

# The Passover Experience For Christians: Creating a NEW Easter Tradition

An ABRIDGED Christian Seder Guide



Created, Compiled & Edited by: Melanie Leach & Susie Hawkins

***INSTRUCTIONS on How To Use This Seder Guide:*** *This ABRIDGED Seder Guide should be used as a tool to help inspire as well as enhance your Seder experience. By focusing and learning about Passover we see how Jesus fulfills this ancient celebrated feast.*

*As you gather your group together to participate in this Passover Feast be sure everyone has a copy of this abridged guide (starting on the next page). You will read through this document rotating from person to person. When you see Italics or all capital letters, these are instructions about a particular action (i.e. dipping the vegetable in salt water). The Non-Italicized words are to be read aloud.*

*Designate a Host & Hostess for your group, as each have specific tasks and help lead and guide the Seder. Keep in mind, Passover is, by tradition, an inclusive holiday and all are invited to participate – you don't have to know what to do or what comes next because the guide will simply walk you through it!*

***Items Needed for Your Seder:***

- *Candles (two or more)*
- *A platter to hold the Ceremony Foods*
- *A Seder Guide or Haggadah*
- *Napkin for the Matzah*
- *Wet Wipes for the washing of hands*
- *Seder Guides for each person*
- *Bibles (your favorite version is fine)*
- *\*Green herbs (parsley or lettuce)*
- *\*Bitter herb (horseradish)*
- *\*Haroseth (fruit & nut mixture)*
- *\*Lamb shank bone*
- *\*A dish filled with salt water for dipping*
- *\*Boiled Egg*
- *Matzah (unleavened bread)*
- *Wine or Grape Juice*

***Ceremony Foods Needed:***

*\* Items to be placed on a serving platter.*

*If you and your group prefer to say your own prayers instead of the written prayers, feel free to do so. This is your Seder, make it your own!*

*Now let's begin! If you are making copies, start with the next page.*

***Lighting of the Candles – the Hostess lights the candles to begin the Seder. While lighting the candles she says a prayer:***

HOSTESS:

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
Who has sanctified us by Your commandments  
And commanded us to kindle the festival lights.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe,  
Who sanctified us with His commandments,  
And commanded us to be a light to the nations  
And Who gave to us Jesus our Messiah the Light of the world.  
May our home be consecrated, O God,  
By the Light of Your countenance,  
Shining upon us in blessing and bringing us peace.

ALL: AMEN

*If you prefer to say your own prayer here, that's ok. The primary purpose here is to initiate the lighting of the candles, recognizing Jesus as the Light of the world, kicking off your Passover Seder and blessing your time together.*

*The Washing of Hands – Place wet naps near each place setting for the “washing” of hands. You may recall in the Last Supper when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples, it was probably at this point that He did that. Read this verse while “washing” hands.*

ALL “WASH” HANDS

PERSON TO THE LEFT OF THE HOSTESS READS, THEN ROTATE EVERY PARAGRAPH:

“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. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” *(John 13:5, 12-15)*

NEXT PERSON READS:

*Review the Special Order of the Seder – During the Seder we drink 4 cups of wine or grape juice. These cups have meaning to the Jewish people. The Seder is divided into 4 parts according to the 4 cups of wine/juice. The 4 Cups represent the following:*

1. Cup of Sanctification: “I will bring you out.” Readings are focused on God separating Israel as His chosen people. What a great parallel for us as Christians, we are called out – to be separate from the world around us.
2. Cup of Deliverance: “I will free you.” During this time in the ceremony the focus is on the plagues and telling the story of Israel’s deliverance. We all have a story too. Here, we remember and share the things He has done for us – He delivered us from the slavery of sin. After the second cup and readings, we will break for the Passover meal.
3. Cup of Redemption: “I will redeem you to myself”. The third cup reminds the children of Israel that they are His chosen, redeemed people by the blood of Lambs. This Cup of Redemption, taken after the meal, is where Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper. He changed the Passover Seder to something new. Here He instituted a new covenant. It was at this point in the Seder we are to remember His blood shed and His body broken for us when we eat the Bread and drink the Wine. He Redeemed us. In the Old Testament Passover He saved His People, Israel. In the Lord’s Supper Jesus redeems the World once and for all.
4. Cup of Restoration: “I will take you as my people and I will be your God.” This cup looks forward to the great feast we will one day share in Heaven with Jesus. He didn’t drink from this 4<sup>th</sup> cup that night. He’s waiting to do that with us at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The four cups represent the promises God made to the children of Israel while they were still in Egypt.

