

P5 Week of 01.02.21

We are continuing to follow our planned Religious and Moral Education Programme. This term P5's RME topic is Passover.

Lesson 3: The Meal

In Judaism, Passover, or Pesach, celebrates the freedom of the Jews from slavery in ancient Egypt. Thousands of years ago the early Jews, called Israelites, moved to Egypt, where they became slaves of the Egyptians. It is believed that Moses was chosen to go to the pharaoh, or king of Egypt, to demand that he free the Israelites from slavery. The pharaoh said no, so God sent down 10 plagues (or punishments) to force the king to change his mind. The word Passover comes from the 10th plague, in which the firstborn sons of the Egyptians were killed. The Israelites were spared from the plague because Moses had told them to mark their door posts so that the angel of death would pass over them. The son of Egypt's pharaoh died from the plague. In his grief the pharaoh ordered Moses and the Jews to leave Egypt.

The festival of Passover is one of great joy. It takes place for about one week in March or April. A special family meal called a seder is held the first and sometimes the second night of Passover. Before the meal the story of Passover is told through the songs and prayer of the Haggadah, which is the book used during the seder. The most important food of the holiday is matzo, which is a bread made with only flour and water. It is unleavened, which means that it is flat. This reminds the Jews of the bread the Israelites took with them when they fled Egypt for freedom. They did not have time to let it rise because they were in a hurry to leave.

The Seder is a feast that includes reading, drinking wine, telling stories, eating special foods, singing, and other Passover traditions.

At the head of the table is the beautiful Seder Plate. In Hebrew, it is called a "Ka'arah". Before the Seder the Seder Plate is arranged by placing three whole Matzot in a cover or special compartment under the plate. Then six items are put on top, each one reminding Jews of the Passover Story.

P5 Week of 01.02.21

1. Kiddush

The Seder service begins with the recitation of kiddush, announcing the holiness of the holiday. This is said while holding a cup of wine, the first of the four cups that will be drunk throughout the Seder.

The Four Cups of Wine

Why four cups? The Torah uses four expressions of freedom in connection with the freedom from Egypt: (1) They did not change their Hebrew names; (2) they continued to speak their own language, Hebrew; (3) They remained highly moral; (4) They remained loyal to one another.

Wine is used because it is a symbol of joy and happiness.

Why recline? When drinking the four cups and eating the matzah, Jews lean on their left side to show that they are free people. In ancient times only free people had the luxury of reclining while eating.

2. Urchatz—Washing

Jews wash hands in the usual manner, as is done before a meal, but without a blessing.



3. Karpas—the "Appetizer"

A small piece of vegetable (an onion or boiled potato) is dipped into salt water and eaten (after reciting the blessing over vegetables).



4. Yachatz—Breaking the Matzah

The middle matzah on the Seder plate is broken in two. The smaller part of the middle matzah is returned to the Seder plate. This broken middle matzah, the "bread of poverty," remains visible as the story of Exodus is told and will be eaten shortly thereafter. The larger piece is put aside for later use as the *afikoman*.



5. Maggid—the Haggadah

At this point, the poor are invited to join the Seder. The Seder tray is moved aside, a second cup of wine is poured. Reading the Haggadah, tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt.



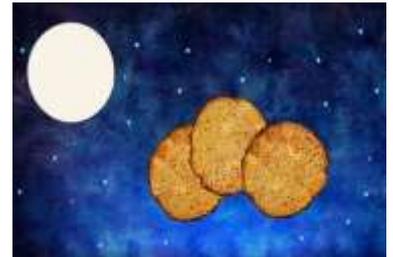
6. Rachtzah—Washing Before the Meal

After finishing the first part of the Haggadah by drinking the second cup of wine (while reclining), the hands are washed again, this time with blessings, as is usually done before eating bread.



7-8. Motzi Matzah—Eat the Matzah

Taking hold of the three matzahs (with the broken one between the two whole ones), a blessing is said before eating bread. Then the bottom matzah drops back onto the plate, and holding the top whole matzah with the broken middle one, a special blessing is said. Then a bit of the upper matzah is broken and at least one ounce from the middle matzah), and are eaten together while reclining.



9. Maror—the Bitter Herbs

The herbs are dipped in the charoset, then the blessing "al achilat maror" is said and the herbs are eaten without reclining.



10. Korech—the Hillel Sandwich

A sandwich of matzah and *maror* is eaten while reclining.



11. Shulchan Orech—the Passover Feast

The holiday meal is now served. To begin the meal the hard-boiled egg dipped into salt water is eaten.



12. Tzafun—Out of Hiding

After the meal, the half-matzah that had been "hidden" and set aside for the *afikoman* ("dessert") is taken out and eaten. It represents the Paschal lamb, which Jews' ancestors ate at the end of their Passover Seders.



13. Berach—Blessings After the Meal

A third cup of wine is filled and Grace After Meals is recited. After the Grace, a the blessing over wine is recited and the third cup of wine is drunk while reclining.



Then the cup of Elijah is filled and the door is opened and the passage inviting the Prophet Elijah, the harbinger of the coming of Moshiach, the righteous Messiah is read.

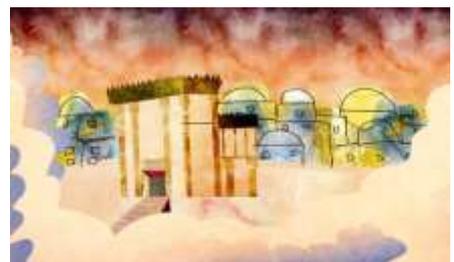
14. Hallel—Songs of Praise

At this point, songs of praise are sung , the Hallel is recited and the fourth cup of wine in drunk while, reclining.



15. Nirtzah—Acceptance

Having carried out the Seder service properly, "*Leshanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim is said—Next year in Jerusalem.*"



P5 Week of 01.02.21

Create illustrations of the order and events that take place during the meal.
