

Family Seder

Notice as you come to the table:

- sprigs of parsley
- charoseth
- horseradish
- matzo layered between clean napkins
- saltwater
- grape juice
- bowl of clean water and towel

1. The Cleaning of the Leaven: The father will break a small piece of matzo on the floor and sweep it up. Have a child toss it out to symbolize the cleanliness of the house.
2. The Lighting of the Candles: The mother then lights the candles and recites the following prayer: *"Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sanctifies us by your Word and your Spirit, who commands us to be a light to the nations, and who gave us Jesus our Messiah, the Light of the world."*
3. The Washing of the Hands: The father explains how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. In Jesus' time, this job would have been left to the lowest servant in the household. Using the bowl of clean water and the towel, the

father goes on to wash the hands of those gathered around the table in imitation of Jesus. He then finishes by washing his own hands.

4. The First Cup – the Cup of Sanctification: The father then lifts his cup (we use sparkling grape juice) and explains that sanctification means to be set apart and recalls how the Hebrews were physically freed by God to be his people and how Jesus fulfilled this covenant, freed us from sin, and sanctified us with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Everyone lifts their glass and says, "*Blessed is the Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine,*" and then drinks from his or her cup.
5. The Dipping of the Parsley: The father invites everyone to dip a sprig of parsley into a dish of saltwater and to eat a bite of it in order to remember the bitterness and tears of slavery and the water of the Red Sea in which Pharaoh's army was drowned.

All: "*Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.*" (all eat)

6. The Breaking of the Middle Matzo: The father takes the middle square of the matzos on the plate, breaks it in half, puts one half back and hides the other half anywhere he wants in

the house while everyone keeps their eyes closed. The children will look for it later. The father points out how Jesus, being the second in the trinity, was broken and hidden away, only to come back 3 days later.

7. The Four Questions: At this point, a child has a conversation around four questions which the child poses to the father:

Child: *"Why is this night different from other nights?"*

Father: *"Once the Jews were slaves in Egypt, but now they are free. On this night, Jesus gave us his body and blood as a gift so that we would be free from our sins and be able to live as sons and daughters of God."*

Child: *"On other nights we eat regular bread. On this night, why do we eat only matzo?"*

Father: *"Matzo reminds us that when the Hebrews left Egypt, they were in such a hurry that they didn't have time to let their dough rise. Instead, they baked it flat."*

Child: *"On other nights we eat all kinds of vegetables. On this night, why do we eat only bitter ones?"*

Father: *"The bitterness of the parsley reminds us of the bitterness of both physical and spiritual slavery."*

Child: *"On all nights we don't dip our vegetables even once. On this night, why do we dip them?"*

Father: *"The saltwater reminds us of the tears of slavery and of our deliverance."*

8. The Story of Passover: The father tells the story of Passover. (Read from "The Jesus Storybook Bible" pages 84-91)

9. Eating the Bitter Herbs and the Charoseth: Each person places horseradish on a matzo and eats it, symbolizing the mortar that was used with the bricks during the time of slavery.

10. The Second Cup – The Cup of Plagues – And the Lamb Bone:

Father *"Moses went to Pharaoh with God's command, 'Let my people go!' But God warned Moses that Pharaoh wouldn't easily agree. The Lord sent plagues: blood in their water, frogs everywhere, gnats, wild animals, diseases in their cattle, boils, hail, locusts everywhere, and darkness throughout the land. But with each plague, Pharaoh refused and made his heart hard against God. With the tenth and most awful plague – the death of all the firstborn of Egypt – God broke through Pharaoh's hard heart. We fill our cups a second time now. A full cup is a sign of joy and we're certainly filled with joy that*

God has set us free – but we should also remember how much that freedom cost. Let's dip our fingers in our glass and drip out one drop on our napkins for each plague, saying the plague as we drip."

All repeat after father: *"Blood, frogs, gnats, wild beasts, disease to livestock, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death of firstborn."*

Father: *"Many lives were lost to save our people from slavery in Egypt, but an even greater price was paid to save us from slavery to sin: the death of Jesus, God's only Son. This lamb bone stands for the lamb whose blood on the Israelite houses was a sign to God. God told Moses, 'The lamb must be perfect' and when it is killed, 'the people are to mark their door frames with some of the blood. They are to eat the meat that night, along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread. Eat quickly, with your coat ready, your shoes on your feet, and your walking stick in your hand. It is the Lord's Passover. The blood will show your obedience; when I see the blood, I will pass over you and no plague will touch you when I punish Egypt.' (Exodus 12:3-13) We are reminded by Moses that it is the Lord Himself who redeemed with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with miraculous signs and wonders."*

Drink the second cup, saying, *"Blessed is the Lord our God,*

King of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine."

11. Eating the Regular Meal: At this point, the ceremony pauses so that a favorite meal of ordinary foods may be eaten.

12. Eating of the Afikomen: This Greek word loosely translated means, "after dinner" or "dessert." At the end of the regular meal, the children then search for the hidden Afikomen.

Whoever finds it gets a small reward, like a coin or piece of candy. The father points out that Jesus is like our dessert. He is the best part of the plan, the part the Israelites had been waiting for! He then divides the matzo – called here the afikomen – into pieces and distributes it to everyone.

Father: *"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19)*

All: *"Blessed is the Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. (all eat)*

13. The Third Cup – The Cup of Redemption:

Father: *"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." (Luke 22:20) This third cup is called the cup of redemption because we were bought out of slavery at a great price – the blood of Our Lord and Savior, who will one*

day return in power and glory.

All: *"Blessed is the Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. (all drink)*

14. Looking out for Jesus and the Final Cup: Finally, the children look out the door to see if there is any sign of Jesus' return. The father asks if He is here. The children respond that there is no sign of Him. The father responds, "Maybe next year." A final cup is raised and a prayer said praising God, thanking Him for His goodness and asking that Jesus may soon return.

All: *"Blessed is the Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has created the fruit of the vine. (all drink)*

Everyone responds: *"Come Lord Jesus!"*