A FAMILY HAGGADAH
FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

By Shoshana Silberman
Illustrated by Katherine Janus Kahn
## PREPARING FOR THE SEDER

In traditional Jewish homes, an elaborate spring cleaning begins weeks before Passover. This is because we are not permitted to eat or even possess food that is categorized as chametz (containing a leavening agent) during the holiday. For guidance on preparing your home and your kitchen, and serving permissible foods, contact your rabbi. You may also consult the many internet sites that offer information.

The evening before the first seder, it is traditional to search the house for chametz. Before the search (called bedikat chametz), you may wish to have a popcorn party, followed by a thorough sweep-up. It's a fun way to dramatize the last "farewell to chametz." The blessings we recite when we search for, and burn the remaining chametz the next morning, are available on the internet and in many Haggadahs.

To make the holiday important to children, involve them in the preparations. This includes cleaning their own rooms, helping to prepare the kitchen, and shopping (a wonderful opportunity to learn what is kosher for Passover and what is not). Junior cooks may be called on to make charoset, matzah balls, and Passover desserts.

Find out what songs and stories your youngsters have learned in nursery or religious school, and plan to include them in the seder. Children will be honored if you use their handmade seder plates or matzah covers.

It is customary to invite guests to the seder, and in the spirit of the holiday you may wish to include a newcomer to the community, a college student far from home, or a guest from a nursing home. Family and friends make the experience more joyful and add wisdom (and often new traditions) to the telling of the Passover story.

Passover is a time to remember those who do not share our freedom and our bounty. Many families donate their chametz to organizations that distribute food to needy non-Jews. It is also a mitzvah to make a donation to a Ma'ot Hittim fund. The term means "wheat money," and refers to an organization that provides Passover foods to the poor. Your rabbi or educational director can provide names and addresses of appropriate organizations to help you fulfill this mitzvah.¹

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### PLATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEITZAH</td>
<td>Roasted egg*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KARPAS</td>
<td>Parsley, celery, potato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z’ROA</td>
<td>Roasted bone*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAROSET</td>
<td>Chopped apples and nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAROR</td>
<td>Bitter herb (whole or grated horseradish or romaine lettuce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAZERET</td>
<td>Second bitter herb for Hillel sandwich</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Vegetarians may wish to substitute an avocado seed and beet instead.

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SEDER CHECKLIST

Holiday candles
Wine or grape juice
Seder Plate
Cup for Elijah
Cup for Miriam
Three matzot, covered
Pillows(s) for reclining
Salt water for dipping
Cup, basin, towel for washing
Haggadah for each person
Wine cup for each person

Optional:
Matzah of Hope
Afikomen Bag
Flowers
Individual seder plates with karpas, maror, charoset
Empty plate to remember the homeless
An orange as a symbol of inclusivity
A dish of olives as a symbol of peace
WE LIGHT THE CANDLES

Before sunset, light candles and say this blessing:
(On Shabbat, add the words in brackets)

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha’olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’tzivanu l’hadlik ner shel [Shabbat v’shel] Yom Tov.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who makes us holy by Your mitzvot and commands us to light the [Sabbath and] festival lights.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha’olam, shehecheyanu v’kiy’manu v’higianu lazman hazeh.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has kept us alive and well so that we can celebrate this special time.

Share a holiday wish for everyone at the seder.

Think of other occasions when candles are lit, such as Shabbat and birthdays. How do these occasions make you feel?
THE SEDER HAS A SPECIAL ORDER

