

## Forever Family Trees - Passover meal ideas for Easter Holy Week:

**Remember**, that if you choose to include this sacred meal into your family's Easter week, to be respectful of things that are not only enlightening to us but also important and sacred to others. Please help your children reflect on the holy –though festive-nature of Passover.

I like to make this meal special, so I pull out my extra nice dishes. The kids notice and pay a bit more attention and have better manners. 😊

**Historically** the Israelites have celebrated Passover since the time of Moses, here is a simplified version of the story:

Moses was instructed and given divine power by the Lord, to do both miracles and plagues in an attempt to soften Pharaoh's heart and encourage him to release the Israelites from slavery. Pharaoh remained unmoved.

At last, the Lord declared that the Egyptians' final punishment would result in the death of every firstborn child and beast in the land. At the same time, the Israelites were given specific instructions to follow so the destruction or death would "**pass over**" their households. Those Israelites who sacrificed and ate a specially selected lamb; and those who used a hyssop-branch and marked their doorposts with the lamb's blood; would be spared the death of their firstborn.

Exactly as foretold, the Egyptians suffered loss in every household, while the Israelites **who obeyed** were spared. Horrified by the destruction, Pharaoh entreated the Israelites to leave quickly which they did—ending hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt.

**In commemoration** of their redemption from slavery, the Feast of Unleavened Bread—or Passover—has been celebrated annually ever since. In our day, a ceremonial Passover dinner begins the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. This celebration is for eight days, with the formal meal being held on the first night of Passover.

The Last Supper was a special meal, but not THE Passover Meal. The foods they used for this special Passover Meal are symbolic and full of meaning. We do not know when all the different foods became part of this meal. But we do know that the 'wine' (grape juice), the bitter herb, and the unleavened bread date to the original ceremony. All these foods point towards the Messiah as our Redeemer.

For your meal, please take time to explain to your children what the foods symbolize. I have **printable cards (see below)** with the symbolism and information written for each food item. Then allow each person to taste the bitter herb, Haroset, parsley, and Matzah. Afterward, enjoy a meal made up of foods eaten in Jesus' day and discuss the important and sacred events of the Passover celebration.

Many Passover meals today are large and have many more symbolic food and elaborate meal preparation. But I try to keep it simple and focus on explaining the symbolic aspects of the Passover meal and story. (maybe after dinner you can watch 'Prince of Egypt' or part of Charlton Heston's "Ten Commandments"). I place these foods on the table and I let the kids make "pita" bread sandwiches out of them. Another fun idea, is to eat your meal at a low table and sit on pillows.

## **Passover Seder (dinner) –**

Recipes:

1. **Lamb** – to represent the Lamb of God.

New Zealand boneless leg of lamb

unroll and pound out if necessary

salt, pepper and crushed red pepper

layer: fresh spinach

feta cheese

Shitake mushrooms (best if fresh but can use dehydrated)

Roll up and tie.

Season outside with salt, pepper and crushed red pepper

Bake as called for on package

Or buy a lamb shank-bone and broil or bake in the oven. (if you don't eat lamb, your kids probably won't like it. It's a very different tasting meat.

\*\*OR use gyro meat at the deli – very good. Last year I tried this for the first time. I grilled it and so far the kids have liked this one the best.

2. **Wine #grapejuice**; to represent the blood on the door, the sacrifice of the lamb and the blood of the slaves - 4 cups of white (so nothing gets stained) grape juice - they drink this throughout story.

3. **Maror** - bitter Herbs to remind them of the bitterness of slavery

Horseradish

\*Romaine lettuce

\*Cucumbers in white vinegar

Radishes

Sprouts

Green onions

\*Parsley

Salt water to dip lettuce or bitter herb in (optional)

I tend to always choose romaine lettuce and parsley for the kids to dip. And then I make a cucumber, white vinegar with a touch of sugar, salad. I mix and place in fridge the day before.

4. **Haroset** - the mortar required to make bricks

Mix: 4-5 apples grated

1/2 cup chopped raisins or dates (apricots, or figs)

2 Tables grape juice

1 Tesp. Cinnamon

1/4 cup finely chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds)

The kids like Haroset. It tastes great as part of the meal or placed inside a pita bread sandwich with the meat and all the other symbolic foods. I make this Haroset the day before.

5. **Beitzah or Roasted Egg** – I place several eggs (with no cracks) in a muffin tin. In a cold oven. Roast the egg at 200 degrees for 1.5 hours. Increase oven temperature to 300 degrees and roast for another 1/2 hour. The egg is done when small brown dots appear on the shell. Remove the egg from the oven, cool and refrigerate until needed. These are wonderful!
6. **Unleavened bread** – they were in a hurry and couldn't wait for their bread to rise. You can purchase pita bread at the grocery store. (that's what I do). Or here is a recipe if you'd like to make it:

3 cups flour (or Matzah meal)  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
Water

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Combine flour and salt in a medium-sized bowl. Slowly add enough water so that the dough pulls away from the sides of the bowl and is soft and pliable. Add more flour if the dough becomes too tacky.

