



Sha'ar Communities

Choose Your Gate. Open Your Soul. Find Your Community

Preparing a Meaningful and Engaging Seder

Websites for adult and children's resources:

Union for Reform Judaism www.urj.org

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism www.uscj.org

www.myjewishlearning.org

www.chabad.org

Jewish Renewal www.kolaleph.org

Websites focused younger children:

www.Kveller.com

www.pjlibrary.org

(card games, plague figurines, quizzes, crafts, etc.)

Suggested Haggadot:

A Different Night, Noam Zion and David Dishon. Be sure to purchase the Leader's Guide as well.

A Night of Questions, Rabbis Joy Levitt and Michael Strassfeld

My People's Passover Haggadah, Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman

Wellsprings of Freedom, Rabbi Ron Aigen

A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices, Noam Zion

Other Resources:

Creating Lively Passover Seders, David Arnow

Songs to Add Pizzazz to Your Passover, Barbara Sarshik (download at

www.barbarasarshik.com or www.templerodefshalom.org)

Preparing a Meaningful and Engaging Seder

General Ideas:

- Comment/Question/Story cards for each guest
- Everything up to the meal to be done in Living Room where people can relax, pillows, decorations
- Appetizers throughout the Magid portion (see karpas) and snacks on the table
- Song parodies by Barbara Sarshik
- Costumes
- Contemporary readings
- Assign sections to guests to prepare beforehand
- Dedicate each of the 4 cups to a different Jewish or general charity that relieves oppression. Introduce at each cup.
- 6 degrees of sederation: collect random objects from around the house and distribute to guests and ask them during the retelling to make a connection between the object they were given and the story.

Candle-lighting:

- M'dor L'Dor – have the youngest and the oldest light together
- Shehecheyanu – Share a favorite Passover memory or how it is you've changed from last Passover to this.

Seder Plate:

- One plate for every few people
- Set them up together to review the items and their symbolism
- Add new items to provoke discussion: orange (women), artichoke (diversity), tomato or coffee beans (forced labor), symbol of broken communities (piece of mosque torched in Israel)
- Ask if anything is missing? What ought to be there and why?
- Intentionally leave one item out and see if people notice
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Kadesh:

- Ask why we have wine at every Jewish festival or Shabbat meal (Talmud: “wine goes in and truth comes out”)

Urchatz:

- What is it that we'd like to cleanse ourselves from this year? Wipe away?

Karpas:

- Like ancient symposium, eat variety of foods dipped in sauces or liquids

- Green celery for spring in saltwater: what do we most anticipate or get excited for during Spring?
- Other dipped foods: crudité in dips, french-fries in ketchup, bananas in chocolate... to arouse curiosity, prompt discussion, AND stave off hunger

Yachatz: (breaking middle matza)

- What in the world is broken that needs mending? Within us?
- Have kids hide the afikomen from adults

Magid: Expand on one of four main sections of the text while using other resources:

- **introductory questions/ma nishtana:** (avoid a simple recitation of the scripted queries – they’re only samples)
- Jeopardy version: supply short answers and see if someone can guess the questions
- Hand out sweets to show how initially Egypt was sweet but then turned bitter
- discuss the role of asking questions in learning and in social change; use quotes
- do something unexpected. Prompt questions.
- **retelling the story of the exodus and subsequent historical exoduses:**
- Costumes and skits
- Bibliodrama – choose a scene or a confrontation from the Exodus story and have people get into character
- Musical parodies
- Seders of the past: With Marranos, Righteous Gentiles, Soviet Jews in Israel, Ethiopian Jews, personal, memorable family Seders.
- **Bridging generations: delving into the 4 sons/children:**
- 4 children or 4 parts of ourselves?
- How to define wise/evil/simple/unknowing in the 21st century given the profile of the American Jewish community today?
- How to engage different kinds of Jews?
- How to parent different kinds of kids?
- Who’s not listed? Who’s not there? (assimilated/disenfranchised Jews? What about our non-Jewish children-in-law?)
- **Reflecting on the meaning of slavery and freedom:**
- Rabbinic and modern commentary on “My Father was a Wandering Aramean”
- Personal experiences of each?
- Modern expressions of slavery? Labor/sex trafficking/domestic slaves
- How to be a liberator? When to step back? As an individual? A government?
- Is freedom free? The price we pay for freedom? That others pay for our freedom?
- Freedom texts

- **Plagues:**
- Modern plagues?
- Plague charades
- Removing wine from our cups: a discussion on empathy
- **Miriam:** the role of Miriam in leading the people out of Egypt
- **Dayenu:** what are your most basic needs for freedom?
- **In every generation:** to see ourselves as having been there versus acting as if we were: what's the difference?
- **Second Cup:** talk about second fund/organization

Rachtza:

- Bring washing vessel to table and have everyone wash the hands of their neighbor
- Use a vessel with some family history and share the significance

Motzi Matza:

- Two blessings to reflect two symbolisms: bread of affliction and bread of freedom
- Discuss inherent ability within each of us to embrace change and transformation

Maror (& charoset):

- The “oys” and the “joys” of Jewish life. Why do we need both? What are yours?
- The face of bitterness: who can eat the most maror and make the funniest face?
- Have several different charoset recipes to sample and share their origins

Korech:

- Why a sandwich? The coupling of sweet and sour; light and heavy
- Iron chef Seder showdown: who can make the most creative sandwich from the Seder offerings

Shulchan Orech:

- Relax and enjoy a nice meal!

Tzafun:

- When the afikomen is found, after talking about gifts for one another, talk about making a donation to one of the funds highlighted during the evening
- We all have to seek out our own completion

Barech:

- 3rd cup: Discuss the third charity/fund
- pause and invite people to share what they're thankful for

“Pour Out Your Wrath”:

- the uses and misuses of revenge
- turning pain into action; vengeance into reconciliation
- alternative readings to discuss

Elijah and Miriam’s Cups:

- Everyone to fill Miriam’s cup with their own water and offer a kavana/intention; same with wine for Eliyahu’s cup
- The symbolism of water and of wine
- Elijah: who and why?
- Use vessels that have some significance or history
- Opening doors: why? Whom are you looking for? From whom are you awaiting news of redemption?
- Someone to dress up and sneak out to be on the other side of the door with something to say or share when they enter

Hallel:

- Choose one or two songs from the haggadah and add some selections from the songsheet of musical parodies
- 4th cup: 4th charity

Nirtzah:

- Sing songs about/from Israel
- Hatikvah
- Share memories of trips to Jerusalem or elsewhere in Israel
- How is Israel central to our freedom today – political? Spiritual?
- How is our freedom bound up with the freedom of others?
- “Next year in Jerusalem”: where do you want to be next year?