SEDER means order. Here is the SEDER of the SEDER:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| KADDESH  | We say the Kiddush  
First cup of wine                                           |
| UR’CHATZ | We wash our hands                                                         |
| KARPAS   | We dip a vegetable in salt water  
and say a blessing                                   |
| YACHATZ  | We break the middle matzah and  
hide the larger piece, the Afikomen                   |
| MAGGID   | We tell the story of Passover  
Four Questions  
Second cup of wine                                     |
| RACTHZAH | We wash our hands and say the blessing                                    |
| MOTZI/   | We say the blessings for “bread”  
and matzah                                                  |
| MATZAH   |                                                                         |
| MAROR    | We dip the bitter herbs in charoset and say the blessing                  |
| KORECH   | We eat a sandwich of matzah and bitter herbs                             |
| SHULCHAN | We eat the festive meal                                                  |
| ORECH    |                                                                         |
| TZAFUN   | We eat the Afikomen                                                      |
| BARECH   | We say the blessing after the meal  
Third cup of wine  
Welcome Elijah and Miriam                                   |
| HALLEL   | We sing songs of praise  
Fourth cup of wine                                               |
| NIRTZAH  | We complete the seder                                                   |

Discuss how our world follows a seder—an order. What has an order that we might not want to be disturbed, such as a baseball game or a symphony?

Describe a backwards or “topsy-turvy” day. (I go to school, and then I get dressed.)

The seder is done today as it has been done for 2,000 years. What feels good about that?

If you know the melody, sing the “Seder of the Seder (Kadde什 Ur’chatz).” Try adding hand motions as you sing. Before you begin each new part of the seder, sing the song again—just to that part.

As the seder begins, complete this sentence:  “At this seder, I hope…”


The seder Kiddush says that Pesach celebrates our leaving Egypt. The Kiddush we recite on Shabbat contains these exact same words. How is Shabbat also a celebration of freedom?

Kiddush countdown: Before the seder, make cup counters. Draw four wine cups on construction paper, and cut them out. Number the cups one to four. At the appropriate time, children may hold them up to show which cup of wine is being blessed.

WE SAY THE KIDDUSH

THE FIRST CUP

(Fill cups with wine or grape juice)

We lift our cups to say the blessing over the first cup of wine:

(On Shabbat, add the words in brackets)

[וְיָֽהוּ הָאָרֶץ וַהֲוָֽאֵֽיִרְבֶּדֶרֶק יֵמְנָֽעָה.]

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[Vay'hi erev vay'hi voker yom hashishi. Vay'chulu hashamayim v'ha'aretz v'chol ts'ar'am. Vay'chal Elohim bayom hash'vi'i m'la'chto asher asah. Vayishbot bayom hash'vi'i mikol m'la'chto asher asah. Vay'are'ch Elohim et yom hash'vi'i vay'kadesh oto, ki vo shavat mikol m'la'chto asher bara Elohim la'asot.]

[On the sixth day, the heavens and the earth were completed. On the seventh day, God finished the work of creation and rested. God blessed the seventh day and called it holy, because on that day God rested from the work of creation.]

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.
Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha'olam, borei m'orei ha'es. We praise you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of light.

Baruch Atah Adonai hamavdiel bein kodesh l'kodesh. We praise you Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who separates holy from not holy, light from darkness, Israel from the nations, and Shabbat from the six days of creation. We praise You, Adonai, Who separates the holiness of Shabbat from the holiness of the festivals.

Continue with Sheheheyanu (opposite)

The celebration of Pesach extends the spirit of Shabbat, so we do not recite the blessing over the spices. The blessing for light is said over the holiday candles and not over a Havdallah candle.
As an act of purification, the kohanim, priests of old, washed their hands before doing rituals and blessing the people. Washing our hands helps us feel “Pesach-dik” and ready for the seder. How did you get ready for the seder? How did you help prepare your home for Passover?

Talk about how athletes warm up or how actors get ready to go on stage.

On Pesach we read from the Song of Songs. Its poetry of nature and of love recalls God’s covenant with the people of Israel.

דודי לי ואני lik, חראבך קשתות
מי את עשלת ממפרץ
קשתת מכ פר ולברך.

Dodi Li va’ani lo, haro’eh bashoshanim.
Mi zot olah min hamidbar, m’kateret mor al’vonah.

My beloved is mine and I am his, who browses among the lilies. Who is she coming from the desert, in clouds of myrrh and frankincense?

Karpas is a symbol of spring and of renewal. How many signs of spring can you think of?

The salt water reminds us of the tears our ancestors shed in Egypt. What happened to the slaves to make them cry?

