

Zoom Home Group

The Passover



**Seder Meal and
Eucharist**

THE FOODS OF PASSOVER

Matzah (unleavened bread). Symbolising the affliction of slavery, and the haste with which the Israelites had to leave Egypt.

Hazarer (bitter herbs - usually horseradish or onion). Symbolising the bitterness of slavery.

Karpas (lettuce, parsley, celery or endive). Symbolising the hyssop used by the Hebrews to smear the lamb's blood on their doorposts. Also, a symbol of life

Salt Water (or vinegar). Symbolising the tears of the Israelites in making bricks for Pharaoh. It is sweet because even the bitterest labour is sweet when redemption is near.

Haggigah (roasted egg). To Jews, this symbolises the ancient Temple sacrifices but many take it also as a symbol of the life God gave the Israelites in setting them free.

Lamb. This was sacrificed in the Temple. All the blood was drained out no bones were broken. It was roasted on a cross-like spit of pomegranate branches. The sacrifice was discontinued after the destruction of the Temple but if suitable it is suggested that a whole lamb be roasted and then attached to the spit before being brought into the meal. Alternatively roast legs of lamb could be used as a substitute or as an addition of needed.

Sweets. Symbolises the abundant goodness of the Promised Land, to which God's salvation leads us,

How to roast an egg. It's simple. All you do is hard-boil it and, with the shell still on, hold it over a flame to brown it. If you've got an electric stove, stick it in the oven for a while.

How to make Harosis

Half cup ground almonds - half-cup ground walnuts - 1 tablespoon sugar

1 cup grated apple - quarter teaspoon cinnamon - sweet red wine (Israeli CARMEL is best)

Combine all ingredients, except wine, in a bowl, and mix. Add the wine to make into paste.

(You may need to add more of any of the ingredients to adjust to your own taste. Some like to add raisins.)





LIGHTING OF THE FESTIVAL CANDLES

COMMENTATOR - According to ancient Jewish custom, it is the task of the mother to light the festival candles in every service, which takes place in the Jewish home. Besides the obvious practical purpose, this gesture symbolises the coming of Christ the Messiah; The Light of the World. We are reminded also of the lighted candles upon the altar, the table of the Eucharistic banquet.

1. Lighting of the Candles.

Hostess: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us alive by your Word. May our house be consecrated by the light of your face, shining on us in blessing and peace.

COMMENTATOR - Four times during the paschal meal the wine is passed. The act of distributing wine from a common bowl to all present is a sign of unity.

2. The Cup of Sanctification (Fill the Cups)

Host: The Passover has begun. During our Seder we will drink from our Cups four times. The first is the Cup of Sanctification, by which we commit this time to God and His glory.

All: Blessed are you, O Lord our God who created the fruit of the vine.

(All Drink)

3. Washing Of Hands

Celebrate washes his hands in the ceremonial bowl

4. The Passover Story

Youngest child: Why is this night of the Passover different from other nights?

Host: We celebrate tonight in this special way so that we can remember how God brought His people out of slavery in Egypt. The meal also reminds us how Jesus rescued us from slavery to evil and death.

Here is the story of the Passover. (Host or narrator reads the story from Exodus 12, or tells the story of Exodus 1-12 in his own words.)

5. The Seder Plate

Youngest Child: Then what do these special foods mean?

Host: The Matzah is a symbol of God helping His people escape from Egypt. Yeast makes bread rise, but it takes time. Because the Hebrews had to make hasty preparations to leave Egypt, they did not have time to wait.

All: Blessed are you, O Lord our God King of the universe, who created fruit from the earth.

(Each person breaks off two pieces of the Matzah)

All: What is the meaning of the greens and salt water?

Host: The greens represent life, and the salt water the tears of life. They remind us that the life of the Israelites was dipped in tears in Egypt.

(All dip greens in salt water and eat.)

All: What is the meaning of the bitter herbs?

Host: They symbolise the bitterness of life in Egypt, where the Egyptians used the Israelites ruthlessly as slaves. They also remind us of the deep bitterness of a life gripped by sin and death.

(All eat a small helping of horseradish with Matzah)

All: What is the meaning of the sweet Harosis

Host: The Harosis reminds us of the mortar used by the Israelites in their brickwork in Egypt. It is sweet because even the bitterest labour is sweetened by the promise of redemption. So we, too, live under the sweet promise that Jesus is coming again.

(All eat a small helping of Harosis between pieces of Matzah, symbolising mortar between bricks)

All: And what is the meaning of the egg?

Host: The egg is a symbol of life. The eldest sons of the Israelites were glad to be alive. It reminds us that Jesus died so that we who believe in Him can live forever. We dip the egg in salt water to remind us that life was won for us through the tears of death.

(All dip pieces of egg in salt water and eat.)

All: These foods all remind us of the bitterness of slavery from which God rescued His people. In the same way, they remind us of the bitterness of sin and the great slavery from which God has rescued us through Jesus.

