

# Celebrating Passover Dinner



for Latter-day  
Saint Families

## WHAT IS PASSOVER?

Have you ever wondered what the “Passover” holiday is? The Passover began with Moses and the children of Israel. When God sent the ten plagues to Egypt, he was trying to convince the wicked Egyptian Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But after each plague, Pharaoh hardened his heart and refused. The tenth and final plague was more terrible than all the others. All the first-born sons would die in the land of Egypt.



God had a plan to save his righteous people. God told Moses what to do. The Israelites had to kill a lamb for each household. The blood of the lamb was to be put above the doorway of the home. Then the Lord would “pass over” that household when the plague came.

The Israelites were obedient. They put the blood of the lamb over their doors. They cooked the lamb and ate it with unleavened bread (bread made with no yeast because there was no time for the bread to rise). That night, the final plague came. There was much sorrow and misery in Egypt. All of the first-born sons of the Egyptians died. Even the Pharaoh’s own son was killed. He finally told Moses to take the Israelites and leave Egypt forever!

There was much rejoicing among the Israelites! They were free at last! They could go back to their homeland. They could worship God the way they wanted. They could be a free people. God had used his power to save his people.

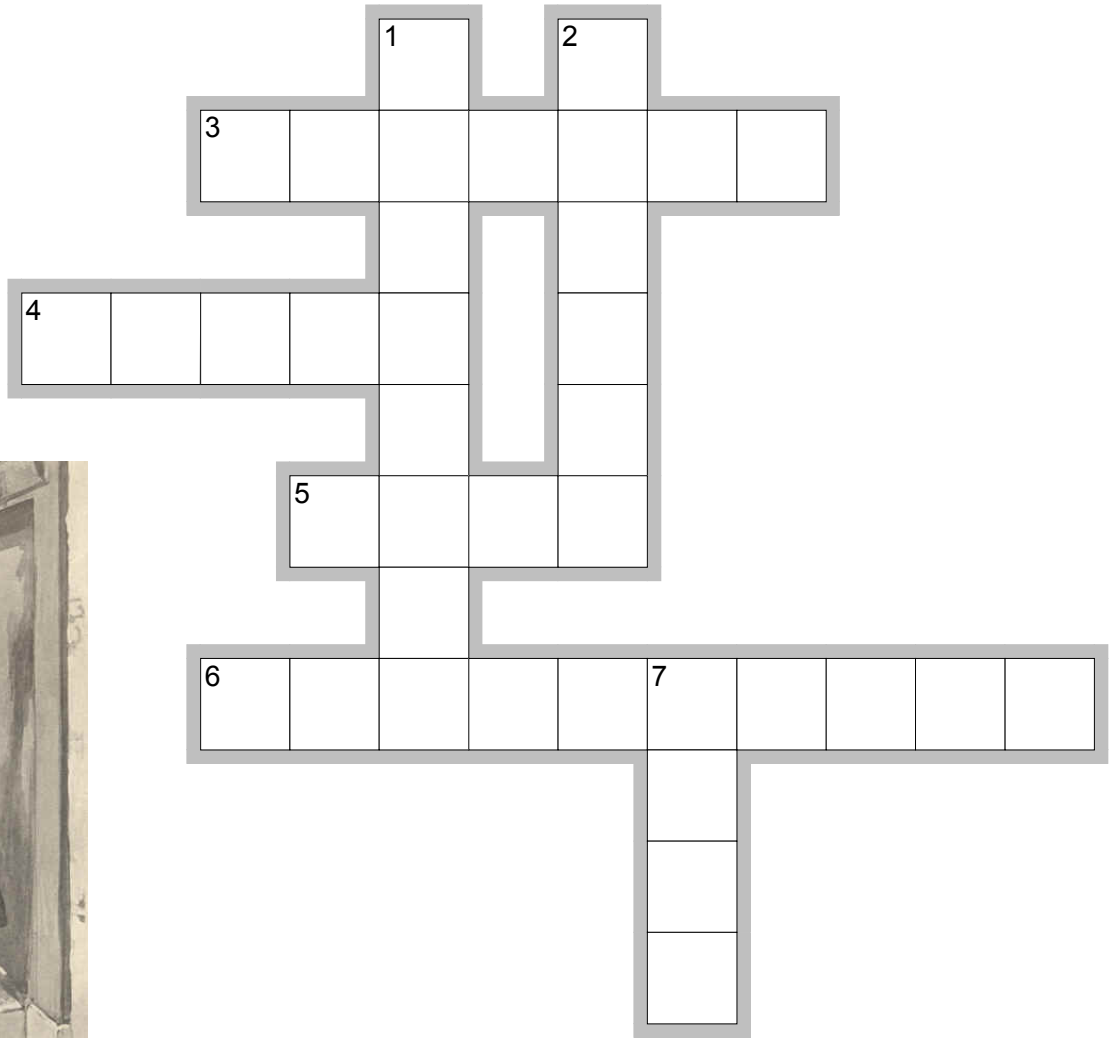
God commanded Moses to have the Israelites hold an annual feast to remember their escape from Egypt. They were to tell the story of their miraculous deliverance from bondage. They were to eat a “Passover” lamb and unleavened bread. They were to look forward to a time when a Savior would come to them to deliver them from spiritual bondage to freedom.