Exodus 6:5-7: “Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant. Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.’”

As Christians we are called out to be separate from the world around us. Jesus delivered us from the slavery of sin when He redeemed us by dying on the cross. We now look forward to His return as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He will take us as His own and we shall dwell with Him forever.

**The Cup of Sanctification – Pour the first glass of wine. I will bring you out.**

ALL:

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

*After this blessing, all drink the first cup.*

*Bless the Children: If children are present, this is the time parents place their hands on each of their children's heads and bless them. Again, feel free to say your own prayer over your children. If no children are present, skip to "Dip the Vegetable".*

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. Numbers 6:24-26

*Dip the Vegetable: The Seder Plate is passed to all so everyone can take a piece of parsley. All dip the parsley in the salt water, bless it and eat.*

The parsley (or green vegetable) symbolizes the growth and fertility of the Jewish people in Egypt. It also recalls their great suffering. We eat parsley dipped in salt water to remember the tears shed during the time of oppression and slavery in Egypt. For Christians, it represents new life, growing in His word and discipleship in Jesus.

All take the parsley, dip it in the salt-water, and say:

ALL:

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the soil.

*All eat the parsley.*

*The Matzah: The Host lifts the 3 Matzah, then takes the Middle Matzah and breaks it in two. He places the larger piece back with the others (still in the middle) and wraps the smaller piece in a cloth that is hidden for the children to find. If there are no children, just set this off to the side for later use.*

The Middle Matzah that is removed is called the Afikomen. We will discuss this more following the meal.

HOST: "This is the bread of our affliction our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are in want come and celebrate the Passover with us. May it be God's will to redeem us from all evil and from all slavery."

As Believers in Christ, we too celebrate this Seder. Jesus celebrated Passover all the years of His life including the night before he died. As we go through this Seder, consider your salvation and how the Lord, our God rescued us from the slavery of sin into eternal life and freedom in Jesus Christ.

*The 4 Questions: The youngest child/person at the table asks the questions below.*

“Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights we eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night why only unleavened bread?
2. On all other nights we eat vegetables and herbs of all kinds; why on this night do we eat only bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights we never think of dipping herbs in water or in anything else; why on this night do we dip the parsley in salt water and the bitter herbs in charoset?
4. On all other nights we eat either sitting upright or reclining; why on this night do we recline as we partake of the four cups of wine?

*Answering the Questions (All rotate answering the Questions):* “I’m glad you’ve asked these questions.

Exodus 12:26-27: 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.’” Then the people bowed down and worshiped.

1. Why do we eat only matzah? When Pharaoh released our forefathers from Egypt they were forced to leave in great haste. They had little time to bake their bread and could not wait for it to rise. The sun beat down on the dough as they carried it along, and baked it into unleavened bread called Matzah. For Christians when we share in the bread of Passover and The Lord’s Supper, we share in Christ who was broken on our behalf. He is the true Bread, the Bread of Life.
2. Why do we eat bitter herbs? So that we are reminded that our forefathers were slaves in Egypt and their lives were made very bitter. We remember the bitterness of sin and our lives before Jesus. We were slaves to our sin, but Jesus set us free.
3. Why do we dip the herbs tonight? The parsley reminds us of the hyssop used to place the blood of the lamb upon the doorposts and lintels. The salt water reminds us of the Red Sea and of the tears shed while they were in bondage. The sweet charoset reminds us that our forefathers were able to withstand bitter slavery because it was sweetened by the hope of freedom. For us, it reminds us that even in the toughest circumstances they are sweetened knowing we can trust and hope in the Lord our God.

