



Passover Seder for Kids

This Seder is designed for children under twelve. Since the Passover Seder is a multi-sensory experience, feel free to experiment with the foods, the Seder order and the way you tell the story. We have included supplementary suggestions for making this meaningful and enjoyable for kids (and therefore their parents!) If you have readers, they can participate in reading the Exodus story and the questions and answers. It's helpful to read the story out of a children's Bible or storybook, since it is usually more concise, or to print off scripture passages in a contemporary translation.

Seder

+ Lighting of the Candles: The hostess/mother lights two white tapered candles; she prays for the Spirit of God to bless her family and be with them as they observe this Passover Seder.

+ Blessing of the Children: The host/father stands with the children and prays individually over each one, asking God's blessing on them.

The traditional prayer is from Numbers 6:24-26 "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you, the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

+ Story of the Passover: Read Exodus 12 (if you have readers, divide up the story into segments each can read). Or, read the story and then have children re-tell it.

+ The Afikomen: The host/father shows the children the three matzah crackers wrapped in cloth. He explains the matzah, the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate as they left Egypt. He breaks the middle matzah in half; wraps one half in another cloth that someone hides in the next room, the other half returns to the matzah bag.

+ The Four Questions:

Host/Father reads: "And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians'" (Ex. 12:26-27.)

Children ask the following questions:

Reader 1:

Question: Why on all other nights do we eat leavened bread, but on this night only unleavened?

Answer: When Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites leave Egypt, they had to leave in a big hurry! They didn't have time for their bread to "rise" (explain.)

Reader 2:

Question: Why on all other nights do we eat all kinds of vegetables but on this night only bitter ones?

Answer: The bad taste reminds us of how bad it felt to be slaves and how bad it feels to disobey God.



Ceremonial Foods

Reader 3:

Question: Why on all other nights do we not dip our foods even once, but on this night we dip twice?

Answer: The parsley dipped in salt water reminds us of the branches used to put the lamb's blood over the door and the tears the Israelites cried as they prayed to God for deliverance. The sweet haroset reminds us of the freedom that God gave His people and the sweetness of hope and happiness.

Reader 4:

Question: Why on all other nights do we eat sitting, but tonight we recline?

Answer: We are safe and do not have to leave our homes in a hurry to escape Pharaoh like the Israelites did. God has blessed us, we can relax and be safe in our homes as we eat this meal.

+ Pass the seder plate: Each person takes a small portion. Explain the meaning of the foods and have everyone taste at the same time.

Matzah – a flat bread, an unleavened cracker, the bread the Israelites ate

Grape Juice – represents blood (the Nile turning to blood) and all the plagues. Have children dip little finger in juice and put a dot on the edge of their plate for each plague: blood, frogs, gnats, flies, sickness, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death of firstborn.

Bitter Herb – represents the tears of slavery

Parsley – represents new life, hope

Salt Water – represents the Red Sea, which the Israelites would miraculously cross

Haroset – represents the sweetness of hope

Egg – represents new life (the egg isn't in the biblical story, but is traditional in Jewish homes)

Lamb bone – represents the Passover Lamb



Ceremonial Foods

Optional Plague Activity: In many Jewish homes the children have activities for each of the 10 plagues. If you are also conducting a Seder for the Adults one night this is a good way to include children before they have to retire for bed. There are Judaica Stores online where you can find “Bags of Plagues” these are fun for the kids too.

Plague	Activity(ies)
<i>Nile turns to blood</i>	<i>Take bottled water and have children drop red food coloring it</i>
<i>Frogs</i>	<i>In Judaica stores, they sell chocolate frogs. Pass these out to the children as a sweet snack.</i>
<i>Gnats and flies (counts as 2 plagues)</i>	<i>Have the children grind up pepper on their plates to represent gnats and flies</i>
<i>Sickness</i>	<i>They can draw a picture or walk around the table like they are sick. This usually looks like a zombie-walk.</i>
<i>Boils</i>	<i>Use red dot stickers and the kids can stick them on themselves and each other.</i>
<i>Hail</i>	<i>Indoor firecrackers are fun for this, but kind of messy. There are also bounce balls they can bounce around.</i>
<i>Locusts</i>	<i>The Jewish Bag of Plagues has a good locust in there that we use. If you have toy bugs, those will do fine as well.</i>
<i>Darkness</i>	<i>Blindfold the children and have them lead one another around the table. You can also turn off the lights for a time.</i>
<i>Death of the Firstborn</i>	<i>Use red streamers and tape the “blood of the lamb” over your door and lintels to demonstrate what Israel did to be saved from the final plague.</i>

+ The Lord’s Supper: Explain that the night before Jesus’ death, He celebrated the Passover with His disciples, eating the same kind of foods the children just ate. At that seder, Jesus began the Lord’s Supper (Communion), which was taking the matzah and juice of the seder and giving it additional meaning. The bread represents His body and the juice, His blood, given on the cross for us.



Ceremonial Foods

Reader 5/6: Read Luke 22:15-20 (depending on readers' age, it is helpful to print out children's translation for them). Emphasize that we "do this" to remember Jesus' death.

+The Afikomen: Remember the half of the matzah that was hidden? Now children go into the next room to look for it. The winner receives a small prize, a piece of candy or \$1. There is frequently some bargaining, the children asking for a little more than the host was planning!

+ Conclusion: The Passover is the story of not only Moses and the Israelites, but also of Jesus. We remember his suffering on the cross and that even though we are sinners, Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life for us. We are thankful!

Sing a praise song that children know, one that they choose. This is how Jesus and disciples concluded their Passover, "When they had sung a hymn, they went out..."