Jesus was that “Passover lamb.” He came to the world and delivered us from sin and spiritual death. His sacrifice is what makes us spiritually free!

Today, Jews all over the world still celebrate Passover in their traditional way. They do not accept that Jesus was the promised Savior. However, as Latter-day Saints, we know that Jesus died for our sins and that he was resurrected. When we hold a Passover meal with our family, we can think about Jesus’ sacrifice for us.

# PASSOVER CROSSWORD

Use the clues below to show what you know about the Passover.



## ACROSS

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ was the king of Egypt.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is the "Passover lamb" that saved us from all sin.
5. The plague passed \_\_\_\_\_ the Israelites.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ were slaves in Egypt.

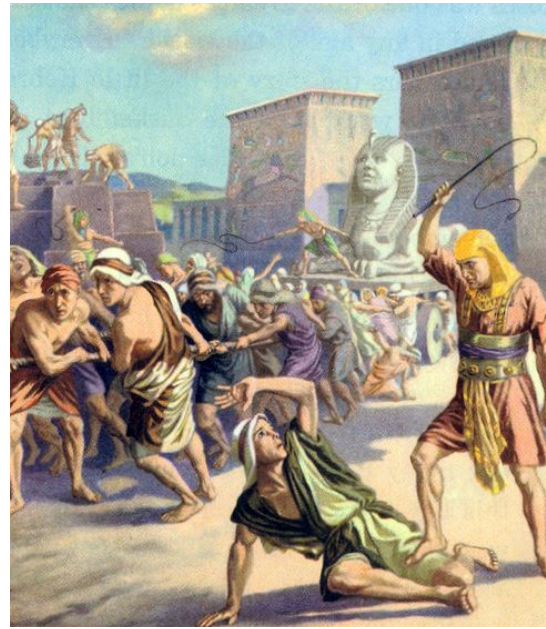
## DOWN

1. The Jewish feast to remember the Israelites freedom is called \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ is the Christian holiday that celebrates Christ's atonement and resurrection.
7. God told the people to put the blood of a \_\_\_\_\_ over their doors.

## WHY CELEBRATE PASSOVER?

The Lord commanded Moses and his people to remember their deliverance from Egypt, “And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever.”

“... And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses” (Exodus 12:17, 26-27).



*The Israelites were in bondage to the Egyptians.*

The Jews have celebrated Passover for nearly 3,000 years, always giving thanks for their deliverance from Egypt and praising the power of God.

President Howard W. Hunter once said, “I believe it is safe to say that **Passover is without equal** in the Jewish calendar of celebrations. It reminds every generation of the return of the children of Israel to the promised land. It is the Old Testament festival of springtime when the world of nature awakens to life, growth, and fruition. Passover is linked with the Christian observance of Easter.

**“The Passover in the Old Testament and Easter in the New Testament testify of the great gift God has given and of the sacrifice that was involved in its bestowal.** Both of these great religious commemorations declare that death would “pass over” us and could have no permanent power upon us, and that the grave would have no victory” (“Christ, Our Passover,” *Ensign*, May 1985, 17).