6. The Cup of Praise (Fill the cups)

Host: The second cup is the Cup of Praise. In the light of God's mercy towards His people, we are bound to give thanks, to praise and to bless him who brought us out from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to gladness from mourning to Festival-day. So let us say before Him. Hallelujah!

All: Hallelujah!

(All drink)

Psalm 113

Praise the Lord

O sing praises you that are his servants:
 O praise the name of the Lord.
Let the name of the Lord be blessed:
 from this time forward and for ever.
From the rising of the sun to its going down:
 let the name of the Lord be praised.
The Lord is exalted over all the nations:
 and his glory is above the heavens.
Who can be likened to the Lord our God:
 in heaven or upon the earth.
Who has his dwelling so high:
 yet condescends to look on things beneath
 He raises the lowly from the dust:
and lifts the poor from out of the dung heap:
 He gives them a place among the princes:
 even among the princes of his people.
He causes the barren woman to keep house
and makes her a joyful mother of children
 Praise the Lord.

7. The Passover Meal

Youngest child: What is the meaning of these foods?

Host: The roast lamb reminds us of the lamb whose blood saved the first-born of the Israelite families from death. It also reminds us of Jesus, whose death on the cross saved us from our sins. The sweet things that follow remind us of the land flowing with milk and honey, the Promised Land, where the Israelites

were led by God. They also remind us that Jesus has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us where there will be no more tears or suffering and we will be with Him forever.

Let us eat and be joyful!

8. The Cup of Redemption

(Fill the chalices ready for the Communion or have pre-prepared)

Host: The third cup is the Cup of Redemption. It was probably at this Cup that Jesus said "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)

All: We drink it with great thankfulness for the redemption He won for us by His death.

(At this point, many Christians use the third Cup and remaining Matzah to celebrate a Communion.)

Sentence of Scripture: Jesus said, "If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" - John 13:14

Let us pray together)

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The two Great Commandments:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Response: Lord have mercy on us: and write your law in our hearts by your holy spirit

(The collect or special prayer for the day)

Grant Lord, that we who receive the holy sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be the means by which the work of his incarnation

shall go forward; take, consecrate, break and distribute us, to be for others a means of your grace, and vehicles of your eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

THE GOSPEL -

The Prayers

This is a time of quiet reflection.

The Confession

Let us pause for awhile and remember before God the things we have done wrong, those we have wronged, and the things we have omitted to do

SILENCE

In penitence and faith let us confess our sins to almighty God.

Merciful God,

our maker and our judge,

**we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do;**

we have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;

we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.

Father, forgive us.

Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Priest pronounces the absolution

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith, pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you to do his will, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**

The Thanksgiving

Merciful Father, we thank you

for these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them

may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;

and when he had given thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever.
Amen

Celebrant

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us. Feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The Celebrant communicates first and then hands the bread to the next person, who communicates the next and so on. Then the wine is distributed in the same manner.

The Lords Prayer -

As our Saviour has taught us, we are confident to say

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Eternal God, giver of life,
in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.
May we who celebrate this holy feast walk in his risen light
and bring new life to all creation.

All say together,

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen

9. The Cup of Hope (Cup of Elijah)

(Fill the cups)

Host: Jewish people have a special cup on the Passover table, a cup for Elijah. They place it there on the basis of God's promise through His prophet Malachi: "See I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the Lord comes." Each year, they hope that this will be the year God sends Elijah with the Messiah, the Son of David.

We know, however, that Jesus identified John the Baptist as Elijah, and that his coming marked the arrival of God's Messiah. We now look forward in hope to His coming again, in glory and majesty and power and to being with Him forever at the eternal Feast of the Kingdom of God.

All: Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad, and give Him the glory! Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!

(All drink the fourth cup.)

We now move into the body of the church for the feet washing ceremony & stripping of the altar

(The meal is served)

WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT?

When God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, He gave them a special ceremony to remember what He'd done - the Passover.

Every Year, near Easter, comes the Passover.

To Jews, it is as important as Easter is to Christians. It commemorates God's rescue of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

In a history full of God's great redeeming actions, the Jews consider the Exodus the greatest.

The story is told in the book of Exodus: how the Egyptians ruthlessly oppressed the Israelites. How God raised up Moses to lead His people. How, in the face of Pharaoh's refusal to set the Jews free, God sent nine plagues on the Egyptians. How, in an ultimate act of judgement, God passed through Egypt to kill all the first-born sons of the Egyptians.

But He spared the Israelite first-born by commanding them to smear the blood of lambs on their door posts, so that He would see the blood and "pass over that doorway, and not permit the destroyer to enter" (Exodus 12:23).

The Passover does not celebrate destruction

Rather, God commanded the Israelites to celebrate the Passover Festival every year so that they would remember His amazing mercy to them.

