



PASSOVER SEDER INSTRUCTIONS

By Daryl Fenton, Executive Director

Instructions for a full Messianic Passover Seder Meal conducted at home

1. First, a few terms:
 - a. *Pesach*/Passover...the teaching in Exodus about the passing over of the Jewish people by the angel of death in Egypt. It is a traditional, biblically ordained event to remember the redemption of the Jewish people out of Egypt.
 - b. Seder...the liturgy and meal, which taken together are the order of service for the celebration.
 - c. Haggadah...the booklet that contains the service which the leader and family use to read and remember the story.
 - d. Messianic Passover...the traditional Jewish Seder with additions that remember the redemption from sin by Jesus of those who follow him.
2. A Special Meal: Think of this as a special meal (on par with Thanksgiving). Traditionally everyone would dress in their best. The table would be set with the best china, silver, candlesticks, the Seder plate (see below), and favorite foods the family has come to love over the holidays. This physical sense of 'specialness' adds to the special nature of the remembrance.
3. The Seder: Allow a minimum of 1½ hours, including the meal, but as you become more comfortable celebrating it, you will probably take more time. It is a celebration and remembrance that is to be fun, child-friendly, as well as having spiritual meaning.
4. The Leader: The father or grandfather of the family should lead the Seder, although if that is not possible, someone can stand in. While it is a family meal, friends are usually invited as well.
5. Singing: Traditional Passover songs are part of the evening. It is best if you have a musician who can lead them. If not, pretend it is someone's birthday. The traditional songs can all be found online.
6. The meal: It is preferable to serve the meal in the context of the Seder itself, approximately an hour after the beginning of the service. It is helpful to advise people (that dinner is delayed), and to serve appetizers before the table service begins. This is especially true when small children are attending.
7. Children: Even small children are very welcome at the Seder; indeed, some things are especially geared for them. This is a family gathering, not a performance. In fact, one purpose of the service is to be sure that children know and remember what The Lord has done for the Jewish people (and for all who follow his Messiah).

8. Food guidelines: It is best if no yeast is used in any dish for the meal. [**Note:** Not essential for Gentile-only congregations; but if Jewish guests are invited, then to have leaven present could be very offensive.] Pork and shellfish should also be avoided. Menus and recipes for typical Jewish dishes are available on our website.
9. Red wine is preferable (regular or unfermented for Passover), but grape juice may be served for teetotalers. Typical Passover wine is a sweet red variety, of which several are now available. If one wishes to be really authentic, ‘Kosher for Passover’ varieties are also available.
10. Haggadah: Everyone will need a printed “Haggadah” service. CMJ has provided a printable PDF for you to download. (See Resource list below.)

People:

1. Mom, Grandmother or “Mother figure”: Sitting at the foot of the table, she lights the candles and recites the opening blessing over them. The blessing is in the Haggadah. Ideally it is Hebrew and then repeated in English. (An English transliterated version of the Hebrew is attached in most Haggadahs.)
2. A small child: This child should be old enough to read the “Four Questions” in English. They are part of the Haggadah, but it doesn’t hurt to rehearse them ahead. Alternatively, each question could be read by a different child. If no children are present, a little humor can be added by finding the youngest person at the table.
3. Father, Grandfather, or “Father figure”: Leads the service from the head of the table. The first time most leaders stick pretty closely to the printed text. After their confidence grows, they feel free to personalize it for the family. This is perfectly fine. In fact, there are lots of online resources, such as extra Passover stories that can be woven into the service. It is also possible to add some extra teaching from the Bible.

Ceremonial Food and Other Items:

1. Candles: There must be at least two candles, preferably in nice candlesticks on the table, placed in front of “Mother.” She will also need a scarf to wear while lighting the candles before she offers the opening blessing. Other candles (preferably white) can be on the table.
2. Seder Plate (*Ka’arah*): Our family has a Seder plate that will be passed down in our family. You can find them online or in Judaica stores. The range in price and ornate design is wide. The plate has places (or small dishes) for each of the “elements” eaten in the service portion of the evening to illustrate and remember what The Lord did in Egypt.



