

HAGGADAH

The Haggadah (Hebrew: הגדה) sets out the order of the Passover Seder. Haggadah, meaning "telling," is a fulfillment of the scriptural commandment to each Jew to "tell your son" about the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt, as described in the book of Exodus in the Torah.

- *The Passover ceremony is a meaningful event for a Life Group to share together because the intimate atmosphere of a small group meeting in a home much more closely resembles the atmosphere in which Passover has always been observed - with the family or with a small gathering of significant people in your life as Jesus did when he celebrated Passover with his disciples in the upper room.*
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Passover Symbols:

- The Bitter Herbs- Represents the bitterness of Egyptian slavery
- The Unleavened Bread- Represents the haste with which the Israelites left Egypt (they could not wait for their bread to rise).
- The Charoses (a sweet mixture of chopped apples, nuts, wine, and cinnamon)- Represents the mortar used by the Israelites slaves to make bricks for the Pharaoh.
- The Karpas (greens)- Dipped in salt water, they represent the lives of the Israelite slaves immersed in tears.
- The Ceremonial Cups- Represents the four phrases in Exodus 6:6-7
 - “I will bring you out”
 - “I will deliver you”
 - “I will redeem you”
 - “I will take you to me for a people”

Preparation:

At each place setting, provide the following:

- White or light colored plate for each person
- Glass for wine
- Napkin, fork, spoon, and knife
- Parsley on Passover serving plate (2 sprigs)
- Charoseth in serving bowl (1 tablespoon)
 - Chopped apples, nuts, honey, cinnamon, and a touch of grape juice mixed to your liking prepared beforehand.
- Grape Juice in pitcher(s) (4 servings- 3 ounces each)
- Saltwater in bowls (1 bowl per 4-5 people)
- Horseradish in small serving bowl (1/2 teaspoon and as ‘biting’ as possible)
- Matzo on Passover serving plate (plain- ¼ piece per person)
- Bowl of water and hand towels (one bowl for every 4-5 people)

At the leader's place setting also provide:

- 1 bowl of saltwater
- 1 lamb bone on Passover serving plate (meatless and oven roasted until shell is browned- *or you can use something to symbolize the lamb bone such as a dog's leather chew bone from a pet store.*)
- Whole squares of matzo (3-6 pieces) and 4 napkins on Passover serving plate (the matzos are stacked between the napkins on a plate)
- 1 roasted egg on Passover serving plate (boil for 10 minutes and then place it under oven broiler until shell is browned)
- 2 white candlesticks in the center of the table

An extra setting for 'Elijah':

- Same as the 'per person' setting with the exception that only one glass of juice (do not pour until the 4th cup) is poured and left next to the plate. This symbolizes the future appearance of Elijah, who will signify the coming of the Messiah.

Assign people to roles:

- Mother
- Father
- Youngest
- First
- Second
- Third
- Fourth



The Passover Seder:

- *Allow at least 2 hours for the Seder. If your group cannot dedicate 2 hours then plan on doing the first half for 1 hour and then the following week you can complete the ceremony. If you break the ceremony up into parts prepare only those items that will be used in the segment you will complete.*

All have taken their places.

The first cup of wine is filled.

Mother lights the candles.

Mother: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, who has given us Your commandments and instructed us to kindle the holiday candles.

Father: Together with our fellow Jews everywhere, we celebrate tonight the story of the Jewish people.

In this our great yearly feast of freedom, we give thanks to the great Eternal. We give thanks for the event that became the great symbol of freedom, the Exodus from Egypt.

Father raises his wine glass.

Father: We shall drink the first of the four cups of the Passover Seder to freedom. We begin with the prayer, the “Kiddush.”

Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, who selected us from among all people, and raised us among all tongues, and gave us Thy commandments. Lovingly Thou hast given us, Lord our God, times for joy, seasons for celebration, and this feast of Matzah for the anniversary of our becoming free, a remembrance of our release from Egypt.

Before each of the four cups, we shall say the blessing for wine.

All raise their wine cups.

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Father: Now we say the blessing that reminds us of the continuous wonder of being alive.

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, who has given us life, and kept us alive, and brought us to this moment.