Put a fresh flower at each place setting, so everyone can smell the fragrance of spring.

Karpas was served as an appetizer at festive meals in ancient times. Serving vegetable hors d’oeuvres and a dip at this point in the seder will help hungry children (and adults) hold out until the meal is served.

We wash our hands

(Take a cup or pitcher of water in one hand and pour it over the other hand. Then do the same, reversing hands. This can be done at a sink, or with a cup and basin at the table. No blessing is recited.)

We dip a vegetable

(Give everyone a green vegetable)

We dip a vegetable into salt water and say this blessing:

ברוך אתה מ郄ל עולם פור ואדמוא
Baruch Atah Adamai Eloheinu melech ha’olam, borei p’ri ha’adamah.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

(All eat the vegetable)
THE MATZAH OF HOPE

(Lift the designated matzah ad set it aside)

We set aside this matzah as a symbol of hope for all those in the world who are in despair. Some are crushed by poverty and disease, others by tyranny and violence. We pray that their pain will end soon, and they will be brought to safety and healing. We dedicate ourselves to relieve suffering in whatever form it takes.

Matzah is known as the “bread of poverty.” One reason we break the middle matzah is to show that the poor need to set aside some of their food for the next meal. What can we set aside to share with someone less fortunate?

Some say the middle matzah is broken because our redemption is not complete. What is incomplete in our world? What problems do you wish we could solve?

Afikomen is a Greek word meaning dessert. The reading Halachma Anya, (this is the bread of poverty) is in Aramaic. These languages were spoken by Jews during the time when the Haggadah was written. What languages do Jews speak today?

It’s time for Afikomen hiding games! In some families, the seder leader hides the Afikomen when the children are not looking. The child who finds it later on (or all the children) win(s) a prize. In other families, children “steal” the Afikomen during the seder and hide it. After the meal, the leader must find it, or offer a reward for its return.

WE BREAK THE MIDDLE MATZAH

We break the middle matzah into two pieces. We wrap and set aside the larger piece as the Afikomen, the dessert matzah to be eaten after the meal. The smaller piece is returned to its place.

(Uncover the plate of matzah and raise it for all to see)


This is the bread of poverty which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry, come and eat. All who are needy, come and celebrate Passover with us. Now we celebrate here. Next year may we be in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves. Next year may we be truly free.

(Fill the wine cups for the second time)
WE TELL
THE STORY
OF PASSOVER

THE FOUR QUESTIONS

mah-nishtana halilah hazeh mikol halilot?

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 maror?

3
On all other nights we do not have to dip vegetables even once. On this night why do we dip them twice?

4
On all other nights we eat our meals sitting any way we like. On this night why do we lean on pillows?

FOUR MORE QUESTIONS

1. Why do we have to ask the same Four Questions year after year?
2. Why does the youngest child ask the Four Questions?
3. What other questions can you ask about the seder?
4. Where else does the number four appear in the seder?
AVADIM HAYINU

Avadim hayinu; atah b'nai chorin.
Once we were slaves, but now we are free.

LET MY PEOPLE GO

When Israel was in Egypt land.
Let my people go.
Oppressed so hard they could not stand.
Let my people go.
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh to let my people go.

"Thus saith the Lord," bold Moses said.
"Let my people go.
"If not I'll smite your first-born dead.
"Let my people go." 
Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land.
Tell ol' Pharaoh to let my people go.

The Talmud says that when we tell the story of Pesach, we should begin with despair and end with joy. The Haggadah does this in two ways. The first begins with the idea that our people were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and God brought them to freedom. The second begins with the idea that our ancestors were idol-worshippers, and now we worship only God. Why does the Haggadah talk about both physical and spiritual slavery?

What kinds of things are we free to do in our country that many people around the world are not free to do?

Bukharian Jews have an interesting custom. When they come to “Avadim hayinu—we were slaves in Egypt,” the leader of the seder stands up and walks around in a bent-over position as if he or she were a slave. You can do this, too.

