

What is the Passover Meal (Seder)?



Seder is the traditional **Passover** Week Dinner celebrated by the Hebrews since the Exodus, when following the ten plagues, Moses led the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt on their journey to the promised land. It is the Hebrew thanksgiving to God for deliverance and redemption.

It commemorates the protection of God as the Angel of Death passed over every family protected by the Blood of the Paschal Lamb.

It is celebrated in the family setting and so Jewish children were first introduced to the Book of Exodus and the adults gained further insight. We refer to this kind of instruction as multimedia, as all five senses are involved to make this bible study an unforgettable event.

The Last Supper, was a **Seder** hosted by Jesus for His disciples. Jesus chose to announce The New Covenant and it was at this **Seder** that Jesus asked all of us to **do this in remembrance of Him**. So the links with deliverance, sacrifice, covenant the entire ceremony will bring us a profound sense of meaning.

Seder was the basis of the early Church's **Lord's Day** worship service. It was referred to as the **Agape Feast** and **Eucharist**. **Agape** is the Greek word for Christian love, that love we have for one another. **Eucharist** is a transliteration of the Greek word which means to give thanks.

The Agape Feast and **The Eucharist** were separated after 300 AD. After this was done, there were many attempts to outlaw **The Agape Feast** altogether. Five Church Councils between AD 320 and AD 816 that addressed this issue were never completely successful in eliminating the **Agape**. It continues to this day in the Greek Church as well as in some Protestant denominations.

The **Seder** dinner is as Christian as it is Jewish. It is the focal point where we bring together our common heritage. We, as Christians, are heirs of Abraham through faith and children of God through Christ.



A Celebration of the Passover

The Seder Plate

The leader introduces the Passover and explains the items on the Seder Plate.

- 1 **The egg**, a symbol of new birth, reminds us of the festive offerings made at the Temple in Jerusalem. As Christians it reminds us of our new birth into Christ. *John 3:3*
- 2 **The roasted bone** reminds us of the sacrifice of the lamb whose blood ensured the Destroyer spared the Israelites from the final and terrible plague on Egypt's firstborn. As Christians it reminds us of the Lamb of God who was killed for the sins of the world. *Exodus 12:21ff*
- 3 **The green vegetables** dipped in salt water remind us of the tears of the slaves. As Christians we remember the tears Jesus shed in the garden of Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed. *Matthew 26:37ff*
- 4 **Bitter herbs** remind us of the bitterness and suffering of the Jews enslaved in Egypt. As Christians we are reminded of the suffering Jesus Christ bore for us. *1 Peter 2:24*
- 5 **Cheroseh** reminds us of the mortar with which the slaves built Egyptian storehouses. As Christians we remember that we are the living stones being built into a spiritual house. *1 Peter 2:4*

The Invitation

Leader: *(Lifting the Seder plate and Matzohs)*

This is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come in and eat; let all who are in need join us as we celebrate this Passover feast.

Breaking the Matzoh

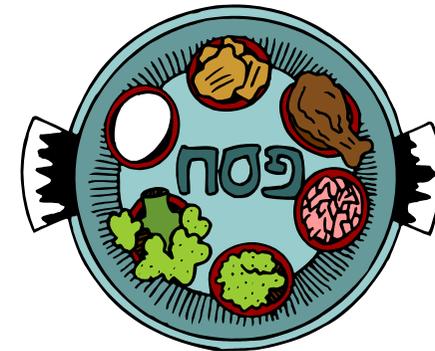
The Leader breaks the middle Matzoh in two. Half is returned to the napkin and the other half is hidden for the children to hunt for later. This is the Afikomen

The Conclusion

We say together

**We thank you, Lord, for leading us
from slavery to freedom,
from sin to salvation
from sorrow to joy,
from death to life.**

**As we have celebrated our Passover together
so may we celebrate as often as we eat and drink it
until we celebrate it together in heaven,
our new Jerusalem. Amen**



Jesus put this song into our hearts (x2)
it's a song of joy no one can take away.
Jesus put this song into our hearts.

Jesus taught us how to live in harmony, (x2)
diff'rent faces, diff'rent races, he made us one.
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony.

Jesus turned our sorrow into dancing, (x2)
changed our tears of sadness into rivers of joy.
Jesus turned our sorrow into a dance.