Use the code on the right to discover a secret message about Passover.

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## SYMBOLISM OF THE PASSOVER

Mostly, the Passover celebration is the same as it has always been. There is a meal of lamb and unleavened bread (along with some other very yummy food!) called “the Seder.” Someone tells the story of the first Passover. The whole family gives thanks for the things the Lord has done for them. The basic symbols of the Passover have remained the same.

The first and most important symbol of Passover is the **lamb**, which represents Jesus Christ. The blood of the lamb was shed for the *physical safety* of the Israelites. The blood of Jesus was shed for the *spiritual safety* of all mankind. On the Passover dinner plate (called the Seder plate), a bone is set out to represent the lamb that the Israelites ate (and for us—Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God). There are also other traditional foods served at Passover which have an important meaning.



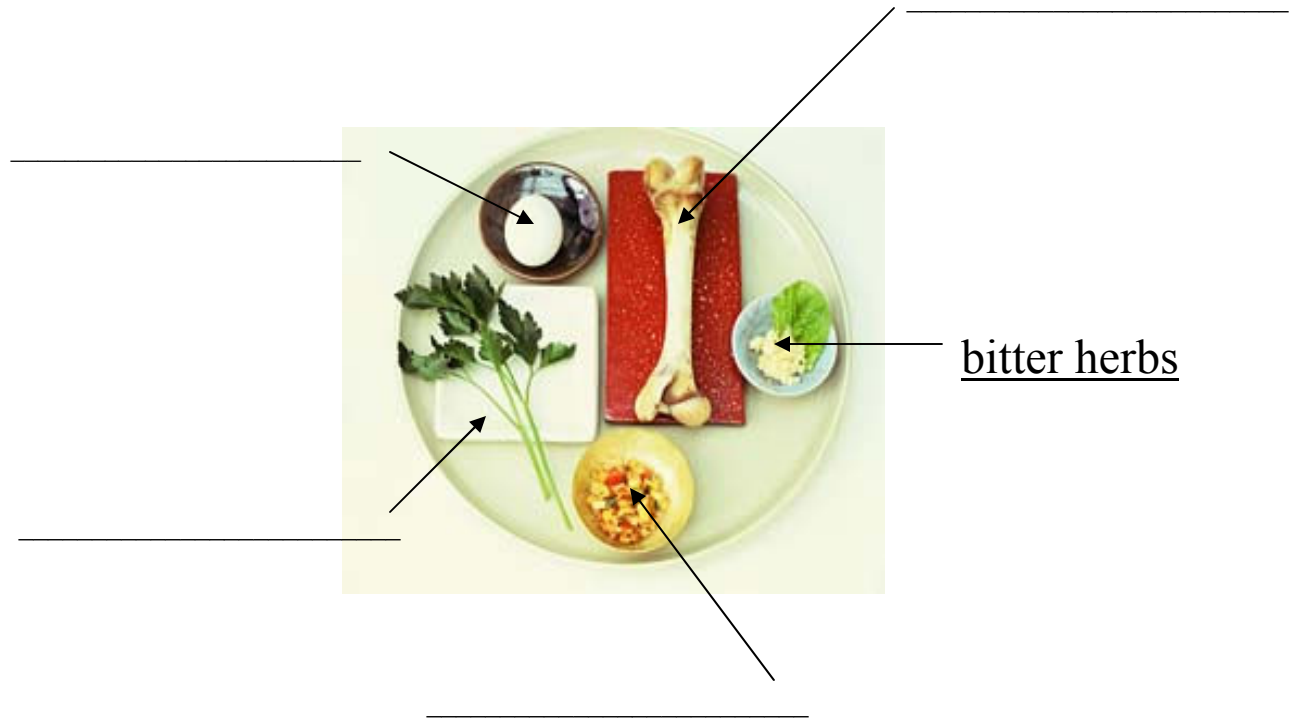
*The Passover or Seder meal is begun with a plate of food that symbolizes the celebration: lamb, bitter herbs, charoset, parsley, and egg.*