WE BEGIN TO ANSWER

עבדים היהנו להורעת מצריים. ויצאנוبيانא משה ביד
突破口 וחרות ב谼ה. ואל לא הנע חורשת בחרה או ארץ
אלות מצריים. וחרות אחר בחרה. בחרת בחרה. בחרת
הנגב. בחרת בחרת באחרות. מתים עלון להנערת
מצריים. בחרת פָּרָהוֹ בִּמְיָרָי.

Avadim hayinu l’Pharaoh b’Mitzrayim.

This night is different from all the other nights because once we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but Adonai, our God, took us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. If Adonai had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, then we, and our children, and our children’s children would still be slaves in the land of Egypt. Even if we know the story well and have told it many times, the more we tell it in great detail, the more we are to be praised.

This night is also different because once we worshipped idols, but now we worship only Adonai, the One Who Is Everywhere.

ברוך המוקם, ברוך Hu.
ברוך שנתת תורה לעם ישראל, ברוך Hu.

Praised be God Who Is Everywhere. Praised be God. Praised be God who gave the Torah to the people of Israel. Praised be God.
THE FOUR CHILDREN

The Torah commands us to teach our children about Passover. The Talmud suggests four different ways children might react.

The WISE child might ask:  
*What is the meaning of the laws and rules which Adonai our God has commanded us?*

We should explain to this child in great detail all the laws and customs of Passover.

The WICKED child might ask:  
*What does this service mean to you?*

Since this child does not want to be included in the celebration, we must answer harshly: "We celebrate Passover because of what Adonai did for us. If you had been in Egypt, you would not have been included when Adonai freed us from slavery."

The SIMPLE child might ask:  
*What is this all about?*

We answer simply that, "With a mighty hand Adonai took us out of Egypt."

What about the child who DOESN'T KNOW ENOUGH TO ASK A QUESTION?  
We must explain to this child that we observe Passover to remember what God did for us when we were freed from slavery in Egypt.

How would *you* explain Passover to each of the four children?

What job would you give each of them to help get ready for the seder?

There is a little of the four children in each of us. Describe situations where you felt wise, wicked, simple, or didn’t know what to ask.

What other kinds of children can you describe? How would you explain Passover to them?
TELLING THE PASSOVER STORY

The Passover story was originally told orally by parents to their children. You may wish to skip over this section and tell the story in other ways. Here are some suggestions:

- Tell the story in your own words. One volunteer may begin and others may continue.
- Pantomime the story as it is being told or read.
- Assign participants parts of the story ahead of time. They may wish to prepare a puppet show, or other creative way of telling their parts.
- Invite children to share Haggadot they have made in school.
- Select a volunteer “talk show host” to interview important persons in the story. Choose others to be Moses, Yocheved, Miriam or even funny, made-up characters such as a frog from the ten plagues.
- Ask someone to play a reporter assigned to cover the crossing of the Red Sea. Describe what is happening.

BUILDING CITIES

Bang, bang, bang,  
Hold your hammer low.  
Bang, bang, bang,  
Give a heavy blow. 
For it's work, work, work  
Every day and every night.  
For it's work, work, work  
When it's dark and when it's light.  

THE PASSOVER STORY

God promised Abraham and Sarah that their children would become a great people. God made this promise again to each new generation—to Isaac and Rebecca, and to Jacob, Rachel, and Leah.

One of Jacob’s sons, Joseph, came to live in the land of Egypt and was an advisor to the Pharaoh. He told Pharaoh to build storehouses and fill them with grain. When years of famine struck, there was food to eat in Egypt. The Pharaoh was so grateful that when Joseph’s brothers came in search of food, he invited them to settle. They lived there in peace for many years and became known as the Israelites.

Years later, a new Pharaoh came to rule who did not remember Joseph and all he had done for the Egyptian people. He only feared that the Israelites would become too numerous and too powerful.

SLAVERY IN EGYPT

This Pharaoh made the Israelites slaves. He forced them to do hard labor, building cities with bricks made from clay and straw. The people knew neither peace nor rest, only misery and pain. The cruelest decree of all was the Pharaoh’s order that every baby boy born to an Israelite woman be drowned in the River Nile.

