

# Celebrating Passover

A resource for younger families

## INTRODUCTION

Passover tells the story of what God did through Moses to save the Israelites from slavery to Egypt. The celebration is based around a meal. This is the meal that Jesus shared with his disciples on Maundy Thursday, the day before he was crucified.

When Christians celebrate Passover we also tell the story of what God did through Jesus to save us from slavery to sin and death.

The word Passover refers to the way that the tenth plague, the angel of death, 'passed over' the families of God's people because their houses were marked with the blood of the lamb that they sacrificed and ate for dinner that evening. In the same way we remember that Jesus is our passover lamb; because we are covered by Jesus' blood, death passes over us too, instead we can enjoy eternal life with God. For this reason the main meal at Passover is usually lamb.

A traditional Passover meal is also based around a Seder plate which contains different foods that help to tell the story; such as salt water to represent the tears of the Israelite slaves and bitter herbs to represent the bitterness of slavery.

If you would like to celebrate a more traditional Passover meal the resource 'Hope is Here' contains a liturgy which would be very understandable for upper primary school aged children.

This resource contains some suggestions for an alternative Seder plate and an alternative liturgy you could use with younger children. Reading the two resources in tandem, and picking the bits that will work best for you as a family, is perfectly acceptable!

## A CELEBRATION

Above all Passover is a celebration! At a traditional Jewish Passover the atmosphere is one of celebration, feasting, joviality, and love; think of a cross between a party and Christmas Day. We are celebrating that God is the one who saves us! He saved the Israelites through the Exodus, he saved us through Jesus dying on the cross, and he will continue to save us from the sin and pain that we experience in our lives. That's an incredible thing!

There are moments of reflection and contemplation, as we acknowledge that we live in a broken and sin filled world, after all, that's why we need saving, but the focus is on salvation and hope.

## AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

In a traditional Passover the children ask questions and the adults respond, it is a very didactic way to teach the faith to our children. This liturgy encourages the adults to ask questions and the children to respond; you may well be surprised by how much they know, how intuitive they are, and how easily they understand spiritual matters! There are lots of different questions, pick ones that you think your child will be able to understand. When you ask a question leave space for your child to think and then respond (try counting to ten silently in your head before you prompt with an alternative question). Encourage your child to make links between what they are experiencing, what they are thinking, and what they have heard in the story. There probably are some 'right' answers, and you may wish to help your child find them, but it is also important to teach your child that they can know God, and know about God, by putting the words of the Bible together with their experience and their intelligence and creativity.

## A ROADMAP FOR THE MEAL

### Before the Meal: Telling the story of the first Passover

Tell the story of the first Passover. If your child has their own Bible or Bible stories read it from there, or use the stories at the end of this resource. Try to pick a story from between the tenth plague through to the Israelites escaping through the Red Sea. In an unabridged Bible that would be from Exodus chapters 5-15, which is far too long for children, so perhaps just pick one part of the story; if you can, you could try to tell how that part little story fits into the bigger story of the Exodus.

### During the Meal: Experiencing the story of the first Passover

Experience the different items on your Seder plate. Encourage your children to use all of their different senses; what does it look like? Smell like? Feel like? Taste like? Sound like? On the next page there are some suggested questions and answers that you can use to explore the different foods and make links to the story that you just read together.

If you are eating a proper meal together, in addition to the symbolic Seder plate and bread and wine, do that now. There are some suggested questions which you might want to talk about over your meal.

### After the Meal: Experiencing the story of Jesus' Passover

Tell the story of the Jesus sharing the Last Supper with his disciples, and, depending on the length of the stories, upto Jesus dying on the cross. As you tell the story of the Last Supper, eat flat bread and drink red drinks together, either at the right points in the story, or afterwards.





## AN ALTERNATIVE SEDER PLATE

The Seder plate contains different foods that help to tell the story of the first Passover.

Sometimes younger children struggle to engage with a traditional Seder plate because some of the flavours are very strong and, frankly, unpleasant. By swapping some of the traditional foods for alternatives we can encourage our children to explore the flavours and what they represent.

Traditional	Represents	Alternative
Salt water	Sorrow. The tears of the Israelites in slavery, and our tears for when we do things wrong.	Salty foods such as olives, marmite, salted nuts.
Parsley and Horseraddish	Suffering. The bitterness of the Israelites' slavery and the pain caused by our sin.	Bitter foods such as radishes, dark chocolate, coffee.
Spiced apples and raisins	Difficulty. The clay used by the Israelites to make bricks and the mortar used to join them together.	Mushy, sticky foods such as apple sauce, cranberry sauce, jams, chocolate spread, toffee.
Hardboiled eggs and Lettuce	Hope. New life which returns each spring time.	Chocolate eggs, quiche, frittata, home grown cress.
Matzah (kosher baked crackers)	Haste. The Israelites did not have time to let their bread rise before escaping Egypt, and our salvation which is waiting for us now.	Flat bread such as pitta, wraps, naan, bread sticks.
Red Wine	God's promise to bless us. The blood of the passover lamb, and the blood of Jesus.	Tasty red drinks such as cranberry juice, grape juice or blackcurrant squash.
You will also need...		
Candle	Light. Jesus is the light of the world, he chases away the darkness.	

## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SEDER PLATE

Food Group	Questions to explore
Salty foods such as olives, marmite, salted nuts, salt water.	<p>What does it look like? Smell like? Feel like? Sound like?</p> <p>What does this food taste like?</p> <p>Does it taste like the seaside? Can you taste the salt? What else tastes salty? Have you ever noticed that tears taste like salt?</p> <p>Can you think who might have been crying or upset in our story?</p> <p>Why might the Israelites have been crying?</p>
Bitter foods such as radishes, dark chocolate, coffee, parsley, horseradish.	<p>What does it look like? Smell like? Feel like? Sound like?</p> <p>What does this food taste like?</p> <p>Did you know that flavour is called bitter? Can you think of anything else that tastes bitter? Did you know that bitterness can also be a feeling; what do you think bitterness feels like? Do you think bitterness is like being happy, or sad, or angry, or frustrated?</p> <p>Can you think who might have felt bitter in our story?</p> <p>Why might the Israelites have felt bitter?</p>
Mushy, sticky foods such as apple sauce, cranberry sauce, jams, chocolate spread, toffee, spiced apples and raisins.	<p>What does it look like? Smell like? Taste like? Sound like?</p> <p>What does this food feel like?</p> <p>Have you ever had sticky, jammy fingers? What happens if you touch paper with sticky fingers? Why do you think the Israelites needed sticky stuff?</p> <p>Can you think why sticky stiff might remind us of our story?</p> <p>Did you know that bricks are made from sticky stuff like clay, mixed together with hard stuff, like sand and rocks and straw?</p> <p>Do you think it is easy to make bricks? Do you think the Israelites enjoyed it?</p> <p>How do you think the Israelites felt after making bricks all day?</p>
Chocolate eggs, quiche, frittata, home grown cress, hard boiled eggs, lettuce.	<p>What does it look like? Smell like? Feel like? Taste like? Sound like?</p> <p>Why do we think about eggs at Easter time? What do you think eggs represent? What happens in the spring time? Does new life always happen? When does spring happen? Does spring always come? What did the Israelites hope for?</p> <p>If your child wants to eat the chocolate now, perhaps you could ask them to wait until pudding time, just like, sometimes, we have to wait for the good things and hope that God promises us.</p>
Flat bread such as pitta, wraps, naan, bread sticks, matzah.	<p>What does it look like? Smell like? Taste like? Sound like?</p> <p>What does this food feel like?</p> <p>Do you know what kind of food this is? Is this bread thick or thin, hard or soft? Do you know why this bread isn't as thick and soft as normal bread? This bread hasn't had time to rise up, what does that remind you of in our story? Why do you think the Israelites didn't have time to let their bread rise? Why do you think the Israelites were in a hurry?</p>
Tasty red drinks such as cranberry juice, grape juice or blackcurrant squash, red wine.	<p>What does it smell like? Feel like? Taste like? Sound like?</p> <p>What does it look like? Is it tasty and good? Does having bread and wine remind you of anything? Sometimes we have bread and wine at church, do you know why?</p>

## THE LITURGY

### Before the Meal

*Gather together where you can be comfortable and explore the Seder plate together.*

*Light a candle, let your child help if it's safe.*

**Child** We bless you God, King of the world. You give us light.

**Adult** Why do we light a candle?

We light a candle to remind us that Jesus is here with us, why does a candle remind us of Jesus? We light a candle to remind us that Jesus is here with us, what does it mean when we say that Jesus is the light of the world?

Tonight we are celebrating Passover, and now we are going to read the story of the very first Passover.

*Tell the story of the first Passover.*

### During the Meal

*Bring in the Seder plate.*

*Explain that the different foods help us to remember different parts of the Passover story. Ask them which food they want to think about first, then encourage them to experience the food with all of their senses. Use the questions above to help them make connections between the foods on the Seder plate and the Passover story.*

*If you are eating a proper meal together, in addition to the symbolic Seder plate and bread and wine, do that now.*

*Before you start to eat, thank God for your drinks and food. You may wish to say 'cheers' afterwards.*

**Child** We bless you God, King of the world. You give us good things to drink.

**Child** We bless you God, King of the world. You give us good things to eat.

*During the meal talk about these three questions:*

**Adult** The Israelites felt sad and bitter because their lives were difficult and full of suffering; how have our lives felt like that this year?

The Israelites were hopeful that God would save them, and he did; how could God save us from those things?

The Israelites rejoiced with singing and dancing when God saved through the Red Sea; what are we thankful to God for in the last year?

## After the Meal

*After the meal clear the table except for one cup of red drink and one piece of flat bread.*

*Tell the story of the Last Supper.*

*Either, share bread and wine together at the relevant points during the story, highlighting Jesus' words; or, after the story, share bread and wine together, using these words.*

**Adult** Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying:

**Child** This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

*Encourage your child to share the piece of bread between everyone at the meal.*

**Child** Jesus took the cup, saying

**Adult** This is my blood poured out for you; do this in remembrance of me.

*Encourage everyone to have a drink from the cup and pass it along.*

**Adult** Our God, King of the world says:  
I have freed you from being slaves to sin  
I have freed you from working without rest  
I have redeemed you  
I will be your God, and you will be my people.

**Child** We have celebrated our Passover. Amen.

*The candle is blown out.*