1. The **unleavened bread** or matzah (not shown in the picture above) represents the bread that the Israelites made and ate in a hurry when they left Egypt and found freedom. Jesus is the Bread of Life.
2. **Bitter herbs** are served to remind us of the pain and bitterness of the slavery that the Israelites served under. It also reminds us of the bitterness of sin.
3. **Charoset** (recipe to follow) is a mix of fruit, nuts, and honey that reminds us of the mortar the Jewish slaves used to assemble Pharaoh’s bricks. It is also sweet, which reminds us of the sweetness of the hope for redemption through Jesus.
4. **Parsley** reminds us of new things growing—a new beginning. It is dipped in salt water to remind us both of the bitter tears of bondage shed by the Israelites, and the unhappy consequences of sin.
5. A **roasted egg** is served, which represents the Passover sacrifice made in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. When the egg is dipped in salt water, we can remember that the miracle of resurrection came through the tears of our Savior.

- ◆ The bone on the plate represents \_\_\_\_\_, the lamb of God.
- ◆ The \_\_\_\_\_ represents the resurrection of Jesus.
- ◆ The bread reminds us that Jesus is the bread of \_\_\_\_\_.

# THE SEDER PLATE

Label the foods on the Seder plate..



Match each food to its symbolic meaning.

bone

bitter herbs

charoset

roasted egg

parsley

bitterness of sin

resurrection

a new beginning

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God

hope for redemption

*“And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.” (Exodus 12:14)*

## PASSOVER AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

Jesus and his family celebrated Passover every year. During Jesus' life, it was customary to travel to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. The Passover lamb was sacrificed at the temple, and then families held their Passover dinners in homes, or rented spaces.

◆ Where did Jewish families travel for Passover? \_\_\_\_\_

When Jesus was twelve, he went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem to attend the Passover. They would have sacrificed a lamb at the temple and held a Passover feast with their extended family or friends. After several days, they began the long journey home, only to find that Jesus was not with their group. Mary and Joseph quickly returned to Jerusalem, where they found Jesus in the Temple court asking and answering questions of the rabbis. The rabbis were amazed at what they heard him say.

◆ How old was Jesus when he got separated from Mary and Joseph?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Later, during Christ's ministry, he came to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and he saw the moneychangers in the temple courtyard. He grew angry at their greed and drove them out, turning over their money tables. Three years later, Jesus came again to Jerusalem with his disciples to celebrate Passover, knowing that he would soon become the Passover lamb—the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world.

◆ What did Jesus do to the moneychangers? \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples was a Passover meal. Jesus knew he was to be the Passover Lamb, the one to save mankind from their sins—in a matter of hours. He broke bread with his disciples and started a new custom—the sacrament. Now, each week when we partake of the sacrament, we have the opportunity to reflect on Jesus' great sacrifice for us. "The more we understand and appreciate the Passover service...the more deeply we can understand our sacramental covenants" (Terry W. Treseder, "Passover Promises Fulfilled in the Last Supper," *Ensign*, Apr 1990, 19).



*Jesus held a last Passover meal with his disciples.*

## PREPARING THE SEDER MEAL

The Passover meal, or Seder, is begun with a plate of food that is symbolic of the holiday. Each person is served a plate with: a bone (a chicken bone or even a picture of a bone will do), bitter herbs, charoset, parsley, and roasted egg. A small glass of salt water should be available on the table for dipping various foods into. There are also three pieces of matzah (unleavened bread) on the table. You can buy matzah (or matzah flour) around Passover time at most large supermarkets, or try a specialty foods store if you live in an area where there are many Jews. Otherwise substitute something more readily available like tortillas, crackers, or pita bread (though these are not unleavened, they give you the idea!). Here are some instructions on how to prepare the other foods.

### BITTER HERBS

Anything bitter can be used such as small slices of radish, horseradish root, etc.

### ROASTED EGG

Hard-boil the egg and then broil it in the oven until it begins to brown.

### CHAROSET

Charoset can be made many ways by combining chopped apples, sliced bananas, dried apricots or other fruit, walnuts, dates, raisins, honey, etc. Try using  $\frac{1}{2}$  chopped fruit,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup nuts, 1 chopped apple,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup honey, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup orange or grape juice. Refrigerate until dinner time.