One couple, Amram and Yocheved, would not kill their newborn son. Instead, they hid him in their hut for three months. When his cries became too loud, Yocheved placed him in a basket on the river. Their daughter Miriam watched to see what would happen.
If you were the casting director for the TV special of the Exodus, whom would you choose to play the part of Pharaoh? Moses as a young boy? Moses as a man? Yocheved? Miriam? What part would you like to play? Why?

The Torah tells us that Moses was reluctant to be God’s messenger. One reason is that he had a speech defect. Moses is assured that God will be with him and that his brother Aaron will help him. Why did God choose a leader who had a disability, a leader who was not perfect?

In many Haggadot there are no odes to, or poems about Moses. Traditional Haggadot do not even mention him. Some say this is so that we don’t worship Moses as a god, but rather see the Exodus as the work of the Almighty. Others say it is so we don’t come to believe that we can only accomplish our goals when there is a strong leader. Each of us must act to bring freedom and peace. Do you think that Moses should be included in the Haggadah?

A MIDRASH

When Moses was a shepherd in Midian, a little lamb wandered off from the flock. Though tired from a long day, Moses went to search for the lamb. When he finally found him, Moses gently carried the lamb back to the flock. God saw this act and knew that someone who would care for a little lamb in such a loving way would care for God’s flock, the children of Israel. Can you invent a “test” to judge a person for an important leadership position, such as the presidency?

When the Pharaoh’s daughter came to bathe in the river, she discovered the basket. She felt pity for the helpless child and decided to keep him as her own. She named him Moshe (Moses), which means “drawn from the water.”

Bravely, Miriam asked the princess if she needed a nurse to help her with the baby. The princess said yes, and so it happened that Yocheved was able to care for her own son and teach him about his heritage.

MOSES GROWS UP

Moses would have lived at the Pharaoh’s palace forever, but he could not ignore the suffering of his people. Once when he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave, he could not control his anger, and he killed the Egyptian. Knowing his life would be in danger once the news of this deed spread, Moses fled to the land of Midian where he became a shepherd.

One day, while tending sheep on Mount Horeb, Moses saw a bush that seemed to be on fire, but was not burning up. From the bush, he heard God’s voice calling him. God said “I am the God of your ancestors. I have seen the suffering of the Israelites and have heard their cries. I am ready to take them out of Egypt and bring them to a new land, a land flowing with milk and honey.”

God told Moses to return to Egypt to bring the message of freedom to the Israelites and to warn Pharaoh that God would bring plagues on the Egyptians if he did not let the slaves go free. Moses was such a humble man that he could not imagine being God’s messenger. “I will be with you,” God promised Moses. With this assurance and challenge, Moses set out for Egypt.
THE TEN PLAGUES

When Moses asked Pharaoh to free the Israelites, he refused, so God brought ten plagues on the Egyptians. Each one frightened Pharaoh, and each time he promised to free the slaves. But when each plague ended, Pharaoh did not keep his word. It was only after the last plague, the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians, that Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go.

We fill our wine cups to remember our joy in being able to leave Egypt. Yet our happiness is not complete, because the Egyptians, who are also God's children, suffered from Pharaoh's evil ways. Therefore, we spill a drop of wine from our cups (with a finger or a spoon) as we say each plague:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plague</th>
<th>Hebrew Name</th>
<th>English Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>Dahm</td>
<td>דם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frogs</td>
<td>Tz'fardaya</td>
<td>עפרדים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lice</td>
<td>Kinim</td>
<td>כנימין</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beasts</td>
<td>Arov</td>
<td>עורב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Disease</td>
<td>Dever</td>
<td>בכר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boils</td>
<td>Sh'chin</td>
<td>שיחים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hail</td>
<td>Barad</td>
<td>ברד</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locusts</td>
<td>Arbeh</td>
<td>ארביה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkness</td>
<td>Choshech</td>
<td>חשך</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plague of the Firstborn</td>
<td>Makat B'chorot</td>
<td>מؖת בֵּכֹרֵת</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When reading the Haggadah, some people prefer to call Egypt by its Hebrew name, Mitzrayim, to distinguish the Egypt of Pharaoh from the Egypt of today. What do you think?