The first Christians were Jewish. During the time of the first 15 bishops of Jerusalem, Christians celebrated the resurrection of Jesus at the time of the Hebrew Pesach (Passover).

It was not until the Council of Nicea in AD 325 that Emperor Constantine banned Christians from joining the two celebrations together.

Although Passover is a festival God commanded Jews to keep, Christians feel free to participate in it because, as non-Jews saved by faith in Jesus, they have become, spiritually Jews.

To use the Apostle Paul's jargon, Gentile Christians have been grafted into Israel', like branches into a tree (Romans 11).

Christians also recognise that the New Testament draws a comparison between Jesus and the Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5: 7-8).

And when Jesus met with His disciples for their last meal together, it was a Passover meal (Matthew 26: 17-19). By choosing Passover as the time for His death, Jesus was clearly pointing to its meaning.

Hebrew Christians today have done a lot of work reshaping the Passover ceremony (the Seder) to emphasise this comparison.

Of course, while celebrating the Passover can be profoundly meaningful for Christians, this is only because of its symbolic value. Paul warned non-Jewish Christians against taking on the trappings of Jewish religion as if they could contribute to their salvation. They can't.

But setting aside a special time to celebrate in a symbolic way the redemption that God brought the Jews from Egypt, and the redemption that He brought us from sin and death, can enhance Christians' appreciation of His wonderful actions immeasurable.

DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES the Jewish celebration of the Passover has changed and developed. The essential components are found in Exodus 12; but a range of special actions and foods, all with symbolic value, have been added.

Today there are a wide range of Passover customs and patterns.

Christians, too, have adapted the Jewish haggadah (Passover order of prayers) in various ways.

The essential components are the symbolic foods and the narrating of the Passover story.

For Christians, a third essential is explaining the similarities between the Passover and Jesus. Many do this by including a Communion as part of the Feast, remembering the way Jesus began the special Christian meal in the first place.

What we give you here is a description of the various components of the Passover Seder, together with a sample haggadah of moderate length.

The components can be arranged in many different ways. The possibilities are almost endless.

For example, some drink only two cups instead of four, then travel to their church for the third at Communion. They do not drink the fourth because they believe, on the basis of Matthew 26:29, that Jesus did not drink it.

Some eat the symbolic foods at one time, others space them out through the meal.

Some take Jesus' example in John 13 and make their Meal the opportunity to wash each others' feet in service.

As God's free people we aren't bound to any set form, but should experiment to find the length and combination that works best for us.

The Passover is a family celebration, with many of the explanations being given so that the story can be passed on to children. Many Christians celebrate it in small groups, such as cell groups, in someone's home. The head of the family traditionally leads the Seder.

- Passover is a celebration, a feast, a banquet!

It contains solemn moments; but its fundamental atmosphere is joy. Make the food special; dress up; prepare children as you would for a party!

- Many Jewish people use special crockery reserved for Passover use only. You might want to use the best cutlery and crockery, too!

Traditionally, Passover is eaten reclining, or sitting on cushioned seats to symbolise the freedom of people rescued from slavery.

- The Jewish Passover is preceded by the removal of all yeast and leavened food from the house, in accordance with God's instructions.

Christians, while not bound to perform this cleaning, might choose to do it - actually or symbolically - as a symbol of their desire to clean the yeast of sin from their lives (I Corinthians 5: 7).

* The symbolic foods are served on a Seder plate - a round, compartmentalised platter made especially for the occasion. It is appropriate to choose one of your best plates for this purpose

The following are traditional parts of the Passover

1 . The lighting of two candles. 2. The drinking of four cups of wine. 3. The eating of symbolic foods. 4. The retelling of the Passover story. 5. The main meal. 6. The reciting of Psalms of praise.

The two candles represent the light of God's face shining on us.

The four cups of wine (or grape juice) represent Sanctification, Praise, Redemption and Hope. They are drunk at different points in the meal. The third cup, of Redemption is probably the moment at which Jesus and His disciples shared the first Communion.

The symbolic foods are Matzah* (unleavened bread), hazarer (bitter herbs), karpas (greens), Harosis (a paste made of nuts, raisins, apple, cinnamon and wine) haggigah (roasted egg) and salt water.

Many Jews no longer eat lamb at Passover because the Temple sacrifices are no longer offered, and substitute instead a symbolic shank bone of lamb (zeroah) Christians, however, feel free to eat lamb, symbolic of the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin (John 1: 36).

The retelling of the Passover story can be done formally, by reading the Exodus account or a prepared version, or informally, in the leader's own words.

The main meal can be a lamb dish usually roasted, with vegetables. Dessert and sweets (cakes etc) have important symbolic value, representing the land of milk and honey to which God took His people!

The Psalms of praise are traditionally chosen from the Hallel psalms (Psalms 113-118) and the Great Hallel[(Psalm 136). 'Hallel [' simply means 'praise'.

* Matzah can be bought in many supermarkets.