

Facilitating a Seder/Passover Meal

Much of what we have below was gleaned from a message by Tim Mackie, delivered in 2011 at Blackhawk Church in Madison, with minor additions and supplemental sources added along the way over the years. There are many minor variations on the traditional Seder meal, but we hope to have encapsulated the framework and high points appropriately.

What You Will Need for Your Passover Meal:

- Bibles
- A reclined meal setting (we might suggest using blankets on the floor with pillows and cushions) Candles are appropriate if you have them as well
- A TV, computer or at least a smart phone to view supplemental visual clips
- Whatever yeast you have in your home (if any)
- A bowl of water and soap for handwashing and towel(s)
- A grocery list that would include:
 - Wine or grape juice and cups/glasses
 - Karpas – this literally means “parsley” but a slice of onion or potato would work. Romaine lettuce leaves work well also.
 - A bowl of intensely concentrated salt water
 - Unleavened bread (below is a recipe that works)
 - 4 cups [whole wheat flour](#)
 - 1 cup [white flour](#)
 - 2 cups [water](#)
 - 1/4 cup [honey](#)
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons [salt](#)
 - 1/4 cup olive oil
 - **Directions:** Roll out 1/8 inch thick, place on greased cookie sheet, score into 1 inch squares, cut into 4 x 5 rectangles, bake at 400 degrees about 15 min.
 - Bitter herbs (i.e. chopped horseradish root or horseradish from a jar)
 - Lamb meat (seasoned simply and grilled is suggested, but not mandatory)

Depending on how long you spend on each element, how many people are involved, etc., a Seder meal can take up to a couple hours. It can go faster, but in terms of expectations, it was only a once-a-year meal, so it shouldn't be rushed if you can help it.

Order of Passover Meal:

Framing the Meal: Read Luke 22:7-16

Note:

- Jesus Himself celebrated the Passover (the Feast of Unleavened bread) as His last meal.
- Jesus and His disciples were participating in an annual rhythm/feast/celebration that the Hebrew/Jewish people had been celebrating for thousands of years.
- The Seder meal goes all the way back to Exodus chapter 12...

Stepping back into the History: Read Exodus 12:14-15

Note:

- Begin by finding and removing any leaven (yeast) you have in your house and taking it outside. (usually a great job for a child if there is one).
- The reason the Passover feast is also called “The Feast of Unleavened Bread” is because God was going to rescue His people out of Egypt so quickly that they were told they would not have time to let the yeast (leaven) rise.
- We now dive into the meal assuming some of the history that you may not know, but it will unfold more as we go.

The first of four cups: Read Exodus 6:6-7

Note:

- The Feast is marked by four “cups” or toasts.
- These four cups are from the promises made by God in the above verses:
 - “I will bring you out... (of Egypt)”
 - “I will free you... (from slavery)”
 - “I will redeem you (from bondage)”
 - “I will take you... (as My own)”
- Each cup is marked with a blessing prior to drinking.
 - Say this blessing out loud together:

All: ***“May You be Blessed, Lord our God, king of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.”***

- Take and drink of the wine/juice together.

The dipping of the Karpas: Read Genesis 37

Note:

- Genesis 37 rewinds the story to tell of how the people got into Egypt in the first place. Starting in Genesis 12, we follow this chosen family of a man named Abraham, then Isaac, then Jacob, who had twelve sons. Joseph was favored by Jacob, and chapter 37 tells of how Joseph ended up in Egypt.
- The rest of Genesis explains what happens leading up to the book of Exodus.
- The “dipping of the Karpas” is a visual of the brothers dipping Joseph’s coat in blood (which is salty to the taste).
- Wash hands.
- Take a dip the lettuce (or other veggie) into the intense salt water together and eat together.

The questions of the children:

Note:

- At this point in the Seder meal, the children (if present) are instructed to ask a series of questions that set the stage for the re-telling of the Passover narrative.
 - It might be helpful to print out the below questions, distribute to children who are present, and have them then ask the questions out loud.
 - Children ask:
 - What makes this night different from all other nights?
 - Why do we eat only unleavened bread tonight?
 - Why do we eat bitter herbs tonight?
 - Why do we dip the vegetable tonight?
 - Why do we all recline at the table tonight?

Retelling the Story of the Passover:

Note:

- Ultimately this is told in the pages of Scripture from Genesis 12 – Exodus 12, but some key texts would include:
 - Genesis 37
 - Exodus 1
 - Exodus 6
 - Exodus 11 & 12
- Have someone either read these texts or retell the narrative account.
- Another option for this is to watch “The Prince of Egypt” animated movie (it starts in Egypt)... but since you probably won’t have time to watch the whole thing, you could also check out a few clips at You Tube:

- God speaks to Moses through the burning bush:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ds9y3lJGig&t=119s>
- The 10th plague:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2R07EbLjSU>
- This clip is a five minute overview using the Prince of Egypt:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFU5NrPgutA&t=109s>
- You could also listen to this song by Andrew Peterson called "Passover" :
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuMxnUxi6C8>

Responsive Reading:

Note:

- Responsive reading of Psalm 113
- One person can assume the role of leader, and everyone else responds.