The Festival Meal is served

During the meal we share

The Third Cup—Redemption

Leader: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine, who redeemed us with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgement.
All drink leaning to the left

At the end of the meal the children hunt for the missing piece of Matzo (the Afikomen). The finder receives a prize. Aphikomenos is Greek for 'The one who comes.' Originally it was a reminder that the Messiah was still to come. As Christians we too await the return of Christ.

The Fourth Cup—Blessing

Leader: Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, creator of the fruit of the vine, who has blessed us and made us a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to you that we might declare our praises to you, who called us out of darkness into your wonderful light.

In the same way after supper, Jesus took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'

The Leader pours wine for all. We say together:

**Blessed is he whose bounty we have eaten
and through whose goodness we live.**

We all drink.

Lighting the Candles

A female member of the family lights the candles with these words:

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe
And blessed is Jesus, the Light of the World
A light no darkness can quench

The light is passed and candles are lit along the tables

The First Cup—Sanctification

The leader pours out wine for each member with these words:

Blessed are you, O God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine. Blessed are you, O Christ, who poured out your blood for us.
All drink (leaning to the left as a reminder that the meal was eaten reclining in tents as they journeyed)

Dipping the Green Vegetables

All take a portion of the green vegetable and dip it in the salt water.

Leader: The green vegetables symbolise the coming of Spring and the rebirth of hope. We dip them in salt water remembering the bitter tears shed by our ancestors as slaves in Egypt. As Christians we recall the tears shed by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he was betrayed.

The Second Cup—Deliverance

The leader introduces a short silence for confession, and then pours more wine saying:

Blessed are you, O God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine who has delivered us from slavery to sin.
All drink leaning to the left

Washing the Hands

The leader washes their hands

The Questions

A child asks these four questions

On all other nights, we eat either bread or matzoh.
Why on this night, only matzoh?

On all other nights, we eat any herbs we wish.
Why on this night, only bitter herbs?

On all other nights we need not dip any foods into another
even once. Why on this night do we dip twice?

On all other nights, we eat either sitting upright or leaning.
Why do we all lean tonight?

Telling our Story

Leader: This night is indeed different from all other nights, for on this night we act out one of the great dramas of our history, the Exodus from Egypt. The story began when Joseph was rewarded by Pharaoh after he interpreted dreams. He was made a prince. When famine came to Canaan Jacob and his family joined Joseph in Egypt. Over time the Jewish people became numerous, wealthy and powerful.

A new Pharaoh arose who did not know why the Jewish people were in Egypt. He was a tyrant and fearing the Jews, he made them slaves. His cruelty and oppression culminated in ordering the death of every first born Jewish child. Moses was saved from this evil decree and was called by God to lead the Jewish nation to freedom. Pharaoh resisted Moses' pleas and so God sent one plague after another before Pharaoh finally let them go.

As we remember each of these 10 plagues we spill a drop of wine in a saucer. This is to diminish our joy because we do not rejoice that our freedom should be at such cost. Each drop also represents God's tears shed as he acts in judgement.

We all drip a drop of wine as together we name the 10 plagues

All
Blood
Frogs
Gnats
Flies
Cattle Disease
Boils
Hail
Locusts
Darkness
Slaying of the firstborn

The last plague which persuaded Pharaoh was when God passed in judgement through the land killing every firstborn Egyptian. The blood of the sacrificed lamb daubed on the door posts of the Jewish people meant that death 'passed over' them and they were spared God's judgement.

Jesus firstborn Son of God is also the Lamb of God. He takes our judgement. His shed blood on the cross delivers us from the judgement to come.

Sharing the Bread

The Leader lifts up the top Matzo, saying:

This unleavened bread reminds us that our ancestors fled in haste and did not wait for the bread to rise.

The Leader breaks the Matzo and says:

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.
Blessed are you, O Christ, who gave your body to be broken for us.

Each person is given some Matzo

Dip the Matzo first in the sweet Cheroseth and then the Bitter Herbs. (It is said you should take enough horseradish to bring tears to your eyes.)

Leader: The Bitter Herbs reminds us of the bitterness of slavery and the sweet Cheroseth of the mortar used when our ancestor made bricks for Pharaoh.