Divide dough into three portions. On a floured surface, roll out each portion as you would a piecrust (try to make it thin, but don't worry if it's a little thick). Roll each sheet of dough onto the rolling pin and then onto a lightly oiled cookie sheet (vegetable oil is kosher). Without puncturing the dough, prick dough lightly a few times with a fork. Bake immediately until browned, turning once. Carefully slide the three bread rounds from the cookie sheets onto a kitchen towel or rack to cool. Keep in airtight container. This can be made several days before the Passover meal.

7. **An extra plate, cup, and chair for Elijah**, with the door left open. (We don't leave a door open) But we do set have a place setting for Elijah. And talk about the temple and doing Family History work. This is the only fest or festival that the Israelites set a place for Elijah.

**The Sedar** (or Passover dinner) is to teach children that the Israelites once were slaves in Egypt, and that God led them out with "a strong hand and an outstretched arm."

### **Activity for the kids:**

Traditionally the Israelites clean their house of all leavening (yeast). As part of the fun and to get the children excited about the meal the next day. The night before, on 'the day of preparation', the parents would take Afikomen or matzah – a unleavened bread and tear it into several pieces (probably the number of children you have so each child could find their own piece of matzah), then strategically hide them around the house. The family would recite a set prayer together and then search through the darkened house with flashlights, lamps or electric candles. All pieces **MUST** be found, placed in a paper bag and burned the next morning. (Or ceremoniously thrown away in the trash outside 😊). Having symbolically cleansed the home of all corruption and evil, the Passover celebration can now properly begin the next day. (Honestly, just using the celebration as an excuse to clean the house lends to fun, and a peaceful tone for the next day's festivities.)

### **Some other foods you could add to your meal:**

Honeyed yogurt, olives, grapes, melon, beans or lentil soup, hummus, garlic, broiled fish, and cheese; like goat cheese, are a few to be named. Think Mediterranean. Maybe be adventurous and try goat's milk.

I created information cards about each of the symbolic foods and placed them next to the different items. It was easy to talk about and discuss the foods before the meal. I had the kids that were sitting next to the cards read them. [Printable link for cards here.](#)

Print on Cardstock

Cut and fold so the information cards are free standing.

Like a tent 😊

### **Other foods eaten at the time of Jesus include:**

Honeyed yogurt, olives, grapes, melon, beans or lentil soup, garlic, broiled fish, and cheese; like goat cheese, are a few to be named. Think Mediterranean. Maybe be adventurous and try goat's milk.

## **Grape Juice**

A symbol of Joy and Redemption

## **The Prophet Elijah**

Symbolized by an extra dinner plate, a cup of grape juice, and a door left open. No one drinks the juice. Hoping he will enter and usher in the Messiah. Malachi 4:5 We, however, believe that the Messiah has already come. Jesus Christ our Savior.

## **Zeroa**

A Paschal lamb.

The sacrifice of an unblemished lamb, with not one bone broken. A similitude of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, who is also called the Lamb of God. Also, to make sure that the destroying angel of God would "pass over" their homes, they were to take the blood of the sacrificial lamb and paint their door posts using a hyssop-branch. Then they were to cook and eat the lamb.

## **Beitzah**

A roasted egg.

To remind them of the Temple and the roasted offering they would give. The Israelite pilgrims would sacrifice an animal at the temple in Jerusalem during the time of the Feast, until the temple was destroyed. Now it is also symbolic of the loss of their temple.

## Haroset

A dried fruit and nut mixture.

It is symbolic of the clay for making bricks, the straw for mortar and the blood of the Israelite slaves. Its sweetness promises a better world to come. (The Israelite slaves constructed many Egyptian cities. The apple and nut pieces represent the clay of the brick; the cinnamon represents the straw they added to the mortar; and the wine (or grape juice) represents the blood of the slaves.)

## Karpas

Parsley or another green herb, such as watercress or lettuce, celery leaves, green onions, or even radishes. This is to be dipped into a dish of salt water before being eaten. It symbolized the Israelites' new life of freedom.

## Maror

A bitter herb

(Romaine lettuce or Horseradish). It was to remind the Israelites of their suffering under the hands of their Egyptian taskmasters. The characteristic taste of these "herbs" at first is sweet but then becomes bitter or strong tasting. As first Israel was welcomed to Egypt. Living there was a blessing. But when a new Pharaoh came to power, he enslaved them, and life in Egypt became miserable. Egypt was also symbolic of sin. Sin often appears sweet or mild at first; but all too soon, all that remains are its bitter and overpowering consequences.

## Three Matzot

or Matzah (a single piece)

Unleavened bread.

It reminds us that Israel had to quickly escape from Egypt. So sudden that the Israelites could not wait for their bread dough to rise but had to bake it while it was flat. Leaven causes dough to rise. It also transforms, or corrupts, the original ingredients. Anciently, leaven was associated with sin and pride. The use of unleavened bread during the Passover, suggests the quick surety of the Lord's redemptive word and at the same time cautions the children of Israel against moral corruption and pride.