Leader: Praise Yahweh!
 All: **Blessed be the name of Yahweh now and forever.**
 Leader: From the place where the sun rises to the place where it goes down,
 All: **May Yahweh's name be praised.**
 Leader: For Yahweh is high above the nations;
 All: **His glory is higher than the heavens.**
 Leader: Who can be compared with Yahweh our God? Who is enthroned on high?
 All: **He stoops to look down on the sky and the land.
 He lifts up the poor from the dust and the needy from the slums
 He sets them among princes, even the princes of His own people!**

The second of four cups:

Note:

- Say this blessing out loud together:

All: ***"May You be Blessed, Lord our God, king of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine."***

- Take and drink of the wine/juice together.

The eating of the unleavened bread: **Read Exodus 12:31-39**

Note:

- Like the cup, this was marked with a blessing prior to eating.
- Say this blessing out loud together:

All: ***“May You be Blessed, Lord our God, king of the world, who brings forth bread from the land.”***

- Take and eat the bread together.

The eating of the bitter herbs: Read Exodus 1:14

Note:

- This is to be a reminder of the bitterness of slavery endured by the people of Israel while in Egypt
- The bitter herbs can be chopped horseradish root or horseradish in a jar, either way, if you have little ones, know that they will not like this (which is the point)
- Be careful with this, as it is meant to make you cry
- The herbs can be eaten with some of the bread
- Eat the bitter herbs together
- You can drink in between the official “cups” if needed

The third of four cups:

Note:

- Say this blessing out loud together:

All: ***“May You be Blessed, Lord our God, king of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine.”***

- Take and drink of the wine/juice together.

The eating of the lamb: Read Exodus 12:1-11

Note:

- The lamb was to be spotless or “without blemish or defect” (verse 5)
- The lambs blood was to be put on the doorposts of the house (verse 22) so that when the 10th plague came through, the angel of the Lord would “passover” those under the blood of the lamb.
- Eat the lamb together

The fourth of four cups:

Note:

- Say this blessing out loud together:

All: ***"May You be Blessed, Lord our God, king of the world, who creates the fruit of the vine."***

- Take and drink of the wine/juice together.

Responsive Readings:

Note:

- Leader: Reads...

- ***"Then I will take you as my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."*** - Exodus 6:6-7
- Traditionally, Psalms 115-118 may be sung in Hebrew, but since this is likely not feasible, reading Psalm 117 out loud together might be appropriate. Say aloud together:
 - ***"Praise the LORD, all you nations; extol him, all you peoples. For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever. Praise the LORD."***

The fifth cup:

Note:

- As part of some Seder meal traditions, a fifth cup is poured and left at the table.
- Pour a cup and leave it at the center of the table.
- Some believe that this cup represents the fifth promise in Exodus 6:8, where God says, "I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."
- Others call this fifth cup "Elijah's cup" that stays untouched to symbolize the anticipated return of the prophet Elijah who would herald the arrival of the Messianic age.
- Others yet refer to this fifth cup, "Elijah's cup" as the cup of God's wrath, drawing from both prophets Jeremiah and Malachi:
 - *This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. 16 When they drink it, they*

will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them.” 17 So I took the cup from the Lord’s hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it: Jeremiah 25:15-17

- *“See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.” - Malachi 4:5*
- The traditional Jewish Seder meal would conclude here, but there is more...

Transition back to Luke:

Note:

- Read Luke 22:39-44
- Jesus refers to a “cup” and asks the Father to take it from Him

Video:

Note:

- Watch the below video called “The Fifth Cup” by Dan Stevers
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dbd4Dt0OhZM>

The Lord’s Supper:

Note:

- In Luke 22, Jesus did something new with His disciples when sharing in the Seder meal. He re-interpreted the meal. He said that the bread and the cup were His body, and His blood.
- Read Luke 22:17-18
- If you are comfortable, at this time, you might consider taking of the bread and the cup again. This time, not as part of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Seder, but instead, as the Lord’s Supper.
- According to the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, followers of Jesus are to pass on what was Jesus’ disciples did, by partaking of the bread and the cup together.
- Distribute the bread and the cup.
- Read the below words from Luke 22:19-20

Leader: “And he took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and give it to them saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.’” Take and eat.

Leader: “In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.’” Take and drink.

Prayer:

- Pray together
- We might suggest the Lord's prayer:
 - "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, here on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever, amen.

Song:

- You may choose to end in song of your choice. A lyric video to "Nothing but the Blood" is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bl1P4apA5yw>

Fasting?

- In preparation for Resurrection Sunday, you might consider fasting between this meal and Resurrection Sunday morning. If you have never fasted before, here is a link with some helpful considerations: <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/fasting/how-to-do-a-biblical-fast.html>

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Wallace, Daniel B. *Passover in the Time of Jesus*, 1998 Biblical Studies Press.

Mackie, Tim – Some information was taken from and adapted from a message given by Tim at Blackhawk Church in Madison, WI on April 10, 2011.
(<https://vimeo.com/25103313>)