

A Messianic Passover Seder (service) for Families with Young Children

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(You may print and use. Feel free to make any age-appropriate adjustments.)

We participate in this meal on what is known in Christian tradition as “Maundy Thursday,” or the day before Good Friday. In 2020, it will be Thursday 9th April.

PREPARATION:

Decorate your table with a white cloth (or sheet), candles, Palm Sunday’s leftover palm branches (if you have any) and a basket of flatbread/pita bread/wraps. You can make your own flatbread if you enjoy baking, or just use store-bought pita bread or wraps – whatever your children will eat. Pancakes would do if they are made beforehand and are tough enough to hold together when wrapped around the lamb chunks.

For each place setting, set out a wine glass or a cup appropriate to the child’s age, & a round piece of tinfoil as a plate. (This symbolises the rush to leave Egypt – no time to wash dishes. No utensils are needed. Around the table, have a few small bowls of salty water.

*On each tinfoil “plate,” include the following: one boiled egg with the shell on; 4 small sprigs of parsley each (some people use small bits of broken lettuce leaf or celery); a bit of horseradish in an eggcup, and a tablespoon-size of **charoset** – a sweet mixture of dried fruits and nuts. Many recipes are available online. Try ½ red apple, ½ pear, ½ cup chopped or ground nuts, ¼ cup sweet red wine or grape juice. Chop in food processor or use stick blender to make a lumpy paste. It represents the mortar the Israelites worked with while they were slaves in Egypt.*

(Instead of charoset, you may choose to just have fruits & nuts, such as apple slices, mandarin pieces and grapes plus a few nuts you know the kids will eat)

Set an extra place to represent Jesus’ place at the table.

Nearby, have a bowl of water ready for hand washing, along with a towel.

Have a jug of grape juice (or red cordial) and lamb ready. (Keep lamb on low in oven. [Link to recipe here](#)). You can use lamb chops or any lamb cut and adjust the time as necessary. Maybe wrap in foil when cooked so you can keep it warm and not over-cook. The significance of using lamb is that Christ is our Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed to set us free.

Before the meal, hide the afikomen. The afikomen is a piece of your unleavened bread (or pita bread or cracker), broken off and concealed in a white cloth. Have candy as the prize for the child who finds the cloth-wrapped afikomen. (Or have candy for all the children). The afikomen hunt will take place after the meal concludes.

Play music in background if you feel it appropriate. These ones are all in our church’s repertoire and have lyrics on the screen so you can join in.

“In Christ Alone, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENtL_li4GbE”

“Above All,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yg9zjVUz9Kw>

“How Deep the Father’s Love.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLDGVI8D5UU>

Have your Bible (and the children’s ones) ready. Allow your children to ask questions, and keep the atmosphere light. This is a celebration!

Passover Service

PARENT: Tonight, we take part in the Passover Seder. It is a tradition celebrated by Jewish people as part of the Jewish Passover. The Passover celebrates the time when God, through Moses, led his people out of slavery. The Egyptian Pharaoh (king) let the people go, after the angel of death killed every firstborn male of the Egyptians but “passed over” the Israelite homes with lamb’s blood on their doorposts.

(Optional: Depending on what you feel is age-appropriate for your child regarding the explanation of Passover, you may choose to have a colouring page of a man preparing his doorpost by [clicking here](#). Have the child colour or paint the doorpost red in the picture. Explain that this was a message to the angel of death to “pass over” those houses and spare the children. Ask children how they may have felt that night if they were the parent painting the doorpost, or a child inside the house.)

PARENT: Tonight, we celebrate a Jewish feast. But we are not Jewish. We are Christians. So why do you think we should celebrate Passover? *(Give children a chance to respond, and be open to their thoughts and questions.)*

PARENT: One reason we celebrate is to remember how God helped his people by leading them out of slavery. We remember that God keeps His promises. Can you think of a time when God has kept a promise in your life? *(Allow children to respond. Tell them of one in your life if they can’t think of one.)*

PARENT: We also celebrate Passover because Jesus did! Remember, when Jesus joined his friends for one last dinner before he died on the cross? That “Last Supper” was during a Passover celebration. During dinner, Jesus first introduced Holy Communion to the disciples. He took bread, broke it and said “This is my body.” He took a cup of wine, lifted it and said, “This is my blood.”

PARENT: What do you think the disciples thought when he said his body was the bread and his blood was the wine? *(Allow the children to share responses.)*

PARENT: The disciples might have been confused. No one ever said anything like that before. With Jesus, this meal was given new meaning. Bread and wine had new meaning, too. Even his very best friends, the disciples, were surprised and amazed!

PARENT: And so, we eat this meal to remember Jesus Christ. We will eat the same kinds of foods that Jesus ate. We will say some of the same words he said. And we can be amazed, too!

PARENT: *(Drawing attention to the wine glasses...)* During the meal, you will be served a drink four times, which is an ancient tradition of the Passover Seder. The four cups are: The cup of sanctification, which reminds us of God’s promises; the cup of deliverance, because God brought his people out of slavery; the cup of redemption, because Jesus died for us; and the cup of praise, because we praise and thank God for what He has done.

PARENT: *(Drawing attention to empty seat)* And we remember throughout our dinner tonight, that Jesus is always at our table, just like He was at the table with the disciples.

