



THE SEDER

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FOCUS
ON THE FAMILY.

THE SEDER

Experience the Easter story in a new way with a traditional Passover meal

THE SEDER (pronounced “say-der”) is the religious ceremony that tells the story of Passover. It’s a family-oriented ritual where everyone gathers around the table for a service that may include a meal.

The Seder is traditionally celebrated in one night and consists of 15 steps. In many Christian circles, it’s celebrated on the Thursday before Easter as a part of Holy Week. According to the account of the first Passover recorded in Exodus 12, a lamb’s blood was painted on the doorposts so God would “pass over” that house, sparing the family from the death of their firstborn. As a spiritual picture, this symbolizes the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus, being painted on the doorposts of our heart. What a beautiful picture of forgiveness!

When we compare the principles of the Passover to the details surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus, it’s exciting to see how the two are related. God’s directives to ancient Israel foreshadowed His plan to deliver us from sin through Jesus’ death and resurrection hundreds of years later.

The following is a sample Seder that incorporates Jewish tradition with a Christian perspective. Consider sharing the Seder as a family during a one-evening ceremony or partake of these elements a little each day during the week leading up to Easter.



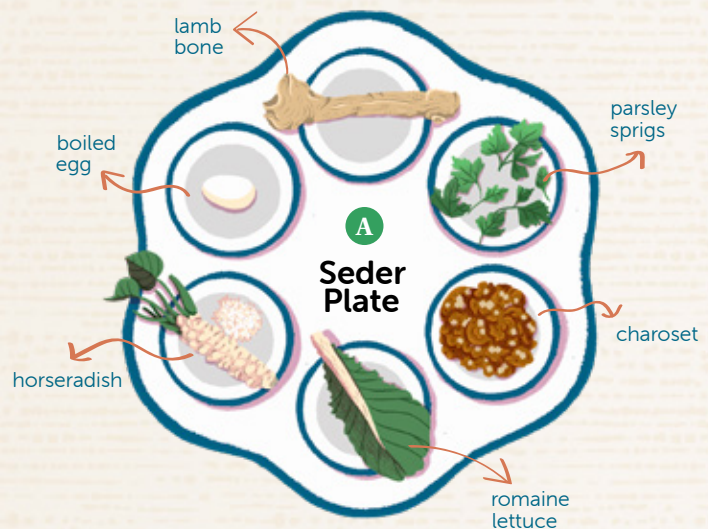
Shopping list

- ☐ Fresh parsley
- ☐ Fresh horseradish
- ☐ Matzah (available in most grocery stores in the kosher or ethnic food section—use plain style)
- ☐ 1 lamb bone with no meat
- ☐ 1 egg
- ☐ Romaine lettuce (optional)
- ☐ Red wine or grape juice
- ☐ 6 apples
- ☐ Walnut pieces
- ☐ Honey
- ☐ Cinnamon
- ☐ White candles
- ☐ Salt
- ☐ Napkins
- ☐ Candy or small toy
- ☐ Other items for the full meal



Prepare ahead of time:

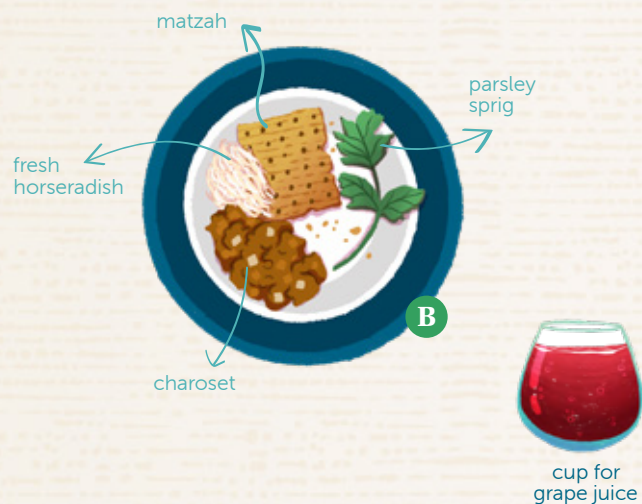
- Boil egg.
- Make charoset.
- Grate horseradish.
- Roast lamb bone with no meat until brown.
- Gather 1 pillow for each guest to recline.
- Prepare full Seder meal for step 11 (optional).