An Israeli Seder Plate

[Image: Dawn Kepler, buildingjewishbridges.org]

3. A Small Plate: For each participant to use during the service.
4. Unleavened Bread (Matzah) and a *Matzah Tashen*: You can buy matzah in local stores or order online. Near the head of the table should be a *Matzah Tashen* or a napkin large enough to hold three matzos separated by fabric. These three matzos are central to the service. If your table is large, other pieces of matzo can be served from a plate elsewhere on the table.
5. Wine (or grape juice): Enough is required for each person to take four sips, including two after the meal. Other beverages can be served for the meal, but if the wine is served for the meal as well as the service, then more wine will be required. Generally, a sweet red wine is used. Unfermented wines are made for Passover (e.g. *Mogen David*). These are generally almost non-alcoholic. You could have both wine and grape juice on each table if preferred. If you really want to feel authentic, look for a “Kosher for Passover” label. And by the way, do not have too high of expectations for the quality of the wine.
6. Wine glasses: A regular wineglass should be at each place. For small children, a small glass can be substituted.
7. A bowl of water and a towel at each table for individual hand washing. These may be placed at a side table for large gatherings. In a family setting it is nice to pass the bowl (not too large) and towel around. One simply rinses one’s hands in the water and dries them with the white cloth napkin that is also used (or passed around the table).
8. The elements on the Seder plate:
 - a. Salt Water: Participants will be dipping parsley and some egg into the salt water.



- b. Green Vegetable (*Karpas*): Parsley or lettuce. Enough for each person to have a couple pieces.
 - c. Bitter Herbs (*Maror*):
 - a) Horseradish: Preferably the actual horseradish root grated (!), but bottled horseradish sauce is fine (as long as it is not too smooth and bland – it is meant to clear the nasal passages!).
 - b) Lettuce: Endive or kale.
 - d. Charoset (Pronounced: *Ch* (as if clearing the throat)-*arro-set*): This mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon, red wine or grape juice, and honey is for the Seder plate in its little cup, but should also be available from bowls around the table. The charoset is spread on a small piece of Matzo and consumed as part of the service, but it is also typically served as a side dish during the meal. See the recipes on our website, or look for Passover recipes online. Most families have their own favorite recipe for this dish.
 - e. Hard-boiled Eggs: A roasted egg is one of the elements of the Seder plate, but participants also begin the meal with at least part of an egg dipped in the salt water. It would be fine to cut them up, giving a quarter of an egg to each participant.
 - f. Lamb Shank Bone: This is the shank bone of a lamb (if you can get one from your butcher) or a chicken leg or neck bone. Clean it well and roast it until a deep brown color. It should not be broken.
9. **Elijah's place**: A separate, unused, complete place setting should be set at the table for Elijah. The purpose of the place is explained in the Seder service booklet. You can buy a special cup for this place.

Well, those are most of the background details that should make preparation easier. All of us here at CMJ hope that your experience of celebrating the Passover will be a joy for you, your friends, and family as well as another step in your journey following Yeshua the Messiah.

SPECIAL READINGS

BLESSING OVER THE LIGHTS

Barukh atah adonai eloheynu melekh ha'olam asher kidshanu bidevaro uvishmo anakhnu madlikim haneyrot shel yom tov.

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, who has set us apart by His Word, and in whose Name we light the festival lights.

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

Why is this night different from all other nights?

1. On all other nights, we eat either leavened bread or unleavened; on this night, why only unleavened?
2. On all other nights, we eat herbs or any kind; on this night, why only bitter herbs?
3. On all other nights, we do not dip our herbs even once; on this night, why do we dip them twice?
4. On all other nights, we eat our meals in any manner; on this night, why do we sit around the table together in a reclining position?