

A Christian Seder

Candle Lighting

The “mother” at the table lights the candle then reads this blessing:

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.

First Cup, the Cup of Sanctification

Leader: This is the first of four cups, the cup of sanctification.

All: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. (All drink a little)

Parsley

Leader: This parsley represents life, which God gives us.

This salt water represents the tears of the Israelites because of the suffering they endured as slaves in Egypt. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the earth.

Everyone takes a piece of parsley, dips it in the salt water, and eats it.

Haggadah, the Four Questions

Leader: : We celebrate the Passover to remember how God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and we review the story by asking and answering four questions.

- **1. On all other nights we eat bread or matzah. On this night, why do we eat only matzah?**
- **2. On all other nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables. On this night, why do we eat only bitter herbs?**
- **3. On all other nights, we do not dip our vegetables. On this night, why do we dip them twice?**
- **4. On all other nights, we eat sitting or reclining. On this night, why do we eat only reclining?**

Leader: On Passover we eat only matzah, flat bread without yeast, because the Israelites did not have time for their bread dough to rise when they left Egypt. Leaven, or yeast, is a metaphor for the bad influence of sin in our lives. It is a way to represent physically that we are now a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). We get rid of the leaven, which is the old life of sin.

The leader holds up the plate with three matzo, takes out the middle piece, breaks it into two, wraps half in a napkin, and says: This bread of affliction reminds us that Jesus suffered for our sins.

Isaiah 53:5 (NRSV)

⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

Zechariah 12:10 (NRSV)

¹⁰ And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

Leader: I am going to hide this broken piece of matzah, called the Afikomen, which means “that which comes last.” Later the children will look for it. The one who finds it gets a prize.

The host at each table takes a piece of the other half of broken matzah and passes the rest around for everyone to take a piece. All eat.

Leader: On Passover we eat bitter herbs to remember the Israelites’ terrible life of slavery in Egypt.

Everyone takes a piece of matzah, scoops horseradish onto it, and eats it.

Leader: On Passover we dip vegetables twice. We have already dipped parsley in salt water to remind us of the Israelites’ tears. But we also dip our vegetables in sweet charoset. This reminds us that even in slavery, the Israelites had hope in God.

Everyone takes another piece of matzah, scoops charoset onto it, and eats it.

Leader: On Passover we recline, or sit comfortably, as free people. In contrast, the Israelites ate the first Passover meal standing, ready to leave any minute.

The Second Cup, the Cup of Plagues

Leader: **Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go, so God sent ten plagues to change his mind. Now we have the second cup, the cup of plagues. Instead of drinking it, we are going to name the plagues, dip our fingers in our cups, and drop juice on our plates each time a plague is named.**

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Blood | 6. Boils |
| 2. Frogs | 7. Hail |
| 3. Lice | 8. Locusts |
| 4. Flies | 9. Darkness |
| 5. Cattle Disease | 10. Death of
the Firstborn |

All dip finger as each plague is named and put the drop on their plate.

Passover Lamb

Leader holds up the roasted lamb shank bone and says:
This bone reminds us of the Passover lamb that was killed.

Leader summarizes Exodus 11-12.

Leader: **Jewish people can no longer sacrifice a lamb on Passover because the temple was destroyed. But no one needs to make a sacrifice because Jesus died as the Passover Lamb to take the punishment for our sin.**

Leader: *holds up the betzah (the boiled and roasted egg) and says:* **The egg symbolizes mourning and reminds us that the temple was destroyed, a sad event for the Jewish people.**

First Half of the Hillel

Leader says: **At this point in the Seder, we recite together the words of Psalms 113 and 114.**

Psalm 113-114 (NRSV)

Leader: **Praise the LORD! Praise, O servants of the LORD; praise the name of the LORD.**

All: Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time on and forevermore.

Leader: From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the LORD is to be praised.

All: The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

Leader: Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,

All: who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?

Leader: He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.

All: He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children. Praise the LORD!

Leader: When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,

All: Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.

Leader: The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.

All: The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

Leader: Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?

All: O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?

Leader: Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob,

All: Who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a spring of water.

Everyone does so, and then drinks some of the second cup, the cup of plagues.

The Passover Meal

Afikomen

All: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

Leader: **Then Jesus gave some of the matzo to his disciples and said, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

Leader breaks off a piece of Afikomen and passes it around for everyone to take a piece. All eat.

Third Cup, the Cup of Redemption

Leader: **Then Jesus took the third cup, the cup of redemption, and said the blessing.**

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

Leader: **Then Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."**

Everyone drinks.

Leader: *holds up the cup from the place at the table that has been saved for Elijah*

This cup is for Elijah the prophet, who will come before the Messiah returns.

Micah 4:5 (NRSV)

⁵ For all the peoples walk, each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

Cup of Elijah

Leader: **Jewish people look for Elijah's return on Passover, so they set a place for him at the table and open the door to welcome him. Christians acknowledge that Elijah has come again in the presence of John the Baptist, and also that the Messiah has come.**

**We open the door in expectation of the second coming of the Messiah.
Maranatha!**

The Second Part of the Hallel and the Fourth Cup, the Cup of Praise

Leader: **After Jesus and his disciples ate the Afikomen and drank the third cup, Matthew 26:30 says they sang a hymn.**

Read Psalm 118 together.

Psalm 118 (selected verses)

Leader: O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever!

All: Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

Leader: Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

All: With the LORD on my side I do not fear. What can mortals do to me?

Leader: I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD.

All: Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD.

Leader: This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it.

All: I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation.

Leader: The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

All: This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

Leader: This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

All: Save us, we beseech you, O LORD! O LORD, we beseech you, give us success!

Leader: Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD. We bless you from the house of the LORD.

All: The LORD is God, and he has given us light. Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar.

Leader: You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God, I will extol you.

All: O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: *lifts his cup*: **The last cup is the cup of praise. Let us read the blessing together:**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

All drink.

Leader: **The Seder ends with a traditional wish for celebrating the next Passover:**

All say: **Next year in Jerusalem!**