Place on the table:

- 3 squares of matzah (unleavened bread) placed in a white napkin near the leader
- small bowl of salt water
- large bowl of fresh water and hand towel
- pitcher of grape juice
- 2 white candles and matches
- 1 small reward, such as a small toy or piece of candy for each child

- A** — Assemble the Seder Plate with the following elements and place in the middle of the table near the leader:
- lamb bone
 - parsley sprigs
 - charoset (recipe on page 6)
 - boiled egg
 - horseradish
 - romaine lettuce (as an optional second bitter herb)



B For each place setting:

- 2 parsley sprigs
- 1 tablespoon of charoset
- 1 cup for grape juice
- ½ teaspoon fresh horseradish
- ¼ square matzah

C Elijah's place setting:

Same as the "individual" place setting with the exception that only one serving of wine or juice is poured and left next to the plate for the duration of the ceremony (see step 14). ➤

*When planning,
you can pass the leader
plate around the table as
the family partakes or you
can set each place setting
to have the elements on
individual plates.*

**BEGIN YOUR
SEDER MEAL AT
SUNDOWN THE
THURSDAY BEFORE
EASTER SUNDAY.**



Starting the Seder

As a family, remove all leaven from the house. The traditional Seder begins just after sundown as the mother lights the two candles and recites a blessing. Throughout the meal, the family maintains a posture of reclining, using pillows or cushions to lean against.



2

Washing of Hands

The leader dips his hands in a bowl of water and wipes his hands on the towel then passes them so each person can do the same.

Explain: "Jewish families remember how the priest washed in the basin before he could come before God on behalf of Israel (Exodus 30:17-21). That ritual pointed to Jesus, who washes away our guilty conscience so that we can draw near to God (Hebrews 10:22). This symbol of cleansing also provides insight concerning Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet at His Passover Seder (John 13:1-17)."



THE FIRST CUP The Cup of Sanctification

1

Each person fills his or her glass with wine or red juice.

Explain: "This is the cup of sanctification. The word *sanctification* means to be set apart for God. Jewish families remember that God performed miraculous deeds to free (set apart) Israel from Egypt. We remember that Christ set us apart from the world as a holy nation to himself (1 Peter 2:9)." Everyone drinks the first cup.

3

Dipping of the Parsley

Everyone dips parsley in the salt water, one sprig at a time.

Explain: "The first dip symbolizes the tears shed by the Israelites while they were enslaved; the second dip symbolizes the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea and the miraculous deliverance that came for the nation of Israel (Exodus 14:13-31). In the New Testament, the apostle Paul compares the crossing of the Red Sea to baptism, which symbolizes our redemption from sin (1 Corinthians 10:1-2)."



4

Breaking of the Middle Matzah

The leader takes the middle square from a stack of three matzah, breaks it in half, puts one half back in the middle of the stack and wraps the other half in a white napkin. Next the leader hides the wrapped matzah as the rest of the family closes their eyes.

Explain: “We can see the beautiful picture of the Trinity in the matzah—the top piece representing the Father; the bottom piece representing the Holy Spirit; and the middle piece representing Jesus, who was broken for us and then wrapped in linen to be hidden away (Mark 15:46).”

5

The Four Questions and the Passover Story

The leader and the youngest child in the family now ask and answer four important questions (at right) that explain why the Passover is celebrated.

The leader holds up the roasted lamb bone as he or she reads Exodus 12:1-13.

Explain: “At the Passover, a lamb was killed and its blood was spread on the doorposts of the house to protect the home from the 10th plague, the slaying of the firstborn. God said He would pass over the house when He saw the blood (Exodus 12:13). Each person had to eat of this sacrificial lamb—no one could eat for another person. We must each make a personal decision to spiritually apply the blood of Jesus to the doorposts of our heart so we never experience sin’s judgment (1 John 1:7-8).”

Introductory Question

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

Leader: Once we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but now we are free. We set aside this night each year to remember the great things God did for us.

Question 1

Child: On all other nights we eat either bread or matzah, but why, on this night, do we eat only matzah?

Leader: Matzah reminds us of two things—we were delivered from slavery in Egypt and have a new life.

Question 2

Child: On all other nights we eat whatever kind of vegetables we want, but why, on this night, do we eat only a bitter one?

Leader: We remember how bitter our ancestors’ slavery was while they lived in Egypt.

Question 3

Child: On all other nights we do not dip our vegetables even once, but why, on this night, do we dip twice?

Leader: We are reminded of tears and of a miraculous deliverance, as we just saw portrayed with the parsley.

Question 4

Child: On all other nights we eat either sitting up straight or reclining, but why, on this night, do we all recline?

Leader: Before, we were slaves, but now we are able to recline to express the rest we enjoy as free people. This pillow represents our freedom. ➤



THE SECOND CUP The Cup of Plagues

6

Everyone fills the cup a second time.

Explain: "This is the cup of plagues. God poured out 10 plagues on Egypt to show His strength and deliver the nation of Israel. Thank God that He delivered Israel and He delivers us."