In addition, a glass of grape juice should be set at each plate. During a traditional Jewish Seder, four glasses of wine are drunk as the story of the first Passover is told. You can substitute grape juice and just one drink of juice instead of a glass full! All of the toasts with the grape juice have been moved to the end of the meal in the script on the next few pages. It will be easier for the children to see the symbols of the grape juice when they are grouped together.

Layout the table as you would for a formal dinner. Add two white candles in the center, which the mother of the family will light during the pre-dinner service (see the script on the next few pages). Also, be sure to set an extra place at the table for Elijah. Elijah was a great prophet in the Old Testament that held the keys to the sealing power of the priesthood. There is a prophecy in the book of Malachi that says he will return to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the children to their fathers. Jewish tradition says that Elijah will return during Passover, so a place is always left open for him at the table.

Guess what? Elijah has returned, and he did it at Passover time! He appeared on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple to confer the keys of the sealing power of the priesthood on Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery.

In addition to the “pre-dinner plate” described above, you will serve a meal that suits the tastes of your family. Jews today do not serve lamb because it is required that the lamb be sacrificed at the temple in Jerusalem (which was destroyed in 70 AD). However, you can eat it with your family. Other favorite Jewish dishes are Matzah Balls, Vegetable Kugel, Gefilte Fish, and Potato Latkes. You can find recipes online or in the book *“Celebrating Passover: A Guide to Understanding the Jewish Feast for Latter-day Saints”* by Marianne Monson-Burton. Feel free to just serve your family favorites so that your whole family will enjoy the meal.

\*\* A much shorter alternative to holding a special Passover dinner would be to do only the first part (the Seder plate with the five foods as described above) as a family home evening demonstration. Use the script below, leaving out Part 3.

## **SCRIPT FOR THE PASSOVER MEAL**

The script given here is loosely based on a traditional Jewish Passover Seder, with modifications for length and clarity, to make it family-friendly, and to emphasize the symbols of Christ that are meaningful for Latter-day Saints. If you’d like to read an authentic Passover script, there are many available online. I also suggest the book: *Celebrating the Passover: A Guide to Understanding the Jewish Feast for Latter-day Saints*, by Marianne Monson-Burton.

There are several speaking parts in the script. The **Passover Leader** (usually the patriarch of the family) leads and narrates the celebration. Other speaking parts can be divided among older children and adults. You can make an extra copy of the Seder script, and then cut out and distribute the speaking parts. During the meal, the Passover Leader will indicate when it’s each person’s turn to read their part. Here are the sections of the Passover script:

- ◆ Part 1: The Passover Story
- ◆ Part 2: Children’s Questions
- ◆ Part 3: The Meal is Served
- ◆ Part 4: After the Meal

## PART 1: THE PASSOVER STORY

**PASSOVER LEADER:** Prophets since Adam have taught their people to look forward to and remember the time when Jesus would come to the earth and atone for their sins. Tonight we have gathered to observe the feast of the Passover, or Seder, which was first celebrated by Moses' people and is still celebrated by Jews around the world. Like our celebration of Easter, it will help us remember Christ's sacrifice for us and our redemption from sin through his atonement.

**MOTHER:** (*Light two white candles, motions from the flame towards herself with both hands, and says:*) Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who asks us to light the candles of Passover. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who has given us life and allowed us to celebrate this joyous occasion.



**MATZAH READER:** A very long time ago in the land of Egypt far away, the Israelites were slaves. But then, on a night like this one, they were delivered from slavery to freedom and they rejoiced!



The matzah was the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate on the night they escaped from Egypt. There are three pieces of matzah on the table. (*Break the middle matzah and wrap it in a napkin*). We will hide the matzah, and the children will look for the hidden matzah later in the meal. (*An older child or adult hides the broken matzah*).

**SLAVERY IN EGYPT READER:** Nearly 4,000 years ago, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. The Pharaoh forced them to make bricks and build pyramids. The work was difficult and they cried to God for help. God sent Moses to lead the people to freedom. The Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt and have heard their cry... And I am come down to deliver them" (Exodus 3:7-8). Moses told Pharaoh that the Lord wanted him to let the Israelites go, but the king refused! So, God sent ten terrible plagues on Egypt.