CHILD READER (or parent): **Read from Mark 14:12-16.** *Discuss briefly. Note how the Bible says that Jesus was celebrating the Passover feast on the night before he died on the cross.*

CHILD READER (or parent): **Read Luke 22:14-15.** *Discuss briefly. Ask the children what they think Jesus meant when he talked about suffering. Ask them how they think the disciples might have felt. How might Jesus have felt?*

PARENT: We begin tonight with our first cup — the cup of sanctification and freedom.

Pour small amount of grape juice in each goblet. Don't drink yet!

PARENT, (you may like to try to say this in Hebrew): Baruch abah adonai, elohaynu melech hadlam boray pree hagafen. (**Otherwise, use the English translation**): Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who makes the fruit of the vine.

Everyone drinks the first cup.

PARENT: In the traditional Seder, the first cup was followed by the ceremonial washing of hands.

Dip hands in the basin you have prepared, then dry them.

PARENT: At this point in the Passover meal, the first “dipping” took place. This is represented tonight by the parsley and salt water. You will dip the parsley in the bowl of salt water. The parsley reminds us of the hyssop branch which applied the lamb’s blood to the doorframes of the homes. The salt water reminds us of the Israelites’ tears shed while in slavery and of the waters of the Red Sea. God parted those waters so the people could pass through to safety and freedom.

All dip a parsley sprig twice into the salty water and eat it. *Encourage children to taste the salt and remember the tears.*

Pour second cups. *Do not drink yet.*

PARENT: After the dipping, the host of a Passover Seder pours the second cup but the participants did not drink yet. The next step was the asking of questions, usually by the youngest person present.

CHILD: Why is this night different from all other nights?

PARENT: Because we were once slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

CHILD: On this night, why do we eat only unleavened bread?

PARENT: The Bible says that the people had to leave Egypt so quickly that they did not have time to let the bread rise. So they made dough without yeast.

CHILD: On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs and vegetables, but this night only bitter herbs. Why do we dip them?

PARENT: Because this reminds us of the bitterness of slavery. On this night we dip into salt water to remind us of the tears of the Hebrew slaves.

Explain each element of the Passover meal. Explain how some of the food might taste different from what they normally eat. Encourage your children to be willing to try new things, and to remember that each part of the meal has special meaning.

The unleavened bread, or crackers, reminds us that the Jewish people did not have time to let their dough rise when they made their bread, so they did not use yeast. They had to escape quickly.

The horseradish represents bitter herbs— to remind us of the bitterness of slavery. (If you don't have horseradish, refer to the parsley as a bitter herb.

The egg represents offerings that were brought to God in the Temple of Jerusalem in ancient times. You may also tell them that the empty shell of the egg can remind us of the empty tomb.

The lamb symbolizes the Passover sacrifice. This is a famous painting of the lamb.
<https://rabbiyeshua.com/articles-by-kehilat/item/10-passover-lamb>

The fruit and nuts (sometimes served separately) were often combined into a coarse, sweet mixture called charoset. This represents the mortar the Hebrew slaves used in their work in Egypt.

PARENT: You may now drink from the second cup – the cup of deliverance.

PARENT may say: Barach abah adonai, elohaynu melech hadlam, boray pree hagafen.
 (And/or) ... Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who makes the fruit of the Vine.

Parent or child or whole family may say grace before the meal is eaten.

Serve lamb at this time. (We do not need to use utensils if we are eating the lamb in pita bread.)

EAT MEAL.

After the meal, you may say this blessing: Blessed are you our God, King of the Universe, who feeds the whole world, with your goodness and with grace, kindness and mercy, for your mercy endures forever.

At this time, the third cup, the cup of redemption is served. You may simply note that this is when Jesus would have served the first communion.

PARENT: We will now be serving the third cup – the cup of redemption – as Jesus would have done on the night of the Last Supper, when he celebrated Passover with the disciples in the Upper Room. In Jewish tradition, the cup of redemption recalled God's promise to Moses: "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm."

Imagine the surprise of the disciples when Jesus suddenly gave this cup of redemption a whole new meaning. During the drinking of the third cup, Jesus took his cup and said: "Drink of it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my father's kingdom."

He also took the bread, gave thanks and broke it, saying, “This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Pray the Lord’s Prayer. “Our Father, who is in heaven, holy is your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever, Amen.

We each give the person on our left a small piece of flatbread.

PARENT: We have reached the fourth and final cup, the cup of praise.

Pour final cups. Don’t drink yet.

PARENT: Baruch abah adonai, elohaynu melech haolam, boray pree hagafen.
Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who makes the fruit of the vine.

Each person may now pray a prayer of thanksgiving to Jesus for what He has done for us.

Drink.

HUNT FOR THE HIDDEN AFIKOMEN. When they find this bread, broken and wrapped in a white cloth, ask them what that reminds them of, in the Easter story. (*Christ’s body wrapped in a cloth and hidden in a tomb*).

PARENT: The Passover Seder traditionally comes to an end with a closing hymn. We will do the same tonight, by singing the Doxology. *You might explain first, that “Holy Ghost” is an ancient way of saying “Holy Spirit.” It has nothing to do with what modern people call “ghosts.”*

You may like to use this music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiMZprhxZw4>

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise Him above, you heavenly host.
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.