and deliverance experienced by the children of Israel. It was this Cup of Redemption that Jesus lifted and presented to his disciples, saying, "This is the blood of the New Covenant poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

ALL

Action: Lift the cup of wine [or juice].

O Lord our God, we thank you for the freedom from death that was purchased for us through the shedding of Jesus' blood. We thank you for this finished work of the cross, which provided adoption to all mankind into the bloodline of Abraham, for the forgiveness of our sin, the redemption of our souls, and the healing of our bodies.

Father/Leader

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth the fruit from the vine.

ALL: Amen.

Action: Take a third sip from the cup of wine [or juice].

The Prophet Elijah

Father/Leader

Action: Identify the empty seat and place setting.

At every Passover Seder, a place is set for Elijah, including a full cup. In a traditional Passover, we would also leave the door open or run to call Elijah in. We do this because In Malachi 4:5, we're told that the coming of Elijah will precede the arrival of Messiah. But we can rejoice in knowing that the spirit of Elijah did come, and Jesus identified him in Matthew 11:14.

ALL

"And if you are willing to accept it, he (John the Baptist) is the Elijah who was to come."

Father/Leader

Jesus points to John the Baptist as the Elijah who had come and affirms this again in Matthew 17:10.

ALL

"The disciples asked him, 'Why then do the teachers of the Law say that Elijah must come first?' Jesus replied, 'To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him.'"

The Cup of Praise (*The Hallel*)

Father/Leader

The fourth cup is the Cup of Praise. Our God has kept his promise— "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God." This cup praises God for His completed work of redemption, when the yoke of slavery was broken for the Israelites and the yoke of sin was broken for all mankind. Let us give thanks to God, our great redeemer.

Father/Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.

ALL: His love endures forever.

Father/Leader: Give thanks to the God of gods,

ALL: His love endures forever.

Father/Leader: Give thanks to the Lord of lords,

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *To Him who alone has done great wonders,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *To Him who alone does great wonders,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *Who by his understanding made the heavens.*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *Who spread out the earth upon the waters,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *Who made the great lights,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *The sun to govern the day,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *The moon and stars to govern the night,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *To Him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *And brought Israel out from among them,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *To Him who divided the Red Sea asunder,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *And brought Israel through the midst of it,*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader: *Give thanks to the God of heaven*

ALL: *His love endures forever.*

Father/Leader

Action: Raise the goblet to signal the fourth cup.

Let us lift our cups and bless the name of the Lord.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth fruit from the vine.

ALL

Action: Take the fourth sip from the cup of wine [or juice].

Father/Leader

Our Passover Seder is now complete, just as our redemption has been made complete in Jesus the Lamb of God, our Messiah.

Extra Resources

Recipes

Basic Charoset

Ingredients

- 3 apples, peeled and diced
- 1 cup walnuts, toasted and roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ground
- 1 teaspoon sugar, or brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon red wine, sweet like Manischewitz
- 1 tablespoon honey

Instructions

1. Place all ingredients in a large bowl and toss to combine evenly.
2. To achieve the “mortar” consistency for *Seder*, combine all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until just forming a paste.

Favorite Charoset

From Divascancook.com

Ingredients

- 1 granny smith apple
- 2 gala apples
- ¾ cup chopped walnuts
- 1½ Tablespoons raw honey
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 3-4 Tablespoon sweet Kosher red wine (Manischewitz Blackberry wine)
- Dash of nutmeg
- Dash of clove
- Brown sugar, to sweeten

Instructions

1. Peel and dice apples into tiny pieces.
2. Place diced apple in a large bowl.
3. Stir in remaining ingredients, except the brown sugar.
4. Taste and add brown sugar to further sweeten.
5. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour

Songs

It is traditional for songs to be sung during Passover, especially at the end of the Seder after the reading of the Hallel. Consider including some worship songs with your celebration and providing the lyrics so the guests at your table can participate. Here are some great worship songs to consider:

Behold the Lamb

Matt Adcox | Our God, Our Mountain
Celebration Worship
~Available on iTunes and YouTube

No Longer Slaves

Jonathan David & Melissa Helser | We Will Not Be Shaken
Bethel Worship
~Available on iTunes and YouTube

Remembrance

Hillsong Worship | There is More
~Available on iTunes and YouTube

The Passion

Hillsong Worship | There is More
~Available on iTunes and YouTube