4. Why do we recline at the table? It is because reclining was a sign of a free man long ago, and since our forefathers were freed on this night, we recline at the table. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

*The Telling:* (All get your Bibles and rotate reading the story of the Exodus alternating sections or paragraphs in the Bible. Exodus Chapter 12 is the primary chapter read. We suggest you use a newer translation like NIV, ESV or NLT.)

*For Discussion (Optional):* How has God called you to be separate from the world around you?

**The Second Cup, the Cup of Deliverance is poured after Exodus 12 is read: "I will rescue you." God rescued Israel with wondrous signs!**

*The Plagues:* Here, the plagues are recited. All dip their finger in the second cup of wine or juice and recite each of the plagues while dotting the edge of each plate.

ALL: Blood, Frogs, Gnats, Flies, Sickness, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Death of the Firstborn. (Your plate should have dots of wine/juice along the edge).

We do this because our joy is diminished because of the suffering of the Egyptians. We should never take joy in the sufferings of others; therefore our second cup isn't completely full.

*Pesach (Pay-sok) Passover/the Lamb):* The Host holds the shank bone and recites:

HOST: The Passover Sacrifice, the lamb, which our fathers ate, was as an offering unto God that spared them from the angel of death.

Ex 12:27: "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.'" Then the people bowed down and worshiped."

- *During this part of the Seder you can have the children or your group place red streamers around the doorposts as a visual to remember year after year.*

As believers we know Jesus shed His blood as a final sacrifice for us. John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29)

Jewish Believers say the Passover Feast was an enactment or a rehearsal each year so the Jewish people would know and recognize the Messiah when He came. Passover pointed to Jesus.

In Exodus 12, we read what was to happen in Jerusalem on Passover. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the Passover Lamb was led through the Sheep Gate for its journey to the temple. The lamb was then taken to the temple where it was kept four days under close observation. (Ex 12:3&6) According to Jewish tradition there were several tests performed on the lambs to ensure it's purity. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day, after it was declared pure, it was placed on the altar to remain there until 3p.m. for the sacrifice. Not one bone was to be broken.

The similarities between the Passover Lamb and Jesus, the Lamb of God, are hard to miss! Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (4 days before Passover). He was closely watched and questioned by the religious leaders during those four days. The priests tried to trap him that week while He taught in the temple, but they couldn't do it. They arrested him in the night and early Friday morning, Pilate declared Him INNOCENT – PURE. Jesus had done NOTHING deserving of death.

On Good Friday, because it was almost sundown – and Jewish Sabbath begins at sundown - they broke the legs of the other criminals on the cross but not Jesus's legs, because at 3p.m. – the same time of the Passover sacrifice - He gave up the ghost and died.

This is the story Jewish Believers and Christians tell at Passover. Jesus is the Passover Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world.

*All raise the SECOND cup: "the Cup of Deliverance", the Host/Hostess says a prayer of thanksgiving to God for delivering His people from the Egyptians and for saving us. Blessed are you, O God, for you have, in mercy supplied all our needs. You have given us Jesus, forgiveness for sin, life abundant and life everlasting. Hallelujah!*

With the final plague – the death of the firstborn, Israel was free! With Jesus's death on the cross, we are free.

We offer praise to God for His Deliverance! In typical Jewish homes, families sing a song called Dayenu (It would have been enough).

*For Discussion (Optional): How has Jesus set you free? What's your story? What miracles have you experienced in your own life? Those who want to share, may do so here.*

One of the key customs at Passover is to relate personally to the story as though you, yourself came up out of Egypt. As Christians, we can relate – we were slaves to our sins and in Jesus we are set FREE! As we drink the second cup, we thank God for delivering us with a mighty hand!