How are strikes and boycotts used like plagues to apply pressure to bring about change?
CROSSING THE SEA

Soon after Pharaoh let the Israelites leave Egypt, he regretted his decision and ordered his army to bring them back. His soldiers caught up with the Israelites by the banks of the Sea of Reeds. When they saw the Egyptians, they were afraid and cried out. Adonai told Moses to lift his staff, and when he did, a strong east wind drove back the sea, leaving space for the Israelites to go across on dry land. The Egyptians came after them into the sea. Moses again lifted his staff, and the waters rushed back, covering the Egyptians and their horses and chariots.

Then Moses’ sister Miriam led the women in joyous dance and song, thanking Adonai for saving their lives.

GOD’S PROMISE

Long ago, Adonai promised Abraham and Sarah that their children would be a great people. It is this promise that has given our ancestors courage and hope.

(Raise cup while saying:)


More than once in our history, enemies have tried to destroy our people, but the Jewish people lives.
DAYENU

Adonai has shown our people so many acts of kindness. For each one, we say dayenu, meaning “that alone would have been enough, for that alone we are grateful.”

Adonai took us out of Egypt
Punished the Egyptians and destroyed their idols
Divided the sea and led us across on dry land
Took care of us in the desert for forty years and fed us manna
Gave us Shabbat
Brought us to Mount Sinai and gave us the Torah
Brought us to the land of Israel and built the Holy Temple
For all these—alone and together—we say DAYENU!
Rabbi Gamliel, who lived in the first century, was a great teacher and scholar. He helped formulate the Passover seder after the destruction of the Temple. Do you agree with his statement about the seder symbols, or do you think another part of the seder is more important?

The "wise" child might enjoy reading the actual verses about each symbol from the Torah text:

Pesach: Exodus 12:26-27
Matzah: Exodus 12:39
Maror: Exodus 1:13-14

The three symbols all focus on courage and faith:

**Pesach:** The Israelites risked their lives by sacrificing an animal that was holy to the Egyptians.

**Matzah:** The Israelites took their unleavened bread and followed God into the desert into the unknown.

**Maror:** The Israelites were not defeated by slavery. They had hope in their hearts for a future of freedom.  

Share stories of people you have read about or have known personally who have acted courageously.

Share a time when you were very brave.

Compose an advertisement for matzah or maror. Tell why people should try it.

**THE PASSOVER SYMBOLS**

Rabbi Gamliel said that in telling the story of the Exodus, we must explain the meaning of the three most important symbols. Without this explanation our celebration is incomplete.

**PESACH**

(Point to the lamb bone or beet)

The roasted bone is called the Pesach (Passover). It recalls the lamb our ancestors sacrificed and ate in the days of the Temple. As a symbol on our seder plate, it reminds us that during the tenth plague, Adonai "passed over" the homes of the Israelites and spared their first born.

**MATZAH**

(Lift up the matzah)

We eat matzah to remind us how our ancestors had to leave Egypt in such haste that the dough for their bread did not have time to rise.

**MAROR**

(Lift up the bitter herb)

We eat this maror to remind us how bitter the Egyptians made the lives of our ancestors by forcing them to be slaves.
IN EVERY GENERATION

B'chol dor vador chayav adam lirot et atzmo k'ilo hu yatza mi’Mitzrayim.
In each generation, everyone must think of himself or herself as having personally left Egypt.

SONGS OF PRAISE

(Lift wine cups and say:)

It is our duty to give thanks, sing praises, and offer blessings to the Holy One Who did these miracles for our ancestors and for us. For bringing us:

from slavery to freedom,
from sadness to joy,
from darkness to light.

Venomar l'fanav shirah chadasah, Halleluyah.

Therefore, let us sing a new song, Halleluyah.

Halleluyah hal’lu avdei Adonai,
Hallelu et shem Adonai.
Yehi shem Adonai m’vorach
Me’atoh v’ad olam.