All drink the first cup. (*All wine must be emptied*)

- *First cup symbolizes “I will bring you out” from the 4 phases of Exodus 6:6-7.*
- *The first cup is most likely what Luke references in Luke 22:17-18 explaining why in the book of Luke we see cup-bread-cup instead of bread and then cup as is seen in the other accounts of The Last Supper.*

Father: Even before the Exodus from Egypt, our people each spring celebrated creation and the mystery of life. We remind ourselves that both the tender greens of the earth and the salts of the sea were joined together to sustain life. We remind ourselves that in slavery the salty tears released our strength to survive.

Father distributes the portions of greens, and each person dips his greens in salt water, All recite the blessing following.

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the earth.

All eat Karpas. (Green vegetables)

Father uncovers the ceremonial matzoth and holds it up.

Father: Now we repeat the call to Passover.

All: This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungered, come and eat! Whoever is in need, come and celebrate the Passover.

Now here, next year in the land of Israel.

Now enslaved, next year sons of freedom.

Father sets down the matzah plate. The wine glasses are filled for the second cup.

Father: Even the youngest among us notices this flat bread among the symbols of the Seder. It is unleavened bread, called matzah. Now let the youngest ask the Four Questions, about the differences that mark this night.

Youngest: What makes this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights we may eat bread or matzah, but on this night only matzah.
2. On all other nights we eat all kinds of greens, but on this night only bitter herbs.
3. On all other nights we do not dip even once, but on this night we dip twice.
4. On all other nights we eat sitting or reclining, but on this night we all recline.

Father: Because we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.

All: Because, we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Eternal, our God brought us forth from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Mother: If the Holy One, Blessed be He, had not brought forth our ancestors from Egypt, then we, and our children, and our children's children might still be enslaved in Egypt.

Father indicates, in turn, those who give the four answers.

First: You ask, why on this night do we eat only matzoth?

We are slaves. We were slaves in the land of Egypt. Our ancestors in their flight from the house of bondage in Egypt did not have time to let the dough rise, so they baked flat bread, called matzah. The tells us, “They were thrust out of Egypt and could not tarry, neither had they time to prepare themselves much food.” In memory of this, we eat only matzoth on Passover.

Second: Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs?

We were slaves. We eat bitter herbs because the Egyptians made bitter the lives of our forefathers. The Bible tells us “They made their lives bitter with hard work in mortar and brick, and in all manner of work in the fields, and all the slavery was terribly severe.”

Third: Why do we dip twice?

We were slaves. The first time we dipped our greens to taste the brine of enslavement. But also, to remind ourselves of all life and growth, of earth and sea.

The second time we shall dip in charoset, to remind ourselves of the mortar that our forefathers mixed as slaves to the Pharohs in Egypt. But our charoset is a mixture of sweet apples, nuts, raisins, and wine, to show us that in their bitter time of slavery our forefathers hoped for the sweet delights of freedom.

Fourth: Why do we recline at ease?

We were slaves. We recline at ease as free people to remind ourselves that like our ancestors we can overcome slavery and bondage.

Father holds up the egg from the Passover plate.

Father: After the escape from Egypt the Israelites came into their promised land, and built their Temple in Jerusalem. To the Temple they brought festival offerings, in thanksgiving for the crops of their fields and flocks. This egg recalls such offerings. The egg is the symbol of life, and of growth.

Father holds up the shank bone.

Father: This shank bone is the reminder of the Passover lamb, of the Divine instruction to the Israelites in Egypt to sacrifice a lamb and mark their doorposts with its blood. This was a sign for the Eternal to pass over their houses and strike only Egyptians, to cause them to set free their slaves.

Father: And as it is written, “We cried unto the Lord the God of our Fathers and the Lord heard our voice and saw our pain and our work and our hardship.”

All: And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with great terror and with signs and wonders.

Father: Plague after plague was sent upon the Egyptians. In compassion and sorrow over the evil and suffering that exists in the world, our ancestors, in numbering the plagues, poured away with each word a drop of their wine of rejoicing. We may now recall the Ten Plagues.

Each pours a drop of wine as each plague is recalled. Dip finger into wine, drop a drop on plate for each plague.

Father: Blood
 Frogs
 Gnats
 Flies
 Cattle Disease
 Boils
 Hail
 Locusts
 Darkness
 Striking the first born

Father: When even the Pharaoh's own first born son was killed in the final plague, Pharaoh arose in the night and called for Moses and commanded him, "Get you forth from among my people!" In great haste the children of Israel departed, as it is written, "They baked their bread in haste for they could not tarry." When they came to the Red Sea, Pharaoh again broke his word, for his chariots chased them.