**PASSOVER LEADER:** (*Point to the grape juice*) When we remember each plague that God sent, we remove one drop of grape juice from our cups. When I say the name of each plague, dip your finger in your grape juice and remove a drop of juice for each plague.

- River turned to blood
- Frogs upon the land
- Lice on people and animals
- Swarms of flies
- Sick cattle
- Boils
- Hail and fire
- Locusts covering the ground
- Three days of darkness

You would think that Pharaoh would have given up and let God's people go, but he hardened his heart. God still had one plague to send to Egypt. It was the most terrible of all. Every firstborn male would die (*Remove another drop of grape juice from your glass*). The Israelites, and any who hearkened to Moses' voice, would be saved from the plague, but they had to do certain things to be safe. The things they were asked to do were a symbol of the sacrifice of Christ.

**SYMBOL OF THE LAMB READER:** Each family had to find an unblemished lamb. The lamb was to be sacrificed and the blood put on the top and sides of the family's door frame. The Lord said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13). That night, the Israelites ate the Passover lamb with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The bone on our Passover plate reminds us that the angel of death passed over the houses of the Israelites because of the blood of the lamb. It reminds us that Jesus came as the Lamb of God to be sacrificed for our sins.



**PASSOVER LEADER:** God had promised that those households that followed Moses' instructions would be passed over during the plague. From this miracle came the Jewish observance of "Passover." Passover is a time to remember the miracle of God in saving the children of Israel and bringing them out of Egypt and slavery.

God has also blessed us. As I name some of our blessings, let's say together, "Dayenu," [pronounced *die-yea-nen*] which means "It would have been enough for us."

- Had God only given us life, Dayenu
- Had God only sent us prophets, Dayenu
- Had God only brought us out of Egypt, Dayenu
- Had God only led us through the desert, Dayenu
- Had God only given us the scriptures, Dayenu
- Had God only given us the Temple, Dayenu
- Had God only given us freedom, Dayenu

## PART 2: CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS

**CHILD'S QUESTION:** Why do we eat **matzah** tonight?

**PASSOVER LEADER:** We eat matzah to remember that the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that they did not have time to let their bread dough rise. They baked it immediately and it came out flat and hard—the first matzah. This unleavened bread can remind us of purity; it is free from the leaven of sin. It also reminds us of Jesus, who is the bread of life. *(Everyone eats a piece of matzah.)*



**CHILD'S QUESTION:** Why do we eat **bitter herbs** tonight?

**PASSOVER LEADER:** The bitter herbs remind us of the pain and bitterness of slavery. They remind us that without the atonement of Christ, we would also suffer the unhappy consequences of sin *(Everyone eats a bite of the bitter herbs).*

**CHILD'S QUESTION:** Why do we eat **charoset** tonight?

**PASSOVER LEADER:** Charoset is a mix of fruit, nuts, and honey that reminds us of the mortar the Jewish slaves used to assemble Pharaoh's bricks. It is also sweet, which reminds us of the sweetness of the hope for redemption through the atonement of Jesus Christ. *(Everyone eats a bit of the charoset).*

**CHILD'S QUESTION:** Why do we eat **parsley** tonight?

**PASSOVER LEADER:** In the springtime, the sun is brighter and the days are warmer. Flowers are blooming and grass is growing. Life is beginning. The parsley on our plates reminds us that the Israelites had hope for a new life, even in the midst of bondage. We dip the parsley in salt water to remind us of the bitter tears the Israelites shed as slaves in Egypt. We also remember the sorrow that sin brings to us, and the hope, through Jesus Christ, of repentance and a new life.

**CHILD’S QUESTION:** Why do we eat an **egg** tonight?

**PASSOVER LEADER:** The roasted egg represents the Passover sacrifice made in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem. An egg also reminds us of the circle of life out of death. When the egg is dipped in salt water, we can remember that the miracle of resurrection came through the tears out our Savior. *(Everyone eats a slice of egg dipped in salt water).*

**CHILD’S QUESTION:** Why do we have a **bone** on our plates tonight?

**PASSOVER LEADER:** The bone reminds us of the Passover Lamb and the sacrifice that Jesus made as the Lamb of God.

### **PART 3: THE MEAL IS SERVED**

(Clear away the “Seder Plate” with the five symbolic foods and serve the real meal. Say a blessing on the food and enjoy your Passover dinner!)