Halleluyah.
Give praise to Adonai.
Sing praises, those who serve Adonai.
Blessed is the Name of Adonai now and forever.
We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has freed the people of Israel.

When the people of Israel left Egypt, they became God's people. The sea fled at the sight, and the river Jordan turned backwards. Mountains skipped like rams, and all of nature trembled at the presence of the Holy One.

(Lift wine cups and say)

B'rachot

 ברוך אתה‎ על חיות הוהי בראת
 "ברוך אתה הממקם ה' עוהב"זנה'

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe.

When the people of Israel left Egypt, they became God's people. The sea fled at the sight, and the river Jordan turned backwards. Mountains skipped like rams, and all of nature trembled at the presence of the Holy One.

(Lift wine cups and say)

B'rachot

 ברוך אתה‎ על חיות הוהי בראת
 "ברוך אתה הממקם ה' עוהב"זנה'

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe.
A PRAYER FOR EATING CHAMETZ

During Passover in 1944, there was no matzah at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, but the rabbis would not allow the inmates to endanger their lives by fasting. They decreed that chametz could be eaten, provided the following prayer be recited before meals:

Our Father in Heaven, behold it is evident and known to Thee that it is our desire to do Thy will and to celebrate the festival of Passover by eating matzah and by observing the prohibition of leavened food. But our heart is pained that the enslavement prevents us and we are in danger of our lives. Behold, we are prepared and ready to fulfill Thy commandment: “And ye shall live by [my commandments] and not die by them.”

We pray to Thee that Thou mayest keep us alive and preserve us and redeem us speedily so that we may observe Thy statutes and do Thy will and serve Thee with a perfect heart. Amen.17

WE WASH OUR HANDS

We wash our hands for the meal and say this blessing:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha’olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’atzivnu al n’Nilat yadavim.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who has made us holy by Your mitzvot and commands us to wash our hands.

WE SAY BLESSINGS FOR MATZAH

(Distribute pieces of the upper and middle matzah)

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha’olam, hamotzi lechem min ha’aretz.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha’olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’atzivnu al achilat matzah.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who makes us holy by Your mitzvot and commands us to eat matzah.

(Eat the matzah)
WE SAY
THE BLESSING
FOR MAROR
(Give everyone a piece of maror and some charoset)

We dip the maror into charoset to recall that our ancestors were able to withstand the bitterness of slavery, because it was sweetened by the hope of freedom.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha’olam, asher kid’shanu b’mitzvotav v’etzivanu al achilat maror.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, Who makes us holy by Your mitzvot and commands us to eat maror.

(Eat the maror and charoset)

WE EAT
A SANDWICH OF
MATZAH AND MAROR
(Distribute pieces of maror and the bottom matzah)

On Passover, in the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, Rabbi Hillel would eat a sandwich made of the Pesach (lamb offering), matzah, and maror. Now we do not bring sacrifices to the Temple, so our sandwich is made only with matzah and maror.

(Eat the Hillel sandwich)

WE EAT
THE
FESTIVE MEAL

Many families traditionally serve hard-boiled eggs at the beginning of the meal, perhaps because they are a symbol of spring and renewal. They also remind us of the brave Jewish midwives who refused to carry out Pharaoh’s order to kill male babies, and thus assured Jewish survival. The eggs are dipped in salt water to remember the tears of our ancestors.

Set aside holiday storybooks to occupy children if they finish their meal before the adults (and have already prepared their afikomen ransom). You can also make a simple lotto game using the holiday symbols.

Assign children to prepare Passover charades or trivia questions to present to the adults during dessert.

It was customary in Eastern Europe to distribute nuts to children on Seder night to arouse their curiosity. The numerical value of the Hebrew letters in egaz (Hebrew for nut) is the same as that of the word tav (good). Here are some nut games children can play:

Left or right: Which hand is the nut in?

Odds or evens: Is there an odd or even number of nuts in someone’s hand?

Nut pitching: Whoever gets the most nuts in the bowl wins.*