First: The Lord caused the waters to be divided and the Israelites passed over safely; then the waters closed on the Egyptians, with their chariots of war. Thus the children of Israel became free.

All: Let us remember and never forget.

Slaves were we to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Eternal, our God, brought us out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

If the Holy One, Blessed be He, had not brought forth our ancestors from Egypt, then we, and our children, and our children's children might still be enslaved in Egypt.

All raise their wine cups.

Father: This is the promise that has helped our ancestors and ourselves.

All: For not only one has risen against us to destroy us, but in every generation some have risen up against us to wipe us out. But the Holy One Blessed be He, is our deliverer out of their hands.

Father: Let us drink the second cup.

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

All drink the second cup.

- *Second cup symbolizes “I will deliver you” from the 4 phases of Exodus 6:6-7.*

All wash hands (Pass bowl of water and towel, each helps the other)

Father: We are now coming to the Seder meal. As we ordinarily begin with the breaking of the bread, we begin tonight with the breaking of matzah.

Father breaks off, for each, one quarter of a whole piece of the ceremonial matzah. (Father passes out bread)

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, who brought forth bread from the earth.

Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us through Thy commandments and instructed us to eat unleavened bread.

All eat part of their portion of the ceremonial matzah, representing the paschal lamb, saving a piece for the Hillel sandwich to come.

- *See Luke 22:19, I Corinthians 23-24*

Father: Now each will take a bit of the bitter herb and dip it in charoset to fulfill the commandment of this night to eat the bitter herb. Thus, we dip our food the second time.

If the horseradish is in slices, place a bit of charoset on a slice.

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us through Thy commandments and instructed us to eat bitter herbs.

All eat the matzah with bitter herbs and charoset.

The ceremonial Passover plate is removed.

The meal is served (Eat the festive meal)

- *The ceremony can continue without the meal recognizing this is the point at which a full meal is eaten during the ceremony –or– a full meal can be shared together at this point.*
- *See Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22*

At the end of the meal, the third cup is filled.

Father: We have eaten our Passover meal as free men. Let us give thanks to the source of all life and freedom. We will say grace.

All: Blessed is the Eternal through whose blessings we have been fed and through whose love we are given life.

Father: We drink the third cup!

All: Blessed art Thou, Eternal, our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Each drinks his third cup.

- *Third cup symbolizes “I will redeem you” from the 4 phases of Exodus 6:6-7.*
- *The third cup is what Jesus drank with His disciples as a symbol of His blood (See Matthew 26:28, Luke 22:20, I Corinthians 11:25-26).*
- *For 1500 years the third cup symbolized redemption- at this point in the Passover feast Jesus claimed himself as the redeemer!*

The wine is poured for the fourth cup.

The cup of Elijah is filled.

Father: We are told that Elijah the Prophet visits every house where a Seder is being held.

He selects someone to open the door.

Father: Let us open the door for Elijah, and also as a symbol of hospitality and friendliness, as a sign that none is shut off from his fellow man.

The door has been opened.

Father indicates the cup of Elijah.

Father: This is the cup of Elijah the Prophet, for our legends tell us that Elijah enters every house where a Seder is taking place. Why Elijah? Of all our Biblical Prophets, it is Elijah who became the kind helper between Heaven and Earth. The Bible stories tell us of a fiery chariot sent to carry him up to Heaven. And from Heaven, he was to return to earth to help prepare man for the coming of the Messiah.

The door is closed.

Father: Let us drink the fourth cup to the freedom of all!

All: Blessed are Thou, Eternal our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.

All drink the fourth cup.

- *Fourth cup symbolizes "I will take you to me for a people" from the 4 phases of Exodus 6:6-7.*

All: Have compassion on us, O Eternal our God, and on Thy people Israel, on Jerusalem Thy City, on Zion the tabernacle of Thy glory. Bring peace and freedom to every people. For Thou, O Eternal, art good and helpful to all.

Father: Our Passover is no accomplished. May we celebrate Passover next year in a world of peace, a world of freedom.

All: Amen! Next year in Jerusalem!