### **PART 4: AFTER THE MEAL**

**PASSOVER LEADER:** It’s time for the children to search for the hidden matzah! The child who finds it and brings it to the table will get a small prize! *(The children search for the hidden matzah).* The matzah is a sign that what is broken off is not really lost as long as we remember to search for it. The body of Christ was broken on the cross and hidden in the tomb. But it was not lost! After three days Jesus rose again. Because Jesus overcame sin and death, all of us can live with God again!

**GRAPE JUICE READER (1):** *(Pick up the cup of grape juice.)* The first drink of grape juice represents **physical freedom**, the most basic freedom of all. The Egyptians took away the Israelites’ freedom and made them slaves. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe and Creator of the fruit of the vine *(everyone has the first drink of grape juice).*



**GRAPE JUICE READER (2):** *(Pick the cup of grape juice.)* The second drink of grape juice represents **intellectual freedom**, freedom of the mind. Closed minds lead to misunderstanding and human suffering, but truth leads to greater freedom and tolerance for everyone. “The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words, light and truth.” Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, Ruler of the universe and Creator of the fruit of the vine *(everyone has the first drink of grape juice).*



**GRAPE JUICE READER (3):** (*Pick up the cup of grape juice.*) The third drink of grape juice represents **spiritual freedom**. There are examples in the scriptures of people who had spiritual freedom because of their faith in God. 1) The prophet Daniel lived in Babylon. He was forbidden by King Darius to pray to God. But Daniel continued to pray and was thrown in the lions' den! The Lord protected Daniel because of his faith. 2) Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego would not turn away from God either. They were thrown into a fiery furnace because they would not worship the king's golden idol, but the Lord protected them from the fire! 3) In our day, the early Latter-day Saints left their homes, possessions, and sometimes their families to do what they knew was right. They were persecuted for following God, but the Lord blessed them and gave them peace and joy.



Just before Jesus died, he was celebrating Passover with his disciples in Jerusalem. One night in the upper room, Jesus broke and blessed the unleavened bread and wine as part of the Passover feast. As Jesus passed the matzah, he taught the disciples "Take, eat: this is my body." As they drank the wine he said, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The next day Jesus, the Lamb of God, was slain for the sins of the world to bring us spiritual freedom. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine (*Everyone has the third drink of grape juice*).

**GRAPE JUICE READER (4):** (*Pick up the cup of grape juice.*) As our Passover Feast comes to an end, the fourth drink of grape juice reminds of that redemption is not yet complete. Not everyone in our world is yet free. There is still too much sorrow and despair. We have a responsibility as God's servants to bring peace and spiritual truth to those around us. This is our responsibility. May we live to fulfill it. Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine (*Everyone has the fourth drink of grape juice*).



**PASSOVER LEADER:** (*Point to Elijah's cup*). This special cup of grape juice is reserved for the prophet Elijah. In the Old Testament, the prophet Malachi promised the Elijah would come back to earth to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents. At every Passover celebration, the door is opened to invite the spirit of Elijah to enter and herald the coming of the Messiah.

On April 3, 1836, Jewish families all over the world sat at their Passover dinner tables and invited Elijah to return, and he did! That very day, Elijah appeared in the Kirtland Temple to Joseph Smith to bestow the priesthood keys of the sealing power. Today we give thanks for that sealing power that allows us to be with our families forever!

## PART 5: FAMILY SINGING 🎵

The Passover meal is traditionally followed by hymn singing. Here are some ideas for your family:

### **From the Primary *Children's Songbook***

- He Sent His Son #34, Did Jesus Really Live Again #64
- When He Comes Again #82
- The Hearts of the Children #92

### **From the Hymnbook**

- Redeemer of Israel #6
- I Know that My Redeemer Lives #136
- I Believe in Christ #134
- He is Risen #199