*All drink the second cup.*

*Now, the leader lifts up the top Matzah, the bread of affliction, and passes it to all. All should take 4 pieces of olive-sized matzah. The Host says a prayer over the bread and recites:*

*“Blessed are you , O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth”*

*This is the bread of affliction.*

*All eat one piece of Matzah together.*

*The leader lifts up the Bitter Herbs. Life was full of sorrow, persecution and suffering under the Egyptians. Our lives were bitter before we knew the salvation of the Lord.*

*All place take the second matzah and place the bitter herbs (horseradish) on it and eat.*

*With the remaining two pieces of matzah, make a “sandwich” by placing the charoset (apple, nut mixture) with the bitter herbs between the two pieces. Called the Hillel Sandwich.*

*The Hillel Sandwich reminds us that though our slavery (to sin) was indeed bitter, our redemption (in Jesus) is sweeter still. Let us combine the unleavened bread, the charoset and the bitter herbs and eat them together and remember.*

*All eat the Hallel sandwich.*

### ***This concludes the Ceremonial Meal.***

*The Passover Supper is now served. Set aside your Seder Guides and enjoy the meal. Host blesses the meal and the time together. Your key goal here is to spend time together focused on the true meaning of Easter – Jesus came and became our Passover Lamb.*

### ***The Third Cup is Poured, The Cup of Redemption: “I will redeem you”***

*By this time in the meal, the lost Afikomen should have been found and a reward given. It must be redeemed, just like WE must be redeemed for a cost.*

*This Afikomen is then broken and distributed to all.*

This is the broken piece of matzah that was hidden away earlier this evening. When this piece was broken at the start of our Seder, it was wrapped in a cloth (a shroud), hidden (buried) and finally for the Seder to end, it must be brought back, found and redeemed.

**Matthew 26:26:** While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

This is where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. After the Passover meal, he took this Afikomen to tell His disciples this was HIS body which is broken for you.

Then he took the Third Cup of Wine, which is served after the meal – the Cup of Redemption -- to institute the Lord's Supper.

**Matthew 26:27-29:** Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from 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 from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

The Cup of Redemption represents God's NEW Covenant, and the blood of Jesus shed for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus REDEEMED us! It's done!

*All eat the afikomen and drink the third cup of Redemption. If you have a table full of Christians, you may observe the Lord's Supper here.*

*For Discussion (Optional): Consider The Lord's Supper, what are your thoughts as you chew the bread and drink the wine/juice?*

**The Fourth Cup: The Cup of Restoration: I will take you as MY people and I will be your God.**

*Read Psalm 118 from your Bibles rotating sections*

During the Last Supper, Jesus did not drink the fourth cup (the cup of Restoration), but promised to do so with His disciples in the Kingdom to come. This cup looks forward to the day when Jesus comes back for His bride, the church for the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

Revelations 19:6-9, excerpts: "Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude... shouting: "Halleluah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad... For the wedding of the lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready" ... Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"

The Passover is central to the overarching story of God's Redemptive Plan for the world. It begins with Passover where He saved His people Israel, it moves to the Lord's Supper where Christ redeems sinners. Currently, we are between Feasts – the Lord's Supper and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

Revelations 21:1-4, excerpts: Then I saw a new Heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God."

The 4<sup>th</sup> Cup, The Cup of Restoration - "I will take you as my people and I will be your God."

This cup looks forward to the day when Jesus comes back to take us to be with Him and to restore His Kingdom.

*For Discussion (Optional): Jesus will drink this forth cup with us in Heaven. What do you think it will be like? Using your "holy imagination" consider experiencing The Marriage Supper of the Lamb, seeing and being with Jesus in the kingdom to come.*

### ***The End of the Seder***

*The Host says a final blessing:*

The Lord bless you and keep you,  
The Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you,  
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you  
peace!

Amen!

This concludes the Passover Seder.