Next, each person dips a spoon into his cup, and then makes 10 drops fall onto his plate as he says the name of each plague: blood, frogs, lice, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and slaying of the firstborn. Finally, each person drinks from his cup.



7

Eating of the Bitter Herbs

Everyone takes a piece of matzah, adds a small portion of horseradish and eats it.

Explain: "Eating bitter herbs (grated horseradish) symbolizes the bitterness of slavery the nation of Israel endured in Egypt. We also remember the bitterness of our slavery to sin (John 8:34)."



8

Eating of the Charoset

Each person enjoys a piece of matzah with a little charoset.

Explain: "This mixture symbolizes the mortar, the cement that holds bricks together, that the Israelites used while enslaved in Egypt. This sweet mixture represents bitter toil because even harsh labor is sweetened by the promise of redemption. We know that it was through Christ's bitter suffering that the sweetness of redemption also came to us (Hebrews 2:9-10)."



CHAROSET RECIPE

- 6 peeled, cored and diced apples
- ¼ cup grape juice
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- ½ cup honey
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Mix together and serve chilled.



9

Sharing of the Charoset



Everyone takes another piece of matzah with charoset and feeds it to the person on their right, saying, "Shalom, peace to you."

Explain: "When Jesus brought sweetness into our lives through His forgiveness, He never intended for us to keep it to ourselves. As we feed each other the charoset, we are showing that we want to pass this sweet message on to others (Matthew 28:19-20)."

11

The Eating of the Meal

Your family can now set the symbolic elements aside and eat a full meal such as roasted lamb or fish and potatoes, matzo ball soup and sponge cake, but nothing with leaven.

Read Exodus 12 to recreate the meal that took place at Passover.



10

Explanation of the Egg

The leader picks up the egg.

Explain: "The egg is a reminder that because the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, the Jews were no longer able to sacrifice. The egg is referred to as the *Hagigah*, the festive sacrifice that was made during temple times. We are also reminded that Jesus was the final sacrifice that took away sin once and for all (Hebrews 10:1-18)."



12

Finding and Eating of the Afikomen

The *Afikomen* ("ah-fee-koe'-men") is the piece of matzah that was hidden earlier. It's time to play a fun game as you send all the kids on a hunt to look for the hidden matzah.

Whoever finds the piece gets a token reward—a ransom is paid for the Afikomen. When found, the Afikomen is broken in pieces and distributed to everyone. Explain: "Jesus himself used matzah as a picture of His

sacrifice when He broke the bread during the Last Supper and said, 'This is my body, which is given for you' (Luke 22:29)." >





THE THIRD CUP The Cup of Redemption

13

Everyone fills their cup a third time.

Explain: "This is the cup of redemption. The word *redemption* suggests the idea of a price being paid to bring someone out of slavery. The sacrificial lamb offered on Passover paid the price to deliver the nation of Israel from the bondage of Egypt. We know that Jesus drank with His disciples and declared, 'Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins' (Matthew 26:27-28)." Drink the third cup in remembrance of Jesus.



THE FOURTH CUP The Cup of Praise

15

Everyone fills their cup a fourth time.

Explain: "This final cup is a reminder of God's promise to Israel (Exodus 6:7): 'I will take you to be my people.' The Jewish people look forward to a golden age when everyone will be at peace and will be reunited with God. In Jewish homes, it is traditional to close with 'Next Year in Jerusalem,' a further indication of their waiting for Messiah. As followers of Jesus, we, too, have been chosen by God to be His people, and we eagerly wait for the return of the Messiah so that we will be with Him forever (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17)." With the Passover ceremony finished, drink the fourth cup, proclaiming, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Stan Kellner was a Jewish follower of Jesus and shared these Passover truths for more than 30 years. He was the author of *Behold the Lamb: Messianic Passover Haggadah*.

14

Looking for Elijah

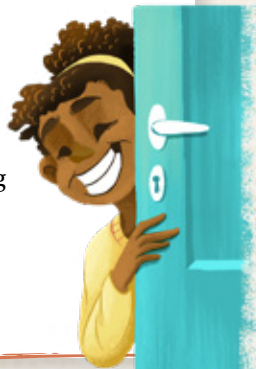
As the ceremony draws to a close, one of the children goes to the door and peeks her head out to see if Elijah is coming.

"Is Elijah there?" the leader asks.

"No, he is not here," the child says.

"Maybe next year Elijah will come!" the leader replies.

Explain: "According to Malachi 4:5-6, the Jewish people know that Elijah will prepare the way for the Messiah. When they ask if Elijah is coming, they are proclaiming that they are waiting for the Messiah. We recognize that John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord more than 2,000 years ago (Luke 